



American Society for Nutrition
Excellence in Nutrition Research and Practice

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Oral Testimony to the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee provided by Sarah Ohlhorst, MS, RD, ASN Director of Government Relations:

Good morning! The American Society for Nutrition or ASN appreciates the opportunity to provide input to the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. ASN is a scientific, professional society with more than 5,000 members who conduct nutrition research to help all individuals live healthier lives.

ASN believes it is an essential function of the Committee to generate research recommendations based on the NEL review of the scientific literature. ASN encourages the Committee to include research recommendations in your technical report so that they can be used to guide future research efforts and can be translated into research funding priorities.

ASN encourages the Committee to provide recommendations based on healthful dietary patterns. Recommendations for single foods and nutrients are useful, yet may be somewhat limiting given the complex interactions of combinations of nutrients and foods consumed and their impact on health. ASN supports food-based dietary recommendations and believes that the need to balance nutrients, foods and behaviors to achieve a healthful eating pattern should be highlighted. Healthful dietary patterns are also influenced by cultural, social, and environmental factors that ASN encourages the Committee to consider.

ASN urges the Committee to provide practical guidance related to eating occasions and habits. Scientific evidence continues to show that certain eating behaviors such as snacking, eating breakfast, and eating meals as a family, play as important a role as what we eat in defining our health.

ASN encourages the Committee to consider nutrient density as an important area that deserves continued research. ASN supports recommendations for a standardized definition for nutrient density and for specific types of nutrient-dense foods to be encouraged for consumption to help consumers understand this concept.

ASN encourages the Committee to eliminate use of the term discretionary calories because of the difficulty for consumers to accurately comprehend its intent.

ASN supports highlighting “nutrients of concern” that continue to be consumed in marginal amounts by subgroups of the American public and welcomes recommendations regarding food sources and amounts needed to meet recommendations for nutrients of concern.

ASN supports recommendations for a consistent, standard definition for dietary fiber and encourages the Committee to discuss practical approaches for the general population to achieve a diet rich in varied foods that meet dietary fiber needs. For example, bran and cereal fibers are important sources of dietary fiber, as well as whole grains, that a healthful diet may entail. ASN also encourages the committee to undertake a dialogue on the important role of enriched grain sources, as well as whole grains, in helping consumers meet all of their nutrient needs.

Thank you.