WN *The issue*

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WN and world nutrition
A productive New Year!



A productive New Year to our contributors. Top are Lester Brown, Boyd Swinburn, David Katz, Bartow Elmore, Jeffrey Pilcher, Brooke Aksnes, Maria Alvim, Geoffrey Cannon. In the middle row are Gyorgy Scrinis, Enrique Jacoby, Fabio Gomes, Raj Patel, Olivia Yambi, John Mason, Fred Kummerow, Leonardo Mata. In the bottom row are Kraisid Tontisirin, Lalita Bhattacharjee, Mark Wahlqvist, Hélène Delisle, Barry Popkin, Carlos Monteiro, David Picou, Claudio Schuftan

The Issue team reports: In *Update* (page 11), Lester Brown warns on food wars, Boyd Swinburn protests, public interest civil society asks the WHO Executive Board to be resolute, David Katz on obesity, and Bartow Elmore and Jeffrey Pilcher remark on Coke and lager. *Visions* for this century (page 28) are seen by Brooke Aksnes, Maria Alvim and Geoffrey Cannon. Our review of *WN* 2014 (page 41) includes Gyorgy Scrinis, Enrique Jacoby, Fabio Gomes, Raj Patel, Olivia Yambi, John Mason, many others. In *Idea* (page 72) Fred Kummerow outlines his centenarian diet, and in *What do you Think* (page 79) Leonardo Mata reveals the secrets of malnutrition. In a 28 page Feedback (page 90) Kraisid Tontisin, Lalita Bhattacharjee and others write about vitamin A, Mark Wahlqvist and Hélène Delisle discuss the *New Nutrition*, Barry Popkin and Carlos Monteiro debate ultra-processing, David Picou celebrates John Waterlow, Claudio Schuftan has his doubts about the UN International Conference on Nutrition.



WN *Hot stuff. Public health nutrition*

How far to go?



Direct action on food. Bread riots, Paris, 1789. Mahatma Gandhi's Salt March, India, 1930 Bread riots, Egypt, 2013. Colin Butler protesting against coal mining boost, Australia, 2014

The Issue team writes: The pictures above illustrate that food (or crises over price or availability) often cause non-violent civil disobedience, riots, uprisings, or even revolutions. The French Revolution started in 1789 with bread riots. Mahatma Gandhi challenged the British Raj tax on salt with a march in 1930 to make salt followed by savage police brutality. The 'Arab Spring' started with bread riots in Tunisia and in 2013 continued in Egypt with riots against official advice to eat less.

These are examples of citizens or their leaders engaging in direct action, with all the risks entailed. What about scientists? After years of frustration, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change member and *WN* contributor Colin Butler decided to engage in non-violent civil disobedience. After blocking a road he was arrested in late November after chaining himself to a gate of Whitehaven coal mine in Australia in protest against the government's policy to boost coal mining. He says:

> The evidence for climate change is getting stronger and yet instead of moving away from coal exports Australia is just advocating it. It's the moral equivalent of selling heroin and saying, 'It's not my fault I'm selling heroin, it's the people who use it'. We profit from selling something we know poisons the future.

Access Update on how far to go, here



***WN** Review of 2014*

The family

The WN editorial team reports: As you can see here, our editorial 'family' has in 2014 grown from a small team to 35 people. They are all regular WN contributors, correspondents or contacts, committed to support *WN*. Most are established professionals working in universities or research centres, or for government or public interest civil society organisations, or are writers.



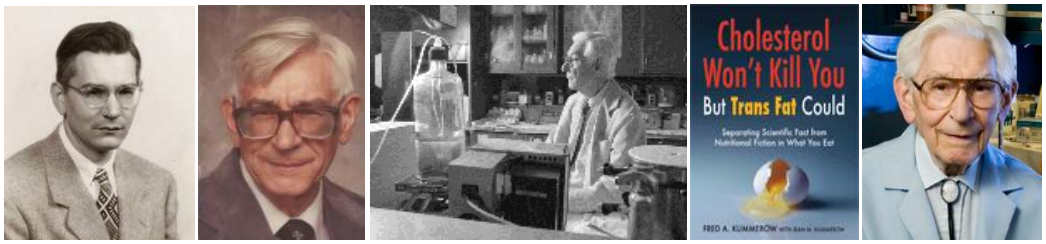
The *WN* editorial family is (in order of their first name) Alejandro Calvillo, Anthony Fardet, Brooke Aksnes, Claudio Schuftan, Claus Leitzmann, Colin Butler, Colin Tudge, David Sanders, David Stuckler, Diana Parra, Enrique Jacoby, Fabio Gomes, Flavio Valente, Geoffrey Cannon, Gerard Hastings, George Kent, Hetty Einzig, Isabela Sattamini, Jean-Claude Moubarac, John Mason, José Luis Vivero Pol, Juan Rivera, Marcela Reyes, Maria Alvim, Mark Lawrence, Mark Wahlqvist, Olivia Yambi, Olivier de Schutter, Raj Patel, Ricardo Uauy, Roberto de Vogli, Sara Garduño-Diaz, Seva Khambadkone, Thiago Hérick de Sá, Tim Lang..

Access Review of WN in 2014 here



Idea. Fred Kummerow

The centenarian diet



Fred Kummerow here at the beginning of his career; in mid-career at the University of Illinois, an advisor to American Heart Association, then recently in his laboratory (bigger picture, and right).

Editor's note

WN has not until now published any contribution that proposes a diet regime. In this issue we make an exception with Fred Kummerow, a biochemist at the University of Illinois, an authority on *trans*-fatty acids for more than half a century, and still a regular contributor to the scientific literature. He sent us his recommendations just after his 100th birthday.

Melanie Warner writes: In 1957 a fledgling nutrition scientist at the University of Illinois persuaded a hospital to give him samples of arteries from patients who had died of heart attacks. When he analysed them, he made a startling discovery. The diseased arteries were filled with fat – but it was a specific kind of fat. The artificial fatty acids called *trans* fats, which come from the partially hydrogenated oils used in processed products like margarine, had crowded out other types of fatty acids. The scientist, Fred Kummerow, became a pioneer of *trans*-fat research, one of the first scientists to assert a link between heart disease and processed food products. It would be more than three decades before those findings were widely accepted, and half a century before the Food and Drug Administration took decisive action by removing the reassuring appellation 'generally regarded as safe' from *trans* fats.

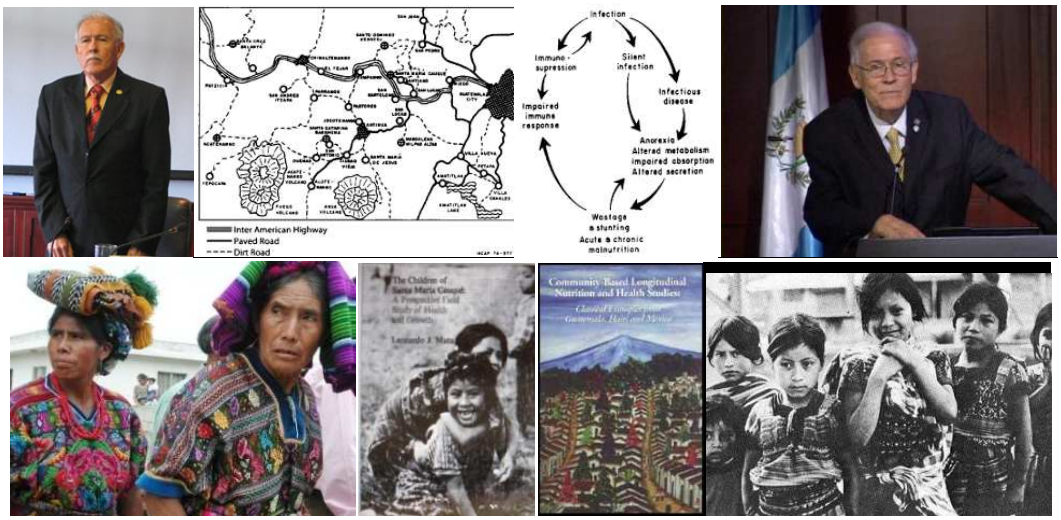
'Cholesterol has nothing to do with heart disease, except if it's oxidised,' Fred Kummerow told me. He also says that the saturated fat in butter, cheese and meats does not contribute to the clogging of arteries – and in fact is beneficial in moderate amounts in the context of a healthy diet (lots of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and other fresh, unprocessed foods). He eats red meat several times a week and drinks whole milk daily. He has never used margarine, and instead scrambles eggs in butter every morning. 'Eggs have all of the nine amino acids you need to build cells, plus important vitamins and minerals' he says. 'It's crazy to just eat egg whites'.

Access Idea. Fred Kummerow on his long life diet



WN *Hot stuff. Leonardo Mata*

The impact of infection on nutrition



Leonardo Mata in 2012 (top row), the location of Santa Maria Cauque, the infection-malnutrition cycle, and (below) women and children of the small town, and two versions of Leonardo's 1978 book

Geoffrey Cannon writes: Encountering Leonardo Mata in Acapulco in 2003 reminded me of that series in *Reader's Digest* – 'the most unforgettable character I ever met' He took me to a backstreet seafood restaurant. He called for more limes for the tequila and also to kill the bacteria on our prawns. His epic study detailed in his book 1978 book *The Children of Santa María Cauqué* is still challenging conventional wisdom about maternal and child health. As stated in a celebration of this ten-year study sponsored by Nevin Scrimshaw, many of its results 'were either new, poorly understood, controversial, or unbelievable when communicated to the scientific community'. For example, it was not lack of food that caused disease and death of infants and young children in this Cakchiquel Maya village in the highlands of Guatemala, but infections and infestations, whose effects were much more likely to be serious and lethal when children were not breastfed. Do Leonardo's findings have universal significance? He says yes.

> The problem in the world today is not hunger. It is lack of appetite. The main symptom of infection is anorexia. The issue is not food. The issue is health. With health, children have appetite, and thrive.

In Santa María Cauqué there was always enough food. When children recovered from infection they consumed 25 per cent more calories. In Leonardo's view it is an axiom of settled peasant communities, even in the most marginal environments, that there is always enough food farmed and stored for all seasons.

Access What do you think? Leonardo Mata here



WN *Hot stuff. Vitamin A*

Capsules, mangoes, breastmilk, or care?



Discussion in Feedback this month on the best ways to prevent vitamin A deficiency give different priorities to high-dose capsules, foods rich in vitamin A, breastfeeding, and integrated child care

The Feedback team writes: New readers please begin here. Current dominant practice to prevent vitamin A deficiency is universal supplementation of populations of young children identified as being at risk (picture top left, above) The contrary view is that dominant policy and practice should be food-based (including breastfeeding, picture bottom left, above). In May 2010 *WN* published Michael Latham's 'The great vitamin A fiasco'. This strongly criticises current practice. *WN* then published many letters from scholars, policy-makers, field workers, and others, almost all supporting Michael Latham, and also a commentary from scholars at Johns Hopkins School of Public Health upholding current practice.

In November *WN* published 'Let food be our medicine' by John Mason and colleagues, following their October paper in the *International Journal of Epidemiology*. This supports the food-based approach. *Feedback* this month includes letters with different points of view, from Elisabeth Sterken, Kraisid Tontisirin and Lalita Bhattacharjee, and Bjorn Lungqvist. To be continued…

Access Feedback on prevention of Vitamin A deficiency here



Development

Hope for the future



India. A quarter of all maternal deaths, in the first 42 days after the child is born, occur in India. Impoverished urban and as here rural communities, need adequate primary health care services



India. In many cities in India the streets are practically the only places where children can meet one another and play, often with minimal supervision and few toys except what they pick up in the street

The Network team writes: The *WN* cover in this New Year month (small picture) and our *Network* page, invite us all to think about the future, embodied in children and in Asia and Africa who have few resources except their own energy and hope.

Access Network here