

Potato Industry | June 2022

Food & Nutrition Policy

HHS and USDA Seek Nominations for DGA Scientific Committee

HHS and USDA announced they are seeking public [nominations](#) for the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee until July 15, 2022. The Committee will provide science-based advice and recommendations to be considered by HHS and USDA as the Departments develop the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030. HHS and USDA are seeking candidates with expertise in nutrition and public health and who reflect the diversity of the U.S. population to serve on the Committee.

White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health

The White House continues to hold listening sessions for stakeholders to provide input on solutions to end hunger and reduce diet-related diseases in the U.S. During a September conference, the White House will launch a national strategy based on feedback from the public listening sessions with the help of an interagency working group. This strategy will focus on actions the federal government will take and commitments and partnerships that could support these goals. Examples of solutions raised during a regional listening session on June 15 included suggestions to subsidize fruit and vegetable purchases, increase produce prescription programs, promote plant-based options in school meals, limit the marketing of unhealthy products, implement long-term sodium guidance, and create mandatory front-of-pack labeling. The White House has posted a [toolkit](#) to help stakeholders host their own convenings ahead of the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health and has also created a comment portal [here](#) for the public to submit comments by July 15.

NASEM Midcourse Report Finds Agencies Improved DGA Development Process

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) released a midcourse report titled, [Evaluating the Process to Develop the Dietary Guidelines for Americans \(DGA\) 2020-2025](#), that reviewed the progress made in the DGA development process compared to recommendations made in a 2017 NASEM report. Overall, this new midcourse report found that the 2020-2025 DGA process made significant progress in implementing the seven recommendations that were in the 2017 NASEM report. For example, the committee shared that the 2020-2025 systematic reviews used to develop the DGAs had a peer-review process, contrary to previous DGA cycles in which no peer review was used. The agencies were also generally transparent when the 2020–2025 DGA recommendations differed from the recommendations in the 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee Scientific Report and why, such as for alcohol and added sugar. However, the committee also indicated that improvements were not equally comprehensive across all recommendations and that more work is needed to improve transparency and address conflicts of interest. A final NASEM report is expected later this year with further analysis of the DGA development process.

Key USDA and FDA Leadership Announcements

President Biden has announced his intent to nominate individuals for Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services and for Under Secretary of Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs. Current Deputy Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, Stacy Dean, was [nominated](#) to serve as USDA's Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services. Alexis Taylor was [nominated](#) to serve as Under Secretary of Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs. Alexis currently serves as the Director of the Oregon Department of Agriculture. The FDA also shared that FDA's Principal Deputy Commissioner, Janet Woodcock, will be working more closely with several FDA centers and offices to ensure areas such as food and nutrition, inspectional oversight, information technology, and operations have the necessary support and resources.

Draft Guidance on Dietary Guidance Statements in Food Labeling at OMB

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is reviewing a draft guidance titled, Questions and Answers About Dietary Guidance Statements in Food Labeling. While there are limited details on the draft document, this guidance could impact the types of labeling statements and claims that can be used on food products.

Food Safety & Agriculture

Senate Confirms Under Secretary of Agriculture for Research, Education, & Economics

Chavonda Jacobs-Young, Ph.D., was confirmed as Under Secretary of Agriculture for Research, Education, and Economics by the U.S. Senate on a vote of 95 to 4. Since 2014, Dr. Jacobs-Young has served as Administrator of the Agricultural Research Service (ARS), USDA's chief scientific in-house research agency. Previously, she was the ARS Associate Administrator for National Programs, leading the Office of National Programs and the Office of International Research Programs.

House Agriculture Committee Holds Hearing on Role of SNAP in Farm Bill

The House Agriculture Committee held a hearing to review SNAP's role in the Farm Bill and hear stakeholders' perspectives. During the hearing, representatives questioned three witnesses - one representing the National Grocers Association - who shared their perspectives on necessary updates to SNAP for the next Farm Bill. These updates included asking for increased technical support to administer the program, additional funding for healthy incentives, and an expansion of online SNAP portals for easy electronic benefits transfer card (EBT) redemption. Republicans and Democrats were split across party lines on whether to extend pandemic-era increases in benefits, with Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA) calling for SNAP expansions and Rep. Glenn Thompson (R-PA) voicing concerns about overspending.

USDA Announces New Supply Chain Framework

Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack announced USDA's framework to increase the productivity of the food supply chain and transform the food system to be fairer, more competitive, and more resilient. The framework's goals include creating a more distributed and local food system to reduce carbon pollution and provide better market options for consumers and producers, leveraging programs to make nutritious food more accessible for consumers, and creating more opportunities in underserved communities. Specifically, the USDA is investing up to \$300 million in a new Organic Transition Initiative, \$600 million in financial assistance to support food supply chain infrastructure, \$90 million to prevent and reduce food loss and waste, and \$60 million to leverage increased commodity purchases through the Farm-to-School Grant Program. Click here for a complete list of USDA's new investments in this framework.

White House Plans to Improve Crop Production to Address High Food Prices

The White House announced plans to help farmers increase crop production to ease food shortages and inflation. The plans include expanding the number of counties where farmers can obtain crop insurance when they practice "double cropping," which involves planting a second crop on the same land in the same year. There are also plans to double federal funding for domestic fertilizer production so that farmers do not have to pay more for fertilizer. Finally, there will be more technical assistance for "precision farming," which uses technology to reduce the amount of fertilizer and other materials needed.

Global

EU Seeks Comments on Sustainability Framework

The European Commission launched a public consultation period for an upcoming proposal for a horizontal framework law to make food systems more sustainable. The public consultation will be open until July 21, 2022. These comments will help inform the European Union's sustainability policies that are expected to be published in late 2023. The Commission is specifically seeking views on sustainability labeling or other sustainability requirements for food imports. This work is part of the broader EU's Farm to Fork Strategy.

FAO Indicates that Doubling Global Potato Production in 10 years is Possible

Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Qu Dongyu, shared that potatoes can contribute to global food security and that total potato production could double in the next ten years during his keynote presentation at the World Potato Congress (WPC) in Dublin, Ireland. By focusing on improving yields

and making full use of historic potato cultivation areas, worldwide production can be raised to 500 million tonnes in 2025 and 750 million tonnes in 2030, the Director-General said. The Director-General also noted that globally, potato output has grown even as the land devoted to their cultivation has decreased, highlighting the role of improved yields and calling for more support for potato genetic improvements and shorter breeding cycles.

New Nutrient Profiling Tools Confirm Starchy Vegetables Deliver Comparable Nutritional Value as Non-starchy Vegetables and Whole Fruit

A [new study](#), led by Adam Drewnowski, a Ph.D. researcher at the Center for Public Health Nutrition at the University of Washington, has challenged the tendency in nutrition research to separate starchy vegetables, including potatoes, from their non-starchy counterparts and categorize them with foods delivering lower nutritional value. Researchers used five separate, previously published indices to assess carbohydrate quality to determine if this categorization of starchy vegetables accurately reflects the foods' nutritional value. Based on four carbohydrate quality index (CQI) scores, nearly half of the 210 starchy vegetable foods analyzed in the study met the CQI definitions for high-quality carbohydrates, which were defined as those with evidence-based cut-off values for fiber and free sugar. The fifth model, called the carbohydrate food quality score (CFQS-4), incorporated metrics of potassium and sodium in addition to added sugars and fiber. This metric showed that starchy vegetables scored most closely to non-starchy vegetables and fruit versus sweets and soda. This latest demonstration clearly shows that all vegetables should be categorized together when it comes to both research and dietary guidance.

Study Demonstrates Potato Protein Increases Post-Exercise Muscle Protein

A new study published in *Medicine & Science in Sports and Exercise* [demonstrates](#) that the ingestion of potato protein concentrate strongly increases post-exercise muscle protein synthesis rates at rest and during recovery in active young men. Furthermore, muscle protein synthesis rates after ingestion of potato-derived protein were comparable to muscle protein synthesis rates after ingesting the equivalent amount of milk protein. While milk protein is often considered the preferred choice for muscle growth and repair, potato protein provides an amino acid profile resembling milk protein. These findings show it can be used as an effective means to support muscle conditioning using plant-based protein.

Potatoes in the News

Potatoes USA partnered with Cara Harbstreet, MS RD LD, to conduct a satellite media tour where Cara spoke with TV and radio stations to dispel myths about potatoes and talk about ways to incorporate more nutrient-dense potatoes into summer eating. Cara has appeared on more than 460 stations (and counting!). A few examples include [The Power of Potatoes](#) (WTLV – NBC Jacksonville, FL); [Summer potato recipes](#) (WSAZ-TV Huntington, WV); [The Health Benefits of Potatoes](#) (WTVO – ABC Rockford, IL); and [Busting potato myths with an expert](#) (KTUL – ABC Tulsa, OK). Additionally, in celebration of Global Running Day on June 1, Potatoes USA encouraged people to fuel with potatoes whether they were running a marathon or just around the block. Outlets like Yahoo picked up the story. Additionally, SheFinds published a glowingly pro-potato article, "[This Starchy Vegetable Is Actually Packed With Health Benefits–We're So Surprised!](#)" which featured Howard Goldstein as a nutrition consultant to Potatoes USA and included information about the health benefits of this versatile vegetable and debunked some common misconceptions about it.