WN *This issue*

World Nutrition **Volume 4, Number 7, August-September 2013**

Journal of the World Public Health Nutrition Association
Published monthly at www.wphna.org/worldnutrition/

World Nutrition now and in future
Conserving the world



Harriet Kuhnlein, Bill Erasmus, Dina Spigelski and Barbara Burlingame on Indigenous Peoples Food Systems. Colin Tudge, Philip James, many more

Editor's note

We affirm our commitment to less resourced countries and settings in this issue. (People named here in bold type are pictured above from the top, left to right). Our cover feature by **Harriet Kuhnlein**, **Bill Erasmus**, **Dina Spigelski** and **Barbara Burlingame** begins our new series on *Dietary Patterns* celebrating indigenous food systems. **Colin Tudge** completes his vision for genuinely sustainable world agriculture. In *As I see it* **Philip James** writes about his high-level work to prevent obesity. Then (second row) in *Inspiration*, **Claus Leitzmann** reminds us of the *Limits to Growth*. In *Feedback*, **Arun Gupta**, **Patti Rundall**, **Urban Jonsson** and **Ted Greiner** write on conflicts of interest, **Tim Lang** on John Boyd Orr, and **Thomas Samaras** and Geoffrey Cannon on human size. Other contributions are by Hetty Einzig, Oliver Moore, and Claudio Schuftan. In *Network* Fabio Gomes shows joys of cooking.

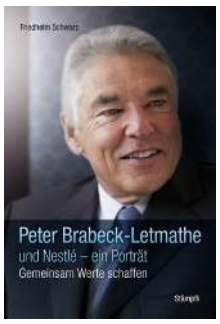
The theme of much of this issue of *WN* is 'conserving the world'. Note please, not 'saving the world', which suggests that more human intervention and more change is what is needed. The rage for change is one of the besetting vices of all sorts of well-meaning science. What we need a whole lot more of, is leaving well alone. Just as we ourselves need to give our beings time to heal after trauma, the whole world needs time and care to regenerate. Fracking is not the way. Nor, very often, is 'aid'.



New series *Big Food Watch*







Nestlé 'creates shared value' (left). CEO Paul Bulcke with Nestlé CSV award. A book of the life and the work of* Nestlé *chairman Peter Brabeck-Letmathe

WN Assistant Editor Fabio Gomes writes: Transnational corporations now may turn over as much money as middle-sized countries. Competition disguises the concentration of power of Big Food and Big Snack transnationals, and their common interests, as they penetrate 'emerging markets' and avoid regulation. They hunt as a pack. So it is high time for *Big Food Watch*, a new *WN* series. It is not a new idea. Several leading public interest organisations already act as corporate watchdogs. But we think *WN* is the first global public interest journal to engage. This issue we give an example of what Nestlé, the world's biggest food product transnational, means by 'creating shared value' as part of its 'corporate social responsibility'.

Editor's note. Like all contributions to WN (unless otherwise stated) Big Food Watch is not an official Association initiative. As here in this issue, the initiative raises issues that need discussion and debate, and we invite responses, to wn.letters@gmail.com.

New series *Dietary Patterns*
Indigenous Peoples' food systems
Standing up for their rights

WN Editor Geoffrey Cannon writes: World Nutrition is committed to the interests of people who live in the least resourced countries, territories and environments. The commentary in our second issue of June 2010, by Harriet Kuhnlein, illustrated above, celebrates the success of Indigenous Peoples, often living in very difficult conditions, to maintain their food and nutrition systems as a central part of their traditions, culture, beliefs, and ways of being and living in their world.



People from three of the nine Indigenous communities studied: here, from Northern Canada (Nunavut), India (Zaheerabad), and Micronesia (Pohnpei)

For this issue we publish another such commentary as the first in our new occasional series *Dietary patterns*, whose co-authors with Harriet Kuhnlein are Bill Erasmus, Chief of the Dene Nation and the Assembly of First Nations, Yellowknife and Ottawa, in Canada, Dina Spigelski of St Francis Xavier University, Nova Scotia, Canada, and Barbara Burlingame of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. They set out policies and strategies to improve nutrition and health. These focus on empowering Indigenous peoples to help themselves, in the face of the pressures to assimilate into industrialised ways of life which harm their health and wreck their ways of being. Policy-makers, professionals and citizens in the global North, while economically rich, have much to learn.

.

Enlightened agriculture
Enabling restoration



Throughout the global South, traditional food systems may survive, as here in Africa. They must not be swept away. They must be protected and promoted

WN Editor Geoffrey Cannon writes: The life's work of Colin Tudge has much in common with that of Harriet Kuhnlein. After four decades of study and experience, Colin speaks for enlightened agriculture, which often means respecting and following traditional knowledge and practice. He explains: 'Get farming and its whole environment right, and we get food systems and supplies right. Get food systems and supplies right and we get dietary patterns right. Get dietary patterns right, and we have the basis for nutritious, nourishing, healthy food for all, that protects against

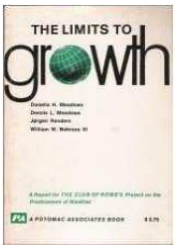
disease and promotes good health and physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. It follows that all attempts to get nutrition and health right at any population level that overlook or ignore food systems and supplies are bound to fail. As they do now.

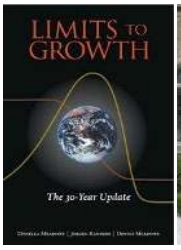
'Agriculture designed to make the best use of landscape, and to be maximally sustainable, would also provide food of the highest nutritional and gastronomic purposes, and would employ a great many people. Thus it would solve the world's food problems, and also its principal social problems, at a stroke. But this is not how things are now. Agriculture now is designed for a different purpose – to generate money and profits, in the cause of "sustained growth".

'Once we get food right, everything else we need to do can fall into place. Getting food right means good farming. This means productive and efficient husbandry that is kind to animals, that looks after the environment, and creates fine rural societies. It means providing sufficient safe and nourishing food that people like to eat and from which, traditionally, communities have built their communities and civilisations. This is the virtuous cycle of wise ways of life'. From the beginning of his work Colin has always insisted that 'Gastronomic excellence is essential, too'.

Inspiration

Seeds sown for a lifetime's work






Claus Leitzmann, the joint convenor of the New Nutrition Science project, inspired by The Limits to Growth, tells of his life commitment to conservation

The WN editors write: Every month we reprint documents that have most inspired *WN* contributors, who explain why their lives, work or ideas have been shaped or changed as a result. The idea is also to inspire readers. For this issue, Claus Leitzmann, former treasurer of the International Union of Nutritional Sciences and co-convenor of *The New Nutrition Science project,* chooses *The Limits to Growth*, first published in 1972. Its theme, the imperative need for conservation of planet Earth's human and material resources, is also the theme of this issue of *WN*.

In Claus Leitzmann's own words: 'The roots of hunger include poverty, natural disasters, climate change, and civil wars. But much of the hunger in economically

developing countries is caused by interference with the natural resources that are the basis of their life. Those of us who are in the global North are co-responsible for processes that cut down their rain forests and that displace human food crops by soy and other fodder to fatten the animals in our economically rich countries. We export our government-subsidised surplus foods into impoverished countries, with the result that the local farmers' income bases are undermined and destroyed. And it is the rich and powerful countries that have created the present world trade system that predominantly favours our selfish interests.

'The initial inspiration of *The Limits to Growth* after its original publication over 40 years ago, continues to influence my thinking and behaviour. Its sombre message surely needs to guide global and national policy and practice. I am also motivated by my five grandchildren, and by thousands of former students who carry the banner of sustainability forward on behalf of the next generations.. Together I feel we are continuing to raise consciousness of the imperative need to conserve the world'. If you would like to contribute to *Inspiration,* please contact *wn.inspiration@gmail.com*.

Feedback

WN is as good as its letters



Our lead letters in this issue confront the issue of conflicted interests and the ways in which Big Food and Big Snack has penetrated public policy making

WN Assistant Editor Isabela Sattamini writes: We publish 19 pages of letters this issue, from correspondents in Asia (India, South Korea and Vietnam), Africa (Tanzania), South America (Brazil), North America (the US), and Europe (the UK and Ireland). Yes, this is a record. Until our relaunched April issue *WN* averaged a letter an issue. Now it is four to six – and in this issue, eight. Yes, this issue covers the two months of August and September, but the editorial team is pleased. So am I.

We are doubly pleased in another sense, because the lead letters this issue, by Arun Gupta, Patti Rundall and Urban Jonsson, and by Ted Greiner, confront one of the

most serious crises in public health nutrition now. This is the increasingly deep influence of conflicted industry, also known in our field as Big Food and Big Snack, in public health and nutrition policy-making and programmes, especially in the global South. We will continue to ventilate this issue, in *Feedback* and elsewhere in *WN*.

But we are not satisfied. We believe we should publish only a couple of substantial letters every issue. Contributors should bear in mind that the more substantial letters can be turned into a full short commentary. What we want more of, please, is short sharp pungent cogent notes of say 200-400 words, usually commenting on contributions in recent issues of *WN* – preferably the previous issue. We believe that *WN* is as good as its letters, and our aim is to make these the best in our business.

Network
The pleasures of the table

WN Assistant Editor Fabio Gomes writes: For this issue in our regular series *Network*, we notice and celebrate cooking and all that goes with it, including consciousness from childhood of the central place of preparation, cooking, and meals within the family and in company, for health and well-being. We choose a Spanish theme for the once-every-four-years IUNS world conference, which this September is held in Granada.

World Nutrition
Our publishing and editorial Board



On Board: Philip James, Geoffrey Cannon, Ted Greiner, Urban Jonsson, Harriet Kuhnlein, Shiriki Kumanyika, Barrie Margetts, Carlos Monteiro, Walter Willett

WN Editor Geoffrey Cannon writes: For the new phase of *WN* that began this April, we have convened our publishing and editorial Board, for strategic thinking. Here are the members, above. The Board is chaired by Philip James, founder of the International Obesity Task Force. Best known to *WN* readers for his monthly *As I see it* column, he was chair of the WHO study group responsible for the first ever global report and recommendations to prevent chronic diseases. As well as being *WN* editor and the *What do you think* columnist, I am co-convenor of the *New Nutrition Science project*, mentioned by Claus Leitzmann in this month's *Inspiration*.

The other Board members are as follows. Four of these are contributors to this issue of *WN*. Ted Greiner of Hanyang University, South Korea, whose letter on conflicts of interest is in this month's *Feedback* section, is a former chair of the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition bilateral group. Urban Jonsson, based in Tanzania, is a former chief of the UNICEF nutrition division, and is co-author of the lead letter also on conflicts of interest this issue.

Harriet Kuhnlein, co-author of this month's lead commentary on Indigenous Peoples' Food Systems, is founder-director of the Centre for Indigneous People's Nutrition and Environment at McGill University, Canada. Carlos Monteiro from the University of São Paulo, Brazil, is convenor of the team responsible for the *WN* series on *The Food System* – and for the latest news, of initiatives being presented at the IUNS conference at Granada in September, see our *Update* section in this issue.

Shiriki Kumanyika of the University of Pennsylvania, US, a champion of public health and nutrition, was vice-chair of the current global UN report on prevention of chronic diseases. Barrie Margetts of the University of Southampton, UK, a researcher with extensive experience in India and Africa, is Association president. The nutritional epidemiologist Walter Willett of the Harvard School of Public Health, US, has for many years been a leader of the campaign against *trans* fats.

The editors

Status

This issue is reviewed by members of the editorial team. Readers may use material here if acknowledgement is given to the Association, and *WN* is cited. Please cite as: Anon. *World Nutrition* now and in future. Conserving the world. [This issue]. *World Nutrition*, August-September 2013, **4**,7, 447-453. Obtainable at www.wphna.org/worldnutrition/ Contributions to *World Nutrition* are the copyright and responsibility of their authors. They should not be taken to be the view or policy of the World Public Health Nutrition Association (the Association) or of any affiliated or associated bodies, unless this is explicitly stated.

How to respond

Please address letters for publication to wn.letters@gmail.com. Letters should usually respond to or comment on contributions to *World Nutrition*. More general letters will also be considered. Usual length for main text of letters is between 200 and 850 words. Any references should usually be limited to up to 10. Letters are edited for length and style, may also be developed, and once edited are sent to the author for approval.