FOOD DIRECTIONS POLICY NEWSLETTER

Potato Industry | May 2022

Food & Nutrition Policy

White House Announces Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health
The White House announced that a White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health will be held this September in Washington DC with the goal to reduce hunger and also increase healthy eating and physical activity by 2030. Leading up to the conference, the White House will hold regional listening sessions this spring and summer to gather input from stakeholders across the government, healthcare, anti-hunger groups, and the food industry to inform a national strategy. The specific dates for the listening sessions will be posted on the White House website here in the next few weeks. Separate from the White House's efforts, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, Food Systems for the Future, the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, and World Central Kitchen also announced the formation of the Task Force on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health. This task force will be gathering its own stakeholders to inform the conference goals released in September.

Proposed Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee Questions Released
The USDA and HHS have released a proposed list of questions for the 2025-2030 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee to review. The questions are organized by dietary patterns across life stages, specific dietary pattern components, and strategies related to diet quality and weight management. For the first time ever, the Departments have proposed reviewing the relationship between ultra-processed foods and certain health outcomes like risk for obesity. There is also a question that looks at the USDA Dietary Patterns (Healthy U.S.-Style, Healthy Mediterranean-Style, and/or Healthy Vegetarian) and assesses whether additional dietary patterns should be developed based on population norms (E.g., starchy vegetables are often consumed interchangeably with grains). Comments on these proposed questions are due on May 16, 2022.

USDA Forthcoming Research on Toxic Metals in Food
The USDA is conducting research on toxic metals in food to complement FDA's Closer to Zero Action Plan to reduce toxic metals in foods for infants and young children. The USDA's research is focused at the agricultural production level, evaluating economic impacts for agricultural producers and consumers, and providing nutrition education and outreach. Specifically, the research will focus on exploring various plant breeds that reduce the uptake of toxic metals, examining alternate production strategies to reduce toxic metals, and looking at lower-cost detection methods for categories of baby foods and other foods commonly eaten by babies and young children. During a public meeting held on April 27, 2022, USDA shared updates on this research for spinach, rice and sweet potatoes and also announced that a full report of these research findings will be available in June 2022.

FDA Releases Draft Guidance to Reconsider Evaluation of Food Allergens
The FDA released draft guidance that outlines the agency's proposed new approach to evaluate food allergens other than major food allergens in the food supply. The FDA plans to prioritize food allergens that prompt the release of immunoglobulin E antibodies (IgE) by the immune system because those allergies are the most severe and immediately life-threatening. The draft guidance discusses the scientific evidence that establishes a food as a cause of IgE-mediated food allergy and the scientific factors, such as prevalence, severity, and allergenic potency, that the FDA intends to consider in its evaluations. Written comments are due on the draft guidance by August 17, 2022.

House Ag Committee Farm Bill SNAP Hearing
On April 28, the House Agriculture Committee held a hearing on the Farm Bill SNAP provisions. During the hearing, SNAP choice was discussed by both parties, with multiple Republican Representatives voicing support for restricting SNAP purchases on certain foods like sugar-sweetened beverages, potato chips, and fast food, while multiple Democrats voiced opposition to restricting such purchases. Rep. Spanberger (D-VA) also proposed allowing certain hot foods like rotisserie chicken to be allowed for purchase under SNAP, to which Stacy Dean, USDA's Deputy Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services suggested the USDA was open to seeing proposals for.

NASEM to Hold Webinar on Climate Change Adaptation in Agriculture
The National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) is hosting a webinar on climate change adaptation in agriculture on Thursday, May 19, from 3-4 p.m. (EST). This webinar is a part of a monthly webinar series from NASEM that aims to convene high-level, cross-cutting, nonpartisan conversations about issues relevant to national policy action on climate change.

EFSA Releases Scientific Opinion on Nutrient Profiling for Front-of-Pack Labeling
In response to a request from the European Commission, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) Panel on Nutrition, Novel Foods, and Food Allergens issued a scientific opinion on nutrient profiling to aid in the development of a mandatory EU front-of-pack nutrition labeling system. In preparing their scientific opinion, they found that the intakes of saturated fatty acids, sodium, and added/free sugars were above the recommended intakes and that the intakes of dietary fiber and potassium were below the recommended intakes. EFSA emphasized in their general conclusions that food groups with important dietary roles in European diets include starchy foods (cereals and potatoes), fruits and vegetables, legumes, dairy products, meat, fish, nuts, and non-alcoholic beverages. As part of the Farm to Fork Strategy, the European Commission intends to propose a revision of existing legislation on the provision of food information to consumers at the end of 2022.

Nutrition Science and Communication Reports

Glycemic Index May Be Counterproductive to Helping Americans Adopt Healthier Diets
A newly published perspective piece published in *Frontiers in Nutrition* examines the shortcomings of the glycemic index (GI) as a measure of carbohydrate food quality. In the article, author Jill Nicholls, PhD, asserts that, to improve overall diet quality, people need tools that are relevant, reliable and applicable – and evidence suggests the GI falls short on all of the above. Nicholls writes that the GI model was intended for people with type 2 diabetes, making application to a broad population challenging. She also discusses the tenuous relationship between GI values, real-world glycemic response, and human health outcomes. Research has shown it may not be an accurate predictor of overall diet quality, and many studies have shown that building a diet based on GI values has a low to very low association with non-communicable disease risk.

USDA Publishes Report on WIC Maternal and Child Health Outcomes
The U.S. Department for Health and Human Services Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality published a report on the maternal and child health outcomes associated with WIC. The report determined that WIC participation during pregnancy may be associated with better maternal diet quality and greater intakes of total fruit. They also found that child WIC participation is likely to be associated with better child diet quality but the evidence was insufficient to determine whether child WIC participation was associated with fruit or vegetable intakes.

Study Explores Dietary Patterns and Chronic Disease in Chinese Population
A study published in *Frontiers in Nutrition* in April 2022 looked at five dietary patterns in middle-aged and elderly Chinese and found that dietary patterns at a reasonable intake and rich in micronutrients can prevent chronic disease. Among the findings, researchers found that the substitution of potato for grain may be an effective way to reduce diabetes.

Study Examines Transfer of Bioactive Compounds from Olive Oil in Fried Food
A study published in *Food Chemistry* looked at the transfer of metabolites from virgin olive oil (VOO) to French fries and found that French fries were enriched by VOO bioactive compounds during deep-frying, especially on the first

two days, improving their nutritional value. Seven out of the ten compounds' classes identified in the oil were transferred to the fried food with VOO remaining highly stable during consecutive deep-frying of French fries.

Research Examines Salt-Reduction Strategies in Potato Chips

A study published in *Food Research International* looked at the effectiveness of reducing salt particle sizes to reduce sodium while increasing saltiness perception. During the study, these “model salts” with smaller sizes and optimal particle shapes were applied to unsalted potato chips with only 70% of the original salt content added to the chip. Results showed that the application of the model salt to the potato chip with 30% less sodium still maintained a saltiness perception that was accepted by consumers. Researchers also tested the removal of salt completely from the potato chips and found that consumers noticed the difference after only 15% of the salt was removed versus the model salt at 30%.