



Hunger Commission Testimony

The Situation

In the next few decades, demand for animal protein will climb 60¹ percent as population increases and the middle class jumps by 3 billion people²³. Further, we're already overusing the Earth's resources, consuming about 1.5x the natural resources we should use in a year⁴. Delivering safe, sufficient, affordable protein to nourish consumers has never been at greater risk. Studies show protein is a critical component to both physical and cognitive development⁵ and plays a key role in maintaining a healthy weight. Children who are food insecure are more likely to have delayed cognitive development, difficulty concentrating, lower math scores, iron deficiency, fatigue, irritability, difficulty getting along with others, school suspensions, and repeating a grade.⁶⁷⁸ As kids across the country enjoy summer vacations, the absence of quality diets threatens the health and development of more than 15 million of our kids – with the highest rate of childhood food insecurity being in our nation's capital.

Accessing nutritious, wholesome foods is a challenge for all Americans. Overall, the U.S. population doesn't meet the dietary recommendations for four food groups—fruits, vegetables, dairy, and whole grains. Intakes for sodium, saturated fats, refined grains, solid fats and added sugars are higher than recommendations.⁹ The impact of these dietary behaviors is stark—nearly 70% of American adults and 33% of youth are overweight or obese, and almost half of the adults in the U.S. have one or more diet and physical activity-related diseases. These are preventable, chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers.

The burden is worse for the 14.9% of Americans that face food insecurity, as they have even higher rates of health disparities.⁹ Over 17 million U.S. households were food insecure in 2013, which means limited or uncertain access to adequate food.¹⁰ Those facing food insecurity are less likely to eat three meals a day, compared to those from higher incomes.⁹ For example, while 53% of Americans below 131 percent of the poverty level consume three meals a day, that percent jumps to 70% for those above the 185% poverty threshold.⁹

1. Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO). "World Livestock 2011: Livestock in Food Security." Rome, 2011.

2 Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO). "How to Feed the World in 2050" Rome. 12-13 October 2009. pg. 1-6 http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/wsfs/docs/expert_paper/How_to_Feed_the_World_in_2050.pdf

3 Kharas, Homi. "The Emerging Middle Class in Developing Countries." Global Development Outlook. OECD Development Center. Working Paper No. 285. January 2010. <http://www.oecd.org/dev/44457738.pdf>

4 World Wildlife Fund (WWF). "Living Planet Report 2012: Biodiversity, biocapacity and better choices."

5 Neumann, C.G. et al. "Meat Supplementation Improves Growth, Cognitive, and Behavioral Outcomes in Kenyan Children." Journal of Nutrition, 2007. UN Standing Committee on Nutrition, 2009.

6 Coleman-Jensen A, Nord M, Singh A. Household Food Security in the United States in 2012. Economic Research Report No. (ERR-155). September 2013. <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err-economic-research-report/err155.aspx>. Accessed 5-18-15.

7 Food Insecurity and Risk for Obesity Among Children and Families: Is There are Relationship? Healthy Eating Research: Building evidence to prevent childhood obesity. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. April 2010. http://www.banpac.org/pdfs/resources_food_security/2010/rwj_obesity_food_insecurity_12_2_10.pdf. Accessed 5-18-15.

8 Kirkpatrick SI, McIntyre L, Potestio M. Child Hunger and Long-term Adverse Consequences for Health. Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med, 2010; 176(8):754-762; <http://www.ucalgary.ca/lmcintyre/files/lmcintyre/hunger%20consequences.pdf>. Accessed 5-18-15.

9 Coleman-Jensen A, Nord M, Singh A. Household Food Security in the United States in 2012. Economic Research Report No. (ERR-155). September 2013.

¹⁰USDA. Scientific Report of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. February 2015.

<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015-scientific-report/PDFs/Scientific-Report-of-the-2015-Dietary-Guidelines-Advisory-Committee.pdf>. Accessed 5-18-15.

Food prices continue to be a significant barrier to accessing nutritious, high quality foods. While global food prices have declined in recent months, consumer food prices in the U.S. are increasing faster than for other goods and services, with year-over-year advances averaging 2.4 percent since the start of 2015. Much of this increase has been driven by sharply increasing egg prices due to animal health challenges from Avian Influenza.

Solutions for Consideration

1. **Innovation:** Innovation – products, practices and genetics –helps farmers produce more food more sustainably, making food more accessible and affordable. By 2050, the United Nations has said we'll need to increase food production 70 percent. Experts from scientists to economists say innovation is the biggest part of the solution – 70 percent.² We must enable innovation more than any other time in our history.

Milk is a great example of the power of innovation. Experts predict on our current path we'll be 80 million metric tons short of meeting demand in 2040, which means milk prices will rise and about 830 million people won't even have access to milk. Even now, 14 percent less milk is available per person than in 1961 – even though productivity has doubled. On our current path – the same productivity and cow herd growth rates – by 2050 there will be a gap in production despite more than 40 million cows. And that's a lot more feed and water!

This story can have a better ending! Today, on average a U.S. cow produces approximately 7.5 gallons of milk each day. Our researchers predict we can fill the gap and actually freeze the footprint of milk production if every year, every cow increases her daily production just 4.75 oz. That's it! A modest increase of 4.75 ounces a day and we can close the gap in 2050.¹¹

It's simple. Many countries around the globe are already increasing at three or more times this rate through their use of innovation.

By using innovation, we'll require 66 million fewer cows. And we can realize massive resource savings, such as:

- 747 million tons per year decrease in global dairy feed demand—approximately enough feed to fill 6,053 Empire State Buildings.
- 383 million more acres of land available—roughly as big as the entire state of Alaska.
- 618 billion gallons less water each year—enough to supply the annual domestic in-house water needs of the 11 largest U.S. cities¹¹

Throughout history, the world's biggest problems have been solved through innovation. Yet, innovation questioned when it's linked to food. Meanwhile, organics and "luxury food" produced without innovation have almost become a status symbol for those who can afford it. The challenge: that type of production decreases the amount of food available per acre and increases food costs.

2. **Education:**

- On the benefits of modern agriculture: Given the dire consequences of global food insecurity, we cannot afford to disregard or dismiss existing or new technologies and innovations that are scientifically proven to increase agricultural productivity.

Unfortunately, there are storm clouds gathering over the science-based approach accepting innovation.

¹¹ Dr. Roger Cady. Elanco Animal Health. Global Food Forward Analysis. 2013. Data on File.

Choice is one of the most powerful things consumers have. But what happens if consumers are making choices toward “cleaner, more natural labels”, assuming they’re doing something better for their families, their neighbors and their planet? But are these choices really better or healthier? Do they come with unspoken, uncomfortable tradeoffs? Many of these consumer choices are having the opposite of their intended effect. They aren’t responsible. They aren’t sustainable. And they just aren’t possible if we’re to keep food accessible and affordable for all.

Actually, because of decisions prompted by perceived changes in consumer preference, productivity of animal agriculture in the United States is beginning to stagnate. Wrong choices based on well-intended assumptions means food is more expensive and less accessible for those with limited resources. We must help consumers better understand these decisions. Turning our backs on innovation risks how we will nourish the future.

- To establish healthy family behaviors: Individuals and families from food insecure households also commonly face high levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, which can lead to unhealthy eating behaviors. Research shows that the likelihood of adolescents in food insecure households becoming obese increases from 35% to 70% when faced with three stressors.⁹

Helping the food insecure make the most of their food dollars to shop smart, eat right and improve child development is especially important in order to prevent childhood overweight and its associated negative physical, mental, and social effects.^{12 13} Evidence shows that many behaviors initiated in childhood continue into adulthood.^{14 15 16 17} Parental and caregiver routines and behaviors are the primary influencers for many

¹² Cook J, Jeng K. Child Food Insecurity: The Economic Impact on Our Nation. Feeding America Web site. <http://www.nokidhungry.org/sites/default/files/child-economy-study.pdf>. Accessed 5-18-15.

¹³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Basics about childhood obesity. Overweight and obesity. <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/basics.html>. Updated April 27, 2012. Accessed 5-18-15.

¹⁴ Tai A, Volkmer R, Burton A. Association between asthma symptoms and obesity in preschool (4-5 year old) children. *J Asthma*. 2009;46(4):362-365.

¹⁵ Jones RA, Hinkley T, Okely AD, Salmon J. Tracking physical activity and sedentary behavior in childhood: A systematic review. *Am J Prev Med*. 2013;44(6):651-658.

¹⁶ Mannino ML, Lee Y, Mitchell DC, Smiciklas-Wright H, Birch LL. The quality of girls’ diets declines and tracks across middle childhood. *Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act*. 2004;1(1):5.

¹⁷ Bjelland M, Brantsæter AL, Haugen M, Meltzer HM, Nystad W, Andersen LF. Changes and tracking of fruit, vegetables and sugar sweetened beverages intake from 18 months to 7 years in the Norwegian mother and child cohort study. *BMC Public Health*. 2013;13:793.

¹⁸ Craigie AM, Lake AA, Kelly SA, Adamson AJ, Mathers JC. Tracking of obesity-related behaviours from childhood to adulthood: A systematic review. *Maturitas*. 2011;70(3):266-284.

¹⁹ Davison KK, Cutting TM, Birsh LL. Parents’ activity-related parenting practices predict girls’ physical activity. *Med Sci Sports Exerc*. 2003;35:1589-1595.

²⁰ Larson N, MacLehose R, Fulkerson JA, Berge JM, Story M, Neumark-Sztainer D. Eating breakfast and dinner together as a family: Associations with sociodemographic characteristics and implications for diet quality and weight status. *J Acad Nutr Diet*. 2013;113(12):1601-1609.

²¹ Salmon J, Timperio A, Telford A, Carver A, Crawford D. Association of family environment with children’s television viewing and with low level of physical activity. *Obes Res*. 2005;13:1939-1951.

²² Spruyt K, Molfese DL, Gozal D. Sleep duration, sleep regularity, body weight, and metabolic homeostasis in school-aged children. *Pediatrics*. 2011;127(2):e345-e352.

²³ Anderson SE, Whitaker RC. Household routines and obesity in US preschool-aged children. *Pediatrics*. 2010;125(3):420-428.

behaviors related to a child's overall health, including diet quality, physical activity,¹⁸ mealtime behaviors,ⁱ screen time, sedentary activities,¹⁹ and bedtime routines.²⁰ Among children who regularly have family dinners, adequate hours of sleep, and limited daily screen time, there is a 40% lower prevalence of childhood obesity.²¹ Engaging parents in behavior change efforts to facilitate healthy habits in young children is both feasible and effective.²² The 2015 U.S. Dietary Guidelines Scientific report calls for individual behavioral strategies to help Americans improve their eating behaviors and supports comprehensive lifestyle interventions and nutrition counseling by professionals as ways to improve health outcomes.

3. Hunger Free Communities/Public Private Partnerships

- Expand the available resources and incentives available in the form of Hunger Free Community grants, incentives and training:

The collaborative and collective impact of the food rescue system along with corporate partners, community leaders and passionate individuals is critical to ensuring an adequate food supply for our communities. Working together, these organized "Hunger Free Community" groups can drive cost and waste down while increasing availability and access to much needed food when and where it is most needed. Additionally, through their joint efforts, critical gap analysis and food desert mapping can align the focus of each organization with community and social efforts toward the areas of highest need. The end result of this diverse array of partners can result in an ever increasing number of Hunger Free Communities, sharing best practices and maximizing the impact and resourcing of critical nutrition and education of those in long or short term need.

Congressional support for these resources as well as incentives and for communities and organizations who help fund or organize these collaborations (in accordance with very specific guidelines) can help jump start wide spread focus on ensuring a sustainable food supply for our communities.

- Creation of a broader array of "Good Samaritan Laws" that protect those organizations who provide, distribute and support the expansion of the food supply through the manufacture, donation, distribution and funding of products and services.
 - Ensuring the sustainability of federal funding of the critical majority of the food available to food banks and other food rescue organizations. This supply, although our ultimate goal is to reduce the quantity needed over time, serves as the basis of creating Hunger Free Communities. Our goal is always to educate, employ and help people get out of the poverty situations that often result in food insecurity, however, our communities will continue to need the critical resources provided to meet the needs of families throughout the year including the critical time periods during summer and school breaks when school lunch programs are not available.
 - Encouraging collaborative efforts between suppliers, farmers, distributors, communities, NGO's and individuals to find sustainable, creative social enterprise solutions to gaps in the food supply or distribution chain. These solutions bring the entrepreneurial mindset to solving critical social needs and encourage broader community engagement where it is needed most.
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Needs

1. Expedited approval process: The food price index for meat, poultry, fish and eggs is experiencing the greatest increases due to animal disease pressures and low beef numbers. Accelerating regulatory approvals that protect animals from disease and increase food production efficiency will also help improving food availability and affordability. FDA's effort with the Animal Drug User Fee Act (ADUFA) has worked to provide predictable regulatory pathways and has helped fill pipelines. As we bring new tools, we must speed their availability to the market. FDA has done amazing work with expedited review mechanisms for human medicines such as the breakthrough therapy designation, reducing approval times to under a year in many cases. We are confident that if products are safe and effective the FDA will work with sponsors to move products quickly to customers.
 2. Increase intellectual property protection: Today, animal health products only have 3 to 7 years of protection. Fueling new projects requires significant investment, but the current protection removes many ideas before we can even consider them. We must have IP rules that value innovation to help novel approaches become more economical.
 3. Public funding of ag research: In the next 50 years, agriculture will be called upon to produce more food than in the previous 10,000 years combined with little or no increase in the amounts of arable land, water or resources available. The efficiencies and increased productivity necessary to meet these agricultural challenges cannot be achieved without a renewed focus on research. Enhanced research, including more funding and better managed programs and competitive research funding, is a primary source of the needed innovation and productivity gains to grow more and better food and help alleviate poverty and hunger. The US Department of Agriculture estimates that every dollar on agricultural research generates 20 dollars for the broader US economy. Yet today, support for basic food and agricultural research is woefully inadequate and on the decline.
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