



American Society for Nutrition
Excellence in Nutrition Research and Practice

January 4, 2012

The Honorable Jacob J. Lew
Director
The Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Lew:

The American Society for Nutrition (ASN) is a nonprofit scientific society with over 4,400 members in academia, practice, government and industry. ASN is dedicated to bringing together the world's top nutrition research scientists to advance our knowledge and application of nutrition to promote human and animal health. A professional society of scientists, researchers, and advanced practitioners, we advocate for federal funding for nutrition research and monitoring. As President Obama works on his Fiscal Year 2013 budget priorities, we ask that the Administration give priority consideration to the agencies and programs outlined below that foster nutrition research and monitoring.

CDC National Center for Health Statistics

ASN recommends \$162 million for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), the nation's principal health statistics agency. NCHS surveys serve as a gold standard for data collection around the world and provide critical data on all aspects of our health care system, including nutrition, health behaviors, genetics, and the environment. The nutrition data collected through the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) is especially important to ASN and its members. NHANES is the only national source of data on nutrition-related conditions, such as obesity, diabetes, and high cholesterol, which directly connects diet with health indicators. This data is used to inform federal nutrition policies and programs that undergird multibillion dollar federal food assistance programs. Additionally, this data is used to design research studies on basic mechanisms of disease, as well as clinical or community interventions.

USDA Agriculture and Food Research Initiative

ASN recommends \$500 million for USDA's Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI), the nation's premier competitive research grants program. Data gathered from USDA competitive grants inform us of the food choices, dietary intake, and nutritional status of vulnerable populations, such as low-income families, and provide the foundation upon which US nutrition policy is built. With the nation and world facing unprecedented health, food security, and nutrition challenges, now is the time to renew our nation's investment in agricultural research. A strong commitment to AFRI will provide America's agriculture, food and nutrition scientists, land managers, and farmers with the tools necessary to keep the country competitive and to solve problems related to

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enhancing human nutrition, protecting the natural resource base and environment, and fostering vibrant rural communities.

National Institutes of Health

ASN recommends \$35 billion for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the nation's premier sponsor of biomedical research. NIH is responsible for conducting and supporting over 90 percent (approximately \$1.4 billion) of federally-funded basic and clinical nutrition research, which makes up about four percent of the NIH budget. Nutrition research is truly a trans-NIH endeavor, being conducted and funded across multiple Institutes and Centers. Some of the most promising nutrition-related research discoveries related to heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and age-related macular degeneration have been made possible by NIH support and have impacted the way in which clinicians prevent and treat these diseases. Because of the unprecedented number of breakthroughs and discoveries made possible by NIH funding, scientists are helping Americans to live longer, healthier and more productive lives.

Thank you for your support for nutrition research and monitoring. Please contact Sarah Ohlhorst, M.S., R.D., Director of Government Relations, if ASN may provide further assistance at 301.634.7281 or sohlhorst@nutrition.org.

Sincerely,



Sharon M. Donovan, Ph.D., R.D.
President, American Society for Nutrition