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## **Build Summertime Sales by Making Mushrooms Your Pick of the Season** *Mushrooms and Weight Watchers Summer Promotion Starts July 1*

**July 2, 2008** – Summer is the time for outdoor activities, skimpy clothes and redoubling diet efforts. It's also time for food retailers to cash in on a storewide summer promotional opportunities featuring fresh mushrooms tied in with a variety of other foods. This unique occasion is courtesy of the mushroom industry and Weight Watchers.

To promote the nutritional benefits of fresh produce this summer, Weight Watchers continues "Pick of the Season," a public health initiative spotlighting seasonal fruits and vegetables. This summer's shining star is fresh mushrooms, a vegetable that adds both flavor and nutrients to any meal. Up to a two-cup serving of savory and satisfying nutrient-rich mushrooms has a **POINTS** value of 0.

### ***Cross-Promote Fresh Mushrooms to Build Sales and Profits***

Nothing beats the versatility of fresh mushrooms, which is why so many cross-promotional opportunities exist between various food retailing departments, including meat, seafood, frozen and, of course, produce. Does merchandising fresh mushrooms in the meat case, for example, pay off? Twelve large New Jersey retail grocery stores served as a test of this promotional concept (Willard Bishop 2007). The chain's produce management chose the six test stores and six control stores. Sales were measured in test and control stores over an eight-week period and compared to baseline values.

**Secondary placement of sliced white mushrooms in the supermarket steak display case resulted in a 29% lift in dollar sales.**

Here are four recipe ideas to consider that highlight the savory taste of mushrooms: **Mini Mushroom Burgers; Tilapia with Mushrooms, Olives and Tomatoes; Turkey Mushroom Soup; and Mushroom Chicken Piccata. Recipes and photos are available electronically via e-mail.** The Mushroom Council recipes will be distributed to Weight Watchers members nationwide.

### ***Pick of the Season Impact***

From July through September 2008, the Mushroom Council will involve retailers and shippers by placing the Weight Watchers Pick of the Season and 0 **POINTS** value logos per serving on pack.

The Mushroom Council will publicize the Pick of the Season promotion through several channels in addition to on pack, including in-store radio advertising and NewsAmerica POS. Pick of the Season will be communicated with usage ideas directly to Weight Watchers members nationwide, as well as covered by local newspapers.

Gordon Hunt, director of marketing for the Watermelon Board, a past sponsor of the program said, "We found the Pick of the Season program to be really valuable. In fact, we're a two-time sponsor."

### ***Pick of the Season Is Underway...Let Summer Begin!***

The Pick of the Season promotion will include:

- A Weight Watchers featured story, highlighting the Mushroom Council and Weight Watchers recipes, will be placed on a **wire distributed to more than 3,000 newspapers nationwide**. More than 10,000 newspapers will receive information and recipes through a pre-packaged news release
- **1 million Weight Watcher recipe cards** will be distributed to Weight Watcher meetings nationwide
- Mushroom banner ads will appear on WeightWatchers.com throughout the month of September, which is National Mushroom Month
- Three months of **in-store radio advertising** (July 1 – September 30), along with one cycle of NewsAmerica POS (August 11 – September 7) in the produce section, will reach millions of Americans. Ads will highlight mushrooms' nutritional benefits in addition to reminding shoppers of their 0 **POINTS** value per serving

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The Mushroom Council is composed of fresh market producers or importers who average more than 500,000 pounds of mushrooms produced or imported annually. The mushroom program is authorized by the Mushroom Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act of 1990 and is administered by the Mushroom Council under the supervision of the Agricultural Marketing Service. Research and promotion programs help to expand, maintain and develop markets for individual agricultural commodities in the United States and abroad. These industry self-help programs are requested and funded by the industry groups that they serve. For more information on the Mushroom Council, visit mushroomcouncil.org.