



November 28, 2017: CNPP's 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans Listening Session

I'm Jill Nicholls, Senior VP Scientific and Regulatory Affairs at National Dairy Council (NDC). NDC is the non-profit organization founded by U.S. dairy farmers, and we are committed to nutrition research and education about dairy's role in the diet. Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) process.

NDC commends the National Academies' two 2017 reports on the DGA process. The February report about committee selection addressed enhanced transparency, increased objectivity, and systematic management of biases and conflicts of interest. In addition, the value of a broader range of expertise and experience among independent experts who review the science was recognized. For 2020, choosing experts on maternal and B-24 nutrition and health will be an important priority; other relevant disciplines may include food science and behavioral science.

The September report outlined a comprehensive redesign to improve objectivity and scientific rigor of the development of the DGA. While it will be the agencies' decision whether implementing all of the reports' recommendations is possible for the 2020 cycle, the reports contain science-based recommendations that would permit the agencies to make choices now to directly build trust and confidence in both the scientific review, and translation of that science, to produce the final DGA. This involves establishing a consistent process using accepted practices and standards of evidence to determine what constitutes a healthy eating pattern.

Three examples in the September report that would help meet this goal, and that are consistent with good scientific practice, include:

- Dividing responsibility for the scientific review process between two main committees: One that would *collect and assess* evidence, and another that would *interpret evidence and make recommendations*;
- Peer review of the Nutrition Evidence Library reports, and increased access of the NEL to the public; and
- Increased transparency during the development of the final DGA policy document

The addition of pregnant women and their young children to the DGA population will likely identify gaps in our knowledge, such as nutrient and energy requirements of young children, and the impact of maternal nutrition on long-term health of her children. Understanding the



latter may require new research approaches. For example, researchers at the University of Illinois conducting the Strong Kids studies are taking a transdisciplinary “cells to society approach to nutrition,” collecting comprehensive data from mother-child pairs up to 5 years of age, including nutrition, behavior, and learning and cognition. While food groups, including dairy foods, are established parts of dietary guidance for mothers and their young children, we have more to learn about building healthy dietary habits across the lifespan.

In conclusion, establishing a transparent and objective process - from beginning to end - will enhance the DGA’s trust and credibility. Thank you again for inviting NDC to this important session.