

XI. WHO PAID THE PIPER?

"No company or industry group can afford to teach the lesson 'Eat less of what we make' even if that lesson is nutritionally sound¹."

-Joan Dye Gussow, Ed.D.

Previous writers^{2,3,4} have documented the political pressure applied via the USDA by the egg, dairy, meat, and poultry industries, against lower cholesterol and dietary fat recommendations. It appears the USDA, whose original charter specified only the promotion and sale of U.S. agricultural products,⁵ has also had a major role in nutrition education,⁶ hence, also a major conflict in interest:

Federal Funding for Nutritional Education Research

	FY '79 \$Million	FY '80 \$Million
U.S. Department of Agriculture	8.40	6.28
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	.45 .21	8.7 .94
Other Federal agencies	9.06	15.92

Harvard is the home of the first school of nutrition in any medical or health school in the world, according to Frederick Stare, M.D (1910-4/4/2002). His autobiography, *Adventures in Nutrition*, reveals that the Basic Four Food Group scheme was devised at the Harvard Department of Nutrition⁷ in 1955 and by 1957 had replaced 1943's Basic Seven,⁸ in the USDA's meandering and cabalistic system of numerology.

The department, begun in 1942, was short on funds so the author solicited support from outside sources.⁹ By 1986 he had raised \$20,640,347 from private and government agencies and over 100 industrial benefactors.¹⁰

¹Sims L, and Light L. *Directions for nutrition education research-the Penn State conferences*. p 16. Pennsylvania State University, 1981.

²Clinton S. *The Vegetarian Perspective: An Examination of Nutrition Education and the American Diet*. Vegetarian Education Network. PO Box 3347. West Chester, PA 19381.

³Imperato P. *Acceptable Risks*. Viking Penguin. New York 1985. ISBN 0-670-10205-9.

⁴See note 290. Hausman.

⁵See note 246. Consumer Reports. *A pyramid topples at the USDA*. October 1991. pp 663-666.

⁶See note 297. Sims and Light. p 18.

⁷Stare F. *Adventures in Nutrition*. Christopher Publishing House. Hanover, 1991. p 126. ISBN 0-8158-0470-9.

⁸See note 287. *Food Guides in the United States*.

⁹See note 303. Stare. p 23.

¹⁰*ibid*. Stare. p 153.

In Stare's words:¹¹ "Money Talks!" This revelation not only failed to raise eyebrows but was praised by one of the book's reviewers.¹² A "scurrilous attack," *Harvard's Sugar-Pushing Nutritionist*, in the August 1978 Saturday Review¹³ also listed most of the following contributors and noted that Stare had not yet advised against the use of DDT, diethylstilbestrol in cattle feed, food additives and colorings, pesticides, saccharin, soft drinks, sugar, or white flour. Among the funding sources were the following:

HARVARD DEPARTMENT OF NUTRITION

Funding 1942-1986

Source: *Adventures in Nutrition* Appendix 6



FOOD COMPANIES:

- | | |
|--|--|
| Ajinomoto Co. of Tokyo | International Sugar Research Foundation |
| American Meat Institute | Kellogg Company |
| Armour & Co. | Kraft Corp. |
| Beatrice Food Co. | McDonald's Corp |
| Birds Eye (Division of General Foods) | National Biscuit Company |
| Borden Co. | National Confectioners Association |
| California & Hawaii Sugar Co. | National Dairy Council |
| Campbell Soup Co. | National Dairy Products |
| Carnation Co. | National Livestock & Meat Board |
| Coca-Cola Co. | Oscar Mayer Co. |
| Coca-Cola Foundation | Oscar Mayer Foundation, Inc. |
| Dairy Council of California | Pet Milk Co. |
| Florida Sugar Cane League, | Pillsbury Co. |
| Frito-Lay, Inc. | Special Dairy Industry Board |
| General Foods | Sugar Association, Inc. |
| General Mills | Sugar Research Foundation |
| Gerber Baby Food Company | Swift & Company |
| Hartford Foundation (A & P) | Swift and Company Foundation |
| H.J. Heinz | Tuna Research Foundation |
| Hershey Foods | |
| Hunt-Wesson Foods | |

An early graduate student was Mervyn Hardinge, M.D., of Loma Linda University. His landmark *Nutritional Studies of Vegetarians* first appeared in 1954 in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. The series continued through 1966, appearing also in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association with Stare as co-author. Although these technical articles exonerated vegetarianism and revealed a number of advantages, in his latest book Dr. Stare continued to find no intrinsic harm in chips, cupcakes, french fries, hamburgers, hot dogs, soft drinks and sugar.¹⁴

¹¹*ibid.* Stare. p 91.

¹²Diane Morris Ph.D. R.D. (President, Mainstream Nutrition) Review of *Adventures in Nutrition* in: *Medicine, Exercise, Nutrition, and Health*. p 58. Blackwell Scientific Publications. Cambridge, 1992. Vol. 1 #1 Jan/Feb 1992. ISSN 1057-9354.

¹³Hess J. *Harvard's Sugar-Pushing Nutritionist*. Saturday Review. Aug 1978. p 10. Saturday Review Magazine Corp. New York, 1978.

¹⁴See note 303. Stare. p 126.

"Milk has been called
the perfect food."

The statement as it stands is unquestionably true. Milk *has* been called the perfect food, but who called it that and how much were they paid? Harvard may have been the first school to dabble with food industry money, but it was not the last. Michael Jacobson, of The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), found six other nutrition professors at the Universities of California, Iowa, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Oregon State, Virginia Polytechnic, and Wisconsin accepting grants and assorted freebies from Campbell, General Mills, Institute of Shortening and Edible Oils, Kellogg, Kraftco, McDonald's, the National Dairy Council, Nestlé and other drug, food, soft drink and food vending machine companies. He was unable to get dollar amounts from any of the parties except Wisconsin (\$635,390), and two of the professors refused to respond at all.¹⁵ Jacobson's CSPI now has a very helpful website where one can track at least some of this tomfoolery at <http://www.cspinet.org/cgi-bin/integrity.cgi> .

Jacobson also tracked the pre- and post-administration careers of top FDA and USDA officials in the period 1970 to 1985. Of 33 officials, 8 came *from* the food industry, but 22 went *to* the food industry on relinquishing their government posts. Most of them went either into the meat biz or joined the sugar pops folks, although one individual joined the Cling Peach Association. There was a strong cross-over effect between the drug and food industries.¹⁶

A Harris poll in 1977 showed that food manufacturers were highest on a list of industries Americans would like to see investigated,¹⁷ although the drug industry often runs a close second.

Other sources of funds for the Harvard school of nutrition were the following drug companies:

Abbott Laboratories
Ayerst Laboratories
Burroughs Welcome
& Co.
Griffith Labs.
Hoffman LaRoche
Eli Lilly & Co.
Marion Laboratories

Mead Johnson Research
Merck, Sharp, & Dohme
Miles Laboratories
Parke-Davis & Co.
Pfizer, Inc.
Searle Laboratories
Upjohn Co.

OTHER:

Council for Tobacco Research
Tobacco Industries Research
Foundation

Consumer Reports has commented recently on the pernicious effects of drug advertising on science.¹⁸ Pharmaceutical houses exploit the urgent human wish that health be restored with no more effort than the popping of pills into the mouth, and by financial leverage alone, select those experts who support this fantasy to serve as media spokesmen. Therefore it's not surprising the dreaded "V" word seldom appears even in reputable publications like The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), or the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM), although the context in which it does appear is more likely to be favorable than unfavorable, as in the past.

¹⁵Hofman L. *The Great American Nutrition Hassle*. Mayfield Publishing Co. Palo Alto 1978. ISBN 0-87484-446-0 p 379.

¹⁶Jacobson M. *The Complete Eater's Guide and Nutrition Scoreboard*. p 168. Anchor Press. Garden City, 1985. App.III. ISBN 0-385-18245-7.

¹⁷See note 311. Hofman. p 333.

¹⁸See note 246. Consumer Reports. *Pushing Drugs to Doctors*. Feb 1992.

Less reputable journals arrive on the doctor's desk at the rate of ~ a dozen a month. They are freebies from the drug industry with cover-to-cover drug ads. The average throwaway contains mostly rehashes of material doctors are taught in medical school, and therapeutic options are virtually limited to drugs and surgery. This is a technique for brainwashing doctors, but the journals are expensive and the costs are passed on to consumers.

A recent Medline search on the word "Vegan" found 38 articles, which is roughly 38 more than were available 38 years ago, so the cause is not hopeless, just slow. Included were Barsotti's 1991 article showing reduced proteinuria and maintenance of normal serum albumin in nephrotic patients on the vegan diet,¹⁹ Kjeldsen-Kragh's 1991 article showing remission of arthritis on the vegan diet,²⁰ and Lindahl's 1985 article showing clinical and biochemical improvement in 92% of asthmatic patients placed on a vegan diet.²¹

Nutrition journals occasionally drop the "V" word. The American Dietetic Association, "recognizes a growing body of scientific evidence...between a plant-based diet and the prevention of certain diseases,"²² and in 1990 approved the formation of the Vegetarian Nutrition Dietetic Practice Group within the ADA.²³ However, a recent list of ADA scholarships, showed at least 16 out of 28 were funded by drug and food companies, with distinctly non-vegetarian financial interests.²⁴

The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition has devoted two supplementary issues to the First and Second International Congresses on Vegetarian Nutrition.²⁵ The first Congress was supported by Loma Linda Foods, S.E. Rykoff, Sanitarium Foods, and Worthington Foods. *Am J Clin Nutr* runs elegant scientific articles, but nothing in the editorials suggests that there are fundamental errors in American nutritional advice or that a global policy change in favor of vegetarianism is in the works. Perhaps a list of continuing sponsors explains why:

**Source: Facesheet from unidentified Am J Clin Nutr review:
American Society for Clinical Nutrition Sustaining Associate Members**

Abbott Laboratories

Best Foods

Bristol-Meyers and Mead Johnson

Campbell Institute for Research and
Technology

Clintec Nutrition

General Foods Corporation

General Mills, Inc.

Gerber Products Company

Hoffmann-La Roche, Inc

Kendall McGaw Laboratories

Lederle Laboratories, Inc.

Miles Laboratories

Proctor and Gamble Company

Ross Laboratories

Sandoz Nutrition

The Coca-Cola Company

The NutraSweet Company

The Pillsbury Company

The Quaker Oats Company

Wyeth Laboratories

"The American Society for Clinical Nutrition is pleased to acknowledge the generous support of these organizations to selected, educational activities of the society."

¹⁹See note 200. Barsotti.

²⁰See note 143. Kjeldsen-Kragh.

²¹See note 142. Lindahl.

²²*Position Paper on the vegetarian approach to eating.* Journal of the American Dietetic Association. 1980;77:61-69. p 66.

²³The Vegetarian Resource Group. *Vegetarian Journal*. Baltimore 1991;X(1):3. ISSN 0885-7636.

²⁴*Journal of the American Dietetic Association.* 1991;91(10):1299. American Dietetic Association. ISSN 0002-8223.

²⁵ *Am J Clin Nutr. First International Congress on Vegetarian Nutrition.* 1988;48(3):707-927. ISSN 0002-9165.

Well, what's wrong with having food and drug companies fund nutritional education? After all, few would complain if IBM kicked in for courses on semi-conductors, or if Boeing gave grants for airfoil research. In the hard sciences the same answers drop out regardless of funding sources, but nutritional education is not about launching a V2 at Peenemünde. It's not rocket science, and while the answers may be okay, the *questions* have been censored by economic pressure. Large food corporations look for health professionals who find nothing wrong with their products, back them academically and economically, and transform them into esteemed spokespersons.

Esoteric nutritional research of little practical value finds easy funding, but studies illuminating the advantages of vegetarianism, for the most part do not. There's no money in demonstrating that inexpensive vegetable diets are the healthiest, and as noted above, "Money talks!"

In the end, establishment nutritional advice does little more than reinforce the dietary errors people *prefer* to make. After rationalizing away the ecological and nutritional calamities induced by animal agriculture, one animal science writer showed his true colors: "No cereal platter...can ever inspire the toast or impart the status symbol of a roast of beef or a sizzling steak."²⁶

If nutritionists were to come out in favor of nutrient/Calorie sorting, nutrient density, nutrient indexing, or any other scheme in which Calories rather than weight appear in the sorting denominator, the apparent complexities of balancing nutrient requirements against excess Calorie, cholesterol, and fat intake would disappear, animal source food would vanish from dietary recommendations, nutrient requirements would be met automatically, and nutritional advice would finally reduce to:

"Eat as wide a variety of plant foods in as unprocessed a form as possible."²⁷

-Susan Havala R.D.

²⁶Ensminger M. *Animal Science*. Interstate Publishers. Danville, 1991. p 25. ISBN 0-8134-2887-4.

²⁷Diet-Ethics. *Issues in Vegetarian Dietetics*. 3835 Route 414. Burdett, Ny 14818. 1990; Vol IV(1):1.