

Contributors



Here, the authors of the articles in this special issue of *Public Health Nutrition* give reasons for their commitment to a broad view of nutrition and food and nutrition policy.

Micheline Beaudry

My first degree was in nutrition. After some experience in dietetics, the research for my Masters at Cornell University took me to the Caribbean where I discovered I needed to understand what was producing malnutrition beyond not eating enough. Mothers knew what foods their children needed and wanted to give it to them! Carrying bananas to the export docks did not bring in enough. I embarked on a doctorate under the subtle guidance of Michael Latham to better understand this broader nutrition. Working with nutrition recuperation centres quickly showed that children progressed well in the programme but sustaining these results after returning home was something else. It convinced me that, though necessary, population-level improvements needed more than 'biological' nutrition.

I have since alternated between work in international organisations and academia. Having been told so often 'you promote breastfeeding because we are poor but you use formula', I also embarked on influencing Canadian and other rich country practices and policies towards breastfeeding. The new government of Nicaragua request for assistance in 1980 led me to develop a 12-year co-operation programme between our university and several of their institutions. This was a true eye-opener on the impact of US policies and the broad ramifications of nutrition issues; this experience further confirmed that nutrition is an entry point to, as well as an end product of, other global development issues.

Canadian citizen. Currently Professor of Public Nutrition at Université Laval (Québec) and co-founder of its public nutrition study group. During a 2-year leave, Chief of Nutrition, UNICEF. Formerly Nutrition Advisor, PAHO (WHO regional office for the Americas), and Professor at Université de Moncton and Laval. Member Canadian delegation to FAO/WHO International Conference on Nutrition (1992); head UNICEF delegation to World Food Summit (1996).

Geoffrey Cannon

Since moving to Brazil in 1999 my idea of food and nutrition is transformed. I grew up and worked in the North, in a high-income country, where the priority is control and prevention of chronic diseases out of other contexts and within an ideology of individualism. I am

now in the South, in a middle-income country with gross contrasts between rich and impoverished communities, where the priority remains nutritional deficiencies and infectious diseases, and now also chronic diseases, embedded in social, environmental, economic and political contexts, and where community and family values still survive.

In the UK I started to work on nutrition in 1980 as a journalist, editor and author, then also as a founder and administrator of civil society organisations, then also as a non-government organisation executive, then also as an advisor to national governments and UN agencies. I came to realise that the physiological, biochemical and medical approaches to nutrition, while essential, ignore wider dimensions of which the founders of nutrition science were aware, which are altogether more apparent in the South.

The challenge of this new century is how to sustain the Earth's physical, living and human resources, all together, and so leave a good inheritance. This means that nutrition science now needs an agreed new definition, wider dimensions and broader principles. Nutrition is about health. It is also about the future of the world.

*UK citizen, based in Brazil. Science and Health Policy Advisor, World Cancer Research Fund; Director of Science and Programmes, World Health Policy Forum; Associate Editor (and writer of its 'Out of the Box' column) of Public Health Nutrition. Founder and former chair, UK National Food Alliance (now Sustain). Member UK delegation, FAO/WHO International Conference on Nutrition, 1992; member Brazilian delegation, WHO Executive Board, January 2001, with special responsibility for the resolution on the global strategy for infant and young child feeding (now WHO policy). Co-convenor, International Union of Nutritional Sciences initiative on the new nutrition science. Books include *The Food Scandal* (with Caroline Walker); *The Politics of Food*; *Food and Health. The Experts Agree*; and *Superbug*. Most recent book *The Fate of Nations* (Caroline Walker Trust, 2003).*

Hélène Delisle

I would have gone into medicine, but in those days most parents did not allow girls to get into a career that would divert them from their responsibilities as wives and mothers. I first trained as a dietitian. This was after I decided to pursue a career in health sciences rather than in music (piano), my first love between the age of 7 and 17 years. I soon felt that nutrition had a more substantive contribution to make in poor than in rich countries.

I completed my doctorate in clinical science (with MDs!) after a Masters in nutrition, and was asked to join the Canadian public health team to train medical students at the University for Health Sciences in the Cameroon, where I served for three years. I keep up with music: I play in an amateur trio, and the rate of the rehearsals depends on duty travel.

I like the broad picture. Realising that agriculture has as much to do as health with nutrition in development, I have taken courses in rural economics, and collaborated with FAO for several years as a consultant. I have also trained in law and international management.

Canadian and French citizen. Currently Professor at the Department of Nutrition of the Faculty of Medicine, and head of the WHO Collaborating Centre on Nutritional Changes and Development, Université de Montréal. Current work includes research on food system-based approaches for the control of vitamin A deficiency in Sabelian Africa, and on nutrition transition in the African diaspora.

Tim Lang

My taste in food, literally, was set by a childhood in India where, to the frustration of my mother and doctor grandfather, I ate simply – dhals, tomatoes and rice – but failed to thrive in the heat! We returned to England and I entered the classic 1950s English dietary culture. I thought about this when ill recently, realising why pulses are my favourite comfort food.

My real interest in food began when, as a doctoral student, I lived in a deeply rural part of Yorkshire, north England. I had friends who were vegetarians and who argued and convinced me of the wastefulness of eating meat. I was writing up my doctorate, living on a run-down farm in a house with lovely views but very basic amenities, no toilet, one tap (water from a dubious spring in the field). I became interested in environmental issues and how landscape was shaped by macroeconomic and political questions. The abandoned house I rented, the collapsed stone walls, the untended wood, the broken field drains, all illustrated one response to policy decisions taken far away (about sheep markets), just as the gleaming new cowsheds and desperate pursuit of producing more dairy fats on other neighbouring farms signified other decisions.

And then the UK debated whether to join the European Union. I was hooked on the policy debates. I gave up my emerging career as a psychologist and went farming, only then to have to re-engage with academia to help the farm make ends meet. I have been pursuing the ideas and contradictions thrown up for me then ever since. The most important source of ideas for me in the 1970s was the debate about the function and value(s) of science. In the then British Society for Social Responsibility in Science, a group of us set up two discussion groups, one around food and health, the other around agriculture and

production. Looking back, I can see that my life was set on a path of trying (with mixed results!) to unravel the connections between society, environment and supply chains, and in juxtaposing health, environment and culture through food. I still find food a wonderfully rich area for study and involvement with a marvellous mix of people, movements, data, history, challenges and conflicts; these are still grist to the mill.

*British citizen, born in Lincoln, UK. Brought up mostly in India until school. Studied social psychology at Leeds University. Farmed for seven years. Lecturer, researcher and advisor in education or voluntary sector ever since. Advisor to European Commissioner for the Environment on food matters in 1987. Consultant to WHO for last decade. Chair of Sustain, the UK 100+ NGO alliance promoting better food, with members ranging across farming, food, consumer, health, animal welfare, social policy and environment interests. Fellow of the Faculty of Public Health; Vice-President of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health; Special Advisor to the UK Parliamentary Health Committee Inquiry into Obesity 2003–2004. Latest books *Atlas of Food, 2003* (with Erik Millstone); and *Food Wars, 2004* (with Michael Heasman).*

Claus Leitzmann

Taking a broad view of different aspects has been part of my life's experience. I had the privilege to grow up on a farm near Hamburg and go to school in the city. This let me see my then small world from the rural and urban perspectives. After school I was an apprentice and journeyman in different regions in Germany and Switzerland as a gardener, which deepened my insights in nature in general and my knowledge about the practical aspects of food production in particular. My university training at Capital University, Columbus, Ohio in chemistry, and the University of Minnesota in microbiology and biochemistry including nutrition science, was a contrasting theoretical programme.

After 12 years in the New World (USA), working among others at the University of California, Los Angeles (with the biochemist and Nobel laureate Paul Boyer), and surrounded by obesity, I worked for five years with malnourished children in Thailand – two totally different worlds. After returning to the Old World in 1974 I taught students – also from abroad – and carried out research projects in various countries round the world, which has kept my view broad and global. My interest in wholesome nutrition, vegetarianism and nutrition ecology reflects my concern about the sustainability of our food systems and ways of life – and the future of our grandchildren. The concept of *The New Nutrition Science project* began for me because of this concern.

German citizen. Former Professor of Nutrition (Developing Countries), University of Giessen, 1978–1998. Treasurer, International Union of Nutritional Sciences.

Board member of several foundations, organisations and scientific journals. Advisor to the German Ministry of Technical Cooperation. Co-convenor, International Union of Nutritional Sciences initiative on the new nutrition science. Books include Wholesome Nutrition; Vegetarianism; Nutrition Ecology; and Bioactive Substances in Foods. Most recent book (with Ibrahim Elmadfa) Human Nutrition (Stuttgart: Ulmer Verlag, 2004).

Barrie Margetts

My first job was working as a physical anthropologist on an archaeological excavation in South Australia in 1975. I was struck by the contrast of what seemed like an ideal life that ancient aboriginals led for many thousands of years in harmony with their environment and seemingly healthy. This contrasted with aboriginals then living in Adelaide, who were in very poor health and with clear signs of social breakdown. I decided that through understanding nutrition I could make some difference.

In my studies in England I met colleagues from Kerala, India, and after I visited there and stayed at the Centre for Development Studies, I realised that equity, social justice and women's empowerment could really make a difference to the effective use of scarce resources. These early experiences shaped the way I think about how nutrition, as a biological science, also fits within a wider social and ecological context. Studying epidemiology and public health then made me realise that to make things better, or to keep them well, means translating evidence into action, making programmes relevant, and making them work to solve problems. This is what motivates me to do public health nutrition.

Australian/British citizen, based in Britain since 1985. Currently Reader in Public Health Nutrition, University of Southampton and Visiting Professor North West University, South Africa. Founding Editor-in-Chief, Public Health Nutrition. Most recent books Public Health Nutrition (edited with Mike Gibney, John Kearney, Lenore Arab), Blackwell Science, Oxford, 2004; third edition of Design Concepts in Nutritional Epidemiology (edited with Michael Nelson), OUP, is in preparation.

Tony McMichael

During my boyhood and early adulthood in well-fed Australia, I consumed, unquestioning, a transplanted English cuisine (meat and three vegetables, then pudding). Medical school (1960s) taught us nothing about food, nutrition and health. Not until mid-career, as an epidemiologist-researcher, did I recognise the profound relationship between diet, nutrition and health – and, soon after, the even more profound relationship between our methods of environmental management and food production and the long-term prospects for population health.

Much of the last quarter-century of official 'health promotion' in developed countries, with respect to dietary intakes, has encouraged citizen-consumers to make healthy choices and food producers, retailers and governments to make healthy choices easy. This assumes an unlimited supply of raw foods at source. However, as population pressures increase, as consumer preferences move up-market, and as the ecological resource base declines, we must also make food production and consumption choices that are environmentally sustainable. Beyond my environmental/health interests and concerns, I am fascinated by how human biological evolution was shaped, over hundreds of millennia, by the available range of foods and nutrients. An understanding of this relationship helps to elucidate the bounds of healthy dietary nutrient intake.

My most recent book explores the broad evolutionary, historical and social dimensions of human biology, culture, behaviour and health, with particular attention to the ecology of infectious diseases, of nutrition-related diseases, and of the diverse health-related consequences of large-scale environmental change.

Australian citizen. Currently Director, National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health, Australian National University, Canberra. Previously Professor of Epidemiology, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Member of World Cancer Research Fund expert panel on 'Food, Nutrition and the Prevention of Cancer: a Global Perspective' (1993–1997). Chair for assessment of health risks, UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and likewise for the international Millennium Ecosystem Assessment project. Most recent book Human Frontiers, Environments and Disease: Past Patterns, Uncertain Futures (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

Klaus Meyer-Abich

My life is embedded in a consciousness of nature that has become embedded in my philosophy of nature. I have developed an approach based on the concept of 'co-natural being' which means that we are human beings only in togetherness, or co-being, with non-human nature.

I began professional life as a physicist, though I wanted to be a philosopher like my father; and later got into politics though I was by then a professor of philosophy. The philosophical tradition has always been careful of where one is standing while looking up to the sky. This is also what brought me into issues of nutrition; any philosophy of nature ought to stand this test. If one's ideas about nature no more hold when a living being is taken between one's teeth, there is something wrong with the ideas. Presently I am working on the philosophy of medicine, or rather of health.

German citizen, born 1936 in Hamburg. I studied physics, philosophy, and history of science in Germany

and the USA. Teaching philosophy at the university of Hamburg and Essen, I directed an interdisciplinary institute for the study of environmental and energy issues between 1974–1984. In 1979–1994 I was a member of several committees for energy and climate issues of the German parliament. As a senator (minister) in the state government of Hamburg for science and research I served 1984–1987 as a full time politician. In 2001 I became professor emeritus at the University of Essen.

Massimo Pettoello-Mantovani

My focus always has been child development, health and well-being. For me child health includes all aspects of life including security, comfort, safety, happiness – and the right to healthy food. I spent much of my childhood in a rural area of northern Italy, learning from old generations the need for properly cultivated fields and the magic of harvesting. After my training at the University of Rome I joined the University Frederick II paediatric gastroenterology and nutrition division in Naples.

In the 1980s I moved to New York and worked for 15 years at the centre where HIV infection was first described in children, the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx. In 2004 I was asked to lead a division of the University of Foggia in southern Italy, and am developing its curriculum in food and nutrition.

US and Italian citizen. Currently director of the Centre for Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition, University of Foggia, Italy. President of the executive committee, World Health Policy Forum. Vice-president, Foundation for Science Technology Education and Research. Books include Scientific Research and Academia (ed. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Rome, 2002).

Barry Popkin

My entry into nutrition was when I worked for a year in a squatter area in old Delhi, India, in the mid-1960s. I became interested in health and welfare and learned Hindi during this time. When I returned to the University of Wisconsin I decided to focus on the economics of nutrition for my thesis. I then worked at the US government's new poverty agency, the Office of Economic Opportunity, and helped to write the Citizens Crusade Against Hunger report. I then became a political activist organising welfare mothers and unions, and was involved in civil rights and the anti-war struggle. My Marxist and Maoist perspective was of the need to organise communities at the grassroots to achieve true social change. I then returned to academic work and obtained my PhD from Cornell University. My interests were – and remain – nutrition, the poor, and the interaction of socio-economic and individual factors.

I began my academic career with a position in Asia with the Rockefeller Foundation. After spending three years in Southeast Asia I returned to the USA and took a job at the

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. This institution has allowed me to build my research and training programme over time and I have remained happily ensconced there for over 25 years.

Midway through my career I began to feel that that to focus on small intense studies was to miss the major global socio-economic and demographic transitions. This prompted me to develop the China Health and Nutrition Survey, which has continued over almost a 20-year period now. At this time I also spent an intense period of study and writing, thinking about the major global and historical transitions in food, nutrition, physical activity and body composition. I then began to develop my theory of the nutrition transition. The rest is history! My China work has expanded to many countries, including Russia, and with Carlos Monteiro in Brazil.

US citizen. Director, Division of Nutrition Epidemiology, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH). Director, UNC-CH Interdisciplinary Obesity Center. Faculty member, UNC-CH Nutrition Department, School of Public Health, and also the Economics Department. Convenor, International Union of Nutritional Sciences task force on the nutrition transition. Recent books include (editor, with Benjamin Caballero) The Nutrition Transition. Diet and Disease in the Developing World (London: Academic Press, 2002).

Colin Tudge

My love of biology began in infancy (and I went on to read zoology at Cambridge). Cooking and farming have followed parallel tracks. As a child I cooked ugly bread puddings (and now can do other things as well) although as a London war-baby I had only occasional contact with the countryside until I got a job with *Farmer's Weekly* in the early 1970s, which I treated as an apprenticeship.

My interest in moral philosophy and religion began in my Church of England primary school. After university, with my involvement with farming, this grew into an interest in politics, particularly of the Third World. I always wanted to write (and treat it as therapy, published or not); and so I have been privileged to work for a medical magazine, for *Farmers Weekly*, the *New Scientist* and the BBC (Radio 3), which between them have enabled me to indulge my interests in all the world's habitable continents. In *So Shall We Reap* (my 14th book, I think) all the threads come together.

British citizen. Research Fellow, Centre of Philosophy, London School of Economics. Fellow of the Linnean Society. Books include The Famine Business (London: Penguin, 1977), Future Cook (London: Mitchell Beazley, 1980), The Day Before Yesterday (London: Jonathan Cape, 1995), Neanderthals, Bandits and Farmers (London: Weidenfeld, 1998), The Variety of Life (Oxford: University Press, 2000), In Mendel's Footnotes (London: Jonathan Cape, 2000) and So Shall We Reap (London: Allen Lane, 2003).

Ricardo Uauy

My interest in public health nutrition began with commitment to address social injustices in Chile and elsewhere, and to strengthen the science base of public policy. I trained in medicine in Chile. I completed training in paediatrics and neonatology as medical specialities in Boston in 1975, and took a doctoral degree in nutritional biochemistry and international nutrition policy at MIT in 1977. These credentials and working as an assistant to Nevin Scrimshaw at that time empowered me as an agent of change.

I returned to Chile in 1977 and experienced eight years of the Pinochet dictatorship during which time the economic and social development of the country was abruptly and forcefully changed. Health and nutrition programmes were mostly kept in place thanks to the strength of the professional and academic community. The country unified and mobilised its democratic forces re-establishing democracy in 1990. At this time I contributed to the reorientation of national food and nutrition programmes and the transformation of research and training at the Institute of Nutrition of the University of Chile (INTA) at Santiago, in order to tackle the drastic epidemiological changes the country had experienced. I became director of INTA in 1994, serving in that post for eight years.

Chilean citizen. Currently Professor at the Institute of Nutrition at the University of Chile, and also of Public Health Nutrition at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. President-Elect of the International Union of Nutritional Sciences. Work with the United Nations University on capacity strengthening of nutrition science and leadership training for young nutrition scientists. Chaired the consultation on Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Diseases (WHO technical report series 916, published 2003).

Hester (Esté) Vorster

My training is in physiology. My graduate experience included studies on membrane calcium transport and physical factors controlling blood flow. One night in my laboratory I noticed that I had to wait longer for blood to clot when the experimental animal was fed a high-fibre diet. This is how my interest in nutrition was born. This interest led to an involvement in nutrition science and then public health nutrition in South Africa.

I soon realised that nutritionists are not very good at addressing nutrition-related public health problems. An example is the coexistence and double burden of under- and overnutrition in Africa and other middle- and low-income countries. I also realised that because of its unique population structure, its social and political history, and the extremely rapid epidemiological transitions taking place, South Africa offers great opportunities and challenges to

develop more holistic, integrated, trans-disciplinary and multi-sectoral approaches to address nutrition-related public health problems; as we do at Potchefstroom.

South African citizen. Professor in Nutrition, North-West University, Potchefstroom. President (and past chair) of the Nutrition Society of South Africa. Chair, organising committee (and programme committee), 18th International Congress of Nutrition, September 2005, Durban. Books include (editor, with Michael Gibney and Frans Kok) Introduction to Human Nutrition (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002).

Mark Wahlqvist

My life has been profoundly influenced by my four grandparents, who gave me a sense of ancestry, continuity and future. They gave me a knowledge of food customs and beliefs; and provided me with parents who enjoyed and valued home-grown and cooked foods. All of this was more than reinforced by being a fellow medical student and then husband of Huang Soo Sien (1941–2004), with her known Chinese ancestry, zest for life, joy of living, love for family, care of others and generosity – and the importance she attached to food.

My biomedical research has spanned metabolic disease, public health and clinical nutrition, with particular reference to the major burdens of disease world-wide. A theme of my work is internationalism and discovery of cross-cultural solutions to health and other problems.

My formal education is secondary to my domestic education, both of which informed my art and science. I regard respect for others and the environment as paramount, and the quest for beauty in the face of the tragic a powerful force for our species. The most rewarding aspects of my life have been to have children and students who, and a readership which, builds on my aspirations. My own personal life is currently crafted as a parent of two adult children, and as a widower with wonderful memories.

Australian citizen. Director, Asia Pacific Health and Nutrition Centre, Monash Asia Institute. President, International Union of Nutritional Sciences. Currently Honorary or Visiting Professor in the Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences at Deakin University, Melbourne; in Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine at Monash University in Melbourne; and in the Faculty of Food Science, Biotechnology and Environmental Engineering, Hangzhou University of Commerce, China. Chair, Australian Academy of Science National Nutrition Committee. Editor-in-Chief, Asia Pacific Journal of Clinical Nutrition. Consultant Physician. Officer of the Order of Australia (AO). Recent books include Nutrition in a Sustainable Environment (with Stewart Truswell, Richard Smith, Paul Nestel) (London: Smith-Gordon, 1994) and Food and Nutrition (2nd ed.) (NSW: Allen and Unwin, 2002).