



The Nutrition Coalition Update | June 26, 2019

- Dietary Guidelines' New B-24 Guidelines: An Industry Giveaway?
- Scientific Rigor and Scope Still Major Questions for the Guidelines
- Former USDA Chief of Staff Weighs in on Guidelines

DIETARY GUIDELINES' NEW B-24 GUIDELINES: A POSSIBLE INDUSTRY GIVEAWAY?

2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans Birth—24 Month Subcommittee: **Industry Funding**

Chair

*Chair/
Vice Chair Rep*



Kathryn Dewey, PhD
University of California, Davis



Ronald Kleinman, MD
Massachusetts General Hospital,
Harvard Medical School



Lydia Bazzano, MD, PhD
Tulane University and Ochsner
Health System



Teresa Davis, PhD
Baylor College of Medicine



Sharon Donovan, PhD, RD
University of Illinois, Urbana



Elsie Taveras, MD, MPH
Massachusetts General Hospital,
Harvard Medical School and Harvard
Chan School of Public Health

Funding Received from Related (B-24 Food) Industries:

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|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mead-Johnson Nutrition (infant formula manufacturer) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Mills • International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) Research Foundation (non-profit financed by Nestlé, Abbott, and the Kellogg Company) • Nestlé Nutrition Institute | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None Found | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abbott (infant formula manufacturer) • Ajinomoto Co. (infant formula manufacturer) • International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) Research Foundation (non-profit financed by Nestlé, Abbott, and the Kellogg Company) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abbott (infant formula manufacturer) • Bristol-Myers Squibb • Danone Institute • Gerber Foundation • Mead-Johnson Nutrition (infant formula manufacturer) • Nestlé Infant Nutrition • Pfizer Nutrition | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None Found |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

The expert committee for the next Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) has begun to deliberate on the first-ever set of guidelines for the “birth-to-24-month” population. This effort is part of the “Pregnancy and Birth to 24 Months (P/B-24) Project,” a joint initiative led by the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services (USDA-HHS).

An important question is whether the influence of the \$70 billion global baby food and formula industries could be at play in influencing these guidelines. While the development of B-24 advice is needed, worrisome signs have emerged that there is limited data for this age group and that these guidelines could, in fact, become little more than a giveaway to the infant formula and food manufacturers. Read [our blog post](#) on this issue, including the many potential conflicts of interest of the B-24 Subcommittee.

SCIENTIFIC RIGOR AND SCOPE STILL MAJOR QUESTIONS FOR THE GUIDELINES

We queried the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP), the USDA office in charge of the Guidelines, about some issues we found regarding the scientific process that produces the Guidelines. For instance, (1) CNPP has said that it will exclude studies that look exclusively at people with nutrition-related chronic diseases (thereby ignoring the nearly 2/3 of all Americans who are diagnosed with one or more of these diseases), and (2) CNPP has stated that it will follow “GRADE,” an internationally recognized process for reviewing scientific studies (GRADE was chosen in response to a recommendation made [by the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.](#)) Why then, can we find no mention of “GRADE” on the CNPP website? To read CNPP’s answers, see “UPDATES” in our blog post [here](#).

If any of these issues are of concern to you, please submit a public comment to USDA. See [our post](#) on how to do this.

FORMER USDA CHIEF OF STAFF WONDERS IF GUIDELINES ARE DOING THEIR JOB

Ray Starling, recently retired from his position as the Chief of Staff to USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue, said [in an interview](#) that he recognizes that the Dietary Guidelines are enormously important:

“We spend an inordinate amount of time bickering over what’s going to be in these federal guidelines and that’s because these are used to set so many other standards for federal government and so many programs administered not just by USDA, but by other agencies as well.” He adds, “The industrial complex came in fighting over what’s in, what’s out [of the Guidelines]... that’s where we got bloated.”

He thinks it's time to start a conversation about whether the Guidelines are

working:

"We haven't always had Dietary Guidelines, but in the years since it's started, the health of Americans has gotten considerably worse. It would be really nice to have a fresh conversation. Do we even need to be doing this? Does government need to be in the business of telling people what to eat? Or should we leave that to...physicians, etc.? I'm sure I'm not going to make everyone happy with that observation, but I think it's worth bringing up."

CORRUPTION IN NUTRITION

ILSI, the International Life Sciences Institute, which has funded many studies and is a leader in nutrition, "should be regarded as an industry group—a private body—and regulated as such, not as a body acting for the greater good," [states a researcher in *The BMJ*](#), after reviewing thousands of emails obtained via the requests under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). A non-paywalled version of the story is [here](#). This should not be surprising to anyone who has followed the news on ILSI. [A blog post](#) from several years ago disclosed: "It's hard to say where Coca-Cola ends and ILSI starts. Coca-Cola Vice President Rhona Applebaum [served](#) as ILSI's President through the end of 2015. ILSI has led the industry's assault [on the World Health Organization's tobacco policies](#), the [CDC's chronic disease efforts](#), and most recently, the [dietary guidelines that limit sugar intake](#)." Other key ILSI members are Monsanto (producer of vegetable oils), Mars, and McDonalds.

NUTRITION STUDY HIGHLIGHT:

- Meat causes mortality: This is [an epidemiological study](#), based on unreliable data from food-frequency questionnaires with reported associations so small that they do not rule out confounding variables (such as the fact that meat eaters tend to engage in less healthy

behaviors generally, so one cannot know whether the meat is to blame or these other factors). These studies finding meat to be unhealthy are a favorite of the Harvard School of Public Health, whose leaders have [actively been promoting a near-vegan diet](#), high in nuts and vegetable oils (coincidentally, industries [that have contributed generously](#) to the school).

- Also, we'd like to remind everyone that [red-meat consumption has declined by 28%](#) in the U.S. since 1970, according to government data, at the same time that chronic diseases have risen exponentially and life expectancy has declined, so this data on red meat must give one pause about the hypothesis that this food could be a driver of disease or mortality.

RATES OF TYPE 2 DIABETES ARE DOWN...!

[The CDC reports](#) that “New cases of diagnosed diabetes in the U.S. decreased by 35 percent since a peak in 2009 – the first sign that efforts to stop the nation’s diabetes epidemic are working...” What is the reason? One major change that we can see is that two nutritional approaches have been established by clinical trials to reverse T2 diabetes: (1) the keto diet or (2) a very-low calorie formula diet. Perhaps people are finding out about these options. A third evidence-based option for reversing T2 diabetes is bariatric surgery.

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The Nutrition Coalition is a nonprofit educational organization working to strengthen national nutrition policy so that it is founded upon a comprehensive body of conclusive science, and where that science is absent, to encourage additional research. We accept no money from any interested industry.

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