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RE: 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee Public Comments

The [International Food Information Council \(IFIC\)](#) and [IFIC Foundation](#) appreciate the opportunity to submit comments to the 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC). Our ensuing comments are constructed with the 2010 DGAC "Needs for Future Research" in mind. We believe our years of consumer research and related peer-reviewed articles will be of great value to the DGAC in supporting innovative ways to motivate the American public toward more healthful lifestyles and behaviors.

IFIC and IFIC Foundation are nonprofit organizations based in Washington, DC. The mission of IFIC is to effectively communicate science-based information about food safety and nutrition to health professionals, government officials, educators, journalists, and consumers. The mission of the IFIC Foundation is to effectively communicate science-based information about health, nutrition and food safety for the public good. Both IFIC and the IFIC Foundation receive primary funding from food, beverage and agricultural companies that support our missions. We also receive government grants and contributions from other individuals, foundations and associations.

IFIC and IFIC Foundation consumer research has been exploring Americans' attitudes toward nutrition and health for more than two decades with our signature research project being the annual IFIC Foundation *Food & Health Survey*. We are dedicated to providing consumers with clear, accurate advice and actionable tips on how science-based information related to nutrition, health, and food safety can be applied to their daily lives.

FATS

RESEARCH NEED ADDRESSED:

The 2010 DGAC identified a number of research needs related to fats. The findings below address general research needs around Americans' intakes and consumer perceptions and attitudes related to fat.

RELEVANCE:

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans provides recommendations on foods and nutrients to increase or reduce; yet there remains confusion among consumers about the role of some nutrients and in what direction to change consumption behaviors. For example, consumers may be ignoring nutrient-specific information, such as advice about dietary fats, because these messages often fail to relate nutrients to foods consumers actually eat. Understanding consumer's beliefs and attitudes around fats will influence communication methods and messaging.

FOR NUTRITION EVIDENCE LIBRARY (NEL) CONSIDERATION:

Hornick BA, Childs NM, Smith Edge M, Reinhardt Kapsak W, Doohar C, White C. [Is it Time to Rethink Nutrition Communications? A Five-Year Retrospective of Americans' Attitudes Toward Food, Nutrition, and Health. A Five-Year Retrospective of Americans. Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 2013; 113\(1\)14-23.](#)

Description: This IFIC Foundation article highlights key findings and trends in consumer food and physical activity knowledge, attitudes and behaviors that enable practitioners to build on effective communication strategies and other approaches.

KEY POINTS:

- All types of dietary fat continue to have a poor reputation among Americans, with little recognition of the beneficial impact that fats can have on health.
- From 2006 to 2009, about two-thirds of Americans reported concerns with the amount and type of fats consumed.
 - Awareness of trans-fatty acids grew from 81% in 2006 to 90% in 2009, along with reported attempts to reduce dietary consumption of trans-fatty acids.
 - Awareness of n-3 fatty acids has remained fairly steady with 74% in 2009 reporting that they have heard of this type of fat. Yet only 51% indicated they were trying to eat more of n-3 fatty acids.
- When making purchasing decisions, the use of total fat, saturated fat, and calories from fat information on the Nutrition Facts panel appears to be declining, which may suggest that consumers are directing their attention to other nutrients and overall calories.
- Directions to reduce intake of specific nutrients and foods may be interpreted as negative rules, which research has shown are often resented and ignored.
- Messages about moderating dietary intake are seen as empowering and encourage consumers to make their own healthful choices.

KEY POINTS FROM IFIC FOUNDATION 2013 *FOOD AND HEALTH SURVEY*:

- Many American try and limit the amount of fat they consume, though one in four do try to consume omega-3 fats.
- Seven out of ten Americans claim they try and eat as little fat as possible. One out of five Americans believes all types of fats have the same impact on health.
- The top reasons for considering the fat content of foods include maintaining a healthy weight and improving heart health (in general or by managing cholesterol).