WN *Review*

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World Nutrition
Our year of 2014. Onwards!

Gyorgy Scrinis; Carlos Monteiro, Geoffrey Cannon, Jean-Claude Moubarac; David Werner, Halfdan Mahler; the *Big Food Watch* team; Enrique Jacoby, Cristina Tirado, Adrián Diaz, María José Coloma, Ricardo Rapallo, Adrian Rodrigues, Octavio Sotomayor, Joaquin Arias, Christian Courtis; Fabio Gomes, David Legge; Isabela Sattamini, Thiago Hérick de Sá, Claudio Schuftan; Stefania Vezzosi, Michela Carruci, Paola Picciolli; John Mason, Ted Greiner, Roger Shrimpton, David Sanders, Joshua Yukich; Olivia Yambi, Anthony Fardet, Sara Garduno, Raj Patel, Mark Wahlqvist – and the hundreds of other contributors, contacts and colleagues who make *WN* possible, especially members of the *WN* family and our advisors

Introduction

The WN editorial team writes:

Here we review *World Nutrition* in 2014, with summaries of the contents of all our issues, and extracts from some commentaries and other contributions. This follows a similar annual review of *WN* *in 2012 published in January 2013*. In these introductory pages we show the members of the *WN* editorial family, list our 2014 contributors, mention some of our achievements and shortcomings, and summarise *WN*'s editorial aims and intentions with reference to our inaugural Manifesto.

This is the 50th issue of *WN,* which since our launch has published just over 3,500 pages. In 2014 our 11 issues averaged just over a modest 100 pages. Our 117 named authors of contributions published in the year come from many countries and all continents, and we have thanked them all, for their time, skills, wisdom and encouragement, freely given in the cause of public health and public goods.

Box 1

The *WN* family and advisors

Our editorial 'family' has in 2014 grown to 35 people. They are regular WN contributors, correspondents or contacts, committed to support *WN*. Most work 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 names) 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..

WN Advisors (below) are Ted Greiner, Philip James, Urban Jonsson, Shiriki Kumanyika, Harriet Kuhnlein, Barrie Margetts, Carlos Monteiro, Walter Willett.



Authors

In the main part of this review of 2014 below, are extracts from some of the commentaries and other contributions published in *WN* during the year. Collectively these have 33 authors. This is a fraction of the total of 117 authors from all continents who contributed to *WN* in the year. Many contributions also are teamwork or have authors who are not named, or contributors not identified here as authors. We thank all of them for their work in our good cause.

Box 2

WN 2014 authors

In 2014 *WN* published contributions from the 117 authors named here. Since WN began publication in 2010 we have published contributions from over 300 authors. Most are experienced professionals working in universities or research centres, or for UN agencies or governments, or for public interest civil society organisations or social movements.

Most are formally qualified in nutrition, or public health, or relevant social, economic, political or environmental sciences, or else have equivalent field or other relevant experience. Some are professional writers. As with our family members, some are post-docs or are earlier in their careers. Others are post-retirement. One contributor, still publishing in the scientific literature, was 100 years old in 2014, and says his energy comes from his own judgement, based on his laboratory findings, on what is a healthy diet. Salutations to our 117 authors. In the Latin friendly way of listing first name first, these are:

Adoniram Sanches, Adrián Dias, Adrian Rodrigues, Alan Court, Alejandro Calvillo, Altrena Mukaria, Anand Grover, Annalies Allain, Anna Lappé, Anthony Fardet, Arnoldo de Campos, Aseem Malhotra, Barry Popkin, Berta Sanseverino, Boyd Swinburn, Brooke Aksnes, Carlos Monteiro, Cecilia Castillo, Cedric de Voil, Chris Kelman, Claudia Roden, Claudio Schuftan, Claus Leitzmann, Colin Butler, Colin Sindall, Colin Tudge, Christina Courtes, Cristina Tirado, David Legge, David McCoy, David Sanders, David Werner, Diana Parra,

Elihu Richter, Enrique Jacoby, Fabio Gomes, Flavio Valente, Fred Kummerow, Gaye Palmer, Geof Rayner, Geoffrey Cannon, George Kent, Graham Lyons, Graham MacGregor, Gyorgy Scrinis, Halfdan Mahler, Helen Louise Berry, Hetty Einzig, Ignacio Saiz, Isabela Sattamini, Isabella Henriques, Jane Dixon, Jane Kramer, Jean-Claude Moubarac, Jessica Johnston, Joaquin Arias, John McKenna, John Mason, Jonathan Patz, Joshua Yukich, Julie Woods, Katharine Jenner, Kiera Butler,

Lautaro Viscay, Leigh Haynes, Leith Greenslade, Lida Llotska, Manuel Peña, Maria Alvim, Maria Hamlin-Zuniga, Maria José Coloma, Marcela Reyes, Mark Bittman, Mark Lawrence, Mark Wahlqvist, Melanie Warner, Michael Pollan, Michael Krawinkel, Michela Carruci, Nancy Krieger, Naomi Klein, Octavio Sotomayor, Olivia Yambi, Olivier de Schutter, Patricia Jaime, Patti Rundall, Peter Kim Streatfield, Peter Travers, Paola Piccioli,

Radhika Balakrishnan, Raj Patel, Ricardo Rapallo, Ricardo Salvador, Rick Cohen, Ro MacFarlane, Robert Jensen, Roberto de Vogli, Roberto Savio, Roger Shrimpton, Sara Garduño-Diaz, Sarah Elton, Sarojini Nadimpally, Seva Khambadkone, Stineke Oenema, Stefania Vezzosi, Stefanie Vandervijvere, Susan George, Ted Greiner, Thomas Samaras, Tim Lang, Tony McMichael, Urban Jonsson, Walter Willett, William Waters, Wilma Freire, Xaviera Cabada, Yoni Freedhoff.

Highlights

The Food System series, first published in *WN* in late 2010, remains our most cited work, in UN and other international reports, in other journals, and other literature. Its conceptual framework is a basis for the new Brazilian dietary guidelines published in late 2014. *The Big Food Watch* series convened by Fabio Gomes has brought together a network of civil society organisations and social movements in a common cause. Our *Visions* series convened by Brooke Aksnes projects the view of *WN* family members forward into this century. Our renewed coverage of universal Vitamin A supplementation is being followed by international policy-makers, as shown in our *Feedback* letters section. We take pride in the development of two sections of *WN* in 2014. One is our *Update* section, whose news features are often teamwork, which keeps abreast of some key events that affect world nutrition. The other is *Feedback*, which from very small beginnings has in 2014 as convened by Isabela Sattamini and now also Maria Alvim, grown to 20 or more pages an issue.

Box 3

The *WN* Manifesto

The WN Manifesto, published with our launch issue in May 2010, makes four main points. First, the nature of *WN*. 'Typically, nutrition journals are mainly concerned with information, and seek to describe their world as it is. *WN* respects facts, and at the same time it is mainly concerned with ideas… The need is for a journal whose contributors have scope to think and reflect on the significance of established and emerging experience and evidence'

Second, the *WN* vision is in keeping with the *Giessen Declaration*, devised in 2005, and as revised later. 'The vision of *WN* is of nutrition as a social as well as a biological and behavioural science, guided by ethical, ecological and evolutionary principles, and with economic, environmental and other dimensions… Nutrition does have a foundation in biochemistry, but is relevant and meaningful only inasmuch as it recognises and promotes family, community and population health, and other public goods'.

Third, the purpose of *WN*. 'The perennial crisis of undernutrition illustrates the need to see the big picture. Food and nutrition security is fundamental to human health, welfare, potential, and progress. So are regional, national, and local independence and self-determination, and that of communities and families…. Good health, in all societies and at all levels, begins at and before birth. It is protected by exclusive breastfeeding, freedom from incessant infections and infestations, adequate and varied food supplies, and reliable sanitation and safe water. It is sustained also by public goods such as primary health care accessible to everybody, universal basic education, and the empowerment of people'.

Fourth, publishing and editorial policy. 'Debates, commentary, challenges to conventional wisdom – these are the kinds of contribution that *WN* will carry… *WN* will also embrace the richness and variety of human experience and culture. It will pay attention to the points of view of societies and communities, in high-income as well as low-income regions and countries, that are impoverished or excluded, or that do not equate development with more cash, or whose ways of life are traditional'. We think that our manifesto still stands up well.

Review

Below, the main part of this review of the *WN* year of 2014 consists of digests of what we have published in every issue this year, summaries of new initiatives and developments, and also brief extracts from some of our commentaries and other types of contribution. Taken all together, we believe these give a flavour of what *WN* stands for, and what, despite very slender human and other resources, we are intent to achieve. We hope and believe that these and our many other contributions uphold the spirit of our *Manifesto*, and collectively look forward with purpose and energy.

As before in our review of 2012, what follows is organised in three groups each of four months. Between January and April the contributions selected are Gyorgy Scrinis on *trans* fats; Carlos Monteiro and colleagues on why ultra-processed product reformulation will not improve public health; the *Update* team covering the renewed onslaught on sugar as contained in processed products and soft drinks; and David Werner with Haldfan Mahler on revival of the spirit of Alma Ata.

Between May and August the selections are the *Big Food Watch* team on Nestlé teaching the world to snack; Enrique Jacoby and many colleagues on the imperative need to protect family farming in Latin America; and Fabio Gomes with David Legge on the meeting of the G77 (or 133 plus China) in Bolivia and its *Santa Cruz Declaration.*

Between September and December the selections are Thiago Hérick de Sá and colleagues on healthy food systems, featuring Claudio Schuftan; Stefania Vezzosi and colleagues on the age-old Tuscan healthy food system; John Mason and colleagues on Vitamin A supplementation; and Brooke Aknes and colleagues on visions for this century, featuring Olivia Yambi, Raj Patel, Mark Wahlqvist and others.

Box 4

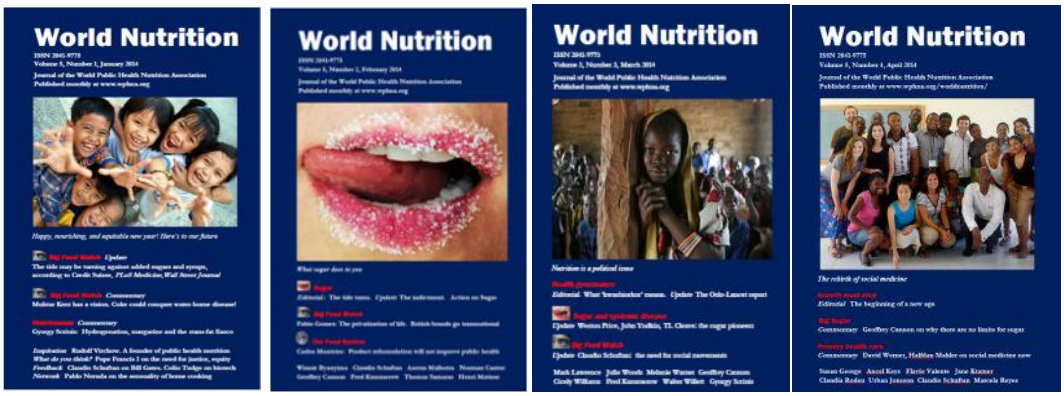
Our appeal

We at *WN* are aware of the limitations and shortcomings of the journal. Some of these we are working on. But we still need more support. Please write to wn.theeditor@gmail.com saying who you are, what relevant work you have done, how much time you can devote to *WN* (a commitment of around 20 hours a month is usual), and what you could contribute.

Our most pressing need is for more members of the editorial family with knowledge of or at least interest in the practical business of producing a journal. Skills needed include production for on-line publication, direct editorial inputting, researching contributions, staying in close touch with contributors, copy editing, and team and network building.

We also need more substantial contributions from or directly relevant to various parts of the world where we need networks. These include India, China and other Asian countries, sub-Saharan Africa, the Mediterranean, the Arab world, and the countries of former USSR.

WN Volume 5, 1-4. January-April 2014



Above are the covers of *World Nutrition* published between January and April last year. Relative to earlier covers their style has been simplified, to focus on the issue's themes and contributors of special interest. In January we hoped (in vain) for an increasingly equitable New Year, above all for the sake of the world's children. In February we launched the first of what remains sustained coverage on *Big Sugar,* with an arresting cover suggesting that sugar has unique properties and associations. The African girl on the cover of the March issue introduces that issue's theme of public health nutrition as a political issue. The young professionals on the cover of the April issue are among those who work in Haiti with Partners in Health, co-founded by Paul Farmer and now-World Bank president Jim Yong Kim. The cover introduces a major commentary by David Werner with former WHO director-general Halfdan Mahler on community primary health care and the rebirth of social medicine.

The structure of *WN* was consolidated in these first four months of the year and has not greatly changed since. *WN* throughout the year sustained 100 pages an issue. After the cover and contents, we run seven pages of *The Issue*, which walks through seven of the main contributions of the month. This is followed by the *WN Editorial*, which usually combines comment on a theme of that issue, with reflections on other current affairs. *Update*, as its name suggests, includes 6 to 8 short pieces, which usually update previous *WN* contributions in the light of events. The increasing numbers of people working as *Update* editorial team members, with their informants from all over the world, have enabled this section to grow to about 20 pages an issue.

The main *WN* commentaries in the centre of the journal have become increasingly themed with general titles, as for example *The Food System, Big Food Watch, Sugar*, *Farming, Development, Idea*!, *Source,* and *Inspiration*. Geoffrey Cannon's *What Do You Think?* column encourages comment and debate. *Feedback*, the *WN* letters section, edited by Isabela Sattamini, has continued to grow, averaging in this period around 15 pages and six mostly substantial letters an issue. The final page, *Network*, features a picture meant to be inspirational. Throughout the year special thanks are due to *Sabrina Ionata* and *Isabela Sattamini* for getting *WN* on-line.

January
***Big Food Watch*, family farming**

In January our cover picture sent best New Year wishes for the sake of all the world's children who are our future. For *Big Food Watch* Fabio Gomes convened *BFW* team members Jeanette Longfield (Sustain, UK), Tim Lobstein (World Obesity Forum), Flavio Valente (FIAN International, worldwide), Michael Jacobson (Center for Science in the Public Interest, US), Alejandro Calvillo (*El Poder del Consumidor,* Mexico), Elisabetta Recine (Brazilian Council of Food and Nutrition Security), and Claudio Schuftan (People's Health Movement, worldwide).

We watched Big Food in *Updates* on the case against added sugars, and also in a *BFW* commentary on the plan of Coca-Cola CEO Muhtar Kent to start to fix water-borne diseases, beginning in Africa. In *Update* Isabela Sattamini explained why the heat is now on sugar. Our main commentary, on the margarine-hydrogenation-*trans*-fat fiasco, was by Gyorgy Scrinis (see below). In *Inspiration* Geoffrey Cannon showed why Rudolf Virchow is a founding father of public health nutrition; and also hymned Pope Francis I. In *Feedback* Colin Tudge showed why family farmers can feed the 10+ billion. *Network* featured an elemental ode by Pablo Neruda.

January. Nutritionism. Hydrogenation
Margarine, butter, and the trans-fats fiasco

Gyorgy Scrinis

Access January 2014 Gyorgy Scrinis on Nutritionism here



The century-old butter vs margarine wars overlooked toxic trans-fats (above, left) still present in processed pizzas, French fries, baked goods, packaged snacks, deep-fried foods – and margarine. But the trans-fat fiasco masks bigger issues, about the nature of processed products, and about the real purpose of nutrition science in promotion of health and well-being and prevention of disease.

Gyorgy Scrinis's introduction to his January commentary is as follows. Access the full text here

Which is the better choice, butter or margarine? Beginning in the 1960s, many nutrition scientists and other experts leaned heavily toward margarine. They did so entirely on the basis of relative ratios of polyunsaturated and saturated fats, while overlooking or being ignorant of the presence of the highly processed ingredients used to manufacture margarine, and the artificial *trans*-fats produced by the partial hydrogenation technology used to harden vegetable oils.

However, a crisis for the reputation of margarine became inescapable when a study by two Dutch investigators published in a leading journal in 1990 highlighted the harmful effects of these *trans*-fats. It was evident that *trans*-fats had an even more detrimental effect on blood cholesterol levels than saturated fats, and therefore – within the logic of the dominant diet-heart hypothesis – posed a greater risk of heart disease.

In 1986 Joan Dye Gussow, the outspoken public health nutritionist, said: 'As for butter versus margarine, I trust cows more than chemists'. The take-home message of what has become the *trans*-fats fiasco may be that we should have placed our trust in cows rather than chemists all along. Certainly, we should question the reductive evaluation of foods and processed food products on the basis of their so-called good and bad fat content.

However, policymakers have responded to this new evidence by re-categorising *trans*-fats as a 'bad fat', and food scientists and technologists and margarine manufacturers have sought new chemical processing techniques to produce a 'virtually *trans*-fat-free' margarine. In this way, focus is maintained on the nutrient composition of margarine, rather than bringing to light and opening up to scrutiny the types of processing techniques, ingredients and additives now being used in its production.

This commentary outlines the history of margarine and its wars with butter, and the continual re-engineering of margarine across what I see as the three eras of nutritionism, in response to changing nutritional fears and fetishes.

I trace the transformation of the public profile and nutritional facade of margarine from being seen as a cheap imitation of butter in the first era of quantifying nutritionism; to a 'hyper-real' spread boasting a superior fatty acid profile in the second, good-and-bad era; and then to a cholesterol-lowering and omega-3-enriched functional food in the third, functional era.

I also examine the research and the debate over *trans*-fats which originated with pioneering work as long ago as the 1960s, and how the discourse of 'good' and 'bad' fats continues to obscure the underlying ingredients and processing quality of margarine and other spreads.

February

The industrialised food system

Our cover feature was on sugar, which was also the topic of the inaugural *WN* editorial. We outlined the new powerful indictment against sugar and greeted the launch of UK pressure group Action on Sugar, whose leaders include Graham MacGregor, Katharine Jenner and various *WN* contributors. *Update* began with an account of the World Economic Forum view on inequity, which was vigorously condemned by Oxfam executive director Winnie Byanyima. Also in *Update* Fabio Gomes wrote on the privatisation of nature.

Our *Big Food Watch* commentary was on global food product power branding and the Pepsi-Co $US 50 million deal with Beyonce. Carlos Monteiro, Geoffrey Cannon and Jean-Claude Moubarac continued our *Food System* series of commentaries (see below) and explained why reformulation of ultra-processed products will not improve public health. *Inspiration* saluted biochemist Fred Kummerow, recognised by Walter Willett as a pioneer in understanding that *trans* fats are toxic, who states that the US government failure to prohibit trans-fats is illegal. *What Do You Think*? celebrated the historian of heroes Norman Cantor. In *Feedback* Claudio Schuftan had more about the Gates Foundation, and Thomas Samaras said that being small is good for human health as well as the planet. In *Network* we featured Henri Matisse on the pleasures of meals in sunny weather and lovely surroundings enjoyed in company.

February. The Food System. Ultra-processed products

Reformulation will not improve public health

Carlos Monteiro, Geoffrey Cannon, Jean-Claude Moubarac

Access February 2014 Carlos Monteiro et al on product reformulation here



Reformulation to reduce fat, salt or sugar or add vitamins and other bioactive compounds enables manufacturers to imply or to claim that their ultra-processed products are healthy. They are not

The authors' introduction to their February position paper is as follows. Access the full text here

This 2014 position paper revises and updates the previous paper, published in *WN* in 2012. It is written from a global point of view. The points we make apply in all countries and settings. They have special force in countries whose diets are still largely food-based, and in middle- and low-income countries, and for vulnerable populations in all countries.

The position commonly accepted within countries whose food supplied are already saturated with packaged processed products, is as follows. Reformulation of processed food and drink products is a prime nutrition policy priority. It justifies 'public-private partnerships' during which agreements concerning product formulation are made. Reformulation that reduces the amount of fat or sugar or salt, or that increases the amount of dietary fibre or vitamins or minerals or other bioactive compounds, will improve the nutrient profile of processed products. It will result in healthier food supplies and dietary patterns, and help to control and prevent obesity and chronic non-communicable diseases, as specified at the General Assembly of the United Nations.

The paragraph above summarises the consistently stated view of government legislators, UN and other international agency officials, and leaders of influential organisations working in the public interest within fully industrialised countries. It is also agreed and accepted by the leading corporations that manufacture such products, and their representative, associated and supportive organisations. These continue to initiate, fund, resource, and set agenda for 'public-private partnerships' designed to shape international food and nutrition policies. It seems that 'stakeholders' agree that product reformulation will improve public health.

Our position, recently summarised in a *Lancet* commentary, is that this view is wrong. Product reformulation has two main functions. One is as new product development with the bonus of being able to make health claims and sometimes charge premium prices. Two is as a damage limitation exercise, a distraction from the use of law. Statutory measures are the only effective ways to improve industrialised food supplies, to protect traditional food systems, and to create a fair market for consumers, and also the food industry as a whole, which properly defined includes farmers, retailers and caterers, as well as manufacturers.

The general net eventual effect of product reformulation, when this enables manufacturers to imply or claim health benefits, will be and already is, deeper penetration and greater consumption of intrinsically unhealthy ready-to-consume ultra-processed products. Heavily promoted, these displace freshly prepared dishes and meals and eventually are liable to destroy food systems and cultures based on freshly prepared meals. Product reformulation is not part of the public health solution. It already is part of the problem.

March

Big Sugar. Is this the tipping point?

Our cover feature theme was that as part of public health, nutrition is political, as stated by the new Oslo-*Lancet* report on global health governance. This was the theme of our *Editorial* and was featured in *Update*. In *Update* we continued our coverage of sugar (see below), including its current antagonists Gary Taubes, Robert Lustig, and Michael Moss. *Update* also celebrated the completed draft out for consultation of the new food- and meal-based Brazilian dietary guidelines.

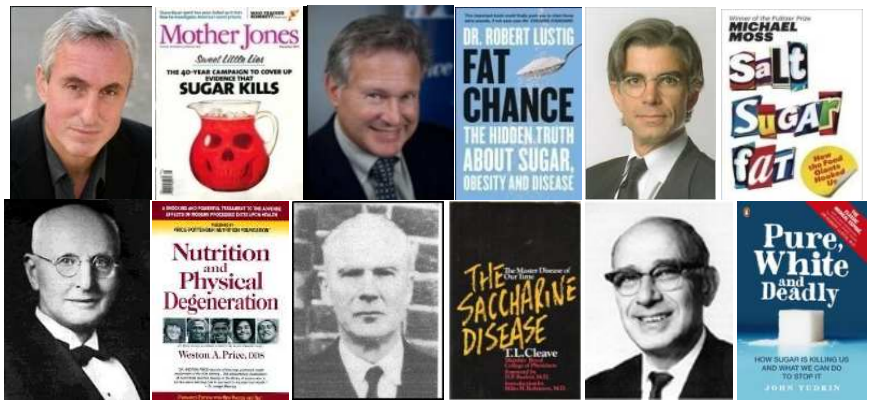
Our *Big Food Watch* commentary by Mark Lawrence and Julie Woods investigated why an official already approved front-label food product guide to health was suddenly suppressed by the Australian government. Melanie Warner visited the Big Breakfast at Battle Creek in her examination of food processing in the US. We continued our theme of nutrition as political in our *Inspiration* tribute to Cicely Williams, who diagnosed kwashiorkor and also indicted artificial baby feeding. Geoffrey Cannon, meditative this month, thought about the meaning of mango trees and their fruit, part of the ancient culture of their native India. In another bumper *Feedback* section, Fred Kummerow, Walter Willett and Gyorgy Scrinis wrote on the implications of *trans* fats, and Claudio Schuftan explained philanthrocapitalism in his long hard look at Bill Gates, the man behind the benign mask.

March. Sugar. The tide is turning

Leaders of the indictment, now and then

The *WN* editorial team

Access March 2014 Update on the new onslaught against sugar here



Attacks on sugar (top row) are now led in the US by Gary Taubes, Robert Lustig, Michael Moss, all drawing on (bottom row) Weston Price, TL Cleave, John Yudkin, at the time largely ignored This comes from the March Update team, on sugar. Access the full text here

The charge against sugar is now being led in the US. Three current advocates are shown above. In his book *Good Calories, Bad Calories,* Gary Taubes (top row left) includes accounts of suppression of evidence against sugar, and he has developed his themes in journalism with provocative headlines (next picture). Robert Lustig (top, middle) is an endocrinologist who attacks sugar relentlessly. The 90 minute video of his University of California talk on *Sugar: the Bitter Truth*, first released in 2009, by late February 2014 had been accessed over 4.4 million times. Michael Moss (top, right), a Pulitzer Prize-winning New York Times journalist, spent three years on his book *Salt, Sugar Fat*. This reveals that food manufacturing industry executives have for many years known of the dangers of sugar.

Such revelations have once again brought to light work published last century that warned against sugar. Three examples follow. The US dentist Weston Price (1870-1948, bottom row, left) after travelling the world, concluded in *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration* (1939), that when whole food is replaced by industrial food supplies containing a lot of sugar, a whole series of diseases, including malformations of the jaw and o facial structure as well as dental caries, become rampant. He showed this in a series of dramatic photographs. Based in part on experience as a British wartime surgeon-captain, TL Cleave (1906-1983), bottom, middle) concluded that many conditions including diabetes and coronary heart disease are aspects of a general 'master' disease. *The Saccharine Disease* (1974) is the title of his most ambitious work.

The British physiologist John Yudkin (1910-1995, bottom right), was one of the first two professors of nutrition in the UK. On publication of his *Pure, White and Deadly* (1972, republished in 2012), which also sees sugar as driving diabetes, coronary heart disease and other conditions now commonly referred to as the metabolic syndrome, his work was undermined and his reputation was shredded by the sugar industry and also by nutrition scientists determined to establish fat and saturated fat as the dietary 'villains'.

Old and now new books and other work that indict sugar have become part of the 'wholefood' movement. They have impressed influential people already inclined to believe as a matter of common sense that sugars and syrups, as conspicuously contained in ultra-processed products including those marketed to children and young people like breakfast cereals and soft drinks, are a key cause of obesity.

Currently no leading public health nutritionist publicly backs the views of Robert Lustig. This may now change. Any general shift of view will not be based on systematic reviews of investigations into sugar, a relatively neglected area defended by studies funded for half a century by the sugar industry. The tide is being turned by revulsion against the appalling and scandalous rates of obesity and diabetes including among children, and frustration with existing official explanations, policies and actions that are implausible and ineffective.

April
Politics of public health and nutrition

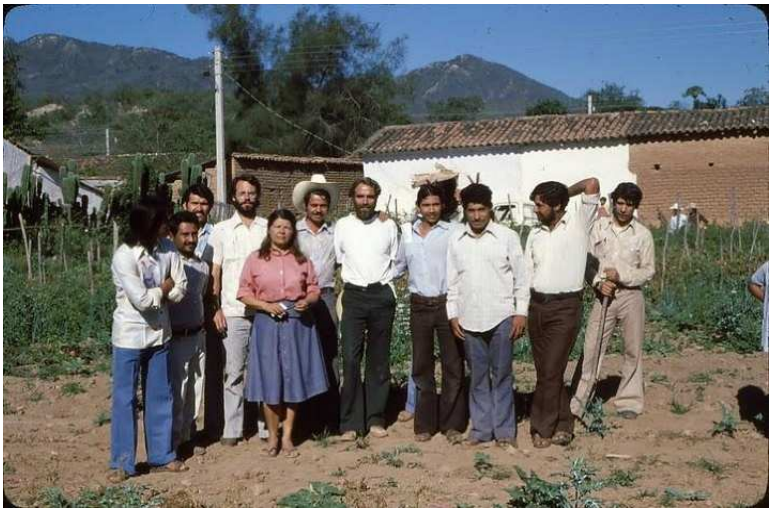
In *Update* Claudio Schuftan, writing from Ho Chi Minh City, told the tale of Ronald McDonald in Vietnam. Other items in the strong *Update* section were on Victor Dzau, the US Institutes of Medicine, and PepsiCo; the plan of Robert Lustig to eliminate diabesity; Susan George's anatomy of transnational power politics; and the story of Ancel Keys of the K rations. For *Big Food Watch* Flavio Valente of FIAN International wrote on the scandal of corporate land-grabbing in Africa.

The WHO World Health Assembly was held in the next month of May. So the issue's cover *commentary* by David Werner with a contribution by Halfdan Mahler (see below) was about the need to revive universal primary health care, as in the WHO Alma Ata Declaration. In *Inspiration* we celebrated Claudia Roden. Pablo Neruda was the hero of Geoffrey Cannon's *What do you think?* column. In *Feedback* Urban Jonsson wrote on causation, Claudio Schuftan on Cicely Wiilliams, Marcela Reyes on Pablo Neruda, Cedric de Voil and Geoffrey Cannon on Robert McCarrison, and Katharine Jenner on Action on Sugar.

April. Universal primary health care
Revival of the spirit of Alma Ata

David Werner, Halfdan Mahler

Access April 2014 David Werner, Halfdan Mahler on primary health care here



David Werner writes: here I am (black trousers) with my companions, friends and co-workers in Piaxtla, rural Mexico in 1970, soon after the beginning of my work and learning in the community

This comes from the April commentary by David Werner. Access the full text here

The period from the 1960s – when my own work began in Mexico – to the 1990s, was exciting but difficult. Grassroots actions in many countries were countered by the ruling classes and their agents with fierce repression. This included torture, disappearances, mass murders identified even as genocide, and other violations of human rights and international law. But this was a time when some very positive, deep-seated changes also took place. Dictatorships and repressive regimes were ousted. Foundations were laid for the more recent dramatic shifts in the region towards representative government and participatory democracy now evident in an increasing number of countries and areas within countries. The suffering has not all been in vain. Maybe hard times are the forge for increasingly equitable societies.

Beginning in the late 1950s, in various parts of Latin America, small non-government health programmes emerged in the poorest, most under-served rural areas and urban slums. The combination of social injustice, poverty-related ills, and minimal public services led to spontaneous generation of community health programmes. Many of these projects were started by concerned outsiders – such as priests, nuns, doctors, nurses, social workers – committed to serving the poor.

As the community-based, primary care programmes evolved and became more participatory, the villagers began to discuss and analyse the underlying causes of their health-related problems. Then they began to organise to overcome their common problems. Out of these collective efforts grew organisations: of mothers, landless farmers, day labourers, share-croppers, even street children and youth, seeking a greater voice in the decisions that affected their health and their lives.

These community initiatives began to mobilise people to address the root causes of ill health and malnutrition. In doing so, they were seen as threats by the local power structure: landlords, public authorities, loan sharks, medical professionals, and others whose routine exploitation of the poor contributed to hunger and poor health.

As a result, many of the non-governmental programmes that were at first welcomed as inoffensive charities became blacklisted by the local authorities and then by national governments. Increasingly harsh rules and obstacles were imposed, and, in some countries, health workers or participating midwives were arrested – or worse. In response, many persecuted health workers went underground and joined resistance movements. With their valuable health and organisational skills, some become leaders in the growing liberation struggles against tyrannical rule.

In this way, grassroots community-based health care in Latin America came to play a key role in the mobilisation of marginalised people in the struggles that contributed to the emerging process of genuine democratisation in Latin America.

WN Volume 5, 5-8. May-August 2014



Here are the *WN* covers for our May, June, and July-August 2014 issues. In May we looked at one of the 'big pictures' that need to be discerned by everybody concerned with public health and nutrition – and with their own health and well-being, for that matter. This month the example of such basic causes was climate, whose most alarming impact as now agreed at the UN and by the World Bank is liable to be on food security and global health. In June we proposed that the point on sugar has now indeed tipped, marked by Bill Clinton starring in *Fed Up*, the ferocious movie attacking the amounts of sugars and syrups now contained in ultra-processed products. In our double July-August issue we celebrated the Mexican public interest organisation *El Poder del Consumidor*, now leading the world in its comprehensive witty and pointed campaigns against marketing of junk food and cola drinks to children.

During the summer our small editorial team consolidated. *Update* became stronger, thanks to the *Update* team and its contacts throughout the world, and *Feedback* regularly carried 15 or so pages of letters, rising to 20. We continued to extend our coverage of public policy and health issues that vitally affect population nutrition.

Examples featured in these issues as well as primary health care and climate change, included the increasing impact of the still-dominant 'free-market' political and economic ideology and the corresponding power of transnational food and drink product corporations. A specific example in May was the corporate strategy to create products as 'world brands', with Nestlé's new peelable ice-cream product as an example (see below). These emulate what Nestlé with baby formula, Coca-Cola and then McDonald's have already achieved, and all together are deeply penetrating the food systems and supplies throughout the global South, and displacing traditional and other sustainable dietary patterns. In June we published a commentary (see below) by authors from the Pan American Health Organization and other UN bodies, emphasising the unique and irreplaceable importance of family farming. In July-August the *Update* team reported on the meeting in Bolivia of the G77 (now G133 + China) group of UN member states (again, see below) and its outcome document, the comprehensive and progressive *Santa Cruz Declaration*.

May

The unresisted rise of the global brand

In *Update,* Fabio Gomes and the *Big Food Watch* team told the tales of Latin American triumphs. Roberto de Vogli wrote on deregulation as a driver of world obesity. Thiago Herick de Sá objected to Coca-Cola penetrating public health conferences – and got support from *The Lancet*. Isabella Henriques outlined Brazil's proposal to prohibit all propaganda to children.

We ran four commentaries. In one, Tony McMichael and Colin Butler wrote on the impact of climate change on food systems and health. In another, the *Big Food Watch* team sleuthed the internet to uncover the secrets of Nestlé's new peelable ice-cream global brand (see below). In another, Maria Hamlin Zuniga and Claudio Schuftan insisted on universal primary health care in the new era. Geoffrey Cannon was awestruck by teamster, professor, author and genius Mike Davis. In *Feedback*, Barry Popkin, Michael Krawinkel, Patti Rundall, Gaye Palmer and Claudia Roden wrote on snacking in China, treating children with kwashiorkor, why Cicely Williams inspired the International Baby Food Action Network, and Mediterranean food.

May. Big Food Watch. Nestlé

The Ban Na Na master plan

The *Big Food Watch* team

Access May 2014 the Big Food Watch team on Ben Na Na here



Brazil's version, with its name of Pega Pop, includes instructions. The social media show aimed at children gives the impression that the ice-cream itself does not melt in sun, which of course it does

Box 5

Nestlé global strategy

Access the full text of the Big Food Watch team commentary here

The general global strategy of all transnational food and drink product manufacturers is identical. This is to displace food systems and supplies and dietary patterns based on regular meals made from foods, with ready-to-consume ultra-processed snack products Transnationals are predatory. They take over national and local industries, or marginalise them, or drive them out of business. The general effect on public health is disastrous. Ultra-processed products are more energy-dense, fatty, sugary or salty than freshly prepared dishes and meals, and contain less dietary fibre and micronutrients (unless 'fortified'). Other reasons include the quasi-addictive qualities of some products, and relentless promotion especially to children.

Nestlé is best placed to 'teach the world to snack' – to induce populations in all countries of all classes, to consume its branded products from birth to death. This is partly because of its scale, with currently 350,000 employees in most countries, annual turnover of around $US 100 billion, and profits of around $US 10 billion. The main reason is the nature of Nestlé's products. It remains the biggest manufacturer of baby formula feeds, and of products for young children from weaning to around 5 years of age, and is one of the top three manufacturers of sugared ready-to-consume breakfast cereals aimed at children. For all ages, its intensely palatable products maintain loyalty to all its products, labelled prominently with the Nestlé logo.

A general strategy to induce corporate brand loyalty from birth to death, accounts for Nestlé's very energetic expansion as from the early 1990s into the ice-cream market, now worth around $US 55 billion a year. From being a small player, Nestlé now makes and sells about 20 per cent of all ice-cream in the world. Ice-cream attracts children and also, sold in individual, family-size or huge tubs, to people of all ages and households. Sales in India and China are now increasing by around 20 per cent a year.

Ice-cream can be made very cheaply, so giant manufacturers can undersell smaller competitors. It can be made with trendy ingredients and sold at eye-watering prices in chic outlets. It is made in many colours and flavours, so the same basic product looks and tastes different. Ice-cream is sold in superstores and supermarkets, but is mostly consumed on the spot as purchased from minimarkets, convenience stores, stalls in markets, vending machines, and vendors on sidewalks and beaches, or in service stations, fitness centres, schools or hospitals, and on trains, boats and planes.

But the trouble with ice-cream is that it melts and therefore has to be kept frozen or chilled. This limits its potential in tropical climates, and most of all where refrigeration is not always available. Until, that is, the wizards at the Nestlé Research Centre came up with the idea of ice-cream contained within a miniature edible thermos flask. This is why BanNaNa™, Eskimo Monkey™, PegaPops™ and all the other versions of the new Nestlé peelable ice-cream product are so valuable. They have long shelf life in all outlets without freezers. They are terrific business in the summer and in tropical countries. The power of Nestlé's image and social marketing wizards implant the product in the minds of children the world over. They are protected with trademarks and patenting of the technology. They help to fill the gap between young child and adult products. They are part of the plan to teach the world's children to snack Nestlé products every day, and to stay with the corporate brand all their lives.

June

The need to get agriculture right

In our editorial Thomas Piketty changed our game. In *Update*, our *Development* series began with Olivier de Schutter on food system regulation. Bruce Cogill and Carlos Monteiro were at the high-powered EAT forum in Stockholm. Our cover commentary on *Fed Up* had Katie Couric, Bill Clinton, Mark Hyman, David Kessler, David Ludwig, Robert Lustig, Mark Bittman and Gary Taubes, on why the sugar point really and truly has tipped. Our *Farming* theme began with Enrique Jacoby *et al* (see below) on UN action on family farming. *Big Food Watch* featured Kiera Butler on McDonald's penetration of conferences. Geoffrey Cannon and Claus Leitzmann began our new *Source* series. *Feedback* included Colin Butler on climate change; Thiago Hérick de Sá on Nestlé teaching the world to snack; Barry Popkin on snacking down the ages; and Claudio Schuftan on difference between equality and equity..

June. Farming

Family farming in the Americas

Enrique Jacoby, Cristina Tirado, Adrián Diaz, María José Coloma, Ricardo Rapallo, Adrian Rodrigues, Octavio Sotomayor, Joaquin Arias, Christian Courtis

Access June 2014 Enrique Jacoby et al on family farming here

Figure 1
Contribution of family farm output to food consumption in Brazil

Top row, percentages of cassava, beans, corn, coffee, rice, wheat, soybeans
Bottom row, percentages of milk, poultry, pork, beef



Box 6

A UN inter-agency initiative for farming, food, health and the environment

1 Improve the food environment, check and reduce obesity and related diseases

Examples of how to promote access to high quality, sustainable food and diets:

- Assurance that access to healthy diet is a constitutionally protected right
- Restriction and regulation by government of production, labelling, and marketing of harmful processed foods, including of their price and availability.
- Regulation of food and drink advertising, particularly to children.
- Use of government purchasing power to procure natural foods from family farms.
- Supply of these foods to national, state, municipal and local food programmes for schools, military installations, hospitals, public agencies, community kitchens.
- Creation of new local food markets, along with related small-scale industries such as processing and freezing plants and restaurants that add value.
- Action to favour healthy food systems with policies to support production, such as subsidies on fruits, vegetables, making them more accessible to the entire population.
- Promotion of national and regional culinary traditions, highlighting their cultural value and their benefits for agriculture, the environment, and health.
- Expansion of food safety programmes, to include protection against non-communicable diseases associated with use of for example sugar, salt, *trans* fats, additives.

2 Support for family farming, agricultural development, sustainable food systems

Examples of agriculture and development policies and actions that support health:

- Development of sustainable family farming, including aquiculture and integrated food production systems, with subsidies and other support.
- Creation of networks of metropolitan retail food markets to offer new opportunities to local farmers and consumers, bringing consumers closer to farmers.
- Progressive elimination of antibiotics used to promote animal growth and the prudent use of antibiotics in agriculture.
- Assessment of health implications of agricultural policies to market foods that encourage family farming, healthy and sustainable foods and diets, and short circuit marketing.
- Ensured use of food safety standards, such as for additives, hormones, pesticides, residues of veterinary drugs, labelling, health claims.
- Elimination of food waste during production, distribution, marketing and consumption.

3 End undernutrition, promote optimal feeding for children under 5 and women

Examples of approaches based on health and nutrition outcomes:

- Eradication of all forms of undernourishment and malnutrition.
- Increase of rate of children under 6 months old who receive breastfeeding exclusively.
- Application of the recommendations of the WHO Code on the Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes.
- Reduction of anemia among children under age 5 and women of childbearing age.
- Reduction of chronic undernutrition among children under age 5.

July-August

The future is with the South

Update reported on Bolivian president Evo Morales presiding at the G77 (or rather, the G133+China) Summit on sustainable development, conspicuously supported by UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon (see below). The UN rapporteur on health Anand Grover denounced transnationals and ultra-processed products. Thiago Hérick de Sá redefined 'development'. We celebrated work in Mexico of the *Alliance for Healthy Eating*. Then for *Climate,* Tony McMichael saw the big picture. For *Development*. Fabio Gomes reported from Rome. For *Sugar,* Rich Cohen told the dark history that made sugar a world food commodity. For *Big Food Watch* Alejandro Calvillo ascended the Soda Summit. Geoffrey Cannon learned from Theodore Roosevelt. Our many letters in our Feedback section came from Leigh Haines, David Legge, Leslie London, David McCoy, and David Sanders; and from Tony McMichael, Claus Leitzmann, Thomas Samaras, Urban Jonsson, and Thiago Hérick de Sá.

July-August. Development. G77 (133) Summit

Food, nutrition, health in the new world order

Fabio Gomes, David Legge

Access July-August Fabio Gomes, David Legge on G77 (133) summit here



The G77 Summit in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, of 133 nations. Left to right above. UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon states that the UN counts on G77 leadership. He greets Venezuelan president Nicholas Maduro. Solidarity with the G77 president, Bolivian president Evo Morales. Below: he blows out the candles of his 70th birthday cake. Final greetings after the summit with Ban Ki-moon between Cuban president Raul Castro and Evo Morales, with Nicholas Maduro

Access the full text of which this is an extract here

A new world order dedicated to peace, security and ways of life that respect all living things and the planet, may arise from the global South. This is the message of the cogent comprehensive 243-clause Santa Cruz Declaration,_ agreed on 15 June at the Summit of the G77, now amounting to 133 nation states including practically all of Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

The Declaration has far more to say about food systems and security, farming, and nutrition, than other overall political agreements made to date between nation states. China, not a G77 member, was represented at the Summit at high level. The South Korean UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon, an ardent environmentalist, gave an opening address. He knows that the G77 Summit leaders see the Declaration as the first draft of the new global governance strategy to be agreed at the UN in New York in 2015. So it well may be. The 133 countries of the 'G77', founded 50 years ago, are two-thirds of the 198 UN nation states.

Ban Ki-moon's commitment to the Summit went beyond normal diplomacy. He mingled with the leaders of nations who are most critical of the current world disorder, as can be seen in the pictures below. He also celebrated his 70th birthday with his wife at a special party in his honour.

Current G77 president Evo Morales, one of the elected leaders of the democratic socialist bloc of Latin American nations, also gave a keynote address. His statements went beyond conventional politics, and stressed respect for nature, the planet, and traditional values personified by indigenous populations and exemplified by long-established ways of life that are centred on community and family values. He stated:

> We need to create a sustainable development paradigm of living well, in balance between human beings, and also in balance and harmony with our *Mother Earth*.

This, he said, must replace the current global North paradigm of reckless capitalism. The Santa Cruz Declaration denounces political and economic systems that continue to exploit farmers and growers, grab land, and privatise public goods such as sources of energy, fuel and water. Comprehensive and cogent, it places population nutrition in the general context of good governance.

Thus, clause 71 states: 'We emphasise the need to strengthen the capacity of our countries, especially through international cooperation, to safeguard and enhance our people's nutrition through the promotion of their productive cultural and environmental practices'. Clause 77 states 'We call for the creation of conditions for the development of economic opportunities for the benefit of small-scale and family farmers, peasant and indigenous peoples and communities, and the creation of options for connecting them with consumers, as part of the national strategies for the realisation of the right to food'.

WN Volume 5, 9-12. September-December 2014



Here are the *WN* covers for our September, October, November and December 2014 issues. September was the month of the World Public Health Nutrition Association conference in Oxford on healthy food systems, and our cover was of members of the young generation who should benefit. In October the UN Summit on climate took place in New York, and in his final *WN* contribution Tony McMichael surveyed past catastrophes in part caused by changes in climate, to foresee a fearsome future. Universal vitamin A supplementation was the cover theme in November, also the month of the International Conference on Nutrition. In December we looked forward to healthy and luscious food supplies to prevent disease and promote well-being.

In this period we built up our editorial team of a dozen to a family of 35, as you can see in the introductory pages of this review. Most of our family members are regular or occasional *WN* contributors or contacts, or have supported us in other ways. They come from all continents, range in age from their 20s to 80s, and work in universities or research centres, or for United Nations agencies or national governments, or civil society organisations or social movements. Some are writers. They support *WN* in various ways, as team members on planning and timely issues, as convenors of sections of the journal or specific contributions, as regular contributors and contacts, and in other ways.

In September we interviewed Michael Pollan, continued our *Source* series, and (see below) appraised prospects for the International Conference on Nutrition (ICN). In October we saluted the work of the Pan American Health Organization, began our *Hot Stuff* theme, this time on the carbohydrate versus fat wars, and (see below) celebrated traditional Tuscan food systems. In November we continued to appraise ICN prospects, published more *Hot Stuff* on vitamin A (see below), and set out five visions and also almost 50 principles for this century. December was an exceptionally full month, with publication in English of the Brazilian food and meal-based dietary guidelines, our report on the ICN, five more *Visions* (see below), and renewed correspondence in our *Feedback* section on prevention of vitamin A deficiency.

September

Achieving healthy food systems

Some of this month's contributors and people who we featured were Barrie Margetts, Carlos Monteiro, Thiago de Sá, Diana Parra, Peter Gluckman, Michael Pollan, Yoni Freedhoff, Fabio Gomes, Flavio Valente, Lida Llotska, Isabela Sattamini, Claudio Schuftan, Jean-Claude Moubarac, Claus Leitzmann, Geoffrey Cannon, Walter Willett, Boyd Swinburn, Stefanie Vandivejvere, Anthony Fardet, Anna Lappé, Sara Garduño-Diaz, Brooke Aksnes, Seva Khambadkone, Urban Jonsson.

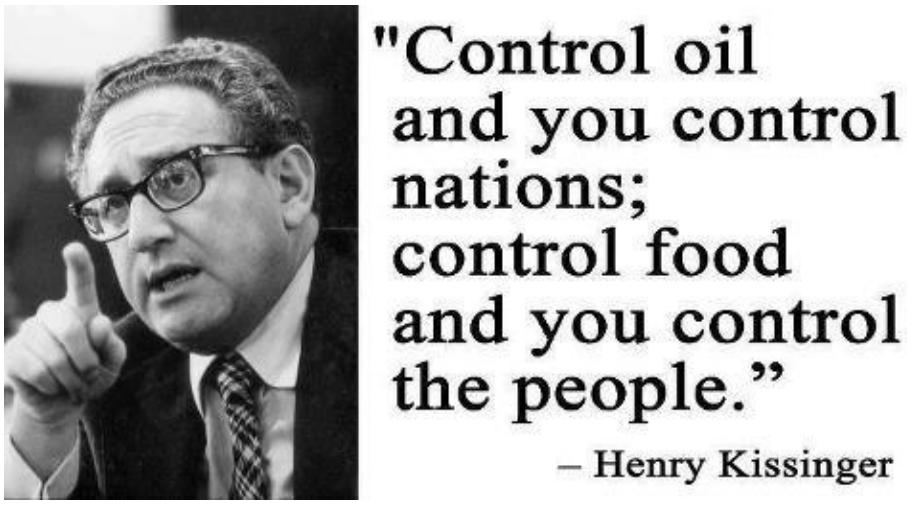
The issue was packed with news, ideas, comments. Event of the month was the Oxford conference on healthy food systems. Initiative of the month was the *Big Food Watch Straight Talking* project, convened by Thiago Hérick de Sá and Diana Parra. News of the month was that twelve more people joined the *WN* editorial family, from Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America, and Europe. *Feedback* editor Isabela Sattamini convened another 20 pages of letters.

September. Development. Conferences: Oxford 2014

The human right to food security

Thiago Hérick de Sá, Diana Parra, Jean-Claude Moubarac, Isabela Sattamini, Fabio Gomes, Claudio Schuftan, Geoffrey Cannon

Access September Thiago Hérick de Sá et al on food systems here



Rome, 1976. Then US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger had a vision that by 2000 no child on earth would go to bed hungry. But he also had another strategy in mind, as stated above in 1970

Access the full text of which this is an extract of one contribution by Claudio Schuftan here

'Food system'. The term is an application of systems analysis to the food chain, something already tried in the late 1970s. I have my doubts about its validity and relevance today. What is certainly wrong is any concept of a single food system. Think about this please. Focus on this concept depoliticises food and nutrition challenges, and also brings it out of the multiple cultural contexts in which it should be treated. Such an approach veers away from what matters much more, which is people's food sovereignty and the right to nutrition. These are the real challenges for sustainability.

When articulated, the 'food system' focus typically includes nothing about empowerment of producers and consumers. It leaves out breastfeeding. It overlooks biodiversity and the importance of balanced local diets. It tacitly condones the use of genetically modified crops. It has nothing to say about land-grabbing and unfair landholding. It usually is silent about the global negative ecological and economic impact of the prevailing agro-industrial agricultural production model. It apparently cares little (if any) about the protection of small scale food production and producers In general, it does not ask or respond to fundamental questions of what, how, why and for whom foods are produced

Here are a few of quite a long list of issues to be faced and resolved:

- Reckless advertising and marketing of ultra-processed food and drink products most of all to children.
- Neglect of ongoing food and nutrition needs during civil unrest and natural or man-made disasters – including famines.
- Intentional overemphasis on a medical approach to chronic diseases, as well as on blaming individual behaviour.
- Refusal to admit the impact and consequences of transnational market penetration, so as to take needed action.
- Avoidance of legislation designed to protect human rights, such as lack of regulations that protect women during pregnancy and lactation.
- Refusal to protect populations and responsible industry with laws that restrict or prohibit predatory corporate greed.

Our struggle requires a deep commitment to justice, fairness and human rights. In our current world, producers and consumers of food are by right, claim holders. So, what cannot be forgotten when discussing food systems is precisely the role of these as de-facto claim holders. A deliberate focus on empowering them – with a specific focus on women and activists in this field – is thus needed. Allow me to mention the role of *World Nutrition*. The journal has become a unique resource for all of us struggling to discern the forces at play, including us who are dedicated to fulfilment of the true vision, mission and work of public health nutrition.

October

Achieving healthy food systems

Some of this month's contributors: Enrique Jacoby,Jean-Claude Moubarac, Stefano Prato, Fabio Gomes, Flavio Valente, Anna Lartey, Francesco Branca, Carlos Monteiro. Also, Diana Parra, Hetty Einzig, Yoni Freedhoff, Naomi Klein, Tony McMichael, Colin Butler, Stefania Vezzosi, Michela Carruci. Also, Brooke Aksnes, Geoffrey Cannon, Maria Alvim, John McKenna, Tim Lang, Sara Garduño-Diaz, Ignacio Saez, Radhika Balakrishnan.

This month our cover, our editorial, and our commentaries by Naomi Klein, Tony McMichael and Colin Butler, concerned climate, for it is agreed that the worst effects of 'climate change' will be on food security and world health. This means that the over 2,000 demonstrations that manifested in September confronted the greatest crisis ever to confront public health and nutrition professionals. In *Update* Hetty Einzig began *Balance*, our new series on food and well-being. We published more *Hot Stuff*, with Dariush Mozaffarian and David Katz on the fat versus carbohydrate wars. Stefania Vezzosi and colleagues told of harmony in Tuscany (see below). In the same mood, Geoffrey Cannon proposed that healthy foods are beautiful.

October. Traditional food systems

Harmony in Tuscany

Stefania Vezzosi, Michela Carruci, Paola Piccioli

Access October Stefania Vezzosi et al on Tuscan food systems here



Since 2005, Quarrata, a Tuscan town of 25,000 people, has engaged its community to implement a healthier school meal service which is based on Tim Lang's rules for ecological public health eating

Access the full text of the commentary by Stefania Vezzosi et al of which this is an extract here

With our actions, we sincerely hope to have made, and to continue to make, school meals a valuable opportunity to understand food and its unarguable social role in health promotion. If food literacy is both a tool and an outcome to promote empowerment and participation in communities, we also hope that people can enjoy all-around well-being from this programme.

Through their food choices, all people consciously or unconsciously support certain models of global food production. Freedom of choice places humans in a close relationship with planet, and assigns each of us a responsibility towards the Earth**.** The way we eat not only influences our health, but also the entire environment. We must therefore hold ourselves accountable to the Earth every time we acquire food and prepare and consume a meal.

The food supplies and dietary patterns of industrialised and other countries have become increasingly unsustainable. So we need to define and implement interventions that empower people to eat with a lower impact on the planet's resources. School lunches, as also affirmed by the European Commission, have become a favoured setting to promote research and define interventions in this area.

In Italy, 2.8 million children attend primary school, and there are thousands of meals prepared by central kitchens daily. For children, eating at school is a special opportunity to learn why and how to adopt an ecological perspective. Moreover, the number of children who might change their eating habits as a result of school lunch programs is significant.

Sustainability is not a radical position. It is simply a position of seeing what we need to do in order to ensure that we aren't depleting the natural capital of the earth, or that we reduce the rate at which we are doing so. We should regularly ask ourselves: 'What is the impact of what I'm doing?' and 'Can I do it in a better and more sustainable way without noticing a big difference in my quality of life or work environment?' These very values have guided our daily actions in the Quarrata school meal service. We have, we hope, devised a strategy that includes food, economy, the environment and social and political goals set by and for the community.

We are convinced that progress in this direction is dependent above all on education and public awareness. We believe that the empowerment and growth of personal skills should always be pursued, to ensure change not only on a personal level, but on one that involves entire communities. Our concept of community does not refer to a compact group of people who think and act in the same way. It refers to a plurality of people who share the same difficulties and all together, in inter-relationship, who work to find common solutions and who therefore ensure greater advantages for all.

November

The shape of things to come

Urban Jonsson reported in *Update* on prospects for this month's International Conference on Nutrition, with Claudio Schuftan, Stefano Prato, and Flavio Valente. Mark Wahlqvist, Ricardo Uauy, Juan Rivera, Raj Patel, Maria Alvim and Nicholas Freudenheimer, José Luis Vivero Pol and Hetty Einzig all joined the *WN* editorial family. John Mason, Ted Greiner, Roger Shrimpton, David Sanders and Joshua Yukich disagreed with the global high-dose vitamin A capsule supplementation policy and programme (see below). Brooke Aksnes, Thiago de Sá, Diana Parra, Isabela Sattamini and Claudio Schuftan had visions of a better century, in the first of a three-part series. Geoffrey Cannon and Claus Leitzmann set out *New Nutrition Science* principles for nutrition. In *Feedback*, Colin Butler, Ro MacFarlane, Nancy Krieger and many others celebrated the work and life of Tony McMichael. Roberto Savio wrote on failed climate summits, and Wilma Freire and William Waters asked who gains from food product fortification.

November. Hot stuff. Development. Malnutrition. Vitamin A

Let food be our medicine

John Mason, Ted Greiner, Roger Shrimpton, David Sanders, Joshua Yukich

Access November John Mason et al on Vitamin A supplementation here



Universal vitamin A supplementation of populations of young children all over the world has been hot stuff since Michael Latham's inaugural WN commentary. The story continues this month

Access the full text of the commentary by John Mason et al of which this is an extract here

The WN Editor writes: This month in *WN*, John Mason, Ted Greiner, Roger Shrimpton, David Sanders and Joshua Yukich discuss global policy to prevent and treat vitamin A deficiency. Their views derive from their paper published elsewhere in October. This is based on new literature reviews, knowledge of changing patterns of disease, and assessment of primary health care priorities.

WN has an interest here. In our first issue in May 2010, Michael Latham came to similar conclusions in his 'The great vitamin A fiasco'. His main points are as follows. One, the case that the vitamin A capsule programme saves children's lives is not proven. Two, supplementation with medicinal levels of vitamin A could harm health. Three, immunisation against measles, and de-worming, or lack of them, confound the vitamin A capsule evidence. Four, externally administered programmes are likely to be unsustainable. Five, the capsule programme blocks food-based programmes. These include exclusive breastfeeding, and support of horticulture including of plant foods rich in carotenoids.

Response to Michael Latham's strongly worded commentary was dramatic. In response we invited and published a commentary from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health which opposed his view. We also received many letters which with one exception supported his view. These included letters from senior officials at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

In what follows here, the authors, three of whom have held senior relevant positions in the UN system, explain why they support food-based approaches to potential and actual vitamin A deficiency. The evidence and the justification, judged by many contributors to *WN* in 2010 to be compelling, is now stronger still, and even better attested. It is time for a change.

The authors write: Periodic high dose vitamin A capsules may have less relevance now with changing disease patterns. These notably include reductions in measles and diarrhoea. High dose vitamin A administered 6-monthly does not reduce prevalence of the deficiency itself, as estimated by low serum retinol. We propose as follows.

- There is no longer any evidence that intermittent high dose vitamin A programmes are having any substantial mortality effect, perhaps due to changing disease patterns.
- Frequent intakes of vitamin A in physiological doses, for example by food-based approaches, including fortification, and regular low dose supplementation – are highly effective in increasing serum retinol and reducing vitamin A deficiency.
- Therefore a policy shift is needed, based on consideration of current evidence. A prudent phase-over is needed towards increasing frequent regular intakes of vitamin A at physiological levels, daily or weekly, replacing the high-dose periodic capsule distribution programmes. Moving resources in this direction must happen sooner or later. It should be sooner.

December

What prospects for the human species?

Mark Lawrence commented on the Brazilian dietary guidelines in our inaugural guest editorial. Stefano Prato, Flavio Valente, Claudio Schuftan, Fabio Gomes and others guided our ICN news coverage. American food policy for the future was outlined by Enrique Jacoby. Mark Bittman, Michael Pollan, Ricardo Salvador and Olivier de Schutter made a plan for US farming policy. Mark Lawrence, John Mason and Olivier de Schutter joined the *WN* family. Mark Wahlqvist wrote on the micro-ecosystems that live on and in us. Olivia Yambi, Anthony Fardet, Sara Garduño-Diaz, Raj Patel and Mark Wahlqvist saw visions for the future (see below). Patricia Jaime wrote on the meal-based Brazilian guidelines. In *Feedback* Alan Court, Ted Greiner, Graham Lyons, George Kent, others, wrote on vitamin A. Colin Butler wrote on climate, Sara Garduño-Diaz on Kuwait, Stefania Vezzosi on Tuscany, Maria Alvim on beautiful meals, and Yoni Freedhoff on the need to walk the talk.

December. Development, Visions. ICN2

Visions for this century (2)

Olivia Yambi, Anthony Fardet, Sara Garduno-Diaz, Raj Patel, Mark Wahlqvist

Access December Olivia Yambi et al on Visions for this century here



Raj Patel writes: S'buZikode, my friend and mentor, former petrol-pump attendant, leads the Abahlalibase Mjondolo shack-dwellers, the largest independent movement in South Africa
Access the full text of the commentary by Olivia Yambi et al of which this is an extract here

Raj Patel writes:

Name up to three inspiring leaders likely to be active to 2030, with reasons
There are extraordinary individuals working to transform the world today. But the best of them are conscious of the structures in which they lead, reluctant to remain at the front lest they prevent others from learning to lead. The first of these is my friend and mentor S'buZikode, a former petrol-pump attendant in Durban, South Africa, who now leads the Abahlalibase Mjondolo shack-dwellers movement, the largest independent movement in South Africa. His example of leadership, democracy and humility in learning from mistakes is one we might all profit from.

Second, Anita Chitaya. I met Anita in Bwabwa, her village in northern Malawi. She has been helping to transform lives of thousands of people through agro-ecological research, farmer training, helping men to start cooking, and women's empowerment. The measure of her leadership is the number of leaders she has nurtured.

My third leader I call the Unknown Activist, who will continue to fight for freedom far more reliably and with far more success than any poor soul killed on a battlefield. This may be the Occupy member who defends a home against foreclosure. The volunteer who decides that food banks are an insult, and vows that no society should need a food bank in the future. The farmer who experiments with intercropping and gives ideas and seeds away. The cook who teaches children the joy of real food. The teacher who gives the gift of critical thinking. Anyone who cracks open the world to reveal the possibilities beyond this one, and lives the politics that will get us there.

Identify up to three of your greatest fears, with reasons
Presenting to students here in the US, I am concerned about the lack of hope for a better world. I grew up when one could be educated without falling into debt. Many students today cannot see how that is possible or desirable. They dream neoliberal dreams, and imagine the only way to get better things is to elect better leaders.

Identify up to three of your greatest hopes, with reasons
History's great moments have come through active, intelligent, widespread organisation in which people have been encouraged to think for themselves. Agroecology embodies this kind of principle – in which everyone is a scientist, activist, critic, transformer and, finally, a penitent before nature. The spread of these ideas through organisations like *La Via Campesina,* through urban food movements is a source of inspiration. We cannot build a better world without tearing down the rapacious elements of this one. You cannot have a monoculture and a polyculture in the same place at the same time. The monoculture must give. This means uprooting industrial agriculture – fighting its predations, its power, its representatives, its culture, its lies, its policies. Not easy. Yet I'm given hope by the millions of people who think it is possible, and fight this fight daily.

Conclusion

World Nutrition has a broad readership in all continents and in over 80 countries and territories. It is studied attentively by policy-makers and decision-takers in UN and other international agencies and national governments, by senior scientists and researchers, and by leaders in public interest civil society organisations and social movements. However, most of our readers, while obviously being keenly interested, are not formally qualified in public health or in nutrition. The *WN* editorial family accepts with relish, the challenge of publishing contributions that take evidence properly into account, and that are also accessible, memorable and a pleasure to read.

We cover world nutrition in the broad sense. This includes social, cultural, economic, political, and environmental as well as behavioural and biological aspects of nutrition and public health. One theme that emerges from contributions to *WN*, including the commentaries extracts from which are published above, is that properly understood, nutrition as a whole is part of public health. Another theme is the extension of the concept of nutrition to include matters of the mind and heart and also the spirit, as well as of the body. This implies a return to the idea of nourishment from foods and shared meals, rather than just nutrition from nutrients. In turn, it implies awareness that much of the wisdom now needed to identify and resolve the challenges and crises that confront professionals and citizens alike, is contained in the age-old principles of the natural philosophy of dietetics.

There are severe limits to what public health or nutrition professionals can achieve alone, to protect the public interest. Resolute allies are needed, from other health professions and public interest civil society organisations. *WN* is committed to forging these links. Another lesson from many of this year's contributions, is that governments at all levels, international, national, state, municipal, and local, must protect public health and public goods, and must be supported in fulfilling this fundamental and elemental duty by constant informed pressure from the people.

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