Christine McCullum-Gomez, PhD, RDN, LD
Food-Based Strategies to Promote Personal and Planetary Health: The Role of Nutrition and Dietetics Practitioners
CT AND Fall Webinar, November 10, 2022

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According to the *Fixing Food 2021* report (pages 32-33),

(page 32): "In the UK, which is ranked among the highest in the [Food Sustainability Index] FSI's subcategory on policy response to dietary patterns, national guidelines recommend the amount of each of five food groups that should be eaten daily. But where the UK really excels is in these recommendations taking into account the sustainability of the planet.[116] Only three other sets of guidelines issued by G20 governments (Australia, France and Italy) take account of the effects of human diets on the environment."

(page 32): “A recent study of [food-based dietary guidelines] FBDGs in 85 countries published in the *British Medical Journal* [2020] found that most were not compatible with a set of six global health and environmental targets, including those set by the Paris Agreement and others associated with biodiversity, land and freshwater use, nitrogen and phosphorus pollution, and the SDG [Sustainable Development Goal] of cutting premature deaths from non-communicable diseases by one-third.[117]

More specifically, if governments were able to ensure that their populations met the recommendations of the FBDGs, the study estimated that premature mortality would fall by 15% and that food-related GHG emissions would decline by 13% (there was no overall effect on demand for freshwater.)[118] This is progress of sorts, but is nowhere near enough. The same study modelled the adoption of FBDGs against Paris Agreement targets and found that projected food-related GHG emissions would exceed those permitted under the Agreement by an average of 140%. Only nine of the 85 FBDGs fulfilled four of the targets, and only two met all six.”

(page 33): “Australia is one of only four G20 countries with national guidelines on healthy eating that take into account environmental sustainability. Its FBDGs are outlined in the Australian Dietary Guidelines, developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council and published in 2013.[120] The Guidelines provide recommendations for how to maintain good health and reduce the risks of chronic health problems across all age groups. Crucially, the appendices state that the aim of the FBDGs is to “encourage people to review their dietary patterns with a primary focus on improving their health, while allowing them to consider ways to reduce environmental consequences”.[121] On sustainability specifically, the document recommends: avoiding over-consumption; reducing food waste by ensuring appropriate product storage; consuming locally grown and seasonal products; focusing on nutritional value (eating “imperfect” fruits and vegetables); and preparing meals in an energy-efficient way. The next step is to put these recommendations in a more prominent position within the Guidelines. An important lesson from Australia’s process, according to Professor Lee, chair of the Australia Dietary Guidelines Working Committee, is “getting sign-off on the scope of the guidelines and the inclusion of sustainability as a pillar early on, because otherwise, no matter how great a job you do, that aspect may end up being buried or excluded”.

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Webinar: Serving up Solutions: Building the evidence on Produce Rx Programs, November 15, 2022. Sign up here: https://rockfound.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_6G7p8YEHRX-oJRq-egRydA

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