

RESOLUTION

HEALTHY FOOD PLEDGE

Proposed by the Environmental Health Committee of the
World Federation of Public Health Associations

THE WORLD FEDERATION OF PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATIONS

Geneva, Switzerland

May 18, 2008

Whereas, the US California Medical Association passed Resolution 705-07 entitled Improving Health through Sustainable Food Purchasing in 2007 which stated in part:

Whereas, industrial agriculture relies on application of high levels of synthetic fertilizers and toxic pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides, exposure to which can lead to elevated cancer risks and disruption of human reproductive, immune, endocrine and nervous systems;ⁱ and,

Whereas, non therapeutic antibiotics routinely fed to industrial livestock pass through the food chain to humans and contribute to human antibiotic resistance, and eliminating the use of non therapeutic antibiotics in livestock can help ensure that human antibiotic treatments remain effective;ⁱⁱ and,

Whereas, manure from concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) has resulted in severe air and water pollution; and nitrates from this manure are linked to blue baby syndrome, birth defects, thyroid disorders, and cancer;^{iii,iv} and airborne particles and gases from CAFOs are linked to extremely elevated rates of respiratory and intestinal disorders in nearby residents;^{v,vi} and CAFOs are implicated in many outbreaks of food-borne illness such as E. coli and Salmonella;^{vii, viii} leading the American Public Health Association to call for a moratorium on CAFOs^{ix}; and,

Whereas, the food purchasing decisions made by health care institutions can affect the health of patients, staff, and visitors; and the massive purchasing power of the health care industry can influence the direction of U.S. agriculture by purchasing food that is produced in an environmentally and socially sustainable manner; and,

Whereas the WFPHA has passed policies on Population and Ecological Sustainability in 1994; Health, Economics and Development in 1996; Health Care Without Harm in 1999; and Public Health and Globalization in 2001 placing living standards food and environmental sustainability in health care and society as a whole and

Whereas the municipalities, regions, and some nations have adopted plans to Improve Local Access to Locally Grown, Sustainable, Healthy Food and Value-Added Products and to Increase Public Awareness.^{x,xi}

Whereas, hospitals and health care systems have joined in signing the Healthy Food in Health Care Pledge^{xii} which commits the pledged institutions to:

- Work with local farmers, community-based organizations, and food suppliers to increase the availability of locally sourced food.
- Encourage vendors and/or food-management companies to supply food that is, among other attributes, produced without synthetic pesticides and hormones or antibiotics given to animals in the absence of diagnosed disease and which supports farmer health and welfare and ecologically protective and restorative agriculture.
- Implement a stepwise program to identify and adopt sustainable food procurement.
- Communicate an interest in foods that are identified as local and certified.

- Educate and communicate within the system and to patients and community about nutritious, socially just and ecological sustainable food, healthy food practices and procedures.
- Minimize or beneficially reuse food waste and support the use of food packaging and products that are ecologically protective;
- Develop a program to promote and source from producers and processors that uphold the dignity of family, farmers, workers, and their communities and support sustainable and humane agriculture systems; and
- Encourage public health professionals to understand and to involve our medical and veterinary colleagues in this multidisciplinary effort.

Be it Resolved that the World Federation of Public Health Associations encourages hospitals and other health care institutions to sign and support the Healthy Food Pledge; and

Be it further Resolved that the WFPHA will work to secure food for professional meetings consistent with this pledge.

This resolution relies heavily on materials written and developed by Jamie Harvie, PE from a paper presented by The Center for Health Design® and Health Care Without Harm at a conference sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, September 2006. www.healthdesign.org.

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- xii. <http://www.noharm.org/us/food/pledge>