WN *The issue*

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Development
Change of the century



WN contributors and supporters. Top row: Urban Jonsson. Then Mark Wahlqvist, Ricardo Uauy, Juan Rivera, Raj Patel, Maria Alvim. Next are John Mason, Ted Greiner and (in the middle row) Roger Shrimpton, David Sanders, Joshua Yukich. Next are Brooke Aksnes, Thiago de Sá, Diana Parra, Isabela Sattamini, Claudio Schuftan. Bottom row: Geoffrey Cannon, Claus Leitzmann. Then Colin Butler, Ro MacFarlane, Nancy Krieger, Roberto Savio, Wilma Freire, William Waters

The Issue team writes: Urban Jonsson reports this month in *Update* on prospects for the International Conference on Nutrition (ICN) with (not pictured) Claudio Schuftan, Stefano Prato, Flavio Valente (page 925). Mark Wahlqvist, Ricardo Uauy, Juan Rivera, Raj Patel, Maria Alvim and also (not pictured) Nicholas Freudenheimer, José Luis Vivero Pol, Hetty Einzig, come to support *WN* (page 938). John Mason, Ted Greiner, Roger Shrimpton, David Sanders and Joshua Yukich on the global high-dose vitamin A capsule programme (page 940). Brooke Aksnes, Thiago de Sá, Diana Parra, Isabela Sattamini and Claudio Schuftan have visions of a better century (page 953). Geoffrey Cannon and Claus Leitzmann set out principles for nutrition (page 971). Then *What do you think?* on editing (page 993). In *Feedback* Colin Butler, Ro MacFarlane, Nancy Krieger and many others on Tony McMichael (page 1008). Roberto Savio on climate summits (page 1024). Wilma Freire, William Waters on who gains from fortification (page 1027).

Development. ICN2

What about the workers?



This month's International Conference is meant to be all about sustaining equitable food systems. But many public interest civil society organisations think it is all about protectimg food corporations

The Update team writes: Public interest civil society organisations last month denounced the draft Declaration and Framework for Action of this month's International Conference on Nutrition. After negotiations in conference they state:

> Unfair trade agreements, lack of investment in small-scale food production and support to agro business models, have led to displacement of small-scale producers all over the world. Marketing of ultra-processed products, high in energy, sugar and salt, has contributed to the surge of obesity in the world. The conference failed to recognise gender inequality and women's rights violations such as child marriage, adolescent pregnancy, violence against women, inter as one of the root causes of woman and child malnutrition. How can we expect a political declaration based on such a flawed diagnosis to serve as the basis for an effective and coherent framework for action?

Access Editorial on ICN2 here

Development. Vitamin A

Food is the best medicine



This picture of a small child being given a massive dose of vitamin A was the cover picture of the very first issue of WN in May 2010, with its criticism of current practice by Michael Latham

The Issue team writes: 'The great vitamin A fiasco' was the title of a commentary by the distinguished scholar Michael Latham in the first issue of *WN* in May 2010. He opposed the policy, current then and now, of giving massive doses of vitamin A to populations of children throughout the global South believed to be at risk of deficiency. The commentary was supported by many scientists especially from Asia, and was criticised by leading scholars who uphold the current policy.

In this issue of *WN* we publish an account by John Mason, Ted Greiner, Roger Shrimpton, David Sanders and Joshua Yukich, following their paper 'Vitamin A policies need rethinking' just published in the *International Journal of Epidemiology*. This in effect upholds Michael Latham's position. They conclude:

> A policy shift is needed... A prudent phase-over is needed towards increasing regular intakes of vitamin A at physiological levels, daily or weekly, replacing the high-dose periodic high-dose capsule distribution programmes. Moving resources in this direction must happen sooner or later. It should be sooner.

They also confirm that the rational sustained policy for populations identified as vulnerable, is food-based. This means breastfeeding, and foods that are good sources of vitamin A precursors, notably fruits abundant in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Access Editorial on vitamin A here
Access John Mason, Ted Greiner, Roger Shrimpton et al on vitamin A here

Development. ICN2

Visions for this century



Berkeley, Califormia. Conviviality as a future vision. Workers in a restaurant sit down together in company at the end of the day,to enjoy the freshly cooked meal they have made for the customers

Brooke Aksnes writes: In this month of the International Conference on Nutrition five of us from the *WN* editorial family summarise our visions for the future. Some of us look forward to more enjoyment of good food in company, as above. Also though, some of us feel sure that achievement of equitable food systems depends on agitation by militant social movements like *La Via Campesina*, as below.



Rio de Janeiro. Confrontation as a present reality. La Via Campesina organises close to 100,000 people demonstrate against what they see as false promises being made at the 2012 Earth Summit

Access Nutrition. Visions for this century here



Idea

The principles of nutrition



Overall principle

The overall principle of nutrition science is ethical. As such it should be guided by the philosophies of co-responsibility and sustainability, and also by understanding of evolution, ecology and history

Here above is one of the principles proposed as a guiding light in the theory and practice of nutrition, arising from a workshop meeting with the purpose of making the science work well in this century

Claus Leitzmann and Geoffrey Cannon write: All sciences, and indeed all organised human activities, are or should be governed and guided by principles. At quiet times such principles may be implicit. But the explicit identification, discussion and revision of principles is crucial at turbulent times, when contexts and circumstances are shifting, and also when new policies and programmes are proposed that are meant to be fit for future use. Thus, here are three principles proposed as guiding lights for the theory and practice of nutrition, at the month when representatives of UN member states are meeting in Rome to agree a Declaration and Framework for Action arising from the International Conference on Nutrition.

- We are moving out of the era in which human activity has been mainly concerned with exploitation, production, and consumption, into a new era in which the main human concerns are of preservation, conservation and sustenance.
- The responsibility of nutrition science now is to be concerned with the human world (personal, community and population health) and also with the whole living and natural world (planetary health).
- Nutrition science should contribute to a world in which all people are able to fulfil their human potential, to live in the best of health, and develop, sustain and enjoy increasingly diverse human, living and physical environments.

Access Idea here

Feedback

Fortification of children, or corporations?



Open fresh food market in Quito, Ecuador. National and local food systems and supplies are the best basis for nutrition programmes designed to prevent disease and to promote good health and well-being

Quito. Wilma Freire and William Waters write: In the past few years, ethical discussions have focused on the increasingly prominent role of corporate interests in shaping how long-standing and also emerging nutrition problems are addressed. In our contribution to *Feedback* in this issue of *WN* we question current food fortification policies and programmes, most of all when these are agreed and carried out in partnership with transnational food and drink product and allied corporations.

It is said that fortification is based on scientific evidence, while calls for considering alternative approaches are not. It is also asserted that conflicts of interest are not an important issue in this regard. We do not agree.

While officials working for WHO and other multilateral organisations promote fortification as the way to address specific nutritional deficiencies, they should also provide opportunities for open discussion about the design and implementation of effective nutrition programmes that are centred on other approaches, especially those based on local participation and the promotion of a varied and healthy diet with locally-produced fresh foods. Technical soundness is a necessary but not sufficient component of successful and sustainable policies and programmes. But.experience shows that when these increase dependency on external factors and players, they will in the long run create as many (or more) problems as they solve.

Access Feedback here



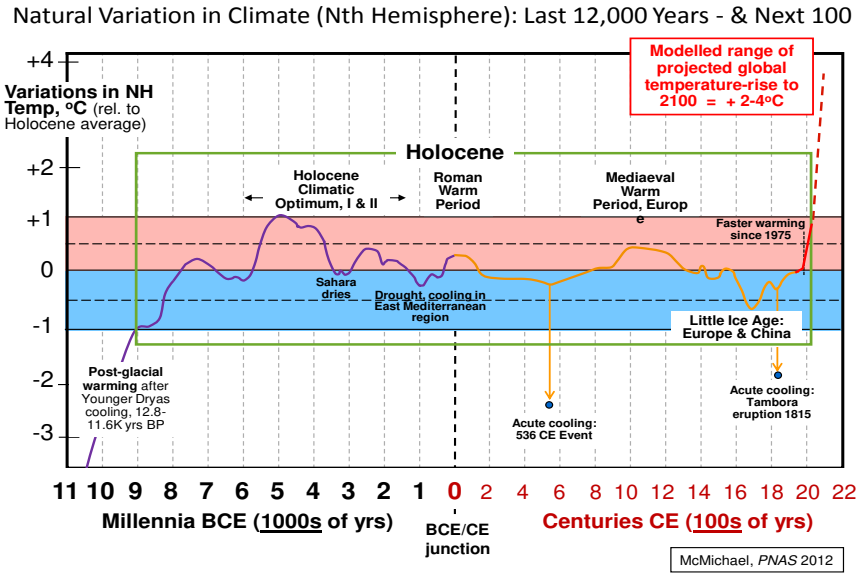
Climate

Abiding genius



We publish many tributes to Tony McMichael in this issue of WN. Here he is (right) with Mark Wahlqvist (left) and Basil Hetzel, in the grounds of the Australian National University, Canberra

Maria Alvim and Isabela Sattamini write: Our new record 23 pages of *Feedback* include 12 letters in celebration of Tony McMichael, whose final *WN* contribution on the climate crisis was published last month. Below is a slide from his keynote plenary at the August International Epidemiology Association meeting in Anchorage, Alaska. It shows data from throughout the Holocene and projected for the Anthropocene. Tony will continue to inspire us. *WN* will continue to feature the climate crisis.



Access Feedback here