

Framework

For translating health into farming and food



Source: WHO European Region Office, 2000

Policy Opportunities

- Commodity Title
- Child Nutrition Title
- Dietary Guidance

Commodity Policy

- Shift in direct commodity payments
 - Support diversified production
 - Encourage shift from feed grains to food crops
 - Create a more favorable climate for growing fruits and vegetables
 - “Let's join hands as wealthy industrialized nations and say to the world, we are going to get rid of all our agricultural subsidies together.”¹
- Crop Insurance and Agriculture Research
 - Correct imbalance: disproportionate emphasis on corn, soybeans, wheat; little for fruits and vegetables, organic/sustainable methods
- Green box payments
 - Support sustainable practices
 - Less focus on commodities and past yields

¹President George Bush speaking to ITV1 television ahead of the G8 summit in Scotland on Wednesday, July 6, 2005.

Child Nutrition Policy

■ School Meals Programs

- Update definition: Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value¹
- Limit access, availability to soft drinks, FMNVs
- Limit/eliminate marketing, commercialism, promotion of junk food

■ Support School Gardens

- *“...all of the kindergartens and several of the other grades tasted arugula, okra, kohlrabi, sage, mint, chives, squash, a variety of pears, mulberries, blackberries, strawberries, and raspberries and several edible weeds. ... “these tastings were the first time the children were ever exposed to these foods.”*

■ Opportunity: School Wellness Policy

- Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, all school districts must develop and implement wellness policies that address nutrition and physical activity by the start of the 2006-2007 school year

¹ CSPI, 2005

Farm to School Programs

- Local foods incorporated into school meals, and snacks
- Benefits:
 - Students
 - Enhance nutrient density of school meals – establish healthy habits
 - Focus on whole foods, fruits and vegetables
 - Opportunity to increase agriculture, food system literacy
 - Farmers
 - Additional or alternative marketing, value-added opportunities
 - Potential increase in participation in local market outlets
 - Greater community exposure
 - Small, mid-size farms – benefiting least by current farm payments
 - Communities
 - Spotlight is on schools because of obesity epidemic
 - Projects often are a collaborative effort
 - Local Economy and Environment
 - Lower energy bill
 - Economy benefits from recirculation of food dollars

Farm to School Policy

- **2002 Farm Bill:**

- Language states that USDA should *encourage* schools to incorporate local purchases if practicable. Memo sent to all Food Service Directors. Include “shall” in policy language
- DoD Fresh received \$50 million additional funding to be distributed to states based on participation rates

- **Child Nutrition Reauthorization (2004):**

- "Farm to Cafeteria Projects" Act introduced to create a \$10 million seed grant fund to help schools start FTS programs (passed, not appropriated)
- \$9 million to continue, expand and make permanent the Fruit and Vegetable Snack Program

Strengthen Local Food Systems and Health Simultaneously

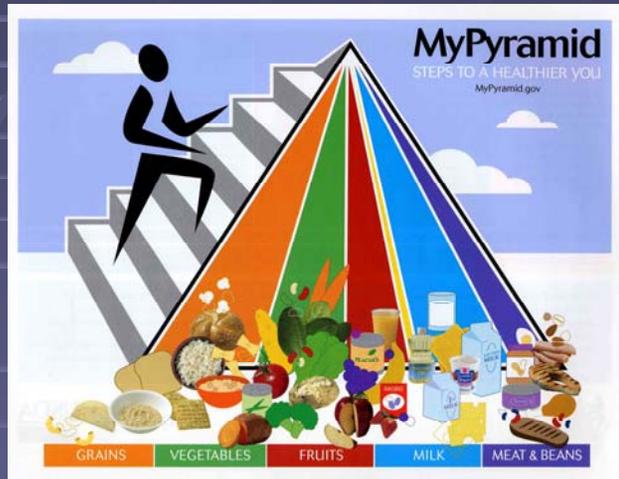
- Need for coherent policy on farmers' markets in low-income communities
- Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
 - Established 1992, to provide fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables to WIC participants, and to expand the awareness, use of and sales at farmers' markets.
- Senior Farmers' Market Senior Program
 - Awards grants to provide low-income seniors with coupons for foods at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs.
- Food Stamps - low income families find it increasingly difficult to redeem FS at markets
 - Resources needed for EBT capacity at FMs

Homeland Security.

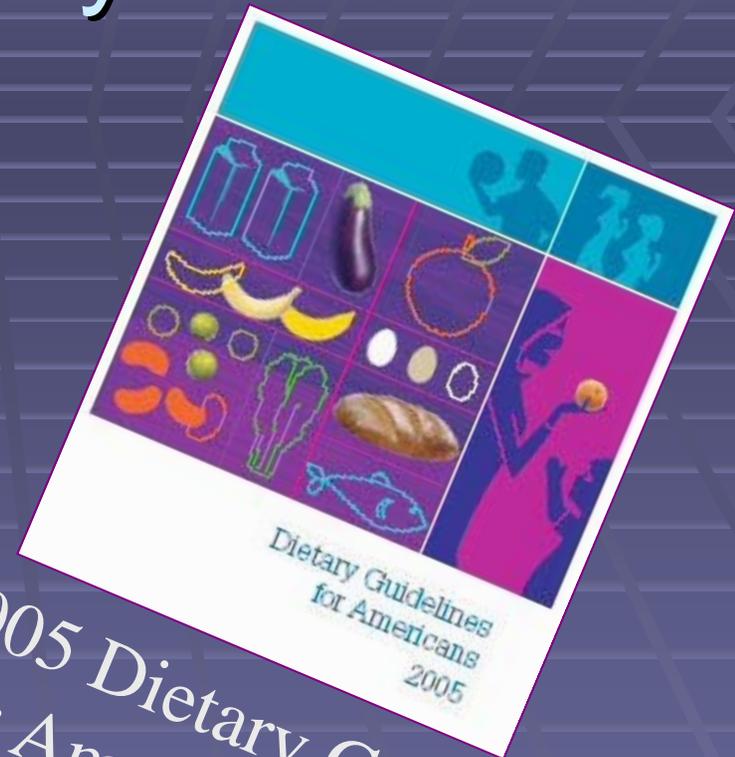
“34,000 member families standing behind the production of food, ornamentals and environmental quality.”

Farm Bureau of
New York State

Congruency: Dietary Guidance



MyPyramid



2005 Dietary Guidelines
For Americans

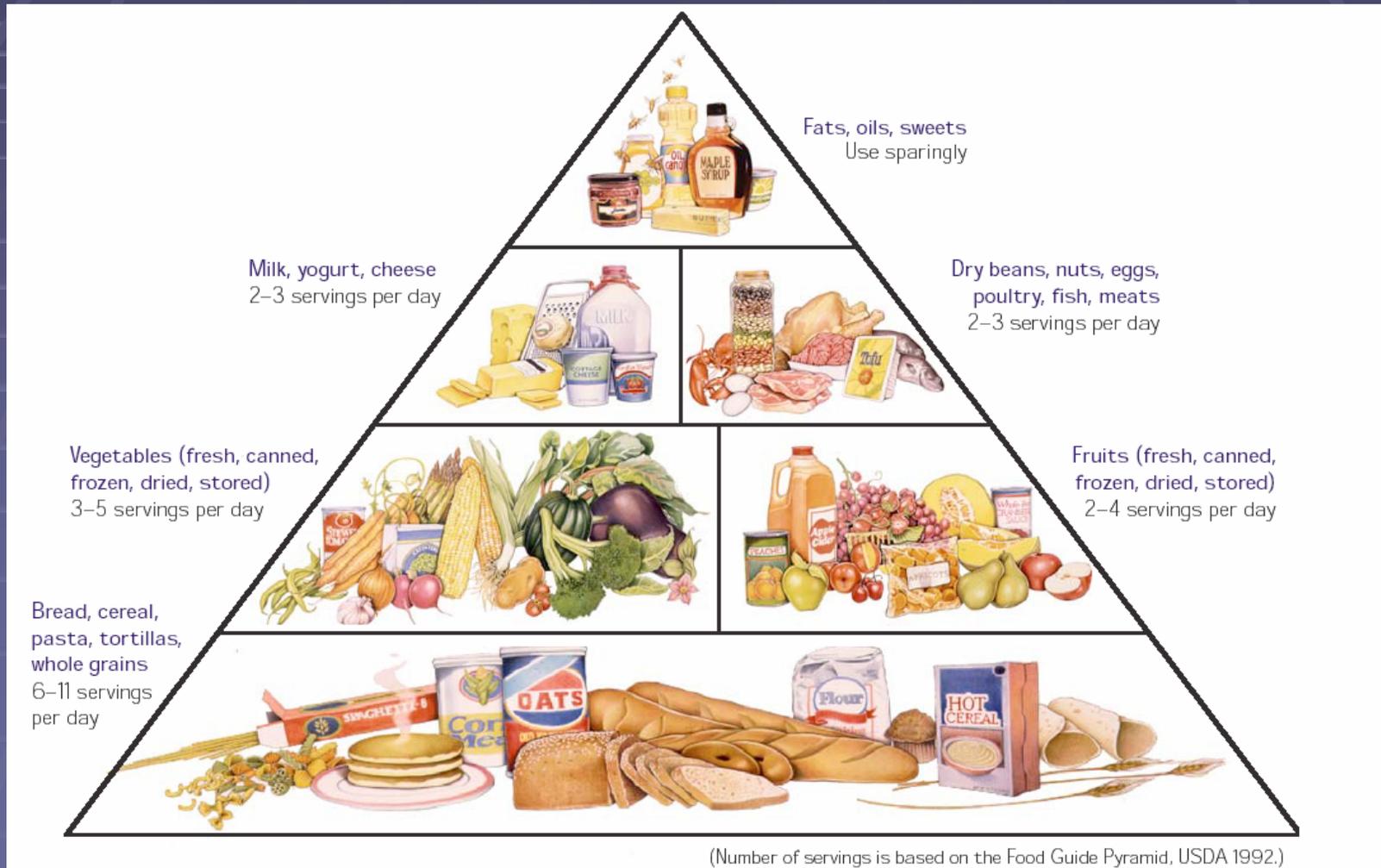
Absent:

Regional or Local Context

“Agriculture” “Farmer” “Farmers' Markets”

Regional Dietary Guidance

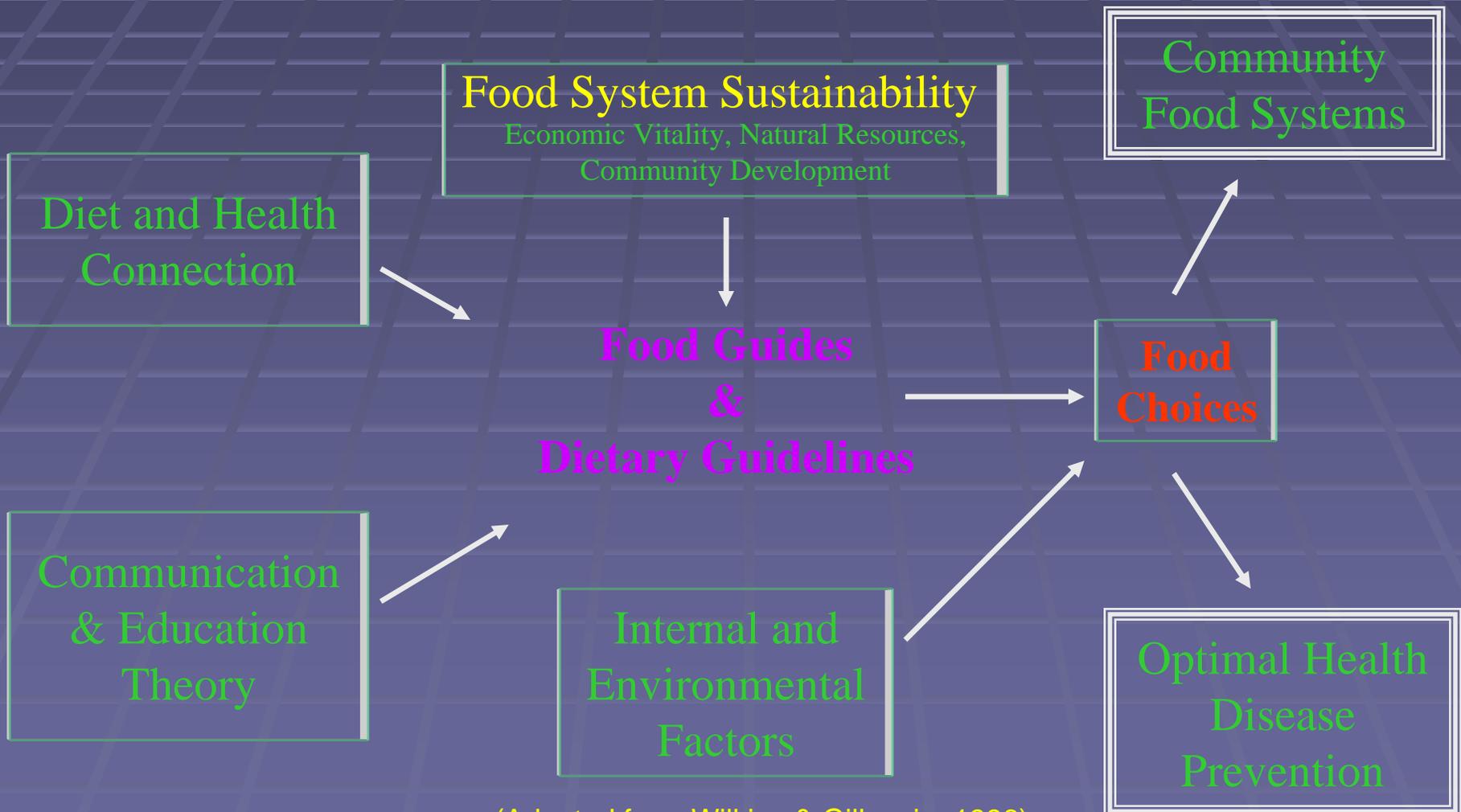
The Northeast Regional Food Guide



Northeast Dietary Guidelines

- Aim for Fitness
- Build a Healthy Base
- Choose Sensibly
- Develop the Local Food System
 - Choose a diet with plenty of foods produced locally.
 - Choose a diet with plenty of foods processed locally.
 - Choose a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables when they are available from local farmers.
 - Choose a variety of root vegetables during the fall, winter and early spring.
 - Minimize your total food mile intake.

Revised Framework for Dietary Guidance



(Adapted from Wilkins & Gillespie, 1996)

Individual Level: Consumer Interest?

- Slow Food
 - Preservation of biodiversity, taste, culinary, regional identity
- Increasing interest in local food systems
 - Farmers markets, Farm stands
 - Community Supported Agriculture - CSA's
 - Farm to School, Farm to Cafeteria
 - Restaurants buying local, organic
 - Retail Grocery Stores featuring local, organic
- Market share for Organic Food¹
 - 2000: more purchased in supermarkets than any other venue
 - Annual growth in retail sales = 20 % since 1990
 - U.S. organic cropland 2X between 1992 & 1997, 1.3m acres.
- Cultural Creatives: LOHAS, 26% of Americans²

¹ Dimitri and Greene. 2003. USDA/ERS, MTED and RED. Info Bulletin No. 777.

² Ray, P. 2000.

Strategies in research, outreach and higher education

- LGUs well-positioned to make the links between the agriculture and food system and public health
- Incorporate agriculture, food system and policy education in the teaching of nutrition
- Facilitate public dialogue on food and agriculture policy - start with the 2007 Farm Bill
- Demonstrate sustainable food system values and practices
- Reward interdisciplinary research in sustainable food systems and health-oriented agriculture policy

What barriers may interfere?

- Powerful interests will resist change in current farm policy, the food supply, and food system structure
- More winners in a more dispersed, community-based food system
- Resistance to acknowledging a connection between agriculture and health

The Policy Challenge

- Farm Bill needs to support health
- Balancing the evidence with interests
 - Major food processors benefit from current commodity subsidies
 - “In policy-making, powerful interest trumps powerful arguments.” (David Stockton)
- Educating about portion size and encouraging exercise will have limited effectiveness without significant change in food supply and marketing
- Incorporate “shall” (versus “may”) language in areas of policy that promote health
- Convincing public it’s worth the investment

Thank you

Jennifer Wilkins, PhD, RD
Food and Society Policy Fellow
Division of Nutritional Sciences
Cornell University
Ithaca, NY 14850

607.255.2730

Jlw15@cornell.edu

www.cce.cornell.edu/farmentoschool