WN *The issue*

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Responsibility
Advocacy and action



Some of this month's contributors and people featured are shown here. Top row: Barrie Margetts, Carlos Monteiro, Thiago de Sá, Diana Parra, Peter Gluckman, Michael Pollan, Yoni Freedhoff, Fabio Gomes. Middle row: Flavio Valente, Lida Llotska, Isabela Sattamini, Claudio Schuftan, Jean-Claude Moubarac, Claus Leitzmann, Geoffrey Cannon, Walter Willett. In the bottom row: Boyd Swinburn, Stefanie Vandivejvere, Anthony Fardet, Anna Lappé, Sara Garduño-Diaz, Brooke Aksnes, Seva Khambadkone, Urban Jonsson. Plus 12 more join the WN editorial team

The Issue team writes: A colleague says that for anybody engaged with public health these days, advocacy is not enough. Action is also needed. We agree. This month's *WN* is packed with news, ideas, comments. Use the contents page o browse and to access pdfs of specific contributions. Event of the month is the Oxford conference on healthy food systems. Initiative of the month is the *Big Food Watch Straight Talking* project, convened by Thiago Hérick de Sá and Diana Parra. Our news of the month is that twelve more people join the *WN* editorial team, from Asia, Africa, Latin America, North America, and Europe. *Feedback* editor Isabela Sattamini announces another 20 pages of letters, whose eight writers are shown in the bottom row above. And there is more, more!




Development. Food systems

Past, present and future



Parents and all adults now have a duty to think, decide and act so as to protect children, and the children of today have a right to inherit enough resource to nourish their children and descendants

Development convenors Thiago Hérick de Sá and Diana Parra write: We at *WN* welcome and salute the conference being held this month in Oxford, UK, on the theme of *Building Healthy Global Food Systems.* Organised by a steering group chaired by World Public Health Nutrition Association President Barrie Margetts, the conference has a grand vision. Speakers include many public health and nutrition architects. As well as Association leaders such as Barrie Margetts, Namukolo Covic, Philip James and Fabio Gomes, these include regular *WN* contributors Enrique Jacoby, Tim Lang, Carlos Monteiro and Boyd Swinburn. The conference is being held at a strategic time, soon before the International Conference on Nutrition being held in Rome in November.

The cover picture of *WN* this month is of children in Bhutan, and our *Network* picture is of rice fields in Bhutan. These are the small pictures above. The big picture is more lively children in Bhutan. Part of the purpose of healthy food systems is to enable children to grow up happy and confident. We offer this vision, and we will continue in coming issues of *WN* to explore the theme of gross national happiness and other true measures of development. Development can be sustained when and only when it is measured in terms of quality.

Access Development on building healthy global food systems here
Access Network here.

***WN** Blog Watch*

Yoni Freedhoff
www.weightymatters.ca



A typical Yoni Freedhoff presentation. Informal while nicely dressed, friendly and quizzical, with something very obviously to tell you, shot in his office in front of a wall of credentials

The Blog Watcher reports: Almost all current writing and speaking on nutrition now, is available electronically, and maybe most is exclusively on the world-wide web and social media, in the form of blogs, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and so on. Most people are interested in food and in their health, including dieting, as are food and drink product corporations. So there may now be more electronic communications on these topics than on any other. Some are knowledgeable. Some are wise. They should not be ignored.

But the only academically qualified nutrition scientist who has a conspicuous personal website with blogs, twitters and other e-bells and whistles, is – as far as we know – Marion Nestle of New York University. Nutritionists almost all rely on publication in scientific journals, some with versatile and accessible electronic capability. But most younger professionals grown up with the internet, and practically all citizens and consumers interested in food, nutrition and health, surely now rely on electronic communications including newspaper websites – the implication being that the influence of academically qualified nutrition scientists is waning. So among the babel of blogs, which can be trusted?

Beginning in this issue we will feature blogs and websites that are informative, provocative, entertaining, and also worth following regularly. Our first choice is that produced by Yoni Freedhoff, a Canadian physician specialising in obesity with an academic position at the University of Ottawa, and an advisor to the UK-based *Action on Sugar* initiative. Inevitably he is the author of a weight loss book (in his case the anti-regime *The Diet Fix*). Since late 2008 he has accumulated 18,000 Twitter followers. Access him on *www.weightymatters.ca* We welcome recommendations of blogs and websites.

Access Update on Blog Watch here.



Development. International Conference on Nutrition

Civil society speaks out



Six commentators on the draft ICN2 Framework for Action, all from civil society organisations: Fabio Gomes, Alejandro Calvillo, Lida Llotska, Flavio Valente, and Stefano Prato (below)

Fabio Gomes reports: I write here as World Public Health Nutrition Association external affairs secretary. As such, I am responsible for the Association's response to the call of the UN secretariat of the FAO-WHO International Conference on Nutrition, for comments from civil society on the draft ICN Framework for Action.

The purpose of the Framework, which once finally drafted will be presented to UN member states for final discussion and ratification on 19-21 November, is to lay down policy lines for global agriculture and food programmes over the next 15 or more years. So it is very important. The more substantial civil society organisations, some of whose representatives are shown above, are worried. Here, Stefano Prato of the Society for International Development summarises what less than three months away from the conference is mostly or totally missing from the Framework:

- Unambiguous affirmation of the right to food and nutrition as the central pillar of the Framework and its profound interrelation with women's rights and empowerment, the recognition of adequate diet as the stepping stone of healthy lives, and an understanding of food as being the expression of values, cultures and social relations.
- Conception of the 'global food system' as being built from local food systems centred on sovereignty, agro-biodiversity, native seeds and traditional knowledge.
- Centrality of small-holders and family farmers as the key actors and drivers of local food systems and the need to ensure their secure access to land, technical and financial resources, and social protection.
- Definition of agricultural productivity that fully incorporates the ecological, social and political dimensions of production and embodies the sustainable livelihoods of families and communities.
- Recognition that the realisation of the right to food and nutrition is hampered by economic, social and political inequalities as well as by existing power imbalances; and the need to ensure proper regulations, transparency and accountability of powerful economic actors, such as transnational corporations.

Access Fabio Gomes and others on ICN2 here.



WN Source

Guides for now and for the future



See how many of these people you can identify. Al Gore (middle row, third from left), Michaerl Pollan (third row, left, and bottom row), and Walter Willett (third row, right). How many more?

Claus Leitzmann writes: What writing guides us best now and for the future – to 2030, and then beyond? And who are the people whose example we may emulate? Above I am in the top row left, and in this issue I respond to such questions, in the second of the *WN Source* series. The field to cover is that of public health nutrition in all its dimensions at a time we have to think and act wider and deeper than ever before.

The task is made a little easier by being the personal choice of contributors. The lists are of the texts and the authors and the leaders who continue to mean most to me in my work and life, and which I recommend to colleagues and students. First though, how many of the 20 people shown above can you identify? If I mention Colin Tudge, Jared Diamond, Francis Moore Lappé, Denis Burkitt and Nevin Scrimshaw, you can no doubt put faces to these names. But what about all the others, including the author of my 'number 1' book, bottom row at left? See how many you can score.

Access Source here.



Big Food Watch

The Harvard wholegrain test



Many products such as those above claim to be made with whole grains. When are such statements and suggestions, or other health claims, accurate and not misleading? Walter Willett of the Harvard School of Public Health, and Carlos Monteiro of the University of São Paulo, have answers

Geoffrey Cannon in Brazil, with support from Jean-Claude Moubarac in Peru, writes: We all know that whole grains are healthy, and that highly processed grains (such as in the form of white flour) are much less healthy. As Walter Willett of the Harvard School of Public Health says in his plain-language book *Eat, Drink and be Healthy* (chosen in *WN* this month by Claus Leitzmann as a top 15 book): 'Eating intact grain foods is clearly better for sustained good health and offers protection against a variety of chronic diseases'.

But what exactly does 'intact grain food' mean? And about the innumerable ultra-processed products crowding supermarket centre aisles that indicate or state that they are wholegrain, or made with whole grains, and therefore make or imply health claims? In my column this month I look at Nestlé brands of breakfast cereal, shown above, which like many other brands made by other manufacturers, say that they are made with whole grains. A savvy customer wise to the ways of product labelling and other manufacturer propaganda may see this as a rather vague statement.

WN contributor Walter Willett has come to my rescue – and guides all consumers. He says that to qualify as 'wholegrain' a product must have a ratio of total carbohydrate to dietary fibre of around 8 to 1. This ratio has been worked out by his colleagues Rebecca Mozaffarian, Rebekkah Lee, Mary Kennedy, Dariush Mozaffarian and Steven Gortmaker, together with David Ludwig, as published in December.last year in *Public Health Nutrition* – to all of whom many thanks. They propose a 10:1 ratio. So, how do Snow® Flakes and Nesfit® measure up?

Access What do you think? here



Feedback. Sick societies. Informas

The war on world obesity can be won





Informas is a world network of researchers and civil society organisations dedicated to stop the rise of obesity and related diseases. Founder of Informas is Boyd Swinburn, in both pictures above

The Issue team reports: Boyd Swinburn, in shades in the pictures above, has created and inspired INFORMAS. This world network is providing evidence to persuade governments to prevent and control obesity and related diseases. Its two big meetings have been held at the Bellagio Centre, and at Pakiri Beach, New Zealand. Boyd and his colleague Stefanie Vandevejvere explain in *Feedback*, that this huge task can be achieved by networks of researchers and civil society organisations. Stefanie as from this month is a member of the *WN* editorial team.

Access Feedback on Informas here.