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February 3, 2010

To the distinguished members of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee;

Poor nutrition is a risk factor for four of the six leading causes of death in the US: heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer. The obesity crisis is receiving public attention but cannot be successfully addressed without addressing the food system that underlies the epidemic. Our current food system provides easy access to highly refined, energy dense and nutrient deficient foods. It is based heavily on animal products rather than on the high fiber, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables recommended for the prevention of disease. An industrialized food system dominates and makes available inexpensive, high fat, sugary food. The current health crisis is providing the opportunity to re-examine our current approach to food and nutrition from an ecological perspective in order to ensure the survival of a nutritious food system as well as to improve the health of our population.

Suggestions for Key Recommendations

- Support your local food system: increase purchases of produce, dairy and other foods direct from farmers, regional farmers markets, and year-round CSAs, as well as those products produced by season extension methods such as greenhouses and hoop houses.
- Purchase beef with the USDA “grass fed” label in place of other beef, to ensure consumption beef without produced without antibiotics and energy intensive feed grains. Consumption of grass-fed beef will increase your intake of Essential Fatty Acids, B-Vitamins, Vitamin E, and beta-carotene.(1,2,3)
- Increase purchase of minimally packaged and processed food to increase freshness and reduce waste.

To be Included in Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee Report

- **Food-climate connection**
 - *Livestock's Long Shadow - Environmental Issues and Options*. Food and Agriculture Organization. 2006. ISBN 9251055718.
<http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/a0701e/a0701e00.htm>.



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- **Meat production and health (including antibiotics)**
 - Bonfoh, B., Schwabenbauer, K., D. Wallinga, and J. Hartung. 2010. “Animal and Human Health Aspects of Intensive Livestock Production Systems.” In *Livestock in a Changing Landscape*, Volume 1, *Drivers, Consequences, and Responses*, eds. H. Steinfeld, H. A. Mooney, F. Schneider, and L. E. Neville. Washington, DC: Island Press.
http://www.islandpress.com/bookstore/details.php?prod_id=1948.
- **Industrialized agriculture and decreased nutrient availability.** A quarter century of research has examined the so-called dilution effect, the notion that industrialized agricultural methods designed to enhance yield or production will tend to decrease nutrient concentrations. Content and quality of some nutrients in certain foods appears to have declined over the last half century as a result of how food is grown, processed, and prepared. Conversely, produce grown using more sustainable agricultural methods may offer significantly enhanced health-promoting qualities, relative to “conventionally” grown produce.
 - Jarrell WM, Beverly RB. The dilution effect in plant nutrition studies. *Adv Agron.* 1981;34:197–224.
 - Davis DR. Trends in the Nutrient and Antioxidant Content of Common Foods. Paper presented at: Annual Meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Available at: http://php.aaas.org/meetings/MPE_01.php?detail=1034. February 19, 2007.
 - Peck GM, Andrews PK, Reganold JP, Fellman JK. Apple orchard productivity and fruit quality under organic, conventional, and integrated management. *HortScience.* 2006;41:99.
 - Asami DK, Hong Y-J, Barrett DM, Mitchell AE. Comparison of the Total Phenolic And Ascorbic Acid Content of Freeze-Dried and Air-Dried Marionberry, Strawberry, and Corn Grown Using Conventional, Organic, and Sustainable Agricultural Practices. *Agr Food Chem.* 2003;51:1237–1241.

Supporting Documents

Policy Statements from Health care Organizations

- **American Public Health Association.** *American Public Health Association Policy Statement (Policy Number: 200712). Toward a Healthy, Sustainable Food System*, November 2007. This position paper reviews the scientific basis for understanding the US food system and sustainability, addresses specific issues of concern, discusses key related policies and action opportunities, and outlines American Public Health Association (APHA) goals. Available at: <http://www.apha.org/advocacy/policy/policysearch/default.htm?id=1361>.



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- **American Medical Association.** *American Medical Association Resolution 405, A-09. Sustainable Food Systems*, June 2009. The American Medical Association (AMA) House of Delegates adopted a resolution recommended by the Council on Science and Public Health on sustainable food systems. The AMA supports (a) responsible waste management policies, including appropriate recycling and waste reduction; (b) the use of ecologically sustainable products, foods, and materials; (c) the development of products that are nontoxic, sustainable, and ecologically sound; (d) building practices that reduce resource utilization and contribute to a healthy environment; and (e) community-wide adoption of “green” initiatives and activities by organizations, businesses, homes, schools, and government and health care entities. This report defines sustainability within the context of the overall food system and outlines areas requiring further attention. Available at: <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama1/pub/upload/mm/475/refcomd.pdf>.
- **American Dietetic Association:**
 - *Healthy Land, Healthy People: Building a Better Understanding of Sustainable Food Systems for Food and Nutrition Professionals: A Primer on Sustainable Food Systems and Emerging Roles for Food and Nutrition Professionals*, March 2007. <http://www.eatright.org>
 - Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition. Food Systems and Public Health: Linkages to Achieve Healthier Diets and Healthier Communities in Volume 4, Issues 3 & 4 (December 2009) Available online at: <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t792306860>. Co-edited by Mary Story, PhD, RD, Michael Hamm, PhD, David Wallinga, MD. This special double issue identifies research opportunities to develop successful interventions within agriculture, food, and health systems as well as policies and actions for moving towards and achieving community environments that allow healthier diets and reduced obesity.



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References

1. Ponnampalam EN, Mann NJ, Sinclair AJ. Effect of feeding systems on omega-3 fatty acids, conjugated linoleic acid and trans fatty acids in Australian beef cuts: potential impact on human health. *Asia Pac J Clin Nutr.* 2006;15(1):21-29.
2. Prache S, Priolo A, Grolier P. Persistence of carotenoid pigments in the blood of concentrate-finished grazing sheep: its significance for the traceability of grass-feeding. *J Anim Sci.* Feb 2003;81(2):360-367.
3. Duckett S, Neel J, Fontenot J, Clapham W. Effects of winter stocker growth rate and finishing system on: III. Tissue proximate, fatty acid, vitamin, and cholesterol content. *J Anim Sci.* Sept 2009; 87(9): 2961-2970.

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