

The Communicator

www.agls.uidaho.edu/fcs

January 2005

Director

Kudos	1
Haberly and Hepworth Reminder	1
2005 Cook's Tour	1
Woman of the Year	2

Food Safety

Food Safety New Year's Resolutions	3
Hand Washing Among Food Workers	4
A Look Back: The Unusual Foods of 2004	5
Book Review: The Jamlady Cookbook	5
Airline Drinking Water Safety	6

Family Development

Panel finds that Scare Tactics for Violence Prevention are Harmful	7
Parents "Going It Alone"—Despite Available Support	8
New International Opinion Poll Finds Global Aging an Economic Priority, but G7 Nations Not Prepared	9
New State-by-State Report Describes Efforts to Strengthen Marriage and Two-Parent Families	10

Nutrition Education

Update from the National Obesity Prevention Conference	11
--	----

Editor

Debra Rumford
drumford@uidaho.edu

School of Family & Consumer Sciences



University of Idaho
Extension

Kudos

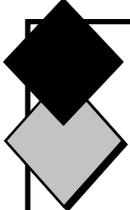
Marilyn Bischoff and colleagues were recognized at the November meeting of the Association of Financial Counseling and Planning Educators (AFCPE). The "Legally Secure Your Financial Future: Organize, Communicate, Prepare" (LSYFF) team was presented with a \$2,000 check and beautiful certificates for the AFCPE Project 20/20 Award. Funds will be used to market the program and enhance the Educator's web site.

LSYFF has been selected to be the first program that E-Extension will fund and format for consumers on their new web-based education site. Marilyn serves as team leader of a seven-person team (representing UI and five other land grant universities) that is developing a national web-based curriculum for Extension educators to teach. Beverly Healy is the Extension educator on the team.

The Extension "Financial Security in Later Life" (FSSL) National Initiative Management Team (NIMT) won the AFCPE Outstanding Education Program award. Marilyn is one of thirteen specialists on the team. This is certainly a positive reflection of excellence in UI Extension. Congratulations to Marilyn and colleagues who have invested so much time and energy in creating family resource management programming for Idaho and the nation.

Haberly and Hepworth Reminder

As you make professional development plans for 2005, please consider applying for the Haberly and Hepworth Fellowships to assist you with programmatic development activities. The **March 1st** deadline seems to sneak up on specialists and educators each year. Plan now to have a proposal to submit. Applications are limited to two pages and will be screened by the Faculty Development Committee. Team applications are acceptable. As you develop plans for your topic teamwork or other special projects in 2005, don't forget about this valuable resource. We are so fortunate to have these generous endowments. We have had two FCS educators share their experiences in the *Communicator* this past year and look forward to



Director
January 2005



Nancy Wanamaker
Director
Family and Consumer Sciences
University of Idaho
Moscow, ID 83843-3188
nancyw@uidaho.edu

hearing from others of you who are fortunate to be able to have this support.

2005 Cook's Tour

We hope you have had a chance to read about our 2004 Cook's Tour to Provence in the recent issue of *People and Programs*. Thanks to CALS Educational Communications and Mary Ann Reese for coordinating the effort that produced such a great article.

This year the Tour will return to Italy for "A Taste of Northern Italy," June 21-30. Brochures will be in the mail to all alumni soon with detailed information about the tour. If you did not receive one and would like to, please contact our FCS administrative assistant, Lynette Brown (lbrown@uidaho.edu).

Tour price will include round trip air transportation from Seattle to Milan, four nights lodging at Villa Volpi in western Tuscany and four nights at the Estate of Serego Alighieri (pictured), just north of Verona.



The cooking, eating, and adventuring tour includes four "hands on" cooking lessons taught by Italian Chefs in the estates' professionally equipped kitchen. Meals include six dinners with wine, six lunches, and breakfast daily.



Tour highlights include: tasting tours of Parmigiano Reggiano cheese producer and traditional Balsamic vinegar producer, guided tour of Verona, San Gimignano, and Siena, and special dinners at three different restaurants renowned for tortellini, risotto, and balsamic vinegar.



Arena in Verona

We will have an English-speaking guide throughout our stay. All transportation, tours, transfers, taxes and tips are included in the \$3,525 price per person. The tour is limited to 20 persons. A deposit of \$500 per person is required to make a reservation. Complete payment is due by April 4, 2005. You may also visit the website for additional information: www.acookstour.com.

Woman of the Year

Athena, an association supporting the interests of faculty and professional women at the University of Idaho, seeks nominations for their annual "Woman of the Year" award. Up to three awards will be given to outstanding women in the faculty, staff, and administrative ranks at the UI. To be eligible, the nominee must be working in a half-time or greater board appointed position. Retired personnel, those in temporary help positions or Woman of the Year recipients from the past two years are not eligible. Recipients of the awards will be honored at an Athena reception in April 2005. Recipients will be presented with a plaque and free membership in Athena for the following year. Nominations are due **MARCH 1, 2005**. We have many outstanding staff, faculty, and administrators involved in UI Extension. I hope you will consider nominating someone who deserves this recognition. Please send completed nominations to Mary W. George, Secretary of Athena, campus zip 2339 or mgeorge@uidaho.edu. More detailed information is available on the Athena website at www.uidaho.edu/athena.



Food Safety New Year's Resolutions

The USDA has suggested a list of fourteen "food safety" resolutions for consumers' 2005 New Year's list. I am pleased to see using a food thermometer is at the top of the list:

1. I will buy and use a food thermometer. *It's the only way to know if meat, poultry, and fish are cooked safely. You can't tell just by looking.*
2. I will use an appliance thermometer in the refrigerator and will check to make sure that the temperature is 40 degrees F. or below. In the freezer, I will make sure the thermometer reads 0 degrees F. or below. *Bacteria grows rapidly at temperatures above 40 degrees F.*
3. I will not leave pizza sitting out on the table or my "doggie" bag in the car overnight. *Foods should not be left out more than two hours at room temperature, or 1 hour if it is over 90 degrees F. When in doubt, throw it out.*
4. I will not defrost my turkey in the garage or in the trunk of my car. *The only safe way to defrost food is in the refrigerator, in cold water or in the microwave.*
5. I will wash my hands and all food preparation surfaces with soap and water before and after touching raw meat, poultry or fish. *Bacteria on raw meat, fish or poultry can contaminate other foods such as bread or lettuce that will not be cooked.*
6. I will not feed my dog or cat old "leftovers" or "take-out" food that's no longer fit for people. *Animals can also be stricken with foodborne illnesses.*
7. I will not leave "take-out" or "ready-to-eat" food in the refrigerator so long that it's forgotten. *You can't tell by looking at or smelling if a food is unsafe. Throw it away after three days and never taste a food that you don't know what it is or how long it has been in the refrigerator!*
8. I will not lick the spoon or the bowl of home-made cookie dough or cake batter made with raw eggs. *Salmonella—a very unpleasant and potentially dangerous illness can come from eating raw eggs—even one taste of raw dough could contain harmful bacteria.*
9. When grilling outdoors, I will use a clean plate for the cooked hamburgers, hot dogs or other meat or fish. I won't use the same plate that held raw meat. *Juices from raw meat, poultry or fish could contaminate your cooked food.*
10. I will separate cooked foods from uncooked foods when preparing a meal, including using separate cutting boards and knives. *Cross-contamination could cause harmful bacteria from one food to be transferred to another food.*
11. I will always put an ice pack in my child's lunch box and my own lunch bag if I have a perishable lunch, such as meat, poultry, fish, milk or eggs. *Foods in lunch boxes sitting in warm classrooms or offices could result in foodborne illnesses. Children under the age of 10 are the most vulnerable.*
12. I will not "save money" by buying dented cans or cracked jars. *Never use food from damaged containers. This applies to containers that are leaking, bulging or badly dented. Do not use food from cracked jars with loose or bulging*

Food Safety

January 2005

Sandra M. McCurdy
Extension Food Safety Specialist
Family and Consumer Sciences
University of Idaho
Moscow, ID 83843-3188
smccurdy@uidaho.edu



lids, canned food with a foul odor or any container that spurts liquid when you open it. It's not worth taking a risk to save a few pennies.

13. I will put meat and poultry packages in plastic bags at the meat counter before putting them in my grocery cart. *Leaking packages from meat or poultry could contaminate other foods in the cart, leading to foodborne illnesses.*
14. If I have a question about food safety, I will call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline toll free at 1-888-MPHotline or 1-888-674-6854, TTY: 1-800-256-7072, Monday through Friday from 10 am to 4 pm EST. *The Hotline is there to help you. Get your questions answered. Do not guess about food safety because the health of your family and friends is at stake. Timely recorded food safety messages are at the same number 24 hours a day. Food safety information is also available at the FSIS Web site at <http://www.fsis.usda.gov>. E-mail questions can be answered by MPHotline.fsis@usda.gov.*

Source: New year's resolutions to keep you safe: USDA checklist for family cooks and "take-out" consumers, *FSIS News Release*, December 27, 2004, http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/NR_122704_01/index.asp.

Key words: food safety, consumer.



Hand Washing Among Food Workers

Poor hand washing by food workers is an important risk factor for foodborne disease outbreaks in retail food establishments. Recent research in Minnesota revealed a need for improved hand washing education for retail food establishment workers.

The researchers, who are with the Minnesota Department of Health and the University of Minnesota, surveyed workers in retail food about hand washing

techniques and training. The surveys were conducted during routine food service establishment inspections.

The survey results showed that only 52 percent of the individuals designated as the "person in charge" (PIC) in the food service establishments could describe the hand washing procedure required by Minnesota's Food Code. The Minnesota Food Code specifies a hand washing protocol that includes wetting the hands, applying soap, rubbing the hands together vigorously for at least 20 seconds, using a fingernail brush to scrub areas underneath the nails and between the fingers, and rinsing with clean water. PICs who had taken and passed a state-certified food safety training course were more likely to be able to describe the hand washing procedure correctly (66%), than PICs who were not state-certified (25%).

The survey also revealed that only 48 percent of food handlers in the establishments could demonstrate the correct hand washing procedure to inspectors. The most frequent problems were failure to use a fingernail brush (in 89% of the incorrect hand washings observed) and failure to wash for 20 seconds (in 60%). More food workers demonstrated correct hand washing if their PIC knew the correct hand washing procedure: 76 percent of workers with a knowledgeable PIC correctly demonstrated hand washing, but only 15 percent of workers in establishments where the PIC could not correctly describe hand washing were able to correctly demonstrate hand washing.

Physical facilities also affect whether food service workers comply with hand washing regulations. The survey found that only 55 percent of the food establishments were fully equipped for hand washing according to the Food Code. The most common deficiencies were lack of a fingernail brush and inaccessibility of the hand sink.

Source: Allwood, P.B., Jenkins, T., Paulus, C., Johnson, L. and Hedberg, C.W. 2004. Hand washing compliance among retail food establishment workers in Minnesota. *J. Food Protection* 67(12):2825.

Key words: food safety, food service, handwashing.



A Look Back: The Unusual Foods of 2004

Here is some fun information to start off your new year. The *Detroit Free Press* assembled a listing of “weird, daring, odd and unusual” foods introduced in 2004. The *Free Press* notes “consumers will decide whether these products make it to '05 or whether they will be shelved as recipes for disaster.” These were collected from *New Product Works*, Food Marketing Institute, Supermarket-Guru.com, and Grocery Manufacturers of America.

- **Pringles Prints:** Potato chips printed with trivia questions so that they are both filling and informative. Eat enough and you could be ready for Jeopardy! For example, How far can a lion's roar travel? Up to five miles away.
- **Grapple:** A fruit made from a Fuji apple and a Concord grape. Rhymes with staple. Sold at specialty stores. But what we want to know is, does a grapple a day keep the doctor away?
- **Jones Soda Co.** Last year the company created a turkey and gravy flavored drink. This year, it did fruitcake, green bean casserole and mashed potato sodas. (All together now—ewwww!)
- **Celery straws:** These super-thin celery stalks are grown with a hole in the middle so that martinis, Bloody Marys and other celery-friendly

drinks can be sipped through them. Now all we need is celery that can drive us home afterward.

- **Liquid candy:** Not in the mood to chew but still want a candy fix? Milky Way and Starburst have launched liquefied versions of their sweet treats: Milky Way Slammers and Starburst Smoothies.
- **Twinkies filled with green goo a la Shrek.** Will this set off the gross-o-meter for kids with an aversion to all things green?

Source: “Weirdos, flops & what's to come,” *Detroit Free Press Inc.*, December 28, 2004, http://www.freep.com/features/food/weird-box128d_20041228.htm.

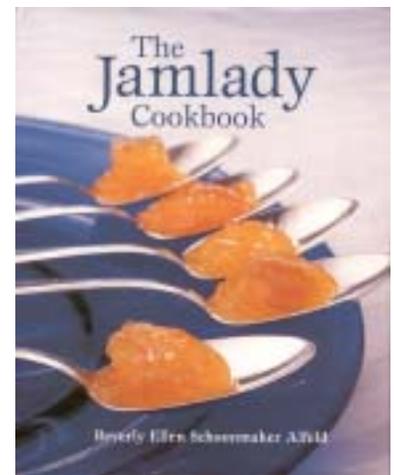
Key words: foods, trends.

Book Review: The Jamlady Cookbook

This recently published cookbook (2004, 288 pages) has more jam, jelly, preserve, butter, marmalade, conserve, spread and chutney recipes than I have ever seen in one place.

For example, there are recipes for Banana Jam, Tomato Conserve with English and Black Walnuts, and Pear and Red Onion Jelly. One chapter includes information and recipes for baking with jams. The author, Beverly Ellen Schoonmaker Alfeld, has produced a very thorough book on the subject of jams and related products. The pictures are beautiful and interesting information about the history of jam and jelly making is included.

However, this book is not for everyone. The wide variety of recipes includes some starting materials that are low in acid. The author provides information about safe processing and advocates that home canners acquire and use a pH meter to test



jam acidity for themselves. Although she discusses how to obtain and operate a pH meter, including the necessity of standardizing with buffer solutions, I am concerned that consumers who do not have a science background, would not find this information thorough enough. In addition, I found the “chatty” prose style to be hard to distill to get to the really important safe processing information.

Source: Alfeld, B.E. S. 2004. *The Jamlady Cookbook*, Pelican Publishing Company, Inc., Gretna, LA, 288 pages.

Key words: food preservation, book review.

Airline Drinking Water Safety



The safety of water on commercial airline flights makes the news occasionally with reports that the water contains various levels of microbial contamination. In response to the concerns, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has taken action to airline water quality and has posted information on their website. Some of the information is summarized in the following paragraphs, but additional detail is available from the website.

In the United States, drinking water safety on airlines is jointly regulated by the EPA, Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). EPA regulates the systems that supply water to the airports and the drinking water once it is on board the aircraft (that is, in kitchens and bathroom sinks.). FDA has jurisdiction over culinary water (e.g., ice) and the points where aircraft obtain water (e.g., pipes or tankers) at the airport. FAA requires airline companies to submit operation and maintenance plans for all parts of the aircraft, including the potable water system.

In August and September 2004, EPA randomly tested the water supplies on 158 domestic and international aircraft arriving at four US airports. Twenty aircraft (12.6%) tested positive for total coliform bacteria and two of these aircraft (1.3%) also tested positive for *E. coli*; water on these 20 aircraft did not meet EPA’s drinking water quality standards. Both total coliform and *E. coli* are indicators

that other disease-causing organisms (pathogens) could be in the water and could potentially affect people’s health.

As a result of the test data, EPA has suggested passengers with suppressed immune systems or others concerned should request bottled or canned beverages while on the aircraft and refrain from drinking tea or coffee that does not use bottled water. While boiling water for one minute will remove pathogens from drinking water, the water used to prepare coffee and tea aboard a plane is not generally brought to a sufficiently high temperature to guarantee that pathogens are killed. In the future, airlines will be required to provide public notification on the aircraft or discontinue the water service on the aircraft when there is a total coliform positive sample result.

To solve the problem on a long-term basis, EPA worked with 12 major US passenger airlines to implement new aircraft water testing and disinfection protocols. (Agreements for the new protocols have been signed with Alaska Airlines, Aloha Airlines, American Airlines, America West, ATA Airlines, Continental Airlines, Hawaiian Airlines, JetBlue, Midwest Airlines, Northwest Airlines, United Airlines and US Airways. Two additional airlines, Delta Airlines and Southwest Airlines, are currently negotiating separate agreements with EPA. Collectively, these 14 carriers represent the majority of US flag carrying aircraft transporting the flying public. EPA is also be working with charter and smaller carriers.) EPA is currently drafting stronger regulations regarding airline water quality, which are expected in 1 to 1.5 years.

EPA has also begun additional water quality inspections, beginning November 9, 2004, on 169 randomly selected domestic and international passenger aircraft at 14 airports throughout the US. The test results will be available to the public by early January 2005.

Source: Keates, N. and Costello, J. “How safe is airline water? Bring your own bottle,” *Wall Street Journal*, November 1, 2002; “Airline Water Supplies,” U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, <http://www.epa.gov/airlinewater/index.html>.

Key words: water, food safety.

Panel finds that Scare Tactics for Violence Prevention are Harmful

Programs that rely on “scare tactics” to prevent children and adolescents from engaging in violent behavior are not only ineffective, but may actually make the problem worse, according to an independent state-of-the-science panel convened in October by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The panel, charged with assessing the available evidence on preventing violence and other health-risking behaviors in adolescents, announced its assessment of the current research.

The panel found that group detention centers, boot camps, and other “get tough” programs often exacerbate problems by grouping young people with delinquent tendencies, where the more sophisticated instruct the more naïve. Similarly, the practice of transferring juveniles to the adult judicial system can be counterproductive, resulting in greater violence among incarcerated youth.

“The good news is that a number of intervention programs have been demonstrated to be effective through randomized controlled trials,” explained Dr. Robert L. Johnson, Chair of the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, who chaired the state-of-the-science panel. “We were pleased to find several programs that work, and we hope that communities will adopt them and continue to develop other interventions that incorporate the features common to successful programs.”

The panel highlighted two programs that are clearly effective in reducing arrests and out-of-home placements: Functional Family Therapy, and Multi-systemic Therapy. Among the important characteristics that these programs have in common are a focus on developing social competency skills, a long-term approach, and family involvement.

The panel also identified strengths and weaknesses in the field of violence prevention research, and made a number of recommendations to shape future efforts. Among these, the panel advocated a national population-based adolescent violence registry, and greater emphasis on economic research

Family Development

January 2005

Harriet Shaklee
Extension Family Development
Specialist
University of Idaho Boise Center
800 Park Blvd, Suite 200
Boise, ID 83712
hshaklee@uidaho.edu



into the cost-effectiveness of intervention to prevent violence.

The 13-member panel included practitioners and researchers in community and family medicine, pediatrics, nursing, psychiatry, behavioral health, economics, juvenile justice, outcomes research, and a public representative. The panel reviewed an extensive collection of scientific literature related to youth violence prevention, including a systematic literature review prepared by the Southern California Evidence-Based Practice Center, under contract with the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. A summary of the Evidence Report on Preventing Violence and Related Health-Risking Social Behaviors in Adolescents is available at <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/epcsums/adolvisum.htm>.

Source: <http://nih.gov/news/pr/oct2004/od-15.htm>.

Key words: youth risk taking, prevention.

Parents “Going It Alone”—Despite Available Support

American parents, often hard-pressed, report a sense of “going it alone.” A majority (53%) of parents surveyed said they don’t often seek support in the vital and challenging task of raising children and teenagers, according to the “Building Strong Families” survey and study, by the Minneapolis-based Search Institute and YMCA of the USA. Indeed, only 4 percent reported seeking help from friends, family, and community organizations.

Parents Say a Little Help Would Go a Long Way!

Interestingly, parents said they were looking for types of support that are easily provided and don’t cost a thing: 78 percent said that talking with other parents about parenting issues would help “very much” or “somewhat.” Similarly, 67 percent said that “others telling them they were doing a good job” would help “very much” or “somewhat.” And 71 percent wanted trusted adults to spend quality time with their kids.

Accompanying the survey and analysis is a Self-Quiz for parents and tips for easing the burdens of parenting. The project is part of an ongoing study of children and families by the Search Institute, a nationally recognized research and social change organization and the YMCAs’ national resource organization, YMCA of the USA. It was made possible by a grant from the Kimberly-Clark Corporation as part of their national sponsorship of YMCA families.

“Parents are central—but often unappreciated—players in kids’ healthy development,” said Peter L. Benson, PhD, President of Search Institute. “This study underscores the many positive things parents are doing for their kids. And it challenges everyone in communities to rally together to build strong families and strong kids.”

“This preliminary research offers a starting place for our efforts. When we reach out to parents, we begin to build strong kids and families, strong communities and a strong nation,” according to Kenneth L. Gladish, PhD, national executive director, YMCA of the USA.

Ongoing Challenges include Lack of Excellent Relationship with Spouse or Partner

Fully half of parents interviewed (50%) said they lacked a strong partner relationship, which the study found a key resource for parenting. And those with a strong relationship—whether married or not—were more likely to feel successful as parents. Parents did not underplay the challenges they face, reporting that their roles were made more difficult by job demands (50%), conflicts among children (48%), overscheduled children (41%), and financial pressures (41%).

Despite this, and in contrast to the popular belief that young people today receive inadequate parenting and supervision, a third of respondents (34%) said they feel successful as parents almost every day. An additional 54 percent said they feel successful “most days” and 89 percent said they teach their children basic values, help their children feel good at something (87%), and do many other positive things with their children, showing them love and support (97%).

All Adults Can Help

The study suggested three simple things that adults can do to ease the parenting burdens of stressed-out family members and friends:

- Provide positive feedback by telling parents that they’re doing a good job raising their kids.
- Volunteer to spend some quality time with your friend’s children, providing those children with your unique knowledge, skills, guidance, and fun.
- Bring parents together in relaxed settings, providing places and occasions where they can discuss parenting issues.

“Today’s parents are more often blamed for problems than supported in their vital role in nurturing children and adolescents,” said Peter L. Benson, PhD, President of Search Institute. “This study challenges everyone in communities to rally together to build strong families and strong kids.”

“Families and healthy children are crucial to our nation’s future,” said Kenneth L. Gladish, PhD, nation executive director, YMCA of the USA. “What more important resolution could we make for the new year than to lend them support in their critical role as parents?”

The Search Institute/YMCA “Building Strong Families” study was shaped by a panel of outside experts on family, and made possible by a generous grant from the Kimberly-Clark Corp. The survey within the study was conducted by the Global Strategy Group of New York. Findings were borne out by related interviews with many other families of different types, across the US. Findings follow Search Institute’s landmark work on developmental assets for children and set the stage for an ongoing exploration of parents and families.

Source: Complete survey findings available at www.ymca.net or www.abundantassets.org.

Key words: parenting, community support.

New International Opinion Poll Finds Global Aging an Economic Priority, but G7 Nations Not Prepared

According to an AARP international survey, most opinion leaders from the leading industrialized nations are aware of the coming impact that aging will have on their respective economies. However, they believe their countries are not well prepared to deal with potential implications that may result. This feeling was especially prevalent in Italy, Germany, and Japan.

The study, conducted in concert with the Wirthlin Group, polled opinion leaders from the worlds of business, government, labor, media, academia, and non-governmental organizations. The respondents were from the Group of Seven (G7) nations: France, Germany, Italy, UK, Japan, the US, and Canada.

"The survey findings are both important and timely as we gather to discuss the critical issues associated with an aging workforce," commented Bill Novelli, AARP's Chief Executive Officer.

The study also found that these leaders see a higher cost for social services, possible labor shortages, and higher costs for pensions, and health care as probable outcomes from a larger older population. Despite the likelihood of future labor shortages, few see any meaningful efforts directed at dealing with an older work force. The opinion leaders saw few or only limited efforts to train or retain older workers or remove the barriers to continued employment. This, despite the fact that six in 10 opinion leaders believe their countries will experience a labor shortage sometime in the future.

There was strong consensus among those polled that retirement income needs to be provided by a combination of public pensions, employer based pensions, individual savings and some form of continued employment, thus creating a "four-legged" stool for a stable economic security in retirement. All categories of respondents concur that the responsibility for providing for retirement income should be shared from the four sources identified. These findings are important in light of the view by most of the respondents that their public pension systems, as well as the employer based pension plans, need to be changed to accommodate the impact of aging in their countries.

Many respondents share the concern that their nation's retirement benefits will not enable the average retiree to live comfortably in retirement.

Overall, the need for changes to public retirement systems is seen as more urgent in Europe and Japan than in North America. Survey respondents from Italy, France, and Germany report a great need for public sector change; however, those polled anticipate low political prospects for achieving these changes. Leaders in both Japan and the UK are only slightly more optimistic. In contrast, strong optimism is shared by most opinion leaders regarding the potential for meaningful change to employer-based pension systems, with all countries but Italy expressing optimism.

The survey asked whether the respondents felt their country will be able to effectively handle the challenges and opportunities of global aging. Seven out of 10 opinion leaders felt that their countries could handle the challenge, but fewer than one in ten felt strongly optimistic in this regard. Leaders

from Germany, Canada, and the US tended to be the most optimistic while Italy was the least. However, few saw current proactive steps being taken to address the aging issue, and the opinion leaders believe that their countries will "muddle through" as opposed to taking definitive steps to meet the challenges and exploit the opportunities.

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization dedicated to making life better for people 50 and over.

Source: Details on the survey at http://research.aarp.org/general/intl_ols.html.

Key words: retirement, elderly.

New State-by-State Report Describes Efforts to Strengthen Marriage and Two-Parent Families

Over the last ten years, every state has undertaken at least one activity or made at least one policy change designed to strengthen marriage and/or two-parent families—although most of these efforts have been modest, according to a new report from the Center for Law and Social Policy, *Beyond Marriage Licenses: Efforts to Strengthen Marriage and Two-Parent Families. A State-by-State Snapshot* by Theodora Ooms, Stacey Bouchet, and Mary Parke. The report is the first to provide a state-by-state description of government-related activities in the new field of couples and marriage policy.

Among the report's main findings:

- The authors identify four main categories of couples and marriage activities: (1) state policy initiatives, commissions, and campaigns, (2) changes in state marriage and divorce law (specifically covenant marriage laws and license fee reductions for couples who have premarital counseling), (3) programs, activities, and services, and (4) policy changes related to marriage and two-parent families in TANF and child support.

- Seven states—Arizona, Florida, Louisiana, Michigan, Oklahoma, Utah, and Virginia—and several communities have used flexible TANF funds (under the 1996 welfare reform law) to support marriage-related activities. Nearly three-dozen states have launched voluntary educational programs, usually on a pilot basis, to help couples better choose marriage partners and create healthier, longer-lasting marriages.
- Traditionally, relationships and marriage education classes have been available mostly to middle-class, committed couples in non-governmental settings. With the availability of government funding in recent years, some states and communities are adapting classes for low-income individuals and couples (both married and unmarried) in a variety of settings.

The federal government is already dedicating funds to marriage-related activities. Over the past three years, the federal Administration for Children and Families has committed at least \$90 million in grants for demonstration projects, technical assistance, and research and evaluation.

"This report shows that a lot more is going on with marriage policy and programming in states than most people realize," said Theodora Ooms, CLASP Senior Policy Analyst and lead author of the report. "However, the efforts thus far are modest and reach only a small number of people. Given the lack of research on marriage-related interventions, policy-makers should proceed cautiously, try out a variety of strategies, and carefully evaluate the positive and negative consequences of these programs, particularly for low-income families and children."

Source: http://www.clasp.org/Pubs/Pubs_New.

Key word: marriage.

Update from the National Obesity Prevention Conference

I had the opportunity to attend a National Obesity Prevention Conference that was sponsored by USDA, at the end of October in 2004. I have had requests to share the information from the conference. Unfortunately, none of the speakers provided handouts of their presentation and did not choose to make their presentations available to the attendees. Therefore, this information comes strictly from my notes.

Session 1: Diet, Nutrition, and Energy Balance

The New Dietary Guidelines: Lessons Learned and Researchable Issues, Dr. Xavier Pi-Sunyer.

- The new Dietary Guidelines, scheduled to be released in 2005 are derived from evidence-based guidelines. The previous guidelines were based more on opinions of researchers/scientists. In addition, the new Dietary Guidelines emphasize food and not nutrients and contain an increased emphasis on physical activity.
- The previous guidelines focused on variety, in order to promote a better micronutrient mix in the diet. However, research indicates that the variety in the diet can lead to overeating.
- Availability and cost of foods may play an important role in the obesity epidemic. Fruits and vegetables are encouraged but they are not always available and it is known that people who consume the recommended servings of fruits and vegetables are less likely to be overweight. Conversely, fast foods, snacks, and caloric beverages (such as sodas) are available and their intake is linked to an increased likelihood of being overweight/obese. In addition, fruits and vegetables tend to be more expensive compared to fast foods.
- Dr. Pi-Sunyer felt that more research should be focused on how to get people to become physically active and stay active.

Nutrition Education

January 2005

Martha Raidl
Extension Nutrition Education
Specialist
University of Idaho Boise Center
800 Park Blvd, Suite 200
Boise, ID 83712
mraidl@uidaho.edu



Children's Diets and Obesity, Dr. Theresa Niklas.

- Eating habit trends of children include an increase in carbohydrate and protein intake and a decrease in fat intake. Some of the increase in carbohydrate intake is due to increase intake of added sugars in the diet.
- Changes in eating patterns of children include an increase in total calorie intake (specifically at lunch, dinner, and snacks) and a decrease in bread, grain intake.
- Physical activity trends of children include a decrease in children taking Physical Education (PE) in schools, and a decrease in the number of children who walk and bike to school. Also, the average child watches 2.6 hours of television daily.

Biological Markers: New Horizons from Genomics Experience, Dr. Jose Ordovas.

- Some gene mutations may be triggered by obesity. Dr. Ordovas found that individuals who had a BMI >30 (classified as obese) were more susceptible to developing a mutation in a gene that resulted in an increase in elevated cholesterol levels.
- Dr. Ordovas stated that genetics determines 30-40 percent of a person's risk of developing obesity. He mentioned a protein called perilipin that surrounds and coats fat cells. Women who have a defect in this protein are more likely to be obese since this defect prevents their fat cells from breaking down.

Food Processing Industry Responses to Provide Healthier Foods, Dr. Leveille.

- This speaker mentioned that focus group data revealed that consumers expect food products to taste good, be convenient and safe, and contribute to a healthy diet, and that they don't expect food manufactures to solve the obesity problem. However, food manufactures recognize that their products can contribute to the obesity problem. And in response, they are developing and introducing a wide array of new products with controlled portion sizes and a decreased caloric density. Also, efforts are underway to help consumers understand the food label.
- Two examples of foods that have controlled portion sizes are Kraft's 100-calorie pack foods and Pepsico: Smart Spot foods (they have put a green dot on products that are lower in calories, sodium, and fat).
- Two approaches to addressing the obesity problem would be: (1) a coordinated effort by federal agencies and the private sector to provide a single message from all sources; and (2) promote programs that are actionable and sustainable such as American On the Move (www.americaonthemove.org).

Nutrition Monitoring, Dr. Allison Yates.

- Many nutrition-monitoring programs in the US (such as NHANES and CSFII) are conducted at the national level. Dr. Yates recommended that bottom up (community) information be collected rather than top down (national) data.
- The types of information that needs to be collected includes: (1) Qualitative data which includes locale, regions, eating occasions—alone or with others, and (2) Quantitative data which includes multiple days of intake and longitudinal information to track changes.
- The goal of data collection should be to correlate food behavior and intake with weight.
- Ideally, it should be possible to integrate data collected from any of the USDA programs.

Exercise and Energy Balance, Dr. Claude Bouchard.

- Physiological facts: Skeletal muscle represents 40 percent of body mass but contributes 22 percent of Basal Metabolic Rate (rate at which a person burns calories).
- At rest 60 percent of energy comes from fat breakdown; at high exercise intensity 3 percent comes from fat breakdown.
- 80 minutes of daily physical activity is needed to maintain weight loss once a person has lost weight.
- Moderate and light levels of exercise intensity are effective in losing weight; vigorous exercise intensity is not necessary.

Session 2: Behavioral and Economic Science

Behavioral Factors in Food choices, Dr. Susan Roberts and Dr. Adam Drewnowski.

Causes of overeating include:

- Variety in the diet,
- Palatability (palatable foods digested faster),
- Eating out (large portion sizes),
- Eating behaviors (eating in front of the television),
- Portion sizes of liquid calories such as sodas),
- Dietary disinhibition (which is eating in the absence of hunger).

Food Industry Response to Encourage Healthy Eating, Dr. Mark Nelson.

- To address the issue of overweight/obesity, the food industry is producing foods that are lower in calories, sodium, fat, trans fats and higher in whole grains and fiber. Some examples of these products are single-serve items and semi-prepared fruits and vegetables (carrots, salads, fruits).
- The food industry is educating consumers by including nutrient and health claims on their products, and making nutrition labeling easier for consumers to understand.
- The food industry recommends that the Dietary Guidelines be more relevant and achievable, and focus on how to balance energy intake with energy expenditure. In addition, consistent nutrition messages should be communicated across all platforms.

Session 3: Exercise Education, Integrated Programs, and Outreach

How Do We Design Effective, Integrated Nutrition Education Programs?, Dr. Isobel Contento.

- Dr. Contento felt that the focus for nutrition education programs should be on eating less, i.e. the message should be on making eating conscious and target children and teach them how to practice self-regulation. Parents need to set limits but they should not make eating restrictive since this triggers overeating. People need to be more discriminating in what they eat.
- Evaluation and measurement tools need to be standardized, tested for reliability and validity, and should include cross-sectional studies.

Relative Pay-Offs for Interventions that Focus on Individuals versus the Environment, Dr. Deborah Thompson.

- Dr. Thompson felt the focus should be on school-based obesity programs since 90 percent of youth attend school, schools offer curricular and PE that can be tapped to address the issue, social networks exist that can support behavior change, and long-term interventions can be conducted.
- There are three categories of school-based programs:
 - Individual focus which is curriculum based and looks at changes in individual characteristics,
 - Environmental focus where the school environment is changed such as a policy change (for example, eliminate vending machines or increase PE),
 - Combined focus that combines select features of both approaches.
- What works? Dr. Thompson reviewed the literature and found that the literature was difficult to summarize or evaluate due to the variability in program components and there was no common methodology for reporting results.

Comparison of successful interventions for improving diet quality versus increasing physical activity, Dr. Laurie Anderson.

Dr. Anderson reviewed numerous studies that focused on:

- Diet quality found that interventions conducted in schools tended to be of short duration (conducted during the school year) and most relied on self-reporting of subjects (and therefore subject to bias).
- Physical activity found that community-wide campaigns were successful in increasing physical activity level of participants if goal setting was part of the program. A recommended resource for setting up community programs was: www.TheCommunityGuide.org.

Individual changes from Nutrition Education Intervention: How Much Can We Expect?, Dr. Tom Baranowski.

- Dr. Baranowski research focuses on behavioral nutrition and physical activity, and has designed interventions based on a person's age and gender.
- Nutrition education programs are effective with youth if they include computer-based interactive games. He found that after spending five weeks playing these games, the youth significantly increased their intake of fruits and vegetables.
- Physical activity programs are more effective with boys if they emphasize competition and with girls if they emphasize affiliation.

Role of Extension

You may have noticed that this national obesity conference did not come up with any definitive answers on how to address the problem of overweight and obesity. However, after this conference, approximately 200 extension faculty met for a day long meeting to discuss how extension could address this problem.

It was felt that the four areas extension could address would be:

1. Role of the family/caregivers and the inter-relationship with environment.
2. Developing appropriate interventions.
3. Focusing on diverse populations.
4. Regulation of energy balance and the role that emotional, sociological, and physiological factors.

The area where I provided input was #2, developing appropriate interventions. We decided to focus on the 2005 Dietary Guidelines and Food Guide Pyramid.

Objectives included:

- Assess consumer perceptions of energy balance message(s) in the 2005 Dietary Guidelines.
- How do consumers apply/use the messages in choosing food?
- How do competing pyramid messages affect consumers?
- Test effectiveness of new tools and delivery methods.
- Develop recommendations for 2010 Dietary Guidelines.

This group will develop a proposal and submit it by May 15, 2005.

Source: *National Obesity Conference, 2004.*

Key word: obesity.