

2019 Food Governance Conference Abstract Booklet

Random Use of Antibiotics in the Meat Producing Animals in Bangladesh: A Wake-Up Call for the Regulators

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Abstract:

Antibiotics are randomly used in Bangladesh for quick fattening of different meat producing animals (including poultry chickens). Although WHO Guidelines on Use of Medically Important Antimicrobials in Food Producing Animals released in 2017 strongly recommended complete restriction of use of all classes of medically important antimicrobials in food producing animals for growth promotion. This research, following a quantitative structured observation found that farmers, consumers and even regulators are not aware of the fact that widespread use of antibiotics in meat producing animals might create antimicrobial resistant infections that could be transmitted to human health through food or through direct contact with food-producing animals or through environmental spread. In absence of the effective regulation and adequate qualitative legal scholarship on the use of antibiotics on food producing animals and its possible impacts on public health, the current study attempts to find out the regulatory changes that could be done by the government of Bangladesh without further delay. First, the present study will analyze available literatures from various disciplines, such as law, public health, veterinary sciences and so forth. In the next stage animal farmers, meat consumers, public health professionals, veterinary scientists and regulators will be interviewed to examine the reasons of use of antibiotics in food producing animals. Finally, based on the mixed methodological data a set of recommendations will be made for the government of Bangladesh on how random use of antibiotics can be stopped to the food producing animals effectively. In doing so the “One Health” approach suggested by WHO will be taken into consideration.

Biography:

Dr. Ali completed his PhD in food law from University of Wollongong (UOW). He also works as Honorary Fellow at UOW.

The Global Food and Nutrition System: System Features and Key Governance Challenges

Phillip Baker,¹ Kate Sievert

¹ Research Fellow, Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition, Deakin University

Abstract:

Governance features strongly as an explanatory factor for why nutrition improves at national and sub-national levels. Yet few studies have defined the global food and nutrition system (GFNS), articulated its defining characteristics, nor the key challenges involved in driving coherent action across policy sectors and levels of governance. In this study, we address several questions: How has this system evolved in terms of key actors, institutional arrangements and normative focus? How can we better coordinate and mobilize coherent actions within this system? What can be done to enhance system governance during the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition? To address these questions we drew from ideas developed at a workshop with representatives from UN food and nutrition agencies, international NGOs and academia; further key informant interviews; and documentary sources. We utilised a conceptual framework comprising key GFNS governance features: actors, spaces, norms, and accountability. We made several observations. First, we define the GFNS as the web of actors engaged in collective actions to attenuate the causes, manifestations and consequences of malnutrition across sectors and levels of governance. The GFNS has evolved a complex set of actor arrangements with significant public-private hybridity; strong normative tensions exist within the system, especially concerning the role of the private sector; the number of spaces for dialogue and decision-making has increased, creating challenges for participation; accountability mechanisms have proliferated in number, yet engagement with these mechanisms has declined, indicative of 'accountability fatigue'. These findings generate several insights for informing actions towards GFNS strengthening.

Biography:

Dr Phillip Baker is a Research Fellow at Deakin University, and is a member of the Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition. His research focuses on the politics of food systems and nutrition policy, globalisation and food systems change, and policies to prevent undernutrition, overweight and obesity, and non-communicable diseases in Australia and worldwide.

What Policy Interventions Exist Globally at A Local Government Level to Promote the Uptake of An Environmentally Sustainable Diet?

Liza Barbour,¹ Rebecca Lindberg, Julie Woods, Julie Brimblecombe, Belinda Reeve

¹ PhD Candidate, Lecturer, Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food, Deakin University

Abstract:

Our food system collectively contributes 19-29% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions, requires 20% of available freshwater, utilises 30% of all ice-free land, is the largest cause of deforestation and is responsible for 20% of global energy use. Food choices contribute substantially to this pressure that humankind is placing on our natural environment. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets, our population must change their current dietary behaviours. This requires supportive policy at all levels of government.

A healthy and sustainable diet is one which (i) avoids over-consumption, (ii) minimises highly processed products, (iii) contains less animal-derived foods, (iv) adopts waste minimising strategies, (v) is seasonal, and (vi) favours local foods. This scoping review will describe the global landscape of local government policy interventions which promote the uptake of these dietary behaviours. Results will categorise the types of policy interventions, describe key attributes of the policy-making process where this information is available and analyse the efficacy of these policy interventions where evaluation results are available.

Countries across our globe are under pressure to achieve targets set within the United Nation's SDGs by 2030, many of which are influenced by our food system. The action of local governments to adopt policy which strengthens local food systems and ultimately supports environmentally sustainable eating behaviours has been limited. By understanding how and why policy has been developed, this study will contribute evidence-based advice to guide future policy-making particularly around structuring and integrating evidence into the decision-making process.

Biography:

Ms Barbour is a PhD food policy candidate and Accredited Practising Dietitian at the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Monash University.

How Are NSW Local Governments Acting in the Food Retail Space: A Pilot Study

Tara Boelsen-Robinson,¹ **Alison Wong**, Belinda Reeve, Anne-Marie Thow

¹ Research Associate, University of Sydney

Abstract:

Introduction: Of recent interest is how local governments can influence food retailers within their communities in order to increase the healthiness of their food and beverages offerings. However, there is little understanding of if and how local governments are acting in this space. The aim of this study is to explore how NSW council policies target the food retail environment and if this differs across councils.

Methods: A representative sample of 20 NSW councils were selected using SEIFA and measures of remoteness. Council websites were searched to obtain four documents (Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program, Operational Plan and Annual Reports) as well as other documents related to healthy food retail. A pre-determined matrix was used to extract information on policy characteristics of interest, and policy content analysis was conducted.

Results: There were few policies directly related to food retail, peripheral key areas expressed in council documents were promotion of sourcing locally grown produce, food safety, healthy food in council-run facilities (i.e. sport settings) and linking agriculture to food provision. Councils tended to introduce food-related initiatives that reflected the characteristics and interests of the particular local government area, for example more rural councils had agricultural-related policies.

Conclusion: While councils were unlikely to be acting directly to promote healthy food retail, there were many actions in peripheral spaces which highlight the potential for action in food retail.

Biography:

Tara Boelsen-Robinson has recently completed a PhD in healthy food retail. She is interested in how we can make food retail both healthy and profitable, and in exploring the different avenues in which to encourage shifts to healthier food retail environments.

Barriers and Facilitators to Delivering the Healthier Catering Commitment: Perspectives From London Local Governments

Tara Boelsen-Robinson,¹ Anna Peeters, Anne-Marie Thow, Corinna Hawkes

¹ Research Associate, University of Sydney

Abstract:

Introduction: Local governments have the potential to improve the healthiness of food environments within their communities. At the forefront of organised initiatives is London's Healthier Catering Commitment (HCC). HCC is a voluntary, local government-delivered initiative that recognises food businesses (e.g. takeaways and restaurants) that improve the healthiness of their food offerings. This study aimed to explore the barriers and facilitators to local governments delivering the HCC in order to suggest enhancements to the scheme and provide lessons for other local governments delivering similar schemes.

Methods: Key informant, semi-structured interviews were conducted with local government staff involved in HCC delivery, exploring the barriers and facilitators to delivering the HCC to food businesses. A thematic analysis approach was used.

Results: Delivery of the HCC through a combination of environmental and public health drew on the strengths, relationships, and expertise of the respective teams. Relying on shared resources was in response to limited funding and the balancing of multiple roles. HCC officers used efficient targeting measures, and engaged businesses by highlighting incentives, ease of joining and the economic and health benefits, however food businesses did not recognise the scheme and feared losing customers. The potential to leverage recruited business to make further changes, increasing the recognition of the HCC, and measuring maintenance were key suggestions that would enhance the delivery, uptake and impact of the scheme.

Conclusion: This study demonstrates the barriers and facilitators of HCC delivery and provides valuable lessons for other local governments considering similar retail-focused initiatives.

Biography:

Tara Boelsen-Robinson has recently completed a PhD in healthy food retail. She is interested in how we can make food retail both healthy and profitable, and in exploring the different avenues in which to encourage shifts to healthier food retail environments.

Food Regulation and Role of Law to Promote Food and Nutrition Security to Address Diet Related NCDs in an Environment of Free Trade in Pacific SIDS: A Case Study of Vanuatu

Sunita Bois-Singh¹

¹ PhD Candidate, Queensland University of Technology

Abstract:

Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) of the South Pacific rely on imported food for food security due to modest local food industries. Global free trade has exposed local markets to increased foreign products resulting in ‘food dumping of agricultural by-products such as turkey tails and lamb flaps’ and adulterated processed food. Traditional diets consisted of root crops, meat, seafood, vegetables and fruits which were high in nutrition. Imported food such as noodles, rice, biscuits, canned products and sweet snacks are cheaper but energy-dense and nutritionally poor. Change in food habits from traditional staple food to imported food is linked to increased conditions of overweight and obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in SIDS. To protect public health, imported food labels need to be comprehensible in local languages (at least in English), provide correct information regarding food composition, ingredients and nutritive value and expiry dates. In the absence of robust food laws and food regulatory systems, SIDS such as Vanuatu are experiencing lack of a uniform evaluation system regarding the nutritive value of food and compliance to international food standards such as the Codex Alimentarius. This presentation explores the role of law in addressing the above issues and how effectively SIDS such as Vanuatu can introduce laws and regulatory mechanisms as World Trade Organization (WTO) member States. It also identifies components of an appropriate legal and food regulatory framework to promote food and nutrition security, food sovereignty and the right to health post trade liberalisation in Vanuatu.

Biography:

Sunita Bois-Singh is a PhD Candidate at the QUT School of Law, as well as a Law Academic University of the South Pacific (USP), School of Law, Legal Practitioner Fiji and Vanuatu. Her research interests are in Contract, Corporate, Trade Law and Health to accomplish healthy food systems.

Experiential-based Nutrition Programs for Primary School-aged Children: Which Ones Work Best?

Karen Charlton,¹ Teagan Comerford, Natika Deavin, Karen Walton

¹ Professor, University of Wollongong

Abstract:

The effectiveness of experiential-based nutrition programs that aim to improve food security, and dietary knowledge, attitudes and practices in primary school-aged children has not been established. A systematic literature review was undertaken to synthesize evidence to date and to identify elements in such programs that may be most promising. The search terms 'food security', 'school', 'nutrition' and 'program' were applied to the databases of CINAHL, Scopus, Web of Science, Medline and Academic Search complete. Of the 5368 articles identified from the initial search, 56 articles were eligible for inclusion. Papers were categorised by type of intervention including: food provision (n=13); nutrition education and games(n=2); cooking (n=10); and gardening (n=23); taste testing (n=7); and farm field trips (n=1). Interventions that included food provision most strongly improved food security status through increased availability and access to foods on a regular basis. Nutrition education (when combined with taste testing), cooking-related activities and gardening interventions increased children's willingness to taste unfamiliar foods, their food preparation skills, their nutritional knowledge and ability to identify and try new fruits and vegetables. The findings of this review suggest that nutrition education programs in primary school children need to be experiential in nature, include multiple components, have parental involvement and focus specifically on vegetable intake.

Biography:

Karen is a Professor that teaches Public Health Nutrition and Nutritional Epidemiology at the University of Wollongong. She is an Advanced Accredited Practicing Dietitian and a Registered Public Health Nutritionist. She is an established researcher in the field of public health policies and food law to improve the health of populations.

The Environmental Impact of Meat Consumption and Production: Regulatory Strategies

Victoria Chen¹

¹ Honours Student, University of Sydney Business School

Abstract:

Australia's livestock industry plays a crucial role in the national economy, accounting for 45% of the value of gross agricultural output and generating annual returns in excess of \$22 billion. Australia's red meat industry comprises over 75,000 farming businesses and reach over 100 global markets, placing the nation as the world's second largest beef exporter. At 115kg/year, Australians' meat consumption ranks the third highest in the world.

It is important however to recognise that society's dietary choices are symbiotically interconnected with the health of the natural environment. Despite being the most environmentally harmful food choice on the market, remarkably little regulatory attention has been afforded to mitigating the negative impacts of meat.

This paper analyses environmental detriments of Australia's animal agriculture industry before offering a holistic range of regulatory options, aligned with and grounded by established regulatory theory. Key regulatory strategies, covering both ends of the supply-demand spectrum, will be assessed and recommended. It is argued that an incremental approach to business regulation should be adopted — beginning with encouraging the industry to regulate itself, before gradually escalating up to more coercive and direct measures. Further, this paper explores methods to address the upward trajectory of meat consumption, in addition to how agribusiness can diversify towards more sustainable product offerings. Ultimately, this paper argues that a cultural shift, underpinned by robust legal and regulatory frameworks that foster corporate accountability and transparency, is necessary to mitigate the dangers of existing meat production and consumption practices.

Biography:

I am a BCom(Hons)/LLB student at the University of Sydney, passionate about sustainability and environmental issues. This year I am undertaking BCom Honours, under the supervision of Dr Cary Di Lernia in the Discipline of Business Law. My thesis is looking at regulating the environmental impact of meat production and consumption.

A Socioecological Model of Factors Influencing Sweet Drink Consumption Among Preschool Aged Children

Alexandra Chung,¹ Kathryn Backholer, Christina Zorbas, Lisa Hanna, Anna Peeters

¹ PhD Candidate, Monash University

Abstract:

Dietary behaviours including consumption of high sugar food and drinks are key risk factors for childhood obesity and dental decay. Sweet drink consumption is the single greatest contributor to free sugars consumed by Australian children. However little is known about the factors influencing consumption of sweet drinks, particularly among preschool-aged children.

Focus groups and semi-structured interviews were conducted with parents (n=25) residing in different socioeconomic areas across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria to examine parents' perceptions of factors influencing sweet drink consumption among preschool-aged children. Transcripts were analysed thematically and the factors influencing sweet drink consumption were aligned with the socioecological model.

At an individual level, drink choices were influenced by health knowledge, health beliefs, and parenting skills and confidence. Within the social domain, peer and family influence, social norms, and marketing were identified as important. From an environmental perspective, sweet drink availability, price and settings-based policies were influential.

Strategies identified by participants to support healthier choices included health education at an individual level; restricting unhealthy marketing, and positive role modelling within the social domain; and improved access to water, decreased sweet drink availability and price modification within the environmental domain.

Contrary to common rhetoric, this study suggests children's sweet drink consumption is often influenced by factors beyond parental control. Findings indicate opportunities for policies and strategies across socio-ecological domains to enable healthier drink behaviours among preschool aged children.

Biography:

Alexandra is a PhD Candidate at Monash University's School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine and Deakin University's Global Obesity Centre. Through her research Alex aims to generate evidence to support the implementation of policies that will reduce socioeconomic inequalities in childhood obesity.

The Barriers of Policy Transfer in Health Policy in the Americas: The Case of the PAHO Plan of Action for the Prevention of Obesity in Children and Adolescents

Luis Manel Encarnación Cruz¹

¹ Senior Capacity Development Officer, NCD Alliance

Abstract:

Policy transfer entails the process of evaluating experiences in one setting to implement them in another. This research assesses policy transfer in health policy in the Americas by analysing the factors that have helped and hindered the adoption of the Plan of Action for the Prevention of Obesity in Children and Adolescents (PAPOCA), and taking the cases of Colombia and Mexico as examples of policy change at the national level. The Plan was unanimously approved by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) in 2014, responding to a childhood obesity epidemic in the region, which would ideally be translated into national policies after its approval, but progress in its adoption has been unequal across countries. This is demonstrated by interviews with key informants from regional and national representatives of the public, private and social sectors. This work elucidates that PAHO is a policy transfer agent and the Plan an ignitor of this process, which is influenced by country-specific contexts, the power of stakeholders of the three different sectors, as well as processes of agenda setting. Thus, key reasons for an uneven adoption include industry interference, contrasting views among actors, existing prevention policies, the sometimes-limited power of civil society organisations and ministries of health, and the non-binding nature of the Plan.

Biography:

Luis Manuel Encarnacion holds a MSc in International Health Policy at the London School of Economics, and certificates in legislation and NGO management. Has 7 years of experience advocating for NCD prevention in Mexico/LATAM. Current member of NCD Child's Governing Council, and Senior Capacity Development Officer at NCD Alliance.

Dietary Recommendation and Methodological Quality Comparison in the Canadian Dietary Guidelines for 2007 and 2019 - A Case Study

Zhaoli Dai-Keller,¹ Cynthia M Kroeger, Lisa A Bero

¹ Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Sydney

Abstract:

Little is known about the methods used for dietary guideline recommendation development, particularly the changes between revisions of a national dietary guideline. This case study compares differences in dietary recommendations and development methods used between the 2007 and 2019 Canada dietary guidelines. Two reviewers independently extracted dietary intake recommendations and focused on vitamin D, calcium, dietary fat, and fat-containing foods and compared development methods to the gold standard methods outlined in the 2014 World Health Organization handbook for guideline development. Main differences in recommendations were found for vitamin D supplementation, dairy consumption, plant-based protein intake, and intake of fat-containing foods. Specifically, the 2019 guideline dropped recommendations to supplement vitamin D and consume milk and emphasizes plant-based food consumption, eating habits, and using food labels. Further, it de-emphasizes serving sizes for food intakes that were recommended in the 2007 guideline and shifts focus from cutting total fat to replacing with foods containing mono- and polyunsaturated fats. Methods used to develop the 2019 guideline are more transparent and evidence-based, with substantiating evidence coming from systematic reviews and health organization authoritative reports and excluding industry commission reports. Compared to the 2007 Canada dietary guideline, the 2019 guideline recommendations have integrated healthy food choices primarily from plant-based foods with a substantial improvement in methodological quality. Future studies will assess quality of the evidence underpinning the recommendations and identify factors that may shift the change of the recommendations.

Biography:

Dr. Dai-Keller is a nutrition epidemiologist with a research focus on the impact of nutrition, considering cultural/ethnic and social economic differences, in obesity and ageing health. Her work has recently expanded to assess methodological and evidence quality in public health guideline recommendations for dietary intakes of foods and nutrients.

(Mis)representing and Responding to the Problem of Food Security Within Animal Cruelty Policy Debates Around the Live Export Trade

Brodie Evans,¹ Hope Johnson

¹ Visiting Fellow, Queensland University of Technology

Abstract:

Research on ethical issues within food systems is often human-centric and, as a consequence, overlooks animal-centric policy debates where policy decisions about food security are being made. This is especially present in recent Australian policy debates around the issue of live export of animals for food consumption. Using Foucault's tools, we present findings of a discourse analysis illustrating how the concern of 'food security' is conceptualised and governed within these debates. It focuses on how the problem of food security shaped Indonesians as 'victims' of food insecurity due to an inability to produce its own sufficient quantities of animal protein, reproducing dominant narratives of food governance. In doing so, Australians were positioned as 'heroes', with intensive animal agriculture, and the live export trade specifically, a vehicle to address global food insecurity. As a result, we pose the need for more engagement from agri-food scholars and activists producing resisting food security discourses in policy discussions about the treatment of animals, as this is a key space of food governance.

Biography:

Dr Brodie Evans is a Visiting Fellow in the School of Justice, Queensland University of Technology. His research examines discourse, law and policy, and political activism, in relation to issues of social and criminal justice. Brodie is particularly interested in how Foucault's tools can be utilised to expand understandings of human-animal dynamics and governance.

Democratizing Food Governance and Deliberative Policy-Making

Mei-Fang Fan¹

¹ Professor, Institute of Science, Technology and Society, National Yang-Ming University

Abstract:

Researches have argued for the need to develop novel spaces for public engagement in food policymaking to foster trust and legitimacy. Drawing on the case of public deliberation on whether to loosen the Taiwan's ban on food imports from the Japan's radiation-affected Fukushima region, this paper adopts a deliberative system approach to examine forms of public participation and deliberation in decision-making processes, and analyzes how various components perform different functions, and complement each other in deliberative systems. The Taiwanese government's considering lifting the ban on food imports from four prefectures of Fukushima nuclear disaster except Fukushima has encountered stiff opposition. Under vociferous opposition and political pressure, the government asked the civic third party to design and conduct public hearings in December 2016 to facilitate stakeholder dialogues and risk communication. Civic groups argued that the government should not rashly allow food imports from the prefectures before conducting a comprehensive risk assessment and gaining public trust. Public forums conducted by civic groups provided an opportunity for people to learn to communicate with others who might have competing points and views, which has potential to contribute to knowledge production and to shape public discourses. It analyzes different transmission mechanisms, including combing election and referendums process, campaign, petition, political consumerism and deliberative forums that transmit ideas and claims from the public space to empower space. It presents an analysis of civic activism engages in democratising science and simultaneously participates in shaping policy making.

Biography:

Mei-Fang Fan is Professor at the Institute of Science, Technology and Society, National Yang-Ming University. She holds a Doctoral degree in Environment and Society from Lancaster University. Research interests include environmental justice and governance; deliberative democracy and public participation in decision-making on risk; local knowledge and citizen science.

Assessing the Development of Nutrient Reformulation Targets for Australia

Clare Farrand,¹ Emalie Sparks, Polly Huang, Jason Wu, Bruce Neal

¹ Senior Public Health Nutritionist, George Institute for Global Health

Abstract:

Purpose: To review the nutrient reformulation targets proposed by the Australian Healthy Food Partnership (HFP) against FoodSwitch (FS) data to assess whether the targets were feasible, reasonable and appropriate.

Methods: The approach undertaken by the HFP to develop the targets was replicated using three years of FS data. Number of products, mean, standard deviation, median and range were derived. The 33rd percentile of the FS data and the proportion of products already meeting the draft targets were calculated. These data were compared against results from the FoodTrack database, and against existing targets (e.g. UK salt targets).

Results: 8434 products from the FS database were mapped against the 30 draft HFP targets for sodium, 2875 products across 7 categories for sugar and 612 products across 5 categories for saturated fat. 14 of 30 draft HFP targets for sodium, 1 of 7 targets for sugar, and 1 of 5 targets for saturated fat were determined to be feasible, reasonable and appropriate. For the remaining 26 reformulation targets, the FS data indicated that these targets were too conservative. We therefore proposed lower targets than the draft targets.

Conclusions: The data indicate that the majority of targets proposed for Australia could be strengthened. Strong governance, and robust monitoring and evaluation strategies will be crucial to the success of the initiative. The FS database (available in 10 countries worldwide) provides an opportunity to compare proposed targets against the current food environment, and facilitate target setting, as well as monitoring towards achieving the targets.

Biography:

Clare is a public health nutritionist, with over 10 years' experience working in public health on the primary prevention of nutrition related illness. Clare has extensive experience in public health advocacy, stakeholder engagement and translating research in to public health action; influencing public health policies at the national and international level.

Access to Healthy Food: A Solomon Islands Case Study

Penny Farrell,¹ Joel Negin, Anne-Marie Thow, Michael Sharp, Pavle Vizintin

¹ PhD Candidate, Sydney School of Public Health, University of Sydney

Abstract:

Populations in Pacific Island Countries are transitioning away from diets high in locally-grown and caught foods – towards diets high in energy-dense, processed, and often imported foods. These diets are a major contributing factor to the burden of non-communicable diseases, which cause three-quarters of adult deaths in the region. Solomon Islands is in the midst of this nutrition transition. Our analysis examined the most important determinants of access to a healthy diet in Solomon Islands.

We used a country case study approach with two main arms: a qualitative study involving semi-structured questions about food access, a food frequency questionnaire, and a modified Radimer/Cornell measure of food security. We also performed multivariate analysis of the latest country-level Solomon Islands Household Income and Expenditure Survey dataset.

All participants reported food insecurity. The reasons for food choice involved an interplay of factors including physical access and convenience – but price was the most important. The quantitative study showed a difference between urban and rural areas in terms of food price and food source. High household wealth was most strongly associated with fruit and non-starchy vegetable consumption.

Taken together, our research shows that in Solomon Islands the food environment is dysfunctional largely due to cheap unhealthy food availability, which is influenced by rapid rural-to-urban migration, unhealthy food imports, and with roots in a post-colonial food culture. Cash-based food acquisition is increasingly important especially in urban areas, meaning improving affordability of healthy food should be a major priority area for policy makers involved in non-communicable disease prevention.

Biography:

Penny Farrell is a PhD candidate in the Sydney School of Public Health and her thesis is about measuring access to healthy food in the Pacific.

Impact of Trade and Investment Agreements on Policy Space for Food Environment Regulation

Kelly Garton,¹ Boyd Swinburn, Anne-Marie Thow, Jane Kelsey

¹ PhD Candidate, University of Auckland

Abstract:

Limited literature suggests that international trade and investment agreements (TIAs) can constrain policy space for public health nutrition. This study aimed to determine whether, how, and to what extent TIAs may constrain governments' policy space for key food policies.

We conducted 22 vignette-style interviews with global stakeholders using incrementally-changing policy scenarios for: front-of-pack (FOP) nutrition labeling, restriction of advertising to children, and regulation of nutrient composition. Responses were analysed thematically to determine under what conditions these policies could trigger trade or investment issues.

TIAs influence policy space in terms of both substantive and process constraints. However, contextual factors such as actors/institutions and power structures, political will and risk tolerance, media attention and public opinion tend to moderate TIA influence on policy space. For FOP labeling, substantive constraints are likely to be mitigated by comprehensive, evidence-based policy objectives and design. For regulating nutrient content, removal of trans fats seemed highly viable, whereas challenges for regulating sodium content related to a difficulty to draft, implement and enforce legislation rather than pressure from TIAs. For restricting advertising of unhealthy foods, there was a wider range of opinions on TIAs' policy constraining influence, with a greater difficulty being the regulation of digital marketing.

Governments are less constrained by TIA influence on food policy space than commonly perceived. Awareness of legal risk, moderating factors, and careful policy design are key to mitigating challenges. Building capacity within health ministries to interpret TIA text for policy implications is needed.

Biography:

Ms. Garton's background is interdisciplinary, having done research in health geography, international development, NCD prevention, and food sovereignty. Her doctoral research adopts a political economy lens to examine the challenges in global governance to address obesity and other issues of health equity, focusing on international trade and investment regimes.

Can We Use Human Rights Arguments to More Effectively Address Overweight and Obesity Prevention in Australia?

Anita George¹

¹ Manager, McCabe Centre for Law and Cancer

Abstract:

In 2014-15, 34.7% of children in the lowest socioeconomic areas in Australia were overweight or obese compared to 22.3 % in the highest socioeconomic areas. The burden of overweight and obesity is particularly borne by vulnerable members of the community including those living in poverty, children, and indigenous communities. Action to address overweight and obesity prevention must address social inequities by protecting human rights.

Unlike similarly situated liberal democratic countries, Australia does not have a Bill of Rights to protect human rights. This has led many to question – are human rights obligations relevant to the promotion of public health in Australia? The answer is a resounding yes. Australia is a party to several international human rights conventions that have implications for overweight and obesity prevention including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights which incorporates the right to health. Australia has also committed to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Finally, there are rights under domestic law including national and state legislation that are relevant to addressing overweight and obesity.

This paper will examine the relevance of human rights obligations and sustainable development goals to address the social inequities underpinning overweight and obesity in Australia, drawing on best practice examples from around the world where the nexus between human rights and overweight and obesity prevention has been successfully leveraged. The paper will provide practical examples of action that can be taken by governments, civil society and academia.

Biography:

Anita George is the Manager-Prevention at the McCabe Centre for Law and Cancer focusing on the interrelationship between non-communicable disease prevention, international trade and investment law, human rights and sustainable development. She is a lawyer, member of World Cancer Research Fund International's Policy Advisory Group and General Sir John Monash Scholar.

Is it Time to Reconsider How We Define Food?

Tim Gill¹

¹ Professor, Public Health Nutrition, University of Sydney

Abstract:

Currently there is a significant disconnect between how food is defined in the regulatory domain and how the community commonly characterises food. Under the Food Standards Australia New Zealand Act 1991 food is defined as "any substance or thing of a kind used, capable of being used, or represented as being for use, for human consumption". However, when the public discusses food they are more likely to utilise a functional definition that reflects food's role in our physical, social, and emotional wellbeing – with a strong nourishment perspective.

There are currently many highly processed products based on ingredients not directly derived from food that also contain significant amounts of added salt, fat and sugar but contribute little of nutritional value to the overall diet that might not be classified as food if we applied a more functional definition. Current nutrition guidance systems do not handle these products effectively as they fail to acknowledge their true function related to sensory reward rather than nourishment. As such, they are more aligned with therapeutic goods or recreational drugs such as alcohol than food.

This presentation will explore community perceptions of what food is and the potential impact that reclassifying certain products to remove them from our definition of food might have on nutrition guidance systems, the balance of the "food" industry, and the development of fiscal and regulatory interventions to improve the nutrition of Australians.

Biography:

Professor Tim Gill has wide experience as an academic and within government departments and health agencies and has authored several key reports and scientific papers on nutrition, obesity and chronic disease. His research focuses on improving food environments and tailoring of advice for the prevention and management of obesity.

South West Food Community: Connecting Community and Government to Improve Food Security

Stephanie Godrich,¹ Jennifer Payet, Deborah Brealey, Melinda Edmunds, Melissa Stoneham, Amanda Devine

¹ Lecturer, Edith Cowan University

Abstract:

Food security (FS) is a complex topic that relates to sufficient physical, economic and social access to nutritious food. In the South West region of Western Australia (SWWA), it was unknown what FS initiatives are occurring and how well they were enhancing FS. This study's objectives were to: (i) identify initiatives supporting healthy food availability, access and utilisation in the SWWA; and (ii) understand how they were functioning as a system to enhance FS. A novel Systemic Innovation Lab methodology was used. Interviews with FS initiative leaders evaluated 52 initiatives' possession of desirable characteristics for enhancing FS. Interview data were uploaded into an online tool to create a matrix of FS initiatives and the Focus Area characteristics they possessed. A results-sharing and co-designed action planning workshop addressed identified gaps to enhance initiatives. Results demonstrated initiatives possessed qualities that facilitated change towards more effective ways of working, such as through awareness raising. Few initiatives possessed characteristics that supported a shared understanding of their common goal. Significant gaps existed in the community-government interface. Results suggest substantial change is required to ensure greater collaboration between community and government FS initiatives. This would support government to create the enabling conditions for community-based FS initiatives to thrive. Participants were encouraged to utilise common language/branding, involve community and government in project governance, develop working groups, ensure government strategic plans are available online and share resources. Participants were referred to a free advocacy course and will be supported through a website/app focusing on connecting government and community.

Biography:

Dr Stephanie Godrich is a Registered Public Health Nutritionist who has worked in practice, research, and consultancy positions. Stephanie's research focuses on food security and supporting rural and remote towns to create healthy, resilient and sustainable food environments.

A Scoping Review of Policies Promoting and Supporting Sustainable Food Systems in the University Setting

Amanda Grech,¹ **Elly Howse**, Sinead Boylan

¹ Academic Staff, University of Sydney

Abstract:

Transitioning towards sustainable food systems for the health of the population and planet will require governments and institutions to develop effective and fair governance to support the adoption of sustainable practices. The aim of this paper is to understand current policies aimed to reduce the environmental impact of food provided at universities. A systematic search of food sustainability governance within universities was conducted. Data sources included 1) targeted websites 2) internet search engines and 3) expert consultations. Inclusion criteria included university governance documents including by-laws, policies, guidelines, frameworks and procedures that support sustainable food systems. Australian and New Zealand universities. Nineteen (40%) Australian and New Zealand universities had governance relating to food sustainability. Twenty-nine governance documents were included for synthesis, including waste management policies (n=3), fair trade/procurement policies (n=6), catering and/or event policies/guidelines (n=9), and environmental management plans (n= 11). The main aims of the documents include sustainable waste management and prevention (e.g. reducing landfill, reducing wasted food, (n=22)), environmentally sustainable food sourcing (local, seasonal, organic, vegetarian food supply) (n=12), and ethical procurement practices (i.e. fair trade, (n=21)). This study indicates that while sustainable food systems are considered in some university governance documents, efforts are predominantly focused on aspects such as waste management or procurement of fair-trade items which as stand-alone practices are likely to have minimal impact. Universities could provide stronger leadership to support sustainable food systems.

Biography:

Amanda Grech is an Accredited Practicing Dietitian (APD) and has completed her PhD in nutrition epidemiology at the Charles Perkins Center, The University of Sydney. Her research interests lie in population nutrition and working towards finding effective solutions to chronic disease.

Food or Human Tissue? Tracing the Risks and Legalities of Modern Breastmilk Sharing in Australia

Laura Griffin,¹ Lisa H Amir²

¹ Lecturer, La Trobe Law School

² Research Fellow, Judith Lumley Institute, La Trobe University

Abstract:

In recent years, more and more parents have begun sourcing breastmilk from donors or sellers via the Internet and social media, giving rise to new forms of modern milk sharing. Such networks even extend across national borders, through the growing global breastmilk market, where women from developing countries supply milk for processing, packaging and export. Meanwhile, milk banks throughout Australia provide donor milk to premature infants in hospitals around the country. Whether for profit or gratuitous, milk sharing involves various risks, and raises a complex set of legal questions for both suppliers and recipients. This article outlines the potential risks involved in milk sharing, and strategies by which these risks are currently managed in informal donation or sale, and formal milk banking. Tracing the ways in which Australian law applies – or could potentially apply – to various human milk sharing practices, we argue that the current legal regime does not respond to these risks well. This is due in part to uncertainty surrounding the legal identity of human milk – as either food, human tissue, or possibly even therapeutic good. Regulatory schemes also vary between different states and territories. The confusion surrounding breastmilk’s legal identity has a number of troubling implications: those involved in informal sharing are operating in a grey economy, the establishment of more formal milk sharing avenues is hindered, and parents are facing an unregulated global breastmilk market.

Biography:

Dr Laura Griffin is a Lecturer at La Trobe Law School and Managing Editor of the Australian Feminist Law Journal. Laura completed her PhD in 2011 at the University of Melbourne. Her current research examines the role of law and the state in relation to pregnancy, birth and reproductive loss.

'Food Safety' and 'Biosafety' in the Era of Genetic Engineering: Legal Challenges Posed by Genetically Modified Foods Under the World Trade Organisation

Alessandra Guida¹

¹ PhD Candidate, Macquarie Law School

Abstract:

Genetic engineering is the process of altering the DNA in the genome of an organism. Unlike traditional cultivations, the production of Genetically Modified foods (GM foods) can be managed and improved so as to be regarded as a solution to world hunger as well as a mean to aid the realisation of the right to food and to enhance national economies. GM foods have, however, also the potential to compromise health and endanger biodiversity. The only certainty regarding the effects posed by Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) to human health and the environment is the existence of scientific uncertainties. Accordingly, it is still debated if genetic engineering produces sustainable foods or if GMOs jeopardise food safety. Nonetheless, because of their benefits, there is a flourishing international trade of GMOs that magnifies geographically, at the same time, the spread of risks posed by these organisms to human health and the environment. The decision-makers under the World Trade Organization (WTO) find themselves in the middle of this polarised debate in which open-trade needs to be balanced with food safety and biosafety.

Against this background, this presentation discusses whether WTO law and jurisprudence contribute to enhance food safety and to ensure biosafety. In approaching this task, it explores crucial legal challenges posed by trading GMOs. The final picture drawn from this discussion will show how a more constructive dialogue between legal and scientific thinkers along with the adoption of precautionary measures might ensure food safety and biosafety in trading GMOs.

Biography:

Alessandra Guida is a PhD candidate and Tutor at Macquarie Law School. Alessandra is an admitted Italian Lawyer who completed her MRes at Macquarie Law School. She holds a Master of Law from Bologna Law School, Italy and completed her Master of Law dissertation at Tilburg Law School, Netherlands.

Sustainable Food Choices: Consumer and Producer Decision-Making and the Implications for a Sustainable Food System Transformation

Annet Hoek,¹ Shirin Malekpour, Eli Court, Alex Gavranich, Rob Raven

¹ Senior Research Fellow, George Institute for Global Health

Abstract:

Action is required across the entire system of food supply and demand to achieve a healthier and more sustainable food system. The current generic premise is that collective changes in food-related decisions can open pathways towards food system transformation.

To this end, the key focus in research, policy and action has been on the demand side. However, there are different views on the roles that consumers play in changing the food system. Consumers are predominantly described as “buyers” who can influence food production by their food choices. Other food models move away from this individualistic approach and stress a societal view, in which a shift in social practices are prominent. Yet again, consumers are also assigned the role of “food citizens” who can influence the food system, with not only buying power, but also social and political influence.

In contrast, there has been little focus on the supply side. There is currently a lack in understanding of the decision making process of food producers in relation to food sustainability, and moreover how these decisions can be influenced.

We therefore undertook a literature review to further examine and detail the role of consumers and producers in sustainable food system transformation, with a particular focus on decision making factors. In the paper we will bring relevant literature together and outline opportunities to better support consumers and producers to change the food system.

Biography:

Annet Hoek is currently a Senior Research Fellow, Food Policy, Advocacy and Policy Impact at the George Institute for Global Health. She previously worked at the Monash Sustainable Development Institute, Monash University. Her work focuses on healthy and sustainable foods, behaviour change, and the wider food system.

Trade of Genetically Modified Products and Regulation of International Law

Jeanne Huang,¹ Jiaxiang Hu

¹ Associate Professor, Sydney Law School

Abstract:

This paper examines the challenges and opportunities to shape the international trade law for Genetically Modified Products (GMPs). Inconsistent with booming international trade of GMPs, no binding international agreements exists on this subject. Relevant regulations are scattered in the WTO agreements and other trade agreements. Although the WTO delineated the baseline for the regulations on GMPs, it focuses on regulating the 'market access' of trade in goods and services as well as the trade-related intellectual property rights. The essence of GMP trade disputes is rather over the 'marketability' than 'market access', which is regulated mainly by domestic laws. How to regulate GMPs within the international regime is a complicated and unsettled issue. The findings, it is hoped, will provide advice for China and Australia to lead the international norm making.

Biography:

Jie (Jeanne) Huang is an associate professor at University of Sydney Law School. She teaches and researches in the fields of private international law, e-commerce law, international investment law, international litigation and arbitration, and underwater cultural heritage protection.

Playing with Food Regulation: Using the Corrupt Kitchen VR Experience to Explore Attitudes to Compliance with Food Hygiene Regulation

Richard Hyde¹

¹ Associate Professor, University of Nottingham

Abstract:

Greater understanding of the reasons for compliance or non-compliance with food hygiene regulations is important to both the design of better hygiene regulation and the improvement of training for food handlers. The study of the behaviour of food handlers is challenging, requiring detailed observation of behaviour in a kitchen setting. Virtual reality may be a new method to explore compliant and non-compliant behaviour. This paper describes the Corrupt Kitchen VR Experience, a virtual-reality game in which the player acts as a chef cooking for a queue of customers. Tasked with making burgers, players must prepare the food while ensuring it is safe to eat, engaging with challenges including washing hands and pest control. An inspector and news article at the end of the session reveals the consequences of the player's actions. More than one hundred participants with a professional involvement in food preparation and production played the game. Analysis of system logs from all sessions and detailed interviews with nineteen participants reveal player conduct within the game. This paper outlines the different types of behaviours observed and the implications for food hygiene regulation. It also considers the utility of virtual reality in studies of compliance behaviour.

Biography:

Richard Hyde is an Associate Professor in the School of Law at the University of Nottingham.

Can Shale Gas Extraction Coexist with the Artisanal Food Industry? Canadian Maple Syrup as a Case Study

Ron Janjua¹

¹ PhD Researcher, Sustainable Minerals Institute, University of Queensland

Abstract:

This discussion explores the potential impacts of Shale Gas extraction on Quebec's Maple Syrup Industry. Maple syrup is an iconic Canadian artisanal food product, that has come into existence through hundreds of years of careful development of methods and cultural practices that rely heavily on local environmental factors, including soil, water and air quality, and the prevalence of microorganisms. Quebec's maple syrup does enjoys some legal protections via Geographic Indication (GI) designation, which is used to identify products that have a specific geographic origin and unique qualities, such as the famous Champagne originating from the Champagne region of France and the Roquefort cheeses originating from Roquefort-sur-Soulzon. However, while GI designation protects the intellectual property of producers and provides reliable information to consumers, there is a question as to its ability to protect local industries from deterioration or harm caused by shale gas development. In particular, the extractive industries can pose risks that are perhaps not fully appreciated or understood. For example, shale gas is often found in agriculturally significant areas and its extraction has been conducted concurrently with existing above-ground agricultural operations. Yet, once the unique and sensitive local environment that provides the raw material and suitable conditions for artisanal food production is disrupted, these distinct, culturally significant items may be lost forever. This discussion considers explores the question of whether the two can coexist, and if so, what regulatory requirements would need to be in place for this to occur.

Biography:

Ron Janjua is a Ph.D. Researcher at SMI -, University of Queensland, and lectures at Griffith University on Food Law, Natural Resource Law, International Law, Public Law. Ron holds a Hons BA in Global Politics and IR, a JD and LLM in Law. His areas of research include regulating the social, cultural, and environmental impacts of extraction on food production.

The Coming “Clean Meat” Revolution: An Analysis of the Socio-Legal Landscape for “Lab-Grown Meat”

Hope Johnson¹

¹ Lecturer, Queensland University of Technology

Abstract:

When Mark Post and his lab at Maastricht university publicised their “lab-grown meat” patty in 2013, it appeared as if the technological remedy to intensive animal agriculture and its related ethical, environmental and public health issues had arrived. This presentation looks beyond the hype to evaluate the transformative potential of “lab-grown meat” in the context of Australia’s socio-legal landscape. In doing so, the presentation makes two key points. Firstly, the discursive construction of “lab-grown meat” as widely transformative is at odds with the innovation’s alignment with the dominant socio-technical regime for agriculture and existing approaches to regulating food and food systems; therefore, expectations that the material will disrupt food systems should be critically received. Secondly, the ontological debate over whether the material is “meat” is political rather than legal. In Australia, like in other jurisdictions, “meat” is already defined in ways that would exclude its application to “lab-grown” animal-derived products. The focus in public and regulatory debates on the definitions of “meat” fosters an unquestioning adoption of the inherited assumptions within the existing regulatory framework for “lab-grown meat”.

Biography:

Dr Hope Johnson is an early-career researcher who researches food and agricultural law, regulation and governance. She specializes in the intersection of environmental, human rights and international economic law and the influence of market-based forms of regulation on food systems. Recent projects have focused on how regulation is and should influence food consumption patterns, as well as how agricultural research and development is and should be designed. Hope is a member of the International Law and Global Governance research program, as well as the Intellectual Property and Innovation Law Program, where she leads the program on agricultural innovation. She won the Outstanding Doctoral Thesis award for her doctoral thesis entitled “An analysis of the international regulation of agriculture using a rights-based approach to food security”.

Beyond the Symbol: Strengthening Regulation of Front-of-Pack Nutrition Labelling

Alexandra Jones,¹ Bruce Neal, Anne-Marie Thow

¹ Research Fellow (Food Policy and Law), George Institute for Global Health

Abstract:

The World Health Organization recommends Member States implement front-of-pack nutrition labelling (FOPNL) to guide consumers towards informed and healthier eating choices, and contribute to prevention of diet-related noncommunicable diseases. Numerous countries have implemented FOPNL or are considering such policies, but there remain significant differences in the approaches taken. Our aim was to propose a framework for national policymakers seeking to design effective FOPNL schemes. Information on existing government-led FOPNL implemented worldwide were obtained from peer-reviewed literature and global policy databases. Core policy characteristics were extracted and categorised according to a pre-defined framework for analysing and improving the performance of public health regulations. This framework was used to assess strengths and weaknesses of FOPNL regulation in different jurisdictions, and explain why FOPNL may not yet be achieving maximum public health impact. Our analysis reveals that public health attention has primarily focused on two substantive terms and conditions of FOPNL: selection of label symbol (e.g. traffic lights, stop-sign warnings) and whether regulations should be voluntary or mandatory. Less attention has been given to developing robust scoring criteria underpinning FOPNL, and mechanisms to maximise label salience and use. Widespread limitations in processes for FOPNL development, administration, monitoring and enforcement suggest significant potential for policymakers to apply principles of good governance throughout the policy cycle to improve the integrity and performance of FOPNL for both consumer and industry users.

Biography:

Alexandra is a public health lawyer, currently leading The George Institute's program on regulatory strategies to promote healthier diets. She has previously worked on tobacco control, and in human rights. Ali tweets about Health Stars, sugar taxes, and other policy tools to improve the food environment at @alikhjones

The Policy Process for Recommending Mandatory Pregnancy Warning Labels on Alcoholic Beverages

Holly Jones¹

¹ Assistant Director, Australian Government Department of Health

Abstract:

Pregnancy warning labels have been applied to alcoholic beverages on a voluntary basis in Australia and New Zealand since 2011. Evaluations of the voluntary labelling scheme were undertaken in 2013 and 2016-17. The most recent evaluation reported 48% of individual alcohol products on sale in Australia carried a pregnancy warning label. In response to the 2016-17 evaluation, the Australia and New Zealand Ministerial Forum on Food Regulation (the Forum) requested advice on whether pregnancy warning labels on alcoholic beverages should be mandated, and the most appropriate labelling to discourage drinking during pregnancy. A policy process was undertaken which involved research, development of policy options, consultation with key stakeholders, cost benefit analysis and impact assessment. Key challenges in this process involved data limitations in relation to the prevalence of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, quantifying the broad-ranging impacts of this condition, and quantifying the number of alcoholic beverages across Australia and New Zealand that would be affected should pregnancy warning labels be mandated. The advice to the Forum as a result of this policy process was that the benefit to the community for mandating pregnancy warning labels outweighed the cost to the alcohol industry associated with label changes. In October 2018 the Forum agreed that a mandatory labelling standard for pregnancy warning labels on packaged alcoholic beverages should be developed and should include a pictogram and relevant warning statement. This presentation will discuss the policy process undertaken to form a recommendation to the Forum and key challenges.

Biography:

Holly works in the Food and Nutrition Policy Section at the Australian Government Department of Health and holds qualifications in nutrition, dietetics and public health. Recently, Holly's work has focused on contributing to the Food Regulation Standing Committee's consideration of food labelling issues including pregnancy warning labels on alcoholic beverages.

The Contest Over the Meaning of “Food Packaging Sustainability”: The Multiple Meanings of Sustainability in Australia’s Self-Regulatory Packaging Regime

Zoe Jones,¹ Gyorgy Scrinis

¹ Senior Lawyer, Department of Environment, Land, Water, Planning

Abstract:

Food packaging sustainability is a key area of focus for global food processors, the packaging industry, and government-industry regulatory bodies. Major food manufacturers have “sustainable packaging” strategies and policies, which focus on how packaging’s environmental impact can be minimised, while responding to consumer choice. Global packaging companies detail their approaches to the “sustainable growth” of packaging worldwide, stressing the role of packaging to address major environmental issues, including food waste. Industry bodies, governments and NGOs contribute to the development of global measures for “sustainable packaging”, establishing criteria and metrics to influence how food packaging sustainability is assessed in domestic regulatory systems.

This paper analyses the technical and industry literature on food packaging sustainability. It offers an original categorisation as to the different approaches to how sustainability is understood, in the context of food packaging. Like other areas of the food system, “sustainability” in the food packaging context, is a contested term. It is also underexamined, with the literature concerning food packaging and sustainability primarily technical in nature, comprising academic studies in the fields of food packaging technology and design, and technical assessments examining the environmental impacts of food and beverage packaging using Life Cycle Assessment (**LCA**).

The paper addresses the underexamined area of the role played by food packaging technology in our access to sustainable food. By examining the contested meanings of “food packaging sustainability” the paper critically evaluates how knowledge about how sustainability is measured and modelled, influences both the shape of our policy and regulatory regimes, and public debate on issues such as food waste.

Biography:

Zoe Jones is an administrative lawyer at the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, and advises on environmental law, land management and health and safety issues. She has a particular interest in regulatory issues associated with food, the environment and health.

“It Was In the Manufacture of Goods that the Danger to Health Came in”: What Can the Pure Food Act 1905 (Vic) Tell Us About Food Regulation in the Era of NCDs?

Jenny Kaldor¹

¹ Research Fellow, Faculty of Law, University of Tasmania

Abstract:

Background: The past decade has seen significant innovation and growth in the use of legal and regulatory instruments to improve population diets and prevent noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). One of the most intriguing trends has been the increasing use of national food standards to set mandatory limits on NCD-associated nutrients. From a regulatory perspective, the trend appears contrary to macro-level shifts away from command-and-control instruments.

Aim: To historicise the recent “turn” to mandatory standards by closely examining early legislation providing for such measures. To identify the technical and discursive foundations of comprehensive, mandatory food standards.

Method: I extracted data from Hansard records of the parliamentary debates preceding the introduction of Victoria’s Pure Food Act 1905, the first of its kind worldwide. I analysed the data according to Walt and Gilson’s health policy analysis triangle, which focuses on actors, context, content, and processes.

Results: The Pure Food Act 1905 (Vic) was enacted in response to widespread adulteration of the food supply, which was causing significant public health risk. Food standards were presented as an appropriate way to balance the competing interests of industry and public health, and to address food adulteration at its source. A key innovation was the establishment of an intersectoral expert group, acting at arm’s length from government, to determine food standards.

Conclusion: This exercise provides important insights into the basis of food standards as a regulatory choice, which may help to guide policy and academic analysis of how best to use these instruments in NCD-prevention.

Biography:

Jenny Kaldor is a Research Fellow in the Faculty of Law, University of Tasmania, and a doctoral candidate at Sydney Law School. Her research relates to food law, public health, and regulatory innovation. Jenny is an author on the Lancet Commission Report on Global Health and the Law.

Food Insecurity in Victoria: Problem Representation, Policy Response and Perspectives Within Local Government

Sue Kleve,¹ Vivien Yii,² Clare Palermo

¹ Public Health Lecturer and Researcher, Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Foods, Monash University

² Bachelor of Nutrition Honours student, Monash University

Abstract:

Background: Food insecurity, the limited or uncertain availability or physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food in a socially acceptable way from non-emergency sources, is considered complex problem requiring action from federal to local governments. VicHealth's Food for All (FFA) program (2005-2010) supported 10 Victorian local governments to address food insecurity, however little is known about its longer-term influence on food insecurity being considered a policy 'problem'. This research examines the progression of responses within policies to address food insecurity in this setting since FFA's conclusion.

Methods: A purposive sample of 10 Victorian local governments across Victoria, funded to address food insecurity as part of FFA, were examined. Bacchi's 'What's the Problem Represented to Be' methodology informed document analyses of relevant council policies (2000-2018), and guided semi-structured interviews with key council policy officers. Interviews explored the representation of the 'problem' of food insecurity within council policy, including the origin, the silences in and impacts of this representation.

Results: Document analyses revealed that FFA local governments demonstrate varied policy support and ways of viewing food insecurity. Interviews identified numerous variations in the representation as a problem, both between and within individual councils and their communities. This presentation will focus on the interview findings, including reasons for the diversity among these councils in how food insecurity is considered

Conclusion: This research highlights how the Victorian FFA program has influenced policy action, an important strategy for addressing food insecurity within local government.

Biography:

Sue is an Accredited Practicing Dietitian with over 25 years' experience in both public and community health and health promotion settings in rural and metropolitan areas of Australia. She currently is a lecturer in public health nutrition at Monash University. Her research focuses on household food insecurity prevalence, experiences and responses to address it.

Differences in Methods Used to Develop National Dietary Guidelines and in Recommendations for Fat Intake: A Comparison Among Australia, the United States, and Brazil

Cynthia M Kroeger,¹ Zhaoli Dai, Sally McDonald, Lisa A Bero

¹ Postdoctoral Research Fellow, Charles Perkins Centre and School of Pharmacy, University of Sydney

Abstract:

National food-based dietary guidelines are developed globally for the general public to help decrease the health and economic burden of diet-related, non-communicable disease. Both recommendations for dietary fat intake and methods used for their development differ among countries. The objective of this study was to describe these differences among guidelines developed by Australia, the US, and Brazil. Recommendations for the intake of total, saturated, monounsaturated, n-6 and n-3 polyunsaturated, and trans fats, and cholesterol, as well as for dairy, meat, oils, and fat-containing processed foods and other plant-based foods, were extracted from each country guideline. Methods for developing recommendations were extracted and compared to the World Health Organization (WHO) Handbook for Guideline Development – gold-standard criteria for public health guideline development. Specifically, the following methods were assessed: selection of the guideline development group, management of competing interests, evaluation of the scientific evidence base, and review of the final version of the guideline. Qualitative and/or quantitative recommendations were developed by Australia for all fat types, except for cholesterol, the US for all fat types, and Brazil for total, saturated, and trans fats and dairy, meat, oils, and fat-containing processed foods. Australia, the US, and Brazil employed WHO methods clearly for 12/13, 11/13, and 3/13 of the domains, respectively, and did not acknowledge whether remaining WHO methods were utilized. Future work aims to assess the relationship between differences in dietary fat intake recommendations and aspects of methodological rigor and transparency among these and all countries with food-based dietary guidelines.

Biography:

Dr. Kroeger is a postdoctoral fellow in the Charles Perkins Centre and member of the Evidence, Policy & Influence Collaborative. With a background in research integrity, open science, and behavioral interventions for obesity, she currently examines biases in the development of national dietary guidelines and the impact of trauma on the nervous system and obesity.

“Appeasing” Corporate Critics: Unpacking the Political Consequences of the Soft Drink Industry’s Strategy to be “Part of the Solution” to Obesity

Jennifer Lacy-Nichols¹

¹ PhD Researcher, University of Melbourne

Abstract:

Recognising and challenging the political power and influence of Big Food and other commercial stakeholders is key to successful public health advocacy. Thus far, most analyses have focused on how Big Food uses political tactics to overtly resist and oppose public health solutions to obesity, such as through lobbying, litigation, funding counter research, or using front groups to challenge policy proposals. However, Big Food also pursues a more conciliatory response to obesity, where it seeks to present the industry as “part of the solution” to obesity. Both strategies are fundamentally political—they seek to minimise the threat that obesity presents to the business interests of Big Food.

In this paper, I build on research analysing corporate power to illuminate and explain some of the strengths and weaknesses of the Australian soft drink industry’s strategy to position itself as “part of the solution” to obesity. I modify an existing corporate power framework to differentiate between two forms of political power: oppositional power, characterised by threats and criticisms, and conciliatory power, characterised by concessions and promotion of the industry’s good behaviour. I use this framework to show how the Australian soft drink industry’s efforts to position itself as “part of the solution” to obesity offer several political benefits: build the industry’s economic resources; maintain a business-friendly status quo; enable industry governance of the food system; improve relationships with influential stakeholders and industry critics; and fragment industry opposition. In light of these findings, I propose two strategies to challenge the political influence of Big Food.

Biography:

Jennifer Lacy-Nichols recently submitted her PhD, which analysed the Australian soft drink industry's political strategy to position itself as "part of the solution" to obesity. Her research explores corporate power in the food system and bridges food studies, critical public health and political science.

The University Campus as a Site of Food System Transformation: Mapping American Campus Foodscapes to Understand Emergent Food Policy and Practice in Institutions

Sophie Lamond¹

¹ PhD Researcher and Director, Melbourne Law School, University of Melbourne

Abstract:

Many North American universities are actively working to transform their campus food systems to be more sustainable, healthier, more equitable and more inclusive. Through programming, teaching, research and extra-curricular opportunities as well as procurement and infrastructure, communities are working together to create policy and projects for change. This presentation will address transformation in campus foodscapes to examine the networks, policy and governance structures that support change within institutions. It will also address how institutions push transformative agendas through broader society.

This presentation will share the results of a systematic analysis of 23 American higher education institutions. This analysis is drawn from The Association of Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE) Sustainability Tracking Assessment & Rating System (STARS) data which monitors institutional progress in sustainability. The analysis is primarily drawn from the food and dining reporting categories and innovation categories. Analysis is further supported from information from further sources to contribute to a more detailed understanding of institutional action in campus foodscapes and food policy. This analysis seeks to present a systems-focused view of action in campus foodscapes encompassing governance, sustainability, public health, equity and inclusiveness, stakeholder relations as well as research and curriculum.

This analysis will contribute to a framework which can be used more broadly to assess institutional action in food systems governance. This US case study will be used to draw lessons for international institutional contexts.

Biography:

Sophie Lamond is a PhD Candidate at the Melbourne Law School researching institutional food policy with a focus on transformations in campus foodscapes. Sophie is the director of Fair Food Challenge, an NGO which empowers young people to transform campus food environments and take an active role in policy development.

Improving Public Policy to Increase Household Food Security in Australia: A Rights-Based Approach

Rebecca Lindberg,¹ Liza Barbour,² Stephanie Godrich

1 ECR and Lecturer in Population Nutrition, Deakin University

2 PhD Candidate, Lecturer, Department of Nutrition, Dietetics and Food, Deakin University

Abstract:

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights includes food as a basic right. This right was enshrined in international law, in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Although Australia signed the ICESCR in 1975, the right to food is not a part of Australia's constitutional law. Current estimates suggest between one and four million Australians have inadequate access to healthy, affordable and culturally appropriate food, meaning they are food insecure. Food insecurity is associated with increased risk of physical and cognitive health implications, including developmental delays in children. Food insecurity has been a persistent social and health issue in Australia for many decades.

As a means to realise food security, The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has developed voluntary guidelines to assist countries to protect, respect and fulfil the right to food. Judicial remedies and constitutional approaches are only one aspect. This presentation will: (i) outline the findings of a critical synthesis of Australia's adherence to the FAO voluntary guidelines; (ii) appraise Australia's periodic progress reports on the ICESCR; and (iii) review key right to food policy approaches in high-income countries. A 'rights-based approach' to address food insecurity is proposed as a conceptual and practical way to ameliorate this complex issue. Six thematic areas have been distilled, providing a road map to guide future work to protect, respect and fulfil the right to food in Australia.

Biography:

Dr Lindberg is a public health nutritionist at the Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition (IPAN), Deakin University. Ms Barbour is a PhD food policy candidate and Accredited Practising Dietitian at the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Monash University. Both have experience in community food security research and practice.

Regulating Hot Potatoes - Genetic Identity in Food

Karinne Ludlow¹

¹ Associate Professor, Law Faculty, Monash University

Abstract:

Consumer and retailer interest in food's genetic identity is growing. Food labels are appearing around genetic characteristics, such as particular breed identification (eg Wagyu beef) or product qualities (such as A2 protein in milk). Labels are also being used around the involvement (or not) in a food's production of innovative genetic technologies (such as GM, genome editing techniques such as CRISPR/ Cas9, and other modern breeding techniques).

From a broader food security perspective, genetic variation is fundamental. Genetic characteristics and technologies can assist in the creation of that variation. Importantly for agriculture, they also broaden the plant species that can have agricultural traits relevant for future food security, enhanced. For example, horticultural plants rather than grain crops, not often subject to biotechnology developments such as GM, are more likely to be the subject of newer innovation.

But enhancement of consumers' awareness of the genetic identity of their food creates challenges for producers who want to take advantage of their product's genetic identity. Development and uptake of these techniques also requires clear regulatory pathways and labelling regulations. These regulatory requirements and pathways are contested in most jurisdictions, with the regulation of the resulting food becoming an increasingly sensitive subject-matter.

This paper considers the regulatory challenges for stakeholders (including consumers, regulators, scientists and agricultural producers) around production, labelling and trade of food on the basis of its genetic identity.

Biography:

Dr Karinne Ludlow is Associate Professor, Monash University's Law Faculty. Karinne's research focuses on the integration of science, law, and commercialisation challenges, particularly around biotechnology and nanotechnology in all applications including health, agriculture and industry. Karinne's commercial expertise was developed through 10 years private legal practice.

Caffeinated Energy Drinks in Adolescents – Potential Legislative Actions to Prevent Health Hazards

Kaja Lund-Iversen,¹ Erik Kristoffer Arnesen, Anne Lise Brantsaeter, Gunstein Instefjord

¹ Senior Adviser, Norwegian Consumer Council

Abstract:

Consumption of high-caffeinated energy drinks (CEDs) among children and adolescents is drastically increasing in several countries worldwide. CEDs are industrially designed functional foods that contain high levels of stimulating ingredients like caffeine, plant extracts, vitamins, and sugar or artificial sweeteners. Through effective marketing strategies and high accessibility, they have become part of children and adolescents' daily diet. In this paper, we present an analysis of the public health concerns that CEDs represent. Due to stimulating ingredients like caffeine, energy drinks pose additional risks to health than sugar-sweetened beverages and consequently need to be considered from several public health angles; food safety, diet quality, addiction and health behaviour. What is a safe level of energy drinks consumption in children and adolescents? What is a correct policy response to protect children and adolescents against health problems and hazards from CEDs? We argue that law plays an important role in regulating these addictive products, and that banning them for sales to minors is a preferred policy response. Only two countries in Europe, Lithuania and Latvia, have implemented a statutory ban on sales of CEDs to minors, but other countries are in the process of considering what measures to implement, for example Norway. In this paper, we outline the experiences of advocacy work at national level and reflect on the urgent need for action to prevent levels of CED consumption that may threaten child and youth health and wellbeing.

Biography:

Kaja Lund-Iversen, MSc in Public Health Nutrition from the University of Oslo, is working as senior advisor at the Norwegian Consumer Council on food and consumer policy issues with special interest in children's possibilities to establish a healthy diet in food environments dominated by powerful commercial interests.

Health Claims on Food Labels; A Comparison of Methodology Guidance Documents for the Substantiation of Food-Health Relationships

Sally McDonald,¹ Lisa Bero, Roger Magnusson

¹ PhD Candidate, University of Sydney

Abstract:

Health claims may encourage consumers to choose healthier products, but there is concern that these claims may lead to positivity bias, whereby consumers view a product as healthier, and that these claims are essentially a marketing tool for food industry. It is important health claims are accurate to enable consumer confidence. To determine how Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) standards compare internationally, we conducted a cross sectional content analysis to compare the guidance documents for substantiation of health claims under FSANZ with methodology documents produced by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the Food and Drug Authority (FDA) in the United States, and Codex Alimentarius. We used AMSTAR 2 to appraise the quality of the systematic review methodology. FSANZ, FDA, and EFSA all have application processes for the use of unqualified health claims. Under FSANZ, food industry may self-substantiate general level health claims on labels using systematic reviews to establish the food-health relationship, however there is limited accountability as submission of these reviews is not required at the time of notification. All guidance for substantiation of health claims required the completion of a predefined systematic review of human studies with a methodological quality assessment of included studies, while only EFSA guidance included a specific risk of bias assessment. Of note, FDA and EFSA have an approval process for submitted claims, while FSANZ has no consistent process for the independent assessment of notified claims. Further research will assess the methodological quality of evidence used to self-substantiate health claims in Australia.

Biography:

Sally McDonald is a PhD candidate in the Evidence, Policy, and Influence Collaborative at the Charles Perkins Centre. Her research focuses on the regulations under which health claims are made on food labels in Australia, and the evaluation of the evidence used to support these claims.

Which companies and brands dominate the New Zealand packaged food supply?

Sally Mackay,¹ Helen Eyles, Leanne Young, Cliona Ni Mhurchu, Boyd Swinburn

¹ Research Fellow, University of Auckland

Abstract:

Aim: To map the key packaged food and non-alcoholic beverage products available in New Zealand (NZ) to parent brands and companies and assess the healthiness of products using the Health Star Rating (HSR) front-of-pack nutrition labelling system.

Methods: Information reported on the labels of packaged foods available in supermarkets and the HSR was obtained from the 2018 Nutritrack database. The company that manufactured each brand was identified using company websites and the NZ companies register. The companies with the highest market share were identified from Euromonitor.

Results: The brands of the major companies were visually documented in a company and brand map providing transparency of ownership. The 13,605 unique products were mapped to 1933 brands and 1209 companies. Almost half (44%) of companies are NZ manufacturers.

Of the twenty-two major NZ companies (1.6% of companies), nineteen hold 67% of the packaged food market share and three hold 77% of the beverage market, they produce 31% of products and 17% of brands. Seven major companies are NZ companies while fifteen are NZ limited companies with overseas ultimate holding companies or Australian companies. The mean HSR of products manufactured by each major company ranged from 1.3 to 4.1.

Conclusion: The NZ food supply has a proliferation of products, brands and companies. However, a very small number (22) of food and beverage manufacturers account for one third of products. Positive changes by these companies could improve the healthiness of the food supply substantially, particularly in categories where they dominate market share.

Biography:

Sally is a Registered Nutritionist working as a lecturer and research fellow at the University of Auckland. Her research involves monitoring the food supply and the wider food environment. She has previously worked as a public health nutritionist for a wide range of organisations.

An Unhealthy State: Lessons from Irish Measures on Sugar and Alcohol

Caoimhín MacMaoláin¹

¹ Associate Professor of Law, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

Abstract:

Ireland has one of the least healthy populations in the European Union. Globally, it is amongst the very highest for rates of premature death, disability years and societal harm caused by consuming too much food and alcohol. In response, the Irish Government has introduced two new laws. The first sets higher rates of taxation on sugar-sweetened drinks, as has been done elsewhere. The second, more controversially, restricts the marketing of alcohol in a variety of ways. The imposition of minimum unit pricing and the exertion of additional controls over advertising, sponsorship and branded clothing are all part of a range of measures designed to reduce alcohol misuse. Most significantly, a suite of health warnings are to be placed on labels, raising the ire of producers, retailers, and those opposed to protectionism. Noting the limitations placed on these schemes by both EU law and WTO obligations, this paper examines the problems and solutions available to contemporary legislators who seek the amelioration of public health issues through legislative and other controls.

Biography:

Caoimhín MacMaoláin has three single-authored books on Food Law with Hart Bloomsbury, as well as book chapters and articles in leading international peer-reviewed journals, including the *European Law Review*, the *Common Market Law Review* and the *American Food and Drug Law Journal*. He lectures in, and supervises, postgraduate researchers on, Food Law, EU Law and International Trade Law.

Why Hasn't Australia Implemented a Tax on Sugar-Sweetened Beverages?

Roger Magnusson,¹ Emma Sainsbury, Anne-Marie Thow, Stephen Colagiuri

¹ Professor of Health Law & Governance, Sydney Law School, University of Sydney

Abstract:

A tax or “health levy” on sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) has been recognized as an important strategy for improving nutrition and obesity prevention, given the significant contribution that SSBs make to excess intake of added sugars. Globally, 37 jurisdictions have implemented a tax on SSBs for obesity prevention, yet there is substantial resistance to adopting such a policy in Australia. In order to better understand why a tax on SSBs has fared so poorly in Australia, we carried out a systematic search of scholarly literature, parliamentary documents and media articles relating to an SSB tax, which we analysed using a well-known theory of policy change, Kingdon’s Multiple Streams Framework (MSF).

The findings reveal that Australia is a substantial way from having the conditions in place to secure passage of an SSB tax. The reasons variously relate to the “problem”, “policy” and “political” streams to which Multiple Streams Framework draws attention and include: the extent of industry political activity and influence; the fragmented nature of advocacy efforts; political opposition to policies framed as paternalistic; conflicting political agendas; and inadequate pressure for change from civil society. Opening a policy window will require a shift in political ownership of the obesity problem, or the coupling of an SSB tax with an alternative problem. Progress towards an SSB tax also requires the public health community to agree that an SSB tax deserves to be prioritised, relative to alternative policies for addressing obesity, and to agree on the most effective tax design.

Biography:

Roger is Professor of Health Law & Governance at Sydney Law School, University of Sydney.

Addressing the SDGs in Cities Through Food Business Incubation: FoodLab in Sydney

Alana Mann,¹ Luke Craven, David Schlosberg

¹ Chair, Department of Media and Communications, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, researcher with Sydney Environment Institute

Abstract:

Food insecurity in Australia's major cities is on the rise, and in 2016 the City of Sydney estimated that 8.5 per cent of the City's residents had run out of food at some time in the last year and were unable to buy more – over 19,000 people in the LGA alone. The City of Sydney's Community Strategic Plan identifies such food insecurity as a threat to social sustainability and resilience, and mandates the City formulate a response. Existing policy responses to the problem in Australia are failing food insecure populations and are unsustainable in the long term. The primary response, emergency food provision, is insufficient and inadequate for addressing the root causes of food insecurity. Programs provided by the charitable food sector are both precarious and variable. Worse, such emergency food provision has never served more than a small minority of the total food insecure population and does not meet even the most basic and immediate needs of the small populations that it does serve.

Cities and partners around the globe have begun to look at more innovative policies and approaches that can work to address the deeper, systemic, and more complex causes of food insecurity, including the affordability and accessibility of fresh and nutritious food, social and economic disadvantage, rising inequality, and economic exclusion. One such innovation being increasingly trialled internationally are food business incubators, which assist new food business start-ups in vulnerable communities, build relationships and connections between businesses and their community, and catalyse broader change in food systems. The paper charts the development of an innovative food business incubator in the City of Sydney, and its connection to the achieving SDGs.

Biography:

Alana Mann is a Key Researcher in the Sydney Environment Institute and Chair of the Department of Media and Communications in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Sydney. She is Chief Investigator on the Australian Research Council (ARC) funded project FoodLab Sydney: Addressing food insecurity through participatory social enterprise (2018-2020), with partners including the City of Sydney, TAFE, and FoodLab Detroit. In 2018 Alana was a visiting scholar at both Harvard Law School and Cornell University. Her new book *Voice and Participation in Global Food Politics* (2019) foregrounds the communicative dimensions of resistance by diverse rural and urban coalitions of food producers and eaters against the corporate capture of our foodways.

The Next Battleground: Aqua Nullius, Aboriginal Ontologies & Indigenous Fishing

Virginia Marshall,¹

¹ Inaugural Indigenous Postdoctoral Fellow, School of Regulation & Global Governance and School of the Environment & Society, Australian National University

Abstract:

A conundrum arises when one tries to define Aboriginal property interests through Western legal concepts, because the values, beliefs and law inherent in Western and Aboriginal ontological concepts exist within polarised cultural paradigms. (PhD Thesis, Marshall:29) An articulation of what defines Aboriginal water property rights in Western terms remains value-laden with social, cultural, economic and Western legal constructs that generally diminish the nature of Aboriginal rights (Marshall:138). The intrinsic nature of Aboriginal customary property rights in water resources, whether in salt or freshwater, (or resources, foods or medicine) requires a paradigm shift in order to understand and recognise that the Aboriginal characterisation of the 'Aboriginal environment' is the antithesis of the Western legal system (Marshall:146). Indigenous laws are at the heart of Indigenous culture, communities and social order. (New Directions, Marshall:226)

The Australian Federal Government has recently dismissed treaty discussions with the Indigenous peoples of Australia and derailed the national conversation on the Uluru Statement from the Heart. The rights and interests of Australia's First Nations continue to be ignored or pushed aside. A new and emerging threat to the interests of Indigenous communities is the 'rights of nature' movement, with its pitch for legal personhood for animals and all components of the environment. If this 'legal personhood' concept were to develop into a normative practice, it would seriously impact First Nations exercise of self-determination and customary law. The 'rights of nature' legal personhood construct raises critical cultural, legal and moral issues. This presentation examines it from an Aboriginal perspective.

Biography:

Dr Marshall, practising lawyer & Indigenous Postdoctoral Fellow. Stanner Award best Indigenous author PhD law. Author of seminal work 'Overturning aqua nullius: Securing Aboriginal water rights. Canada's University of Victoria Distinguished Woman Scholar. Cultural Advisor Tropical Indigenous Ethnobotany Centre, Board Australia Studies Institute (ANU) & Judge Jessup Comp.

Maximising 280 Characters: Social Media Advocacy for Food and Nutrition Policy

Karina Martin¹

¹ Postgraduate Student, University of Sydney

Abstract:

Using the world's most popular communication platforms is now becoming an essential component of public health advocacy aimed at steering governments towards more evidence-based food and nutrition policy. An examination of successful approaches provides an opportunity for improvement in practice. Food and nutrition policy has become a highly contentious environment across low, middle and high-income countries and a crowded one saturated by a multitude of voices. Policymakers, experts, health professionals, industry bodies, NGOs and consumer groups engage in debates on obesity, nutrition labelling, food and beverage taxes, and restricting unhealthy food marketing. Public health advocates in particular face significant obstacles in being heard. With minimal funding, the challenge of conveying scientific evidence-based information widely, and the power of market forces and industry lobbyists, public health advocates must be consistently creative in their communications. This creativity is often best channelled into their use of social media. Health advocacy groups are gaining traction on social media platforms. They now regularly present a unified voice in collaborative campaigns for a sugar tax, more accurate food labelling, banning junk food advertisements in sport and a national nutrition policy. Social media offers public health advocates a relatively democratic and economical platform to engage audiences on food and nutrition policy. Policymakers, media, health professionals and other relevant groups alike can be reached via strategic social media campaigns which are now a dynamic aspect of the global discourse on healthy, equitable and sustainable food systems.

Biography:

I am a current full-time postgraduate student at the University of Sydney completing a Master of Development Studies, focusing on environmental politics, sustainability and public health. Prior to this I was Media and Communications Manager at the Public Health Association of Australia and led the organisation's communications on food and nutrition policy.

Educating Adolescents for Greater Engagement in Food System Futures

Margaret Miller,¹ Julie Boston, Sandra Smith, Donna Barwood, Amanda Devine, Martin Masek

¹ Senior Research Manager, Edith Cowan University

Abstract:

Research and anecdotal evidence suggest that Australian children have limited knowledge and understanding of food systems and career opportunities in this field. School curriculum should provide policy direction to address the gap. This research undertook curriculum analysis to identify teaching opportunities; it engaged students to determine gaps in knowledge, and interests and ideas for learning activities.

Four Australian Curriculum learning areas were reviewed for outcomes relevant to food systems. 17 classes of Years 7-9 students (95 boys, 155 girls) were recruited from six Perth schools across levels of Social and Educational Advantage (ICSEA). Students played a prototype computer game. The aim of the game was to grow, process, and market potatoes to maximise health and commercial returns but minimise food and resource wastage. In groups, students discussed, documented and reported what they learned, what else they would like to learn, and how. Written responses were analysed for themes.

Curriculum analysis found opportunities for food systems education, but not always explicit or compulsory. Students reported learning most about growing time, waste, healthy choices and complexity of food systems. They wanted to learn more about diverse topics, especially themes on inputs and costs, handling and processing, benefits of buying local, preventing food waste and production systems for other foods, Creative, experiential and research based learning activities were favoured.

Food systems education can engage students and address curriculum outcomes. Greater promotion of this focus and preferred learning methods to schools and teachers may enhance student learning outcomes and employment interest.

Biography:

Margaret Miller is a Public Health Nutritionist and Manager of Refresh.ED food and nutrition curriculum support project. She has worked in various sectors to promote healthy food environments. She is an FAO consultant on food and nutrition systems education in schools and President of the World Public Health Nutrition Association.

Governments, the “Nanny State” and the Food Industry

Michael Moore¹

¹ Distinguished Fellow, The George Institute for Global Health

Abstract:

The accusation of “nanny-state” has proved to be an efficient tool for the national and international food industries to silence effective public health policy proposals. Food policy is political. Therefore, public health professionals need to understand the tools available to counter such arguments. Otherwise politicians will remain reluctant to implement regulations such as restricting marketing of junk food to children or implementing a tax on sugar sweetened beverages.

Restrictions on junk food marketing and a sugar tax provide important examples. The tactics of pointing the “nanny-state” finger are used by both the food industry and their marketing companies. Similar accusations were levelled at traffic light labelling, tobacco regulation and proposals to reduce the harm associated with alcohol (such as Nicola Roxon’s “alcopops tax”).

Those who use the “nanny-state” tool argue freedom from interference. However, such arguments may be countered by building on the philosophy of Philip Pettit who argued that genuine freedom requires protection from the sort of domination of national and international food companies. This means a level playing field which may be achieved through either:

- Massive government expenditure on marketing of healthy foods
or
- By the restriction of marketing of junk food.

The former would be a wasteful way to use taxation contributions when the more affordable latter works more effectively in creating a level playing field free from domination.

It is important to point out to governments that they not only have the right to regulate – they have a responsibility to do so.

Biography:

Michael Moore AM is a Distinguished Fellow at The George Institute, Adjunct Professor University of Canberra and Visiting Professor at the University of Technology Sydney. He is former CEO of the PHAA and is Immediate-Past President of the WFPHA and was ACT Minister of Health (1998-2001).

Diet-Related Fiscal Policy: Economic Implications for Food-Supply Sectors

Sarah Mounsey,¹ Anne-Marie Thow, Stephen Jan, Lennert Veerman

¹ PhD Candidate, University of Sydney

Abstract:

Introduction/Background: Evidence for the impacts of diet-related fiscal policy suggest well designed taxes and targeted subsidies not only drive changes in consumption of unhealthy foods and beverages for improved health, but also generate revenue. However, consideration of the impacts of these fiscal measures beyond health by public health researchers and policy actors is minimal. There is little public health evidence for the economic effect of taxes on outcomes relating to the food supply chain; in particular, on employment, agriculture and industry.

Research Question: What are the cross-sectoral economic implications of diet-related fiscal policies relating to employment and industry within the food supply chain?

Methodology: This systematic review used a comprehensive search of six bibliographic databases: MEDLINE, EMBASE, Global Health, SCOPUS, ECONLIT and Google Scholar. Relevant grey literature was also reviewed. Studies were selected using defined inclusion/exclusion criteria and data was extracted using defined characteristics. Quality was detailed for the individual studies using the Cochrane Handbook of Systematic Reviews of Interventions and established modelling guidelines. The results were categorised by economic effects on employment and industry.

Findings: The review found that fiscal policy interventions to improve chronic disease are likely to impact employment and the food industry.

Policy Implications: The evidence from this review will inform (1) designing fiscal policies to improve diets in ways that minimise potential negative impacts on economic sectors, and (2) development of complementary policies to mitigate any unintended consequences.

Biography:

Sarah is a PhD candidate at the Menzies Centre for Health Policy and completed an MSc International Public Health Nutrition in London, 2017. A laboratory clinical biochemist by background, Sarah's interest in non-communicable disease in LMICs was the catalyst for shifting from laboratory work to health and food policy research.

Building a Food Systems Literate Tasmania

Sandra Murray,¹ Stuart Auckland, Caroline Smith

¹ Lecturer, University of Tasmania

Abstract:

Tasmania is synonymous with the production of high quality fresh produce, innovative start-up food enterprises and a vibrant food tourism sector, however many Tasmanian's are unable to experience the benefits associated with the thriving local food economy. For them, the impacts of food insecurity, combined with poor educational outcomes contribute to Tasmania having some of the worst health outcomes in Australia. Recent research has identified a growing interest in food systems education (FSE) across Tasmania. The aim of this research was to scope the potential demand for FSE, in Tasmania, leading to the development of an educational framework at the short course and associate degree level.

A three-phase approach included (1) a scoping review of FSE programs globally; (2) a series of seven focus groups with food system stakeholders, across three regions of Tasmania to determine attitude, need and interpretation of FSE; and (3), development of an education framework through thematic analysis and interpretation of outcomes from phases one and two.

Findings indicate that FSE should be driven by community-values in preference to the perceived needs of the existing food supply chain, and that transformative, learner-centred education is needed to create sustainable food systems and improve health outcomes.

Combined with the establishment of a state-wide food network, transformational leadership is needed to drive change and coordinate future FSE activities from grassroots to government to improve public health outcomes.

Biography:

Sandy has been an accredited practicing dietitian for over 30 year. She is presently the course coordinator of the B Nutrition Science at University of Tasmania. Sandy is undertaking a PhD investigating food insecurity among university students. Her other research areas including food justice and sustainable food systems. She is a member of the UTAS Sustainable Committee.

Food System for 'A Good Age': Issues and Innovations*

Vivek Nemane¹

¹ Researcher, Australian Centre for Agriculture and Law

Abstract:

Global demographic trends indicate a dramatic and rapid increase in older populations. Despite the subjective experience and meaning of what it means to be an 'aged', aging of the world population is a reality. For example, in Australia, the average life expectancy is over 80 for both men and women. The proportion of population aged 65 years and over has increased from 12.0% to 15.3% between 1996 and 2016, and projected to increase more rapidly (ABS trends).

The aging of the world's population is thoroughly connected with the food system. Food system affects the rights of older persons particularly due to its link with health and nutrition. Over the past few decades, several international documents have discussed the rights and status of the aged. Drawing on these documents (including the UN Convention on the Rights of Older Persons and the UN basic principles of human rights for the older persons) and the literature review, this paper contextualises food system issues relevant to health and nutrition of aging population. With this background, the paper explicitly looks at two segments of the aging population: producers and consumers. Recognising the role of aging population in production and consumption, the paper investigates innovations to facilitate the role of older persons as independent right holders (UN basic principle - Independence) and active contributors (UN basic principle – Participation) in the food system. The paper intends to further current understanding of socio-legal aspects relevant to ageing and food nutrition research.

*A book by Alex Comfort, 1981.

Biography:

Vivek has a multi-disciplinary background in law, public policy and international development in addition to significant experience working with law offices, UN-FAO and universities. At the ACAL, his current project work is rooted in law-based multidisciplinary research particularly focused on institutional innovations for effective agro-food and environmental governance.

Is Australia Ready for Food Policy Councils? An Analysis of the Barriers and Enablers to Facilitate the Growth of Food Policy Councils as a Model for Food Governance

Kylie Newberry¹

¹ Food Systems Consultant, Our Food System

Abstract:

This research explores the extent of food policy integration in Australia, and whether Food Policy Councils (FPCs) would be the suitable architecture to facilitate a more joined-up approach. Policy discourse analysis was applied to establish the degree of power and influence within the food policy-making process nationally. Desk-based research methods were utilised to locate the policy positions of state, supply chain and civil society actors within the food system. Additionally, literature on national, state and city FPCs were sourced to identify a range of critical success factors essential for the successful establishment and functioning of FPCs at various levels of governance. Organisational structures, functions and remits were also reviewed to determine which frameworks could be adopted in Australia. The findings identified limited food policy integration across policy sectors, and the discourse highlighted that supply chain actors possess a lot of power in the policy making process and greatly influence how policy is being formed beyond the state. Six factors were deemed imperative to the critical success of a FPC and were analysed in an Australian context. Reflections from the current policy environment and this study highlight the barriers and enablers of FPCs to become a participatory model of food governance to advance healthy, sustainable and equitable food systems.

Biography:

Kylie is a food systems consultant and advocate. Her passion lies in transforming the food system to deliver a range of health, environmental, social and economic outcomes. She does this through working with community groups and the local government. Kylie also share tips which enable people to help support a healthy, sustainable and fairer food system at ourfoodsystem.com.

Achieving Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case for International Solidarity from a “Twaillian” Perspective

Uchechukwu Ngwaba¹

¹ Lecturer, Macquarie University

Abstract:

Informed by the scholarly tradition of third world approaches to international law (TWAIL), this paper makes the case for international solidarity in achieving food security in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). In recent years, international solidarity, has gained recognition in the UN human rights system as a precondition to human dignity, the basis for all human rights, informing a human-centered approach to development, and serving a bridge-building function across all divides and distinctions. By appropriating the emergent human rights framework on international solidarity to the efforts to achieve food security in SSA, the paper conceives of three potential areas of benefits: firstly, in the area of health where lack of access to basic sustenance is a major hindrance to good health outcomes; secondly, in the area of internal stability of SSA states, in view of the significant displacement effects caused by food shortages; and thirdly, in the area of internal security, in view of the increasing number of conflicts across SSA caused by the struggle for scarce food resources. Yet the paper cautions against a western-driven, charity-focused approach to international solidarity in this respect. By engaging the Twaillian lens, the paper conceives of a form of solidarity that is essentially driven and focused on the peculiar needs and potentials of SSA states; one that assists these states to develop an enduring infrastructure for achieving food security on their own terms.

Biography:

Uche lectures health law and policy in the Masters of Public Health Program of the Faculty of Medicine, Macquarie University. He also lectures a number of law units in Macquarie Law School.

Challenging Intense Industrial Animal Farming: Is There a Potential for Holistic Labelling and Certification Standards to Address the Interconnectedness of Human, (Non-Human) Animal and Ecological Wellbeing?

Christine Parker,¹ Rachel Carey

¹ Professor of Law, University of Melbourne

Abstract:

This paper asks whether and to what extent higher welfare labelling is capable of addressing the challenge of remedying both the very poor quality of life experienced by sentient animals confined in intense industrial farming and also the impacts of these systems on human and ecological wellbeing? The campaigns of some animal advocacy and sustainable food system civil society groups argue that animals' experience could usefully be addressed within the context of reforms to the whole social, economic and environmental context of intense industrial animal agriculture. "Free range", "pasture-raised" and "organic" labelling show a growing recognition that respect and consideration for animal lives and the pursuit of agro-ecologically sustainable farming are both important goals in the context of the urgent need for an ecologically healthy food system and protection of safe planetary limits for humans and animals. Yet most ethical food labelling, especially higher welfare labelling, oversimplifies the multidimensional nature of animal welfare and sustainable food systems and misleads as to the possibility of continuing intense animal agriculture in accordance with "business as usual". This paper summarises the lessons from an extensive empirical socio-legal study of the impacts of free range and other higher welfare labelling claims on production practices for egg, pig and chicken products in Australia. It goes on to investigate some ways in which more holistic multi dimensional labelling and certification standards could be created and implemented, and whether these could make any difference.

Biography:

Christine Parker is a Professor at Melbourne Law School where she teaches and researches on corporate social responsibility and regulation, lawyers' ethics and food law and policy. Her current research focuses on food labelling and the possibility for ecological regulation for a transformed relationship between humans, animals and ecosystems.

Should We Give the Public What They Want or What They Need? The Case of Food Labelling

Simone Pettigrew,¹ Liyuwork Dana, Bruce Neal, Helen Dixon, Caroline Miller, Trevor Shilton

¹ Research Professor, Curtin University

Abstract:

Background: Front-of-pack labelling is an important method of providing accessible nutrition information to consumers to enable them to make informed food choices. In recent years there has been much debate about the forms of front-of-pack labels that are most preferred by consumers and most useful in providing information about nutritional quality. This study examined the extent to which Australians want information relating to specific nutrients located on the front of packs. The aim was to provide insight into which forms of the Health Star Rating (i.e., with and without nutrient icons) are likely to be considered most useful by consumers.

Methods: 1,558 adults completed an online survey assessing their preferences for front-of-pack information relating to energy, sugar, saturated fat, salt/sodium, carbohydrate, protein, and fibre. They also provided information relating to various sociodemographic and diet factors.

Results: The following proportions of respondents considered it important or very important to have information available on the front of packs about each nutrient: sugar 68%, saturated fat 66%, salt/sodium 62%, fibre 57%, energy 57%, carbohydrate 54%, and protein 53%. These preferences tended to be stronger among females, older respondents, those who had primary responsibility for household grocery shopping, and those with higher perceived diet healthiness.

Conclusion: Although recent international research has demonstrated that front-of-pack nutrition labels that are purely interpretive and offer no nutrient-specific information can be superior in enabling consumers to assess product healthiness, the results of this study show that many Australian consumers want nutrient-specific information provided on the front of packs.

Biography:

Simone is a Research Professor in the School of Psychology at Curtin University and the Director of the WA Cancer Prevention Research Unit.

India's National Food Security Act Five Years On: Reviewing its Effects on India's Nutritional Situation

Bill Pritchard¹

¹ Professor in Human Geography, University of Sydney

Abstract:

In 2013, India's national parliament passed the National Food Security Act (NFSA). This legislation specified a significant expansion of food social safety net schemes and sanctioned this with legislative protections. The impetus for the NFSA lay in India's high levels of under-nutrition, which seemed to be only weakly responsive to faster economic growth in the country. With the passage of five years since its inception, what can be said about this legislation? In this paper, I review data and political opinion about its effects. In terms of official data, it seems that the NFSA is contributing to reductions in under-nutrition within India's population, highlighting the importance of social protection initiatives for food security policy framings. However, attacks on the legislation as part of a wider critique of India's welfare state by the BJP Government elected in 2014 have placed restrictions around its capacities for further improvements. Moreover, the legislation's emphasis on supplying food grains and cooking oil to the poor sit uneasily with contemporary food and nutrition dilemmas within India, especially relating to the double burden of malnutrition, and micro-nutritional deficits. I argue that the enshrining of food security principles in Indian legislature have important and powerful effects for addressing the country's nutritional problems, however a further round of reforms is required to meet the emergent challenges of the present period.

Biography:

Bill Pritchard is Professor in Human Geography with interests in food, rural development and globalisation.

Action-Oriented Research to Support Evidence-Informed Food Policy-Making in the Solomon Islands

Erica Reeve,¹ Anne-Marie Thow, Colin Bell, Anna Peeters, **Gary Sacks**

¹ PhD Candidate, Deakin University

Abstract:

Background: The Solomon Islands Government is currently looking to adopt fiscal measures to address the relative affordability of food as part of broader efforts to address obesity, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and poverty. Mechanisms for the formulation and adoption of food regulations have implications for their implementation and success. The aim of this action-oriented research was to facilitate evidence-informed policymaking regarding potential tax mechanisms, targets and implementation approaches.

Methods: We used policy analysis to identify an appropriate policy regime for meeting the goals of the Solomon Islands Government, informed by document review and interviews with policy officials from five government agencies in the Solomon Islands. We used local household consumption data to model the potential impact of a sugar-sweetened beverages (SSB) tax on revenue and health outcomes.

Findings and outcomes: We identified an SSB tax as a highly appropriate tax for the Solomon Islands Government to consider, with our analyses demonstrating significant economic and health benefits linked to the adoption of an SSB tax. We outlined a range of policy options related to the type of tax, tax collection mechanisms, appropriate definitions for targeting most problematic beverage varieties, and opportunities to reinvest revenue into a range of complementary policies to improve the food supply. The resulting report was used by ministers to successfully advocate the adoption of an SSB tax in the Solomon Islands.

Implications: Considerations of policy implementation must be a key part of policy design from inception. Action-oriented research can help by providing timely advice to support policy objectives.

Biography:

Erica Reeve has worked in the field of public health nutrition for 15 years and works as a consultant to the World Health Organization and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. She is a PhD candidate looking at barriers to nutrition policy implementation in the Western Pacific Region with the Global Obesity Centre at Deakin University.

Audit of Food and Drink Policies in Local Government-Owned Sport and Recreation Facilities in Victoria

Devorah Riesenber¹ MR Blake, T Boelsen-Robinson, A Peeters, AJ Cameron

¹ Research Fellow, Deakin University

Abstract:

INTRODUCTION: Council-owned sport and recreation facilities can promote health by providing healthy food and drinks aligned with their healthy lifestyle message. Whether councils' food provision policies, attitudes and practices support this is unknown.

AIM: To assess the policies, attitudes and practices of Victorian local government area (LGA) representatives relating to obesity prevention and provision of healthy options in council-owned sport and recreation facilities.

METHOD: An online survey was e-mailed to health and well-being managers in all Victorian LGAs (n=79) between July-November 2018. Closed and open-ended questions assessed council healthy food provision policies relating to sport and recreation facilities and the priority councils give to obesity prevention.

RESULTS: Fifty of 79 LGAs completed the survey. Councils reported that obesity prevention and promotion of healthy food and drink consumption were a moderate to high priority. Fifty-six percent reported having a formal policy on healthy food and drink provision in facilities. Forty-eight percent of LGAs had made changes to both food and drink availability in council-owned sport and recreation facilities. Many councils have begun, but have not finished increasing healthy options or removing sugary drinks from facilities. Fifty-six percent of LGAs reported that the priority they give to healthy food promotion had increased over the past year.

CONCLUSION: The majority of Victorian LGAs report that their intention to change the availability of healthy food and drink in sports and recreation facilities has increased over the past year. However, most councils report action is still required to achieve their goals of healthier communities.

Biography:

Devorah has completed a Bachelors of Biomedical Science and a Masters of Dietetic. Devorah is a research fellow at Deakin University with keen interest in population health, with a focus on obesity related policy.

A Review of Policies Relating to Food and Nutrition in the Philippines

Ana Kriselda Rivera¹

¹ Assistant Professor, University of the Philippines, Manila

Abstract:

This paper examines national level policies relating to food and nutrition in the Philippines from 1946-2018. Policies reviewed include statutes passed through the legislative branch and issuances released by the executive branch. A total of 31 policies were identified to be food and nutrition related. However, only 15 (48.00%) were included in this review. These policies focused on food and nutrition promotion and enhancement of service delivery. From this number, 9 (60.00%) were Republic Acts, 4 (26.70%) were Presidential Decrees, only 1 (6.65%) was an Executive Order and another 1 (6.65%) was a Proclamation. The average interval between the policies is 6 years. Three recent policies were enacted in 2018 - these are the Act on The First 1000 Days of Life, the Philippine Food Technology Act and a National Feeding Program for Undernourished Children Act. On the other hand, older policies lack awareness from the general public and require stricter implementation of rules.

Biography:

Junior Faculty from the Department of Nutrition, College of Public Health, University of the Philippines Manila. Research interests include health policy and maternal and child health.

Participatory Food Policy-Making and Governance at the Local Level in Australia: The Case of Cardinia Shire, Victoria

Nick Rose¹

¹ Lecturer, William Angliss Institute

Abstract:

Cardinia Shire forms part of Melbourne's peri-urban growth corridor. The municipality is expected to double its population to 200,000 by 2035. It also contains significant tracts of highly productive agricultural land and is regarded as one of Melbourne's foodbowl regions. In common with other peri-urban regions around Australia, Cardinia Shire is experiencing complex and intersecting challenges related to its food system, in terms of poor health and wellbeing outcomes, a built retail food environment characterized by the saturation of fast food outlets, low levels of food literacy, and the rapid loss of prime farmland. Since November 2016, the national food systems organisation Sustain: The Australian Food Network has been working with the Council and more than a dozen institutional and community partners in a collective impact food systems project, Cardinia Food Circles. The principal outcome to date of this project has been the creation of Cardinia's first Community Food Strategy, endorsed by Council in December 2018. Inspired by earlier attempts at participatory food policy making in Canada (The People's Food Policy Project, 2009-2011), Australia (The People's Food Plan, 2012-3), and the UK (The People's Food Policy, 2017), the emerging Cardinia Food Movement, supported by Sustain, directly engaged with over 500 residents in small group forums in the development of the Strategy. This paper will reflect on that experience, the lessons learnt to date and the applicability of the Cardinia experience elsewhere in Victoria and nationally, through the lens of critical food systems literacy.

Biography:

Nick Rose has worked in the field of sustainable food systems and food sovereignty for over a decade in a variety of community and academic roles. He lectures in food politics and food movements and is the Executive Director of the national food systems organisation, Sustain: The Australian Food Network.

Policy Actions on Sugar and Their Effect on the Presence of Non-Nutritive Sweeteners in the Food Supply: A Systematic Review

Cherie Russell,¹ Mark Lawrence, Phillip Baker, Carley Grimes

¹ PhD Candidate, Deakin University

Abstract:

Introduction: Diet is one of the leading risk factors of the burden of disease. Diets high in ultra-processed and discretionary foods are associated with rising rates of obesity and non-communicable diseases. Specifically, increased free sugar consumption has been linked with obesity, diabetes and atherosclerosis. Subsequently, WHO recommends free sugar consumption of 5-10% of caloric intake. Substituting non-nutritive sweeteners (NNS) for sugar is one activity that may reduce free sugar availability. Questions have been posed about public health risks and benefits of NNS, including their effect on gut microbiota and BMI. Study findings on the benefits and harms of NNS are inconsistent. This review aimed to investigate the relationship between policy actions and NNS in the food supply over time.

Methods: A systematic review of the literature was undertaken following PRISMA guidelines using a combination of search terms related to the study aim.

Results: Policy actions on sugar that may influence NNS levels in the food supply included sugar taxes, advertising restrictions, bans in schools, labelling and public awareness campaigns. Other influential factors include cost, consumer demand, novel technologies and manufacturers pre-empting policy. Though many regions are under-researched, NNS availability in the food supply is generally increasing globally. Furthermore, the varieties NNS are increasing, and are being added to growing categories of foods and beverages.

Conclusions: Though policy actions on sugar are well documented in the literature, their relationship with NNS availability in the food supply and consumption is not clear. Further research is needed to determine this link.

Biography:

Cherie Russell is a first year PhD candidate at the school of Exercise and Nutrition Science, Deakin University. Her research focuses on food policy, non-nutritive sweeteners and whether 'nutritionism' is improving the healthiness of the food environment.

Reframing Malnutrition: The Political and Policy Consequences of the Dominant Scientific Framing of Malnutrition in all its Forms

Gyorgy Scrinis¹

¹ Senior Lecturer in Food Politics and Policy, University of Melbourne

Abstract:

Within scientific and policy analyses of malnutrition, three forms of malnutrition are commonly distinguished: chronic under-nutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and over-nutrition/obesity. There are two primary characteristics of the conventional scientific framing and definitions of malnutrition that I will identify: the dietary causes and health consequences are defined as being nutrient-specific; and these three forms of malnutrition are defined as being separate and distinct from each other. The limitations of this scientific framing are beginning to be highlighted through evidence regarding the 'double-burden' or 'triple-burden' of malnutrition, as well as critiques of nutritionally reductive scientific understanding of food and dietary health (ie. nutritionism).

In this presentation, I will focus on and argue that this conventional scientific framing of malnutrition promotes and supports particular political, commercial and policy approaches to addressing malnutrition; and that they promote the interests of particular national and international institutions and corporations. It will also be argued that these policy and commercial approaches often fail to adequately address the dietary and structural determinants and drivers of malnutrition, and may instead reinforce or exacerbate these structural determinants. An alternative approach to framing malnutrition in all its forms will also be outlined.

Biography:

Dr Gyorgy Scrinis is Senior Lecturer in Food Politics and Policy in the School of Agriculture and Food at the University of Melbourne. He is the author of *Nutritionism: The Science and Politics of Dietary Advice*.

Regulating to Remove Trans-Fats from the Food Supply: From Recommendations to Action in Low- and Middle-Income Countries

Katherine Shats,¹ Kyra Berasi

¹ Associate Legal Director, Global Health Advocacy Incubator

Abstract:

Background: In 2018, the World Health Organization launched the REPLACE package, encouraging countries to eliminate industrially-produced trans-fatty acids (TFA) from the global food supply by 2023. Case studies of countries that have already passed policies to restrict TFA, demonstrate the importance of crafting a TFA policy specific to each country's circumstances, and the significant enforcement gaps that can result if this is overlooked.

Aim: Our aim is to assist low-and middle-income countries (LMIC) to consider how to develop TFA policies in resource-constrained settings.

Methods: We developed a framework to help determine the most effective regulatory pathway based on each country's circumstances. LMIC often have insufficient information regarding TFA content in foods, consumption patterns, whether specific sub-populations are disproportionately affected, or enforcement needs. One key question is which of the two policy options recommended by WHO – a 2% limit on TFA or a ban on partially-hydrogenated oils – is most appropriate. This will impact which agencies are responsible for implementing, monitoring, and enforcing the policy, and whether legislative or regulatory changes are required. Other factors, such as ability to identify key sources of TFA at the top of the food supply, can help determine the extent to which investment in enforcement capacity (including the ability to test for TFA in foods) is necessary for effective implementation of the policy.

Policy implications: Experiences of TFA regulation to date illustrate the necessity of incorporating key enforcement and implementation considerations into the development of a country-specific legal framework in order to craft effective TFA policies.

Biography:

Katherine Shats is the Associate Legal Director of the Global Health Advocacy Incubator in Washington DC. She advises advocates and government officials from a range of countries on drafting evidence-based public health laws. Katherine has previously worked on tobacco control and has practiced law in the areas of competition and regulation, and human rights.

Learning from the Dirt: Using University Food Gardens as Teaching Tools

Cathy Sherry¹

¹ Associate Professor and UNSW Scientia Education Academic Fellow, UNSW Law

Abstract:

One of the most significant effects of urbanisation is the loss of connection between populations and food production. By definition, to be a city dweller means having insufficient space to be food self-sufficient. 50% of the world's population now lives in cities, while in Australia that figure is over 90%. The result is that millions of urban dwellers have no experience of growing food. Without first-hand knowledge of food production, it is arguably impossible for citizens to properly understand the health and environmental consequences of modern food systems or to make informed decisions about their own food consumption.

Some city dwellers have always maintained an active role in their own food production, and in recent years urban agriculture has undergone a renaissance. While urban agriculture will never make cities self-sufficient, it can supplement other food sources, and perhaps most crucially, it can educate people about food production.

Universities have unparalleled opportunities to capitalise on this enthusiasm for critical engagement with food systems. We can do so not just through traditional academic work but through hands on, experiential learning. This paper will explore the ways in which universities, including space-poor urban campuses, can incorporate food growing into traditional academic programs, teaching practical skills, as well as deepening students' understanding of sustainability, food security, food waste and health. Students will graduate not only able to think critically about our food system, but with skills to play an active role in their own food production throughout their lives. The paper will use a case study of an urban law course and food garden in the Faculty of Law, UNSW.

Biography:

Cathy Sherry is a leading Australian expert on high density cities, providing advice to the private and public sector, domestically and overseas. Her research focuses on the social, political and economic impact of high density development. She has a particular interest in urban agriculture, and convenes the elective Food Law at UNSW.

Building Momentum: Lessons for Policymakers on Implementing Robust National Level Nutrition Policies

Fiona Sing,¹ Bryony Sinclair (presented by **Anita George**)

¹ Policy and Public Affairs Manager, WCRF International

Abstract:

Implementing evidence-based nutrition policies is essential to tackle the growing burden caused by diet-related NCDs such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes. Policymakers face increasing barriers and challenges to introducing and implementing such policies, and this research seeks to establish ways to help policymakers overcome these barriers and challenges. The WCRF International Building Momentum series takes the lessons learned from governments who have implemented evidence-informed nutrition policies and collates them with the published literature to succinctly outline how to design and implement a robust nutrition policy. Policymakers, academics and advocates from around the world are interviewed to inform the series, providing essential guidance on how to overcome common barriers and challenges in the nutrition policy process.

Biography:

Fiona Sing is the Policy and Public Affairs Manager at World Cancer Research Fund International. Fiona's work focuses on researching implemented nutrition and physical activity policies, analysing common barriers and challenges to implementing evidence-informed policies and advocating for more action by governments.

Where is Food Justice in Governing the Sustainable Development Goals?

Kiah Smith¹

¹ DECRA Fellow, University of Queensland

Abstract:

In many countries, food system governance that directly engages with food justice and civil society has resulted in major transformations in people's ability to define healthy, sustainable and just food systems, as well as improve food access for those most vulnerable. To achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals, stronger efforts towards enabling civil society engagement with policy in ways that challenge 'business as usual' approaches to food production and consumption are needed. This is especially so in regards to Zero Hunger (goal 2), where mainstream food security visions or actors tend to crowd out food justice perspectives with implications for both food access and policy.

Following a global comparative analysis of the level of participation of civil society in SDG policy making to date, this paper outlines the case for including civil society 'food justice' actors, networks and initiatives in defining locally-appropriate metrics for measuring progress on, and implementation of, SDG2 Zero Hunger. In Australia, for example, civil society has largely been excluded from food system governance and the SDGs, despite evidence that they are instrumental in addressing hunger and food justice. The paper concludes by outlining an experimental methodology to engage civic food justice actors in dialogue with policy makers around the SDGs. The framework brings together food utopias, as a tool for recognising problems while enabling dialogue to debate a better food future, with insights from reflexive governance on how civil society might practically inform the process, when it has traditionally been excluded.

Biography:

Dr Kiah Smith is a sociologist and ARC DECRA Fellow in critical agrifood studies. She has published on fair and ethical trade, resilience, land speculation and financing, governance, social solidarity economy, gender empowerment, livelihoods and the green economy. Kiah is also a Future Earth Fellow and co-convenor of the Brisbane Fair Food Alliance.

Sugar Taxes: Where Are We at Globally?

Emalie Sparks,¹ Clare Farrand, Martyna Hogendorf, Jacqui Webster

¹ PhD Candidate and Research Assistant, George Institute for Global Health

Abstract:

Background: Excessive sugar consumption has recently received increasing attention with high intakes of free or added sugars associated with increased risks of overweight, obesity and diet-related non-communicable diseases. Recognizing countries are currently exploring sugar taxes as a way of reducing population sugar intake, we conducted a rapid review to describe existing sugar taxes around the world.

Methods: A rapid review of the published literature and existing international databases (e.g. World Cancer Research Fund's (WCRF) International NOURISHING framework) was undertaken to identify national sugar taxes up to August 2018. Key characteristics of the initiatives were extracted and categorized according to a pre-defined framework.

Results: 39 countries have sugar taxes, and 6 countries have proposed taxes. Three types of taxation on high sugar products were identified: specific excise tax, ad valorem excise tax and import tariffs. The value of taxes varied widely. The most common tax applied to both nutritively sweetened and non-nutritively sweetened beverages. Only 3 countries implemented an excise tax at the recommended rate of 20% or more. Available evidence for impact and effectiveness is limited. The evidence of passing taxes through to prices is heterogeneous and there is no evidence for the effect on sugar intake or health outcomes.

Conclusions: A large number of countries are implementing sugar taxes that are not aligned with current recommendations for a robust tax design from the WCRF. Evidence for impact and effectiveness is limited, and should be the focus of future work.

Biography:

Emalie is a PhD Candidate and Research Assistant at The George Institute for Global Health in the Public Health Advocacy and Policy Impact team, and an Accredited Practising Dietitian. Her research is focused on nutrition policies in institutions, nutrient reformulation targets and salt reduction strategies.

School Canteens and Food Security for Children: What Can Australia Learn from the US School Food Programs?

Liesel Spencer¹

¹ Senior Lecturer, School of Law, Western Sydney University

Abstract:

Children are amongst the population groups most vulnerable to experiencing food insecurity in Australia. A 2018 report from Foodbank, the largest hunger relief charitable organisation in Australia, found that 22% of Australian children had experienced food insecurity in the preceding 12 months. Children were at heightened risk in single parent households and households experiencing unemployment, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households. The social safety net of Australia's existing welfare laws is not effective regulation of the public health risk of food insecurity for this vulnerable population. Food insecurity puts children at risk of lifelong educational, social and health disadvantage, compounding and entrenching socioeconomic and health disparities. Australia has a patchwork of school feeding programs, often run by charities, but this is on an ad hoc basis and not universal. The US, by contrast, has long-established school feeding programs. This paper explores the potential benefits and pitfalls of Australia implementing a means-tested national school food program. Australian schools could utilise and expand the existing infrastructure of school canteens to deliver meals to disadvantaged children. The US experience indicates that a school meals program should minimise stigma and preserve student privacy and dignity. It also serves as a cautionary tale that strong legislative safeguards are required to prevent the industrial food sector using school canteens as a new market for unhealthy processed food products. This paper proposes a national school food program as a supplement, not a replacement, to patch the food security gap in Australia's existing social safety net.

Biography:

Liesel Spencer is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Law at Western Sydney University. Her research interests are in public health law and food systems governance. Liesel's current research compares the food security and public health impacts of Australia's income management trial with US food welfare laws.

The Trajectory of the Doha Round Negotiations on Food Security in Achieving sustainable Development Goal of Eliminating Hunger

Sharmin Tania¹

¹ Lecturer, Curtin University

Abstract:

Food security has remained on the negotiating agenda before the GATT and WTO in all Rounds of trade negotiations. The 2008 Global Food Crisis intensified the contesting standpoints of different countries on food security issues. The current debates on food security before the WTO include reaching a permanent solution to India's national food stockholding programs and the use of special safeguard mechanism, agricultural export restrictions and green box subsidies. The world community has agreed on a new framework of sustainable development goals with 17 goals and supporting targets and means of implementation, in which international trade has an indispensable role to play in achieving the goal of eliminating hunger and all forms of malnutrition by 2030. The paper will examine whether the course of the Doha Round negotiations on food security has grappled with the meaning of the multifaceted concept of food security in terms of 'physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food', as agreed at the 1996 World Food Summit.

Biography:

Sharmin is a Lecturer at Curtin Law School. Sharmin works in diverse areas of international law, including international trade law, international refugee law, and law and development. She also works in consumer law and equity and has published journal articles in these areas.

Global Governance of Front of Pack Nutrition Labelling: A Qualitative Analysis

Anne-Marie Thow,¹ Alexandra Jones, Carmen Huckel Schneider, Ronald Labonté

¹ Senior Lecturer in Health Policy, University of Sydney

Abstract:

The Codex Alimentarius has approved ongoing work for international guidance on front of pack nutrition labelling, which is a core intervention for prevention of diet-related noncommunicable disease. This guidance will have implications for national policy decision making regarding this important public health issue. However, front of pack nutrition labelling is also a trade and commerce policy issue. In this study we analyse the global governance of front of pack nutrition labelling and current policy processes, in order to inform public health policy and advocacy. We present findings from a qualitative governance and institutional analysis, based on key informant interviews with 28 global actors. The study found that Codex guidance was perceived as likely to have a high impact on front of pack nutrition labelling globally. However, a small and highly interconnected 'regime complex' of international institutions surrounds FoP nutrition labelling at the global level, and influence on Codex discussions is being exerted differentially by actors at the national and global level, particularly by government and industry actors. There are thus risks associated with conflicts of interests in the development of global guidance on front of pack nutrition labelling. There are also opportunities for more strategic and coordinated public health engagement.

Biography:

Dr Anne Marie Thow is Senior Lecturer at the University of Sydney, and her research applies theories of public policy making to strengthen public health nutrition policy globally. Anne Marie trained in nutrition and political economy, and has undertaken extensive policy analysis fieldwork in Africa, Asia and the Pacific.

Food Security at the Tipping Point: A Community Interest Under Threat?

Theodora Valkanou¹

¹ PhD Fellow, University of Copenhagen, Denmark

Abstract:

The number of undernourished people globally today has now reached at least 821 million people with 1 in 9 in this plight. Two major factors challenging food security are rapid population growth and the adverse effects of climate change. By 2050, the production of food must increase at least by 50% to feed 9 billion people. Climate change-induced extreme weather events cause the destruction of crops and critical infrastructure thus further threatening food security. The elimination of hunger constitutes one of the major challenges of the 21st century. The absence of a comprehensive international legal regime defining state obligations in relation to food security reveals gaps in food governance calling for a response by international law.

The research paper will first map the plexus of international law instruments addressing food security considerations. Upon an analysis of their normative content, the paper will argue that, despite the non-binding nature of a plethora of such instruments, they provide evidence of international law when it comes to states' obligation to safeguard food security. The paper will then assess whether food security constitutes a community interest, i.e. whether states have a collective duty to accommodate the food security of people outside their territory or control in their policy- and law-making as principal actors of international law. The paper will conclude with proposals on how technological advances may contribute to safeguarding the food security of the most vulnerable populations.

Biography:

Theodora is a PhD fellow at the University of Copenhagen, Faculty of Law. Theodora was previously a Research Associate to Judge James Crawford, International Court of Justice. She has also worked at the European Commission and in legal practice in London. Her research focuses on food security and international law.

Regulating Alcohol Pregnancy Warning Labels

Sarah Ward,¹ Michael Thorn, Patricia Hepworth

¹ Principal Policy Officer, Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education

Abstract:

In October 2018, Ministers responsible for food and alcohol labelling in Australia and New Zealand agreed to make pregnancy warning labels mandatory on all alcohol products. For those working in public health, this decision was a long and hard fought battle that took more than seven years of persistent advocacy to win against the delaying tactics of multinational alcohol companies and their lobbyists. For too long the rights of consumers to be informed were denied by these vested interests.

Alcohol consumption during pregnancy is associated with a range of harms including miscarriage, low-birth weights, birth defects and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. These harms are preventable and warning labels on alcohol products are unique in providing health information both at point of sale and point of consumption. The 2011 Review of Food Labelling Law and Policy (Labelling Logic or Blewett Review) in Australia recommended the adoption of pregnancy warning labels.

Public policy seldom occurs in a straight line or in vacuum and it is important to understand the industry tactics, politics and bureaucratic processes, which caused this significant delay. This presentation will outline the advocacy strategy undertaken to achieve this change as well the outline the steps towards successful implementation.

This presentation will also highlight the importance of consumers research and testing to understand how consumers read, comprehend and interpret labels and in particular, health warnings. It will also outline unintended consequences of ambiguously worded Government advice.

Biography:

Sarah has worked in the alcohol and other drug field for over 15 years, joining FARE in November 2011. She has previously worked for Government and non-Government in Australia and England. Sarah leads FARE's policy work on women's health, pregnancy, family violence and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.

Nutrients, Foods, and Dietary Patterns: A Descriptive Analysis of Systematic Reviews Used to Inform Dietary Guidelines Around the World

Kate Wingrove,¹ Mark Lawrence, Sarah McNaughton

¹ PhD Candidate, Deakin University

Abstract:

Dietary guidelines are important policy reference standards. Historically, dietary guidelines existed to promote nutritional adequacy and prevent diseases associated with undernutrition. In many countries, the purpose of dietary guidelines has now expanded to include prevention of obesity and diet-related chronic diseases. Dietary guidelines should be informed by systematic reviews of the best available evidence on the relationships between diet and health. Nutrient-based, food-based, or dietary patterns research can be used to investigate these relationships. In dietary patterns research, the exposure of interest is the total diet or the combinations of foods consumed, rather than consumption of individual foods or nutrients. To fit the current purpose of dietary guidelines, evidence from all three types of research should be reviewed. The aim of this study was to examine the extent to which the systematic reviews used to inform dietary guidelines incorporated evidence from nutrient-based, food-based, and dietary patterns research. The methods used to identify, select, and critically appraise relevant evidence were analysed descriptively. For each systematic review, data on the research question, inclusion criteria, and quality assessment approach were extracted. Preliminary results indicate that in most countries, foods and nutrients rather than dietary patterns tend to be the dominant exposure of interest. Both randomised controlled trials (RCTs) and cohort studies are often eligible for inclusion, but quality assessment approaches tend to prioritise evidence from RCTs over evidence from cohort studies. This may have implications for the translation of evidence from dietary patterns research into dietary guidelines.

Biography:

Kate is an Accredited Practising Dietitian with an interest in public health nutrition. She is a PhD Candidate and Casual Research Fellow at Deakin University's Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition (IPAN). Kate's PhD research focuses on evidence use in dietary guideline development.

Analysing of Milk Formula Advertisements Featured in Chinese Parenting Apps

Jing Zhao,¹ Mu Li, Becky Freeman

¹ PhD Student, School of Public Health, University of Sydney

Abstract:

Background: China is the largest market for infant formula. Formula manufacturers and distributors have both seized app popularity as an avenue for marketing. This study aims to identify and analyse milk formula advertisements featured on Chinese pregnancy and parenting apps; to build the first complete picture of app based milk formula marketing techniques being used by milk formula brand variants on these apps.

Method: We searched for free-to-download Chinese infant feeding apps in the Android App Store. The final sample consisted of 353 unique formula ads from the 79 apps that met the inclusion criteria. We developed a content analysis coding tool for categorizing the marketing techniques used in ads, which included a total of 22 coding options developed across 4 categories: emotional appeal, marketing elements, product claims and advertising disclosure.

Results: The 353 milk formula ads were distributed across 31 companies, 44 brands and 79 brand variants. Overall, 15 of 31 corporations were international with the remaining 16 Chinese-owned. An image of a natural pasture was the most commonly used emotional image amongst the brand variants (16/79). All variants included branding elements, and 75 variants linked directly to e-shops. Special price promotions were promoted by nearly half (n=39) of all variants. Five variants included a celebrity endorsement in their advertising. A total of 25 out of the 79 variants made a product quality claim. Only fourteen variants made a direct advertising disclosure.

Conclusion: Policy makers should take steps to establish an appropriate regulatory framework and provide detailed monitoring and enforcement, to ensure that milk formula marketing practices do not undermine breastfeeding norms and behaviours.

Biography:

Jing Zhao is a PhD candidate at the School of Public Health, University of Sydney where she completed her Master of International Public Health (MIPH) degree. Her research interests include the influence of smartphone apps with respect to people's healthy behaviour change, particularly in infant and child feeding.