

What is happening in nutrition policy and why should we be concerned?

Global Alliance Presentation 1st December 2011

Dr Richard Cottrell

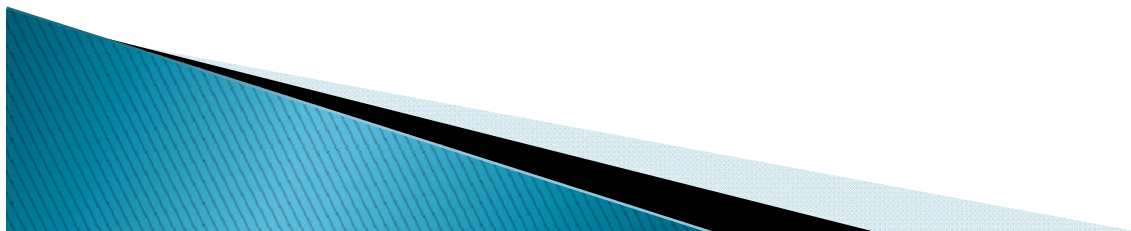
World Sugar Research Organisation



WORLD
SUGAR
RESEARCH
ORGANISATION

Sugar consumption is under threat

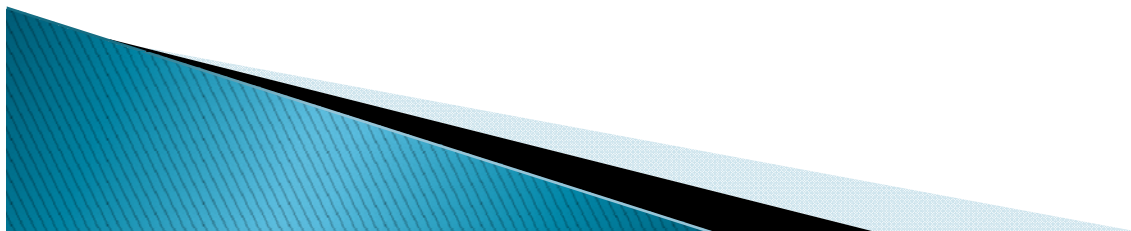
- ▶ The reputation of sugar as a food is being attacked:
 1. By aggressive advertising from competing high intensity sweeteners.
 2. By the “health lobby” who want drastic reductions in sugar consumption
 3. By the anti-capitalist camp who want state control of the “private” food industry



Sugar consumption stagnant or decreasing in mature markets

- ▶ Consumption per head declining
- ▶ Concealed by temporary factors
- ▶ Supply per head increasing
- ▶ Population growth
- ▶ Growth in disposable income

- ▶ Long term prospects not so bright



Today's News

- A concerted effort is being made indiscriminately to discourage sugar consumption right across the world
- This movement is orchestrated by a small number of academics and pressure group activists. It does not reflect the scientific evidence
- It has become firmly entrenched in the World Health Organization with active support of certain members of WHO staff
- WHO is constitutionally immune to outside influence except by a large number of its member countries acting together
- One means by which sugar consumption is being discouraged is through the revision of the rules governing international and internal country trade in sugar-containing products



Sugar

Accused of “causing obesity” (AHA Policy)
and therefore

“Contributing to CVD, Diabetes,
Cancer”

Accused of being “addictive”



WORLD
SUGAR
RESEARCH
ORGANISATION

Sugar

“Consumption should be limited to less than 10% of food energy intake”
(WHO)

This would cause 20% reduction in world sugar trade.



WORLD
SUGAR
RESEARCH
ORGANISATION

WHO

Global influence on health-related policies including towards food

- ▶ Currently implementing an agreed **Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health**
- ▶ **Published Guidelines on Marketing Food and Drink Products to Children** – urges regulation to limit promotion of high sugar foods to children



WHO Global strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health (2004)

One objective is to limit sugar consumption

- The Strategy was easily agreed because it only includes recommendations for “governments to consider”
 - Changing agriculture
 - Controlling food marketing
 - Selective taxation
 - Population Dietary Guidelines – could include 10% sugar target

BUT WHO Staff are on a mission to implement all these suggestions



WHO : Report 916

- Scientific justification for population consumption limit of 10% energy from “free sugars”
- Reference to Report 916 and this 10% target were **deleted** from the Global Strategy before it was accepted by WHO members
- Certain WHO staff and members continue frequently to cite this report and seek to rejuvenate it with new NUGAG report in 2012.
- This rejected target forms the basis for all current activity

WHO takeover of Codex?

Codex sets internationally agreed standards for food composition, quality, safety and labelling

WHO has demanded that Codex focus on nutrition rather than standard setting



WHO trying to get Codex to

- ▶ label foods prominently with their “added sugar” content
- ▶ label foods with details of “recommended limit” of sugar to be eaten by individuals
- ▶ restrict marketing of most sugar-containing foods to all children (even if undernourished)
- ▶ “Profiling” of all foods to decide which may be marketed to children
- ▶ limit sugar content of foods on safety grounds



FAO

Global influence on agricultural policies and trade (provides secretariat for Codex).

FAO's primary mission is to rid the world of hunger

- ▶ Serious financial problems – vulnerable to WHO dominance
- ▶ Struggling to adapt to WHO “freeze out” on nutrition discussions
- ▶ Key staff appointments unfilled



Codex

Developing rules on Nutrient and Ingredient labelling

- Could lead to misinformation eg traffic lights, warning messages
- Could lead to widespread fraud “added sugars” labelling cannot be checked
- Could lead to barriers to trade - each country encouraged to set own rules

So what could happen?

- ▶ More countries could implement anti-sugar policies
- ▶ Consumption per head could fall more
- ▶ Net global consumption of sugar could well fall
- ▶ This fall could coincide with the return of world sugar production to surplus in one or two year's time

What can we do?

- ▶ **Take the threat seriously!**
- ▶ Generate opposition to bogus science and opinion being used to justify bad policy
- ▶ Oppose 10% target on sugar consumption
- ▶ Be prepared to act quickly when NUGAG Report is published
- ▶ Demand that “health” policy on food considers all down-stream consequences