

**The White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health:
Food Industry Contributions, Recommendations & Commitments**
September 2022

In anticipation of the September 28, 2022 White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health, the food industry has summarized its recent collective contributions to improving national nutrition-related health outcomes and remedying national food insecurity. Yet, as food security and nutrition-centric health empowerment are perennial challenges for the country, the industry also recognizes there is ongoing need for private sector cooperation and collaboration in industry-led efforts with the Administration, federal government, public advocates, academia, and other stakeholders. The food industry, including product suppliers and manufacturers, product retailers and wholesalers, and restaurants, is excited to build on current momentum, uncover new opportunities, and collaborate to improve nutrition and health in America.

Snapshot of Food Industry Contributions to Addressing Food and Nutrition Security

The food industry is heartened by the efforts of the Biden Administration to centralize focus and revitalize action through the upcoming White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health. The food industry plays a key role in reducing hunger, improving nutrition, encouraging innovation, and increasing health equity while strengthening the US economy. Work in this vital economic and societal sector is well underway with greater opportunity on the horizon. Bold, smart, and effective industry efforts continue to address food access, as well as the integration of health and nutrition, empowered consumer choice, and smart nutrition research.

The Food Industry Ensures Food Access & Offers Safe, Nutritious and Affordable Options Across America

- Day in and day out, the food industry offers safe, nutritious, affordable, and culturally-diverse food and beverage options in communities across the country, at large and small retailers, national restaurants, and family-owned dining establishments and for federal feeding programs.
- Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, as an essential business, the food industry cooperated to put food on store shelves and keep stores open; the industry also quickly revolutionized to provide online ordering, home delivery, and curbside pickup.
- Food safety and quality is critical to the food industry's success, and we are committed to ensuring delivery of high-quality products that satisfy our customers.
- Recognizing rising inflation and supply chain challenges, the food industry continues to optimize production and distribution efforts to keep food costs as under control as possible and to ensure a variety of products are on retail shelves, restaurant tables or available for federal feeding programs.
- The food industry supports partnerships to improve food access in communities, whether it's through food bank donations, food recovery programs, or custom retail, restaurant or agricultural initiatives.
- The food industry supports and supplies the food for Federal Feeding Programs including the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), USDA Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), USDA Child and Adult Day Care Food Program (CACFP), and the

USDA Restaurant Meals Program (RMP) -- all of which provide nutrition to underserved communities and those in need. In particular, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the retail industry worked to expand access to SNAP Online and helped access grow from five states to 49 states and the District of Columbia.

- Innovation is the hallmark of the food industry. New products with less sugar, lower sodium levels, less fat, and smaller portions are available in nearly every aisle in the grocery store. This innovation gives consumers more control and more choices than ever before. Along with the restaurant industry, food manufacturers are growing the range of “better-for-you” options.”

The Food Industry Facilitates the Integration of Health & Nutrition for the Consumer

- The food industry relies on registered dietitians (RDs) across the supply chain to inform product development and provide meaningful nutrition information to consumers, for example:
 - o Food manufacturers and retailers routinely partner with registered dietitians to provide direct-to-consumer nutrition education programs and resources in store and online.
 - o In-store, retail dietitians offer nutrition guidance and budget-friendly practical meal solutions for families; whereas both registered dietitian nutritionists and pharmacists help address gaps in healthcare equity, improve public health, and meet consumer demands for health and well-being services.
 - o Food companies, retailers and restaurants employ RDs to advise research and development, and to contribute to consumer education programs.
- A number of food industry health and well-being programs align with and operationalize the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics philosophy of “Food as Medicine.”

The Food Industry Empowers Consumers to Make Healthful Choices

- The food industry utilizes tools such as clear and accurate product labeling, in-store signage and displays, and online information, applications, and resources to bring factual, science-based product information to consumers. Many restaurants also provide nutrition information on menus.
- Industry labeling programs and consumer education programs provide consumers with education on and specific data for the calories, added sugar, sodium, and saturated fat content of products.
- Many voluntary industry partnerships strive to improve transparency for the consumer, including:
 - o The Portion Balance Coalition (PBC) is a multi-sector collaborative of private, public, and non-profit leaders and organizations working together to achieve better nutrition for all by focusing on portions.
 - o The Partnership of Food Safety Education (PFSE) provides resources to help consumers reduce their risk of foodborne illness
 - o The USDA MyPlate National Strategic Partners collaborate to educate and raise awareness of the MyPlate resources and to promote MyPlate messaging in communications.

The Food Industry Proactively Tackles Nutrition Research

- The food industry partners with academics and other nongovernmental organizations to undertake research to better understand food safety and nutrition science, and consumer needs, demands and preferences to inform food industry innovation and renovation, bridging a gap unmet by federal nutrition and consumer research dollars.

Food Industry Defined Government Actions to Address Hunger, Nutrition and Health

While the industry has an important role to play, it certainly can't solve the nation's food issues alone. Reflecting common ground among recommendations submitted to the White House, as well as dialogue and collaboration in anticipation of the White House Conference, the industry has rallied behind a priority set of recommended government actions. The below proposed set of *Food Industry Defined Government Actions to Address Hunger, Nutrition and Health* is organized by the White House Conference pillars with the intentional omission of pillar four, which relates to physical activity, as it's outside the purview of food industry expertise.

Pillar 1: Improve food access and affordability

The federal government should be responsive to consumer demands, commercial accessibility, and nutrition needs within federal feeding programs; possible actions include:

- Assess and expand eligibility to increase participation
- Promote access to food in all forms, including fresh, frozen, packaged, or canned foods, eliminating bias in all programs
- Harness the power of innovation in ensuring nutrition security by prioritizing e-commerce solutions and working with the food industry to remove barriers to integrating this capability in retail technology
- Fund retail outlet point-of-sale technology solutions that facilitate accessibility and improve user-experience for federal nutrition programs

The federal government should prioritize food and nutrition at the highest levels of government, specifically FDA should:

- Establish a structured and prioritized regulatory agenda for its food and nutrition program, using a transparent process to seek stakeholder input, conduct public rulemaking and issue guidance
- Allocate more staffing and resources toward transparent and informative nutrition labeling and education for consumers

The federal government should invest in strong, resilient food supply chains; possible actions include:

- Enact government policies that optimize the supply chain (e.g., increase truck-weight limits, establish a "ground traffic control" for freight transport, invest in cold storage)
- Support workforce development and innovation in food and modern agriculture
- Evaluate the multiple factors that impact the cost of food, including but not limited to production and trade issues, and transportation challenges.

The federal government should work with the food industry to increase food access points in communities; possible actions include:

- Incentivize opening grocery stores in limited-access areas
- Assess infrastructure and transportation solutions to improve food availability in areas of low food access

Pillar 2: Integrate nutrition and health

The federal government should recommend that physicians and other healthcare professionals integrate nutrition into wellness plans and leverage the expertise of dietitians and nutritionists within the healthcare team.

As appropriate, any government provided, consumer education materials should help consumers understand the link between health and nutrition.

The federal government should promote and provide funding and other incentives to build on nutrition-centric health best practices established through public private partnerships or communities, that would encourage grocers to act as health-hubs, including implementing a food prescription program that includes options from food groups that align with the Dietary Guidelines and an overall healthy eating pattern.

Pillar 3: Empower all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices

The federal government and the food industry should work together to increase positive consumer-facing, nutrition education messages through existing resources and should expand the reach and effectiveness of these programs; possible actions include:

- Provide increased funding for USDA and HHS for public health and nutrition education campaigns that can be implemented in partnership with the private sector
- Create demographic and culturally diverse, science-based nutrition education resources and trainings

The federal government should incentivize and promote participation in government led and/or private sector led voluntary initiatives that aim to increase access to healthy foods:

- The federal government should promote practical, and achievable voluntary government programs that seek to improve the nutrition quality of food (e.g., voluntary sodium reduction, use of “healthy claims”, responsible marketing to kids).
- The federal government should incentivize restaurants to increase their offerings of appropriately sized nutritious options on menus.
- Within federal programs like SNAP, the federal government should promote food choice with positive incentives to develop and market healthy food and beverages rather than restrictions on certain foods.
- Federal nutrition programs should encourage users to make nutritious foods choices by incentivizing greater redemption levels for healthy food purchases

Pillar 5: Enhance nutrition and food security research

The federal government should prioritize the improvement of nutrition metrics, data collection, and research tools to inform nutrition and food security policy, particularly on issues of equity, access, and disparities, while giving appropriate consideration to private sector research all in an effort to improve food quality and security, as well as eliminate hunger and health inequities.

In order to ensure that U.S. dietary guidance is based on the totality of the scientific evidence, the federal government should provide funding to regularly update the Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs) and support the process to develop the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, including implementation of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) recommendations to modernize the Dietary Guidelines process.

2022 Collection of Food Industry Commitments

Mindful of government policies, programs and responsibility, there continues to be great opportunity for public/private collaboration. As such, to spur meaningful dialogue at the White House Conference and to demonstrate recognition of collective industry responsibility, the food industry has prepared a set of industry commitments.

The 2022 Collection of Food Industry Commitments, Issued In Advance of the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition & Health

- We will continue to maintain and improve the resiliency and accessibility of the U.S. food supply.
- We will continue to innovate and renovate to expand the nutritional quality of food and beverages in the marketplace.
- We will continue to forge public-private partnerships, leveraging best practices in communications and marketing, to educate consumers on the interconnectedness of health and nutrition, and provide guidance on healthy food and beverage choices.
- We will review and understand the National Strategy, and then work with the White House to define and operationalize activities with measurable outcomes in service of the National Strategy.
- In collaboration with the federal government, we will address challenges and barriers to the successful execution of the National Strategy and to improving hunger, nutrition, and health in the U.S.
- In collaboration with the federal government, we will define, prioritize and identify areas for industry contributions to a national nutrition and food security research agenda that supports White House Conference goals

Sincerely,

American Bakers Association

American Beverage Association

American Frozen Food Institute

Consumer Brands Association

Corn Refiners Association

FMI-The Food Industry Association

International Dairy Foods Association
Juice Products Association
National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA)
National Confectioners Association
National Grocers Association
National Restaurant Association
National Turkey Federation
North American Meat Institute
North American Millers' Association
SNAC International
The Association for Dressings & Sauces