

New York State Council on Food Policy

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo

Commissioner Darrel J. Aubertine

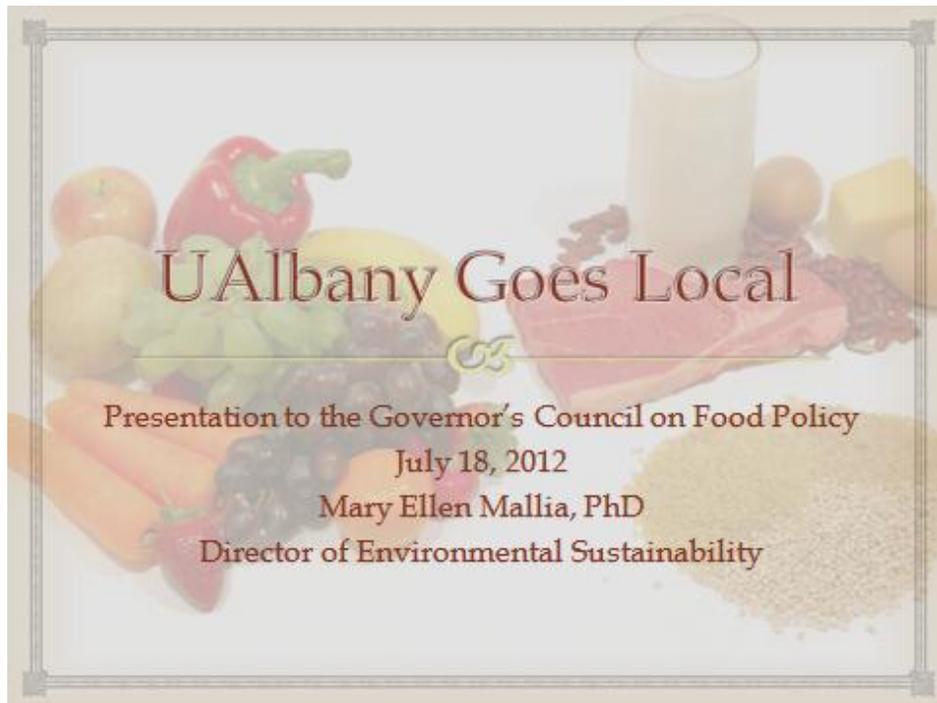
ANNUAL SUMMER MEETING APPENDIX

July 18th 2012 | SUNY Albany Alumni House | 10 AM – 2 PM

Appendix A: UAlbany Goes Local: *Dr. Mary-Ellen Mallia*

Appendix B: NYS CFP Food Procurement Guidelines: *Ray Denniston, Dr. Barbara Dennison, Ellie Wilson*

Appendix C: Public Comments: *Kathryn Tanner, Mark Dunlea, Tom Ferraro, Barbara Baron and Margaret Brown*



What is Local?



- Produced/processed within 250 miles
- In accordance with standard set by AASHE
- We also include anywhere in New York State

History of Movement



Professor

- Interest in sustainable agriculture

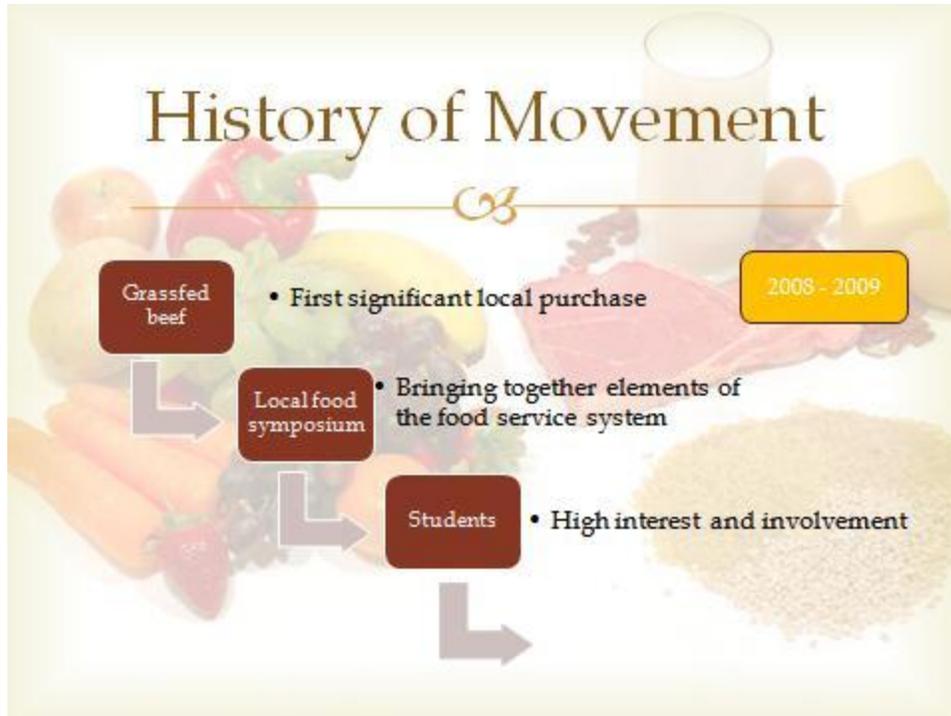
2006 - 2007

Task force

- Green Purchasing committee

Farmer's Market

- Underwritten by Chartwells
- Insurance



Results

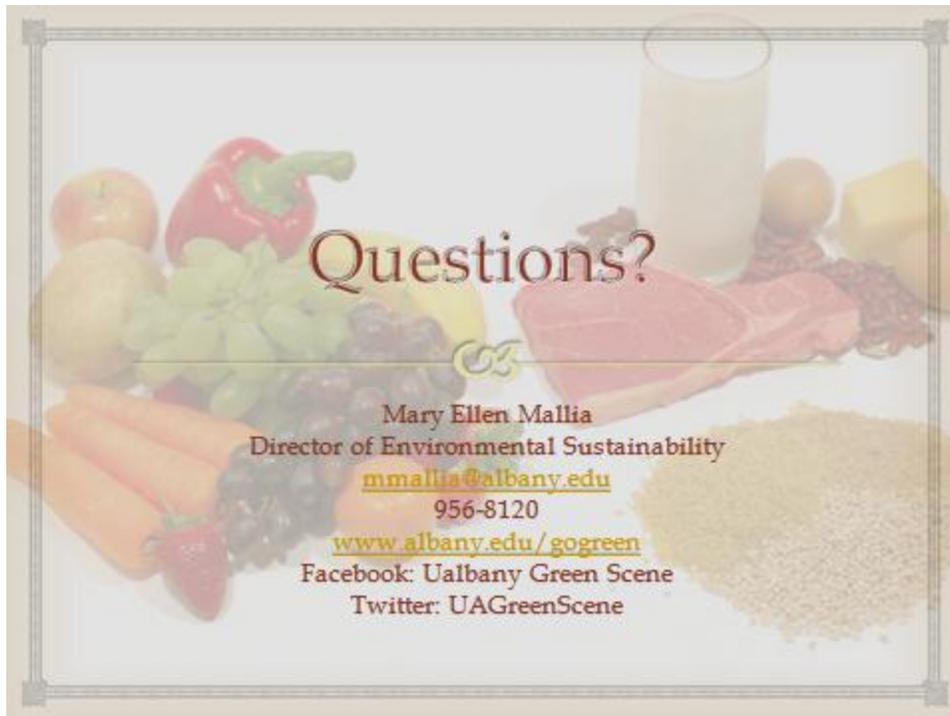


- œ Local purchasing went from 5% in 2007 to 20% in 2012
- œ Administration, food service provider, faculty, students, farmers and wholesalers engaged in the process
- œ Keys to success:
 - œ Focus on process, not numbers
 - œ Re-examine philosophy on ordering
 - œ Willing to accept a price premium

Last Words



- œ Institutions can provide a predictable demand
- œ Farmers can provide more goods year round if you guarantee them a market and have a willing wholesaler
- œ We need more meat processing services in the state
- œ We need more year round production and/or processing of surplus produce during the growing season



Questions?



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A Report and
Recommendations
by the Workgroup
on Food
Procurement
Guidelines to the:
New York State
Council on Food
Policy

[June 2012]

Acknowledgements

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I. Charge

The New York State Council on Food Policy appointed a Workgroup to develop a Report and Recommendations on Food Procurement Guidelines for New York State agencies. For the purpose of this document, these guidelines would refer to food purchased, provided or made available such that key nutrient levels either meet, or do not exceed, certain standards established as part of these guidelines. Such procurement policies can use the purchasing power of government to make an impact on food availability and add to the overall demand for more healthful products. Procurement policies can model healthier food environments, potentially drive reformulation of foods, and have an impact on diverse settings.

II. Purpose

Today's foods have changed from the early 1900s. There is more sodium (salt), sweeteners (sugar) and fats. There are many more processed foods. There are more nutrient-poor foods, such as soft drinks (sugar-sweetened drinks), salty snacks, sweets and desserts. Portion sizes have increased. Food consumption (total calories) has increased. Because these extra calories have not been accompanied by an increase in physical activity, Americans are fatter than ever, with increased rates of obesity and associated obesity-related diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and arthritis.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans are reviewed and updated every five years. They represent evidence-based nutritional information and recommendations for Americans over two years of age. The most recent version, Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010 (DGA) emphasize three major goals for Americans:

- Balance calories with physical activity to maintain weight
- Consume more of certain foods and nutrients such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fat-free and low-fat dairy products and seafood
- Consume fewer foods with sodium (salt), saturated fats, *trans* fats, cholesterol, added sugars, and refined grains.

The DGA recommendations are intended to help people choose a healthy diet. For persons who are served foods through state or local agencies, food procurement guidelines can help the agencies be critical players in transforming the food system to help prevent the development of risk factors, such as high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, or increased blood glucose, help slow rising rates of chronic diseases, such as coronary heart disease, stroke, and diabetes, promote overall health, and reduce excess health care costs for chronic disease management. This is especially important in settings where a majority of foods are provided by the state agency, such as prisons or residential settings.

Agencies can make a difference by modeling healthful nutrition and adopting food purchasing policies and practices in their own facilities that promote healthful food in line with the DGA. In turn, procurement policies for purchasing and providing healthful foods can contribute to improving the health of not only the citizens served by city and state agencies but also their employees

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as other groups, have recommended that governments, businesses and large-scale organizations that purchase or distribute food, can improve the food supply by establishing specifications for the foods they purchase, procure, or contract for distribution.

Food procurement policies can be designed to make healthier food more readily available, affordable, and appealing. These policies can also work to change individual factors (e.g., knowledge of how to choose healthy options), social factors (e.g., social norms), and environmental factors (e.g., access to healthy options). Food procurement policies use existing food dollars to create a more nutritious food environment and drive demand toward increased availability and demand for more healthful products.

III. Policy Development

A workgroup of members of the New York State Council on Food Policy was formed in April 2011. The Workgroup was augmented by staff from the NYS Department of Health and the New York Academy of Medicine. As a first step, an environmental scan was conducted of state agencies. All state agencies that provide food and meals were surveyed to provide a better understanding of how agencies procure and/or contract for food and beverages, and whether they follow the DGA. Most of the agencies reported using the DGA to varying degrees. None had procurement policies around specific nutrients.

Government agencies in several large cities, states, and the federal government have developed, published, and/or implemented food procurement policies. The workgroup spoke to numerous government agencies including the New York City Department of Health and Hygiene, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and Delaware Parks and Recreation. In addition, members researched many documents including, the federal Department of Health and Human Services food procurement policies and received input from the NYS Office of General Services.

IV. Guidelines for Purchased Food

The Food Procurement Guidelines workgroup has agreed on the following:

- State Agencies that procure, provide, and/or contract for foods and beverages have an obligation to provide food that is safe and nutritious.

- The most recent version of the DGA, developed using the most up-to-date evidence-based consensus of the scientific community, should be used to provide guidance for the optimal nutrition for New Yorkers.

- The typical diet of Americans is not consistent with the DGA. Currently Americans consume less than recommended intakes for whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and milk/milk products, and excessive amounts of solid fats, saturated fats, added sugars, refined grains and sodium.

- State Agencies that follow guidelines for meals, snacks, and specific foods will improve the nutritional value of the foods procured, served or contracted, improve the nutrition, promote health and help to reduce the risk for chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, obesity and diabetes of New Yorkers.

Listed below are a set of recommended nutrition standards for foods and beverages procured, purchased and/or served by NYS agencies. Adopting and implementing the nutrition standards would help ensure that foods and beverages provided or served by agencies contribute to a diet consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010.

These standards are defined per serving of food. The serving size is based on FDA-established lists of "Reference Amounts Customarily Consumed per Eating Occasion" and is used on the Nutrition Facts Panel, unless otherwise noted.

It's also recommended that where possible, and to the extent allowed by law, that preference be given to foods from local NYS growers/processors for optimal nutritional value. Where NYS products are not available and/or accessible, preference should be given to domestic, American grown and produced foods. The nutritional value of fresh produce can decline as the length of time between its harvest and consumption increases. Similarly, imported produce also has lessened nutritional value due to having to be harvested prematurely (which is done so that it may be shipped long distances).

A. Nutrient Standards:

Artificial Trans fat:

Standard Criteria

✓ Keep trans fatty acid consumption as low as possible by limiting foods that contain synthetic sources of trans fats, such as partially hydrogenated oils, and by limiting other solid fats. Current FDA labeling regulations allow manufacturers of foods packaged for direct sale to consumers in retail markets to list trans fat content as "0 grams" if the product contains less than 0.5 grams per serving.

Sodium:

Standard Criteria

- ✓ All individual items should contain 480 mg or less sodium per serving, unless otherwise stated below.
- ✓ For agencies serving populations with a majority of the population is 51 years or older, all individual items should contain \leq 360 mg sodium per serving.*

Above Standard

- ✓ Purchase “low sodium” (i.e., 140 mg or less sodium per serving) or “reduced sodium” (i.e., original sodium level reduced by 25%) whenever feasible.

B. Food Category Standards:

Beverages

Standard Criteria

- ✓ \leq 10 calories per 8 fl. oz. for beverages other than 100% juice or milk.
- ✓ If purchasing juice, 100% fruit juice

Dairy:

Standard Criteria

- ✓ Milk is 1% or fat free and unsweetened. (Flavored milk is not recommended for children under five. For children ages five-18 years flavored milks are permitted and should be $<$ 180 calories per 8 oz. serving).
- ✓ Any fluid milk substitute (e.g., soymilk) contains \leq 100 calories per 8 oz. (For children ages 5-18 years flavored fluid milk substitutes are permitted and should contain $<$ 180 calories per serving).
- ✓ Low-fat or non-fat yogurt.

Above Standard

- ✓ Purchase plain yogurt or yogurt with \leq 30 g sugar per 8 oz or equivalent (e.g., \leq 15 g sugar per 4 oz, \leq 23 g sugar per 6 oz).
- ✓ Purchase lower/reduced sodium cheese.
- ✓ Purchase lower/reduced fat cheese.

Bread, pasta, and other grains and starches:

Standard Criteria

- ✓ Sliced sandwich bread contains \leq 180 mg sodium per serving, be whole

wheat/whole grain and contain \geq 2 g fiber per serving (whole wheat/whole grain should be listed as the first ingredient).

- ✓ Other baked goods (e.g., dinner rolls, muffins, bagels, tortillas) contain

\leq 290 mg sodium per serving.

Above Standard

- ✓ Purchase 100% whole grain pasta, whole grain bread and whole grain baked goods (whole grain or multi-grain should be listed as the first ingredient).
- ✓ Purchase brown rice.

Cereal:

Standard Criteria

- ✓ Cereal contains ≤ 215 mg sodium per serving, ≤ 10 g sugar per serving, and ≥ 2 g fiber per serving.
- ✓ For child care facilities, cereal contains ≤ 6 g sugar per serving in addition to sodium and fiber standards. Cereals that contain dried cranberries, dates, and/or raisins are exempt from the sugar standard due to the limited availability of this product type that meets the sugar standard. Cereals must still meet fiber and sodium standards.

Vegetables:

Standard Criteria

- ✓ Canned/frozen vegetables and beans contain ≤ 140 mg sodium per serving, and preferably be “no salt added.”

Fruits:

Standard Criteria

- ✓ Fruit to be canned in unsweetened juice or water. Fruit canned in syrup should not be purchased. Frozen fruit to be frozen without sugar or syrup.

Tuna, salmon and other seafood:

Standard Criteria

- ✓ Canned and frozen seafood contain ≤ 290 mg sodium per serving, or preferably be “no salt added”.

Poultry:

Standard Criteria

- ✓ Canned/frozen poultry contain ≤ 290 mg sodium per serving.

Beef and pork:

Standard Criteria

- ✓ Canned beef/pork contains ≤ 480 mg sodium per serving.

Above Standard

- ✓ Purchase “extra lean” beef and pork (total fat $\leq 5\%$) and at least 90% lean ground beef.
- ✓ Purchase bacon containing ≤ 290 mg sodium per serving.

Luncheon meat:

Standard Criteria

- ✓ Luncheon meat to contain ≤ 480 mg sodium per serving.

Condiments and sauces:

Standard Criteria

- ✓ Salad dressings contain ≤ 290 mg sodium per serving.
- ✓ Sauces, including tomato, contain ≤ 480 mg sodium per serving.

Above Standard

- ✓ Use lower sodium condiments and sauces such as reduced sodium soy sauce.

Portion controlled items and other convenience foods:

Standard Criteria

- ✓ Portion controlled items and other convenience foods such as breaded chicken and veal patties, frozen french toast and waffles contain ≤ 480 mg sodium per serving.

Frozen whole meals:

Standard Criteria

- ✓ Frozen whole meals contain $\leq 35\%$ of the daily sodium limit (adults: ≤ 805 mg, children ≤ 770 mg, seniors ≤ 525 mg)*.

Soup and Broth:

Standard Criteria

- ✓ Sodium ≤ 480 mg.

Above Standard

- ✓ Ideally use low-fat.

No foods requiring deep frying should be purchased or provided.

* The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010 recommend that daily sodium intake be less than 2,300 milligrams (mg), and for persons who are 51 years and older and those of any age who are African American or have hypertension, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease, daily sodium intake should be limited to 1,500 mg.

** Note regarding populations with religious or special dietary food needs:

If an agency cannot meet purchased food standards due to a lack of availability of food items that meet the specific needs of the population they serve (e.g., packaged kosher foods), the agency should look to find suitable replacements for these products.

V. Implementation

Establishing a procurement policy is one strategy that can be undertaken to support healthful changes to foods that are offered, served, and consumed and will complement other strategies and efforts. Some governments and organizations already have standards related to the foods they offer and serve.

Food procurement policies can be adopted through a variety of official means; among them are statutes, ordinances, administrative regulations, executive orders, and other formal statements. Successful implementation of the standards requires gradual change to allow time for industry adjustment, and, in some cases, people's palates to adjust to the new foods.

References

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. *Improving the Food Environment Through Nutrition Standards: A Guide for Government Procurement*, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention. February 2011.

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May 2007.

Massachusetts State Agency Food Standards: Proposed Requirements and Recommendations. June 2009.

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U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010*. 7th Edition, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, December 2010.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Kathryn Tanner.....pg. 16-17
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- Tom Ferraro.....pg. 19
- Barbara Baron.....pg. 20-21
- Margaret Brown.....pg. 22-23

Remarks from Senator Kirsten E. Gillibrand

*As delivered by Kathryn Tanner, Legislative Assistant for Agriculture and Nutrition
July 18, 2012 – at the New York State Council on Food Policy, Albany, New York*

Thank you for asking me to contribute comments during today's important meeting. Firstly, I would like to applaud the work of Governor Cuomo and Commissioner Aubertine in prioritizing New York's farmers and those dependent on nutrition services. We have a diverse and bountiful state, producing the best quality dairy products, apples, grapes, onions, potatoes and numerous other crops and agricultural products. The Farm Bill includes a number of critical programs that assist our farmers in risk management, financing, conservation practices, marketing, expanding their operations, research and development and pest management. The Farm Bill also includes the most critical anti-hunger program in our country, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which is helping over 3 million New Yorkers put food on the table for their children as they survive these difficult economic times.

I am the first New York Senator to serve on the Senate Agriculture Committee in nearly 40 years, and in this role I have spent the last 2 years traveling across the state holding Farm Bill listening sessions and writing legislation in support of agriculture and nutrition for New York State. After Hurricane Irene and Lee, I visited some of the most devastated farms in New York. The farmers I met with explained how they not only lost their entire crop days before harvest, but that the crop insurance available did not work for them. The legislation I authored – the Specialty Crop Insurance Improvement Act – was included in the Senate version of the Farm Bill and will help New York farmers receive the crop insurance they need to grow our nation's finest fresh fruits and vegetables.

Dairy has also been a central focus of mine when working on the Farm Bill. I am very concerned with the average sized New York farm and the multitude of challenges they face, from inconsistent labor force to skyrocketing gas and feed prices to plummeting milk prices. The legislation I authored focused on easing the transition from MILC to the new margin insurance program by keeping the costs as low as possible for small and medium sized farms and extending the current rates until the new program is in place. My legislation included in the farm bill also improves

transparency in milk pricing and increases democratic participation in the co-op block voting. I am dedicated to keeping New York family dairy farms in business, especially during these difficult economic times.

In terms of the nutrition priorities for New York State, the Healthy Food Financing legislation I authored, which will give one time grants and loans to build grocery stores in food ^{deserts} stores, was included in the Senate Farm Bill. During the Farm bill amendment process on the Senate Floor, I led the charge to restore the cuts made to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). We know that 46.4 million Americans depend on SNAP, or food stamps, and that 23 million are children. In New York, over 3 million people receive SNAP. I am deeply disappointed by the \$4.5 billion in cuts to this program that will have a nearly \$300 million impact on NYS by cutting nearly 300,000 families' benefits by \$90 per month. The bill currently being debated in the House goes even further in the wrong direction and I think New York families deserve better. While my amendment to restore these cuts was co-sponsored by 16 Senators and supported by leadership, it fell short from the 50 vote requirement to pass. I will continue to fight throughout the conferencing of the farm bill to make sure that as few food stamp dollars are cut as possible.

I look forward to continuing to work with the Governor and the Commissioner on these crucial priorities for New York farmers and New York's nutrition services. Thank you.

**Comments of the Hunger Action Network of NYS
to the Food Policy Council of NYS
July 18, 2012**

At its recent meeting last November outside of Utica, the Food Policy Council indicated that it would assist in efforts to promote local food procurement.

We were disappointed that the NYS Legislature, for the second year in a row, was unable to come to agreement on and pass legislation setting goals and standards for state institutions to purchase locally grown and processed foods. There has also been a lack of progress under both the Cuomo and Paterson administrations to accomplish this despite two Executive Orders supporting such initiatives.

The New York State Senate passed the "Buy From the Backyard Act" to promote the purchase of food grown or produced locally. The bill (S.2468/A9031) requires state agencies with food contracts to buy at least 20 percent of their food from New York sources. The Assembly apparently felt that the bill was too robust at this point in time; they and the administration are also worried about triggering retaliatory purchasing restrictions in other states. The Assembly developed an alternative bill (A10206) to instead first establish how much locally grown food was already being purchased by the state, similar to the approach taken by the NYC Council. However, there was little negotiation between the two houses on this issue, despite the general agreement to promote local foods, and nothing was resolved.

The New York Academy of Medicine, which Hunger Action Network helps advise through DASH, has also been working with NYS DOH to adopt food procurement guidelines for the purchase of healthy foods.

We believe it would be helpful for the Food Policy Council to provide leadership in this area.

With the food stamp program under increasing attack in the House of Representatives, both in spending bills and the reauthorization of the Farm Bill, it would be helpful if the Food Policy Council was more engaged in public education efforts in support of the SNAP program. Since the Farm Bill covers issues under the jurisdiction of a number of state agencies, we are curious if the Food Policy Council is coordinating legislative efforts in this area.

The Hunger Action Network is not supportive of either the Senate or the House version of the Farm Bill due to their cuts in the food stamp program at a time when we should be increasing funding and benefits. The bigger problem however is that Congress is failing to reform the Farm Bill to support a food and agriculture system that adequately supports family farmers, incentivizes the production and consumption of healthy foods, ends hunger, and promotes rural development. The Food Policy Council is ideally situated to lead educational efforts of both the public and elected officials about what type of food system we need to create here in NYS and nationwide.

Along with NOFA-NY, Hunger Action Network recently convened a gathering in Rochester of more than 70 food policy advocates from Western and upstate New York. There is an incredible amount of great food policy work being done throughout New York State - and the potential for even more. More than 5000 people recently attended the second conference of the Brooklyn Food Coalition. It would be great if the NYS Food Policy Council was able to help empower and assist such efforts both statewide and at the local level, acting as a clearinghouse for information sharing and discussions, assisting with convening stakeholder meetings, and providing necessary background research.

Several years ago the Food Policy Council held a meeting at the Hunts Point Terminal Market, the largest wholesale produce market in the world. Its redevelopment is critical to the food system both in NYS and on the east coast. We are interested in what steps the Council will take to assist with its redevelopment.

Comments for NYS Council on Food Policy

Tom Ferraro is the Founder and Executive Director of Foodlink, the regional food bank of the Finger Lakes/Genesee Valley region. Headquartered in Rochester, NY, Foodlink distributes more than 13 million pounds of food each year throughout the region.

In April of this year, I had the privilege of attending the “Food Hub Collaboration Conference” administered by USDA and the Wallace Center. The conference showed how food hubs—places that aggregate, store, process, and distribute foods—can fill the voids in the food system and help it to function more effectively and equally.

I was surprised to learn that Foodlink, the food bank of the Genesee Valley/Finger Lakes region, was the only food bank invited to the conference. I sat there with over 100 other entities from all over the country that identified as food hubs, and listened to them talk about their biggest operational challenges: they lacked sufficient warehouse space, trucks cost too much money, and keeping inventory organized proved difficult without sophisticated software. While they had the vision and plan for a food hub, they lacked the millions of dollars of critical assets required of such an operation.

Foodlink brought a different perspective to the table. We have sufficient warehouse space, a fleet of trucks, a sophisticated system for inventory, and many other food-related assets and resources that enable us to act as a food hub that distributed over 13 million pounds of food in the last year alone.

We don’t want to use these assets and resources 8 hours a day for 5 days a week to act on the symptom of hunger; rather, we aim to use them 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in order to impact on the many causes of hunger and to rebuild our regional food system. For example, we allocate freezer and cooler space to small producers that need support. We mediate between farmers and low-income neighborhoods by running 10 Fresh Connect farm stands, six days per week, throughout the city of Rochester. All of these stands offer local produce at affordable prices, and accept SNAP benefits. It should be a State priority to make EBT machines more readily available and accessible to initiatives such as the Foodlink farm stands, which accomplish our mutual goals of increasing access to fresh, NYS produce. Regulations re: WIC checks should also be amended to enable/allow redemption at third-party vendors selling NYS-grown fruits and vegetable.

In addition to creating new produce outlets, Foodlink has added a second shift at our commercial kitchen, Freshwise. We still make over 3,000 meals a day for various programs like Kids Café, as well as running a value-added processing program and offering a curriculum in workforce development in the culinary arts.

These examples demonstrate how a charitable organization like Foodlink can be a leader in the food system by being a good steward of our assets. We will continue to be good stewards as we innovate and grow into the food hub that is needed to make the food system more efficient and equitable. We hope our good stewardship will serve as a model to other organizations throughout the state and to the Council on Food Policy.



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July 17, 2012

The New York State Council on Food Policy
NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets
10B Airline Drive
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Dear Members of The New York State Council on Food Policy:

My name is Barbara Baron and I am the Vice President of Nutrition Affairs with American Dairy Association and Dairy Council, which is funded by dairy farmers in New York, Northern New Jersey and Northeastern Pennsylvania.

As a Registered Dietitian with more than 20 years of professional experience (as well as mom of two teenage boys), I commend the Council for the recent development of the Standard Criteria Guidelines which are consistent with the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. As you well know, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend three daily servings of nutrient-rich, low-fat or fat-free milk, cheese or yogurt for adults and children 9 years of age or older, 2.5 daily servings for children ages 4-8, and 2 servings for ages 2-3.

The Guidelines also recommend increased intake of the Food Groups to Encourage (FGTE) – low-fat or fat-free milk or milk products, fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Consuming foods from these groups helps individuals meet their needs for shortfall nutrients, but most Americans, including children, do not consume the recommended amounts of the FGTE. Without developing these habits early in life, children may be setting themselves up for a lifetime of health consequences. Specifically, the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans linked dairy to bone health, especially in children and adolescents as well as a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and lower blood pressure in adults. Considering this, consumers should enjoy the delicious taste of dairy and feel good about the health benefits.

I also applaud the Council's focus on supporting local farmers when possible. With just over 5300 dairy farmers, New York State remains the third largest dairy producer in the country (behind California and Wisconsin). Our farmers play a vital role in providing their communities with wholesome, nutritious foods and support local economies with jobs and purchasing power.

However, I must point out that the Above Standard criteria indicated in the document will be extremely difficult to achieve, particularly in yogurt (which calls for 23g sugar per 6oz serving.) Most flavored, low-fat yogurts and even 99% fat free yogurts have ~ 25g sugar/ 6oz. If this restriction is implemented, consumption of key nutrients, especially the 3 nutrients of concern found in dairy– calcium, Vitamin D, and potassium, could be affected by restricting an additional 2 grams of sugar.

Major health organizations agree that small amounts of sugar or fats in otherwise nutrient-rich foods can help drive consumption and boost intake of valuable nutrients. For example, The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans state that “A few examples of nutrient-dense foods containing some solid fats or added sugars include whole-grain breakfast cereals that contain small amounts of added sugars, cuts of meat that are marbled with fat, poultry baked with skin on, vegetables topped with butter or stick margarine, fruit sprinkled with sugar, and fat-free chocolate milk.” Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010, 7th edition, 2010.
www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines.

The American Heart Association also recognized the importance of nutrient density in their scientific statement titled, Dietary Sugars Intake and Cardiovascular Health. The statement notes that while soft drinks, sugar, and sweets are likely to have a negative impact on diet quality, dairy foods may have a positive impact. “In fact, when sugars are added to otherwise nutrient-rich foods, such as sugar-sweetened dairy products like flavored milk and yogurt and sugar-sweetened cereals, the quality of children’s and adolescents’ diets improves...” Source: Johnson et al. Dietary Sugars Intake and Cardiovascular Health. A Scientific Statement from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2009; 120:1011-1020.

Certainly, the obesity concern is one that must be taken seriously and the dairy industry as a whole is doing just that. Processors are working diligently to reformulate dairy foods to meet consumer demand in regards to sugar and sodium. For example, over the past five years, the sugar content of flavored milk has dropped by more than a third. The industry has also formulated reduced fat and reduced sodium process cheese and blended cheese for commodity purchase by schools.

However, it’s important that in the quest to improve nutritional profiles of target audiences, the Council does not create an overly restrictive policy that leads to well-fed trash cans. Even with small amounts of added sugar, dairy is a local wholesome food providing a unique package of nutrients that plays a vital role in food and nutrition assistance programs helping reduce the risk of chronic disease and promote better health.

Sincerely,

Barbara Baron

Barbara Baron, MS, RD, CDN
Vice President, Nutrition Affairs



NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

Statement of the Natural Resources Defense Council
Before the New York State Council on Food Policy
Re: Food Policy Recommendations for a Sustainable New York Future

Good morning, my name is Margaret Brown and I am a Legal Fellow with the New York Program of the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). As you may know, NRDC is a national environmental organization that has worked for four decades on environmental and public health issues in the New York region. In recent years, we have been working on advancing policy and legal reforms that can dramatically increase the amount of local, sustainably produced food in the New York region.

We commend the Council for holding this hearing and soliciting public comment on the future of our food system. We also commend the Council for its foresight in working to protect New York's precious and dwindling farmland, support its economy, and improve the health of New Yorkers through its recommendations to the Governor since 2006.

In particular, we applaud the Council's recurring recommendation to support local food procurement goals for state agencies, state-owned and state-supported institutions and facilities and other state-supported meal programs. These recommendations represent an important first step toward improving our food system, and NRDC is broadly supportive of the Council's goals. We believe that using the State's considerable purchasing power to boost the demand for healthy, local food is essential to improving our state's economy and environment and the health of New Yorkers.

Buying local can have important environmental benefits. For starters, New York State is losing an astounding 70 acres of farmland every day – and has been for decades. By supporting local farms and increasing our purchasing of regional food, we can act now to preserve important undeveloped farmland surrounding the City that protects the landscape, natural resources, and wildlife habitat. To encourage this local purchasing we respectfully suggest that the Council's recommendations include concrete purchasing targets for state agencies.

However, simply encouraging food procurement from New York State may not be sufficient to achieve the healthy eating and environmental protection that the Council seeks to encourage. We believe that how food is produced is as important as where. Accordingly, we respectfully suggest that any further recommendations advanced by the Council, particularly those related to purchasing targets, should incorporate sustainability standards. For example, ensuring the absence of meat from animals fed subtherapeutic antibiotics. Additional and potentially more ecologically sound farming methods should be encouraged as well—including organic practices and grass-based livestock operations.

Promoting sustainably-produced local food can improve human health and help address many of the largest environmental problems facing our city and country, including climate change, water pollution, and reliance

on fossil fuels. Industrial farming in other states has resulted in extreme water pollution in nearby water bodies, loss of topsoil, and the creation of the enormous dead-zone in the Gulf of Mexico. In short, concrete government purchasing targets with sustainability standards are exceptionally powerful tools that can measurably boost the amount of ecologically sound, healthy food grown and consumed in New York State. Thereby growing our economy while improving our health and protecting the environment.

We applaud the Council on Food Policy for addressing the critical subject of local food purchasing and consumption in New York. And NRDC stands ready to work with you to advance statewide recommendations with new concrete purchasing targets and sustainability standards. Thank you again for the opportunity to testify today.

E N D A P P E N D I X