

Did you know? You can now visit the *Sight and Life* website www.sightandlife.org on a regular basis to get the latest news about what is happening in the field of nutrition. Check out our new blog at www.sightandlife.org/blog.html! You can also follow us on **Facebook** and **Twitter @sightandlife**.

Designing Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Investments: Checklist and guidance for program formulation



Current food systems are increasingly being challenged to provide adequate, safe, diversified and nutrient-dense food amidst the increasing constraints of resource scarcity, climate change, inequitable distribution and unsustainable production and consumption patterns. The FAO's Nutrition Division (ESN) and Investment Center (TCI) has launched a guidance checklist towards achieving one of the targets in the Framework of Action of the 2nd International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) that emphasizes the importance of "reviewing national policies and investments and integrating nutrition objectives into food and agricultural policy, program design and implementation."

There is a growing commitment to ensuring that investments in food systems are "nutrition-sensitive," but for many it is not clear what this entails in terms of program design and implementation. The checklist and guidance document can be used as a tool for improving nutrition through agricultural and food systems.

The aim of the guide is to assist in identifying creative, unique and sustainable solutions that help families improve their nutrition by making the most out of available resources. The checklist provides 10 key recommendations developed in consultation with a wide range of sectors. These recommendations have been designed around the first phase of a programming cycle – namely, situation assessment, program design, and program review. Each recommendation is followed by a list of questions to help the practitioner find locally relevant solutions, and provides tips and additional resources. This is going to be a valuable tool for anyone working at the community level in agriculture, but it also makes excellent reading for those of us that are interested in implementation science.

The publication can be downloaded at www.fao.org/3/a-i5107e.pdf

Ten recommendations for improving nutrition through agriculture and food systems

1. Incorporate explicit nutrition objectives and indicators into the design, and track and mitigate potential harms, while seeking synergies with economic, social and environmental objectives.
2. Assess the context at the local level, in order to design appropriate activities to address the types and causes of malnutrition, including chronic or acute undernutrition, vitamin and mineral deficiencies, and obesity and chronic disease.
3. Target the vulnerable, and improve equity through participation, access to resources, and decent employment.
4. Collaborate and coordinate with other sectors (health, environment, social, protection, labor, water and sanitation, education, and energy) and programs through joint strategies with common goals, to address concurrently the multiple underlying causes of malnutrition.
5. Maintain or improve the natural resource base (water, soil, air, climate, biodiversity), critical to ensuring the livelihoods and resilience of vulnerable farmers and to sustainable food and nutrition security for all.
6. Empower women by ensuring access to productive resources, income opportunities, extension services and information, credit, labor- and time-saving technologies (including energy and water services), and listen to women's voices in decisions concerning the household and farming.
7. Facilitate production diversification, and increase production of nutrient-dense crops and small-scale livestock (for example, horticultural products, legumes, livestock and fish at a small scale, underutilized crops, and biofortified crops).
8. Improve processing, storage and preservation to retain nutritional value, shelf-life, and food safety, to reduce seasonality of food security and post-harvest losses, and to make healthy foods convenient to prepare.
9. Expand markets and market access to vulnerable groups, particularly for marketing nutritious foods or products vulnerable groups have comparative advantage in producing.
10. Incorporate nutrition promotion and education on food and sustainable food systems that builds on existing local knowledge, attitudes and practices.

02 Sustainable Food Systems Programme Launched

The Sustainable Food Systems (SFS) Programme of the UN 10-Year Framework (10YFP) for Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Patterns was launched during the Milan Expo at the end of last year.

The program was developed through coordination between the FAO, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), and an agri-food expert group, and will be implemented over the next seven years. Given the central role of food in society, the SFS Programme is a multi-stakeholder initiative that aims to accelerate the shift towards more sustainable food systems – consumption and production – in both developing and developed countries. Sustainable food systems are key to ensuring sustainable development. They have to ensure food security and nutrition and satisfy a growing demand, for quantity, quality and diversity. At the same time, current food production and consumption already exert a considerable impact on the environment and play a significant socioeconomic role.

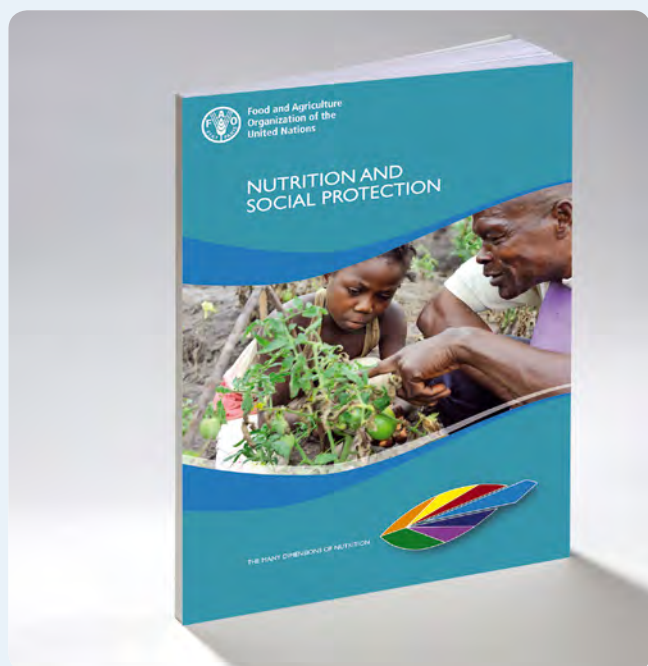
The SFS Programme will seek to promote sustainability along the food chain, through four work areas:

1. Raising awareness of the need to adopt SCP patterns in food systems
2. Building enabling environments for sustainable food systems
3. Increasing the access to, and fostering the application of, actionable knowledge, information and tools to mainstream SCP in food systems
4. Strengthening collaboration among food system stakeholders to increase the sector's SCP performance.

Forty organizations have become Programme Partners so far, and the program is open to further organizations and individual experts interested in joining a collaborative platform.

For further information, please contact the Coordination Desk of the Sustainable Food Systems Programme at sfsprogramme@blw.admin.ch

Harnessing Social Protection to Deliver Improved Nutrition



Just as agriculture needs to address nutrition issues, so too should social protection policies and programs. Every social protection instrument provides specific entry points for increasing its impact on nutritional outcomes, and thus holds immense potential for improving the nutrition situation of especially vulnerable populations.

“Over the decades, social protection has cushioned and, in many instances, prevented vulnerable people from falling into states of abject poverty and malnutrition, while at the same time improving nutrition, productivity and food self-sufficiency,” is the opening sentence from a new FAO technical paper. This paper identifies how the main social protection instruments can address the causes of malnutrition and proposes guiding principles to make these nutrition-sensitive.

“Social protection can help address the multiple dimensions of malnutrition”

The paper discusses the main linkages and synergies between social protection and nutrition within an agricultural context and identifies possible ways of using these synergies to ensure greater positive impact of social protection measures on nutritional outcomes. It highlights how through improving dietary quality, increasing income and improving access to health services, social protection can positively impact nutrition. In addition to the direct links related to the diversity, safety and quality of the food consumed, social protection can also influence other determinants of malnutrition such as care practices, sanitation and education. The paper is action-oriented and targets program designers and implementers.

Social protection and nutrition share many core characteristics, for example:

- > Social protection can address immediate, underlying and basic causes of malnutrition.
- > Social protection and nutrition are linked by their capacity for building resilience and linking emergency and development approaches.
- > Both nutrition and social protection require a multi-sectorial and multi-stakeholder approach.
- > Both nutrition and social protection have to acknowledge and leverage the vital role of women.
- > Both nutrition and social protection use the life-cycle approach, acknowledging that economic and nutritional vulnerabilities differ throughout the various phases of life and that malnutrition, as well as poverty and social exclusion, have a “hereditary” character, being passed from one generation to the next.

To read about the key principles for using social protection to improve nutrition, the approaches that can be harnessed and interesting case examples, please download the full paper at www.fao.org/3/a-i4819e.pdf

Mycotoxin Control – A Key Issue for Low- and Middle-Income Countries



Although aflatoxins have been a massive food safety issue since their discovery in 1961 and billions of dollars have been spent to address their presence in grain staples, exposure to aflatoxins in developing countries has barely diminished, and the world's poorest remain highly vulnerable to this food safety threat.

A new and important report on “Mycotoxin control in low- and middle-income countries” is now available from a Working Group convened by The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). The report makes for sobering reading, and provides a systematic, independent review of the scientific evidence for the adverse health effects of aflatoxin and fumonisin exposure through consumption of contaminated maize and groundnuts.

The report examines four key areas – the extent of exposure; the effects on prenatal, infant and child health; relevant mechanistic information; and effective intervention strategies. The good news is that the recommendations for addressing the mycotoxin problem are not only financially feasible, but can be also implemented at a number of different levels, from the government and non-governmental organizations to the farmers themselves.

Fifteen interventions are evaluated and placed in one of four categories ranging from those that have sufficient evidence for implementation, through those that require further field evaluation or formative research, to those which are not supported by scientific evidence or else have been shown to be ineffective. There are several existing and promising interventions, but it remains to be seen whether the necessary national and regional policies will be put in place and whether their implementation will be encouraged and followed up so as to ameliorate the impact of this disastrous situation.

The report can be downloaded at

www.iarc.fr/en/publications/pdfs-online/wrk/wrk9/IARC_publicationWGR9_full.pdf

Did You Know?

- Some 500 million of the poorest people in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and Asia are exposed to mycotoxins at levels that substantially increase mortality and morbidity.
- Infants and children, in particular, are severely affected by mycotoxins, which they ingest unknowingly from contaminated food.
- Aflatoxin exposure is linked to liver cancer, and acute exposure can lead to death.
- Long-term exposure to aflatoxins may also contribute to poor growth or stunting in children, and negatively influences immune system and gut functionality.

05 Integrating Agriculture and Nutrition Education for Improved Young Child Nutrition



The FAO has over the last five years been collaborating with Justus von Liebig University in Germany on a research and advocacy project entitled: “Improving the dietary intakes and nutritional status of infants and young children through improved food security and complementary feeding counseling.” This project aims to contribute to the body of evidence on the relationship between agricultural diversification, food security and nutrition education, and their nutritional outcomes.

Improving nutrition is a major goal of agricultural programs and policies, and substantial evidence confirms that increases in agricultural production alone and/or increased income do not automatically translate into improved diets and nutrition. Essential prerequisites for this to happen are concurrent and well-designed nutrition education and behavior change approaches, women’s empowerment, and inter-sectoral collaboration.

“Evidence confirms that increases in agricultural production and/or increased income do not automatically translate into improved diets and nutrition”

The project has now reached its end, and two documents have been published. The first summarizes the proceedings of the project technical meeting held in July 2015, and the second is a very useful compendium of program lessons that covers six key areas – namely, program planning and design; capacity development; implementation; supervision; monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment; and sustainability and scaling-up. Although essentially aimed at program planners and managers working in the field of agricultural production in low-income countries, it makes interesting reading for anyone involved in program implementation. It provides practical guidance and examples of good practices and issues to consider, based on empirical research and programmatic experiences reflecting the cumulative experiences of diverse experts from the field.

Both documents can be downloaded at www.fao.org/nutrition/education/infant-and-young-child-feeding/en/

Recommended Reading

Changing Food Systems for Better Nutrition

As this edition of *Sight and Life* focuses on food systems, we would like to draw your attention to an issue of SCN News from 2013 (No 40 2013 ISSN 1564 – 3743) that has a number of interesting articles addressing how to change food systems for better nutrition.

It can be downloaded at

www.unscn.org/files/Publications/SCN_News/SCNNEWS40_final_standard_res.pdf#page=10.



Children and AIDS

On World AIDS Day in December 2015, UNICEF released its annual Statistical Update on the situation of Children,

Adolescents and AIDS, which we believe is important reading. It can be downloaded at <http://www.childrenandaids.org/home>. In the words of UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake, “The number of lives saved thanks to the HIV and AIDS response in this century is remarkable. But for the sake of the children and adolescents still affected, and for all future generations, we cannot mistake advancement for attainment. We must do more, and do it faster than ever. That's the only way to achieve an AIDS-free generation.”

Appointments: Gerda Verburg and David Nabarro



Gerda Verburg

Welcome to Gerda Verburg as the new SUN Coordinator

Following in the footsteps first of David Nabarro and then of Ad-interim Coordinator Tom Arnold, is Gerda Verburg of the Netherlands – the newly appointed Coordinator of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement.

Ms Verburg, who among other roles served as Chair of the UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS) until 2015, takes up the task of working with the 56 country governments that lead the SUN Movement together with UN agencies, civil society, business and donors, in a common mission to defeat malnutrition in all its forms. We believe her enthusiasm and pragmatic approach will ensure that the SUN Movement continues to remain focused on delivery of evidence-informed scaled-up interventions to address malnutrition in all its forms.

To read more about Gerda and the latest SUN news, please go to <http://scalingupnutrition.org/> and follow her on Twitter @GerdaVerburg. Also follow the various SUN groups @SUN_Movement (SUN Secretariat) @SUNSCN (SUN Civil Society Network) @SUNBizNet (SUN Business Network).



David Nabarro

Special Adviser on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

After his successful tenure establishing the SUN Movement as a powerful driving force for nutrition, David Nabarro became Special Envoy of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on Ebola in 2014. Dr Nabarro's role was to provide strategic and policy direction for the international response.

Ban Ki-moon has now called on Dr Nabarro to take on the role of Special Adviser on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He will work with Member States and other relevant stakeholders to galvanize action on implementation of the Agenda, while also overseeing the Secretary-General's special initiatives, for example, "Every Woman, Every Child." Dr Nabarro also remains Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Food Security and Nutrition, so he continues to be involved with nutrition, which we are delighted about.

Helping Children to Reach their Potential through Micronutrient Powder in School Feeding Scheme



Helping school children in South Africa to have brighter prospects and a better chance of supporting their communities as they grow and develop

As part of *Sight and Life's* humanitarian projects, we work with the giving-back projects undertaken by Savanna Game Lodge in South Africa. We support their work at the Tiyimiseleni Centre. This is a home-based care center in the village of Marbarhule, where every day 250 orphans and vulnerable children (age 3–17 years) are given a meal and a beverage that provides them with all the essential vitamins and minerals.

Recently, we have expanded this project to provide a multiple micronutrient powder to supplement the school meal of the local Mketse primary school that feeds some 650 children each day. We had an inspiring launch visit, first meeting with the school Managing Board, who were really excited at the idea of improving the health status of their pupils, who come from

a very poor community. We then met with all the parents/caregivers and were able to share with them how the project was aimed at assisting their children. Finally, but most importantly, we spent time training the dedicated ladies from the community who each day get up at 4 a.m. to come to the school and prepare a mid-morning meal for the children, many of whom arrive hungry and for whom this meal will be the only balanced meal they receive during the course of that day.

We felt humbled by the words of one of the parents during our meeting, “We are very happy that *Sight and Life* is helping our young children to become those who can go to university in the future and make a difference for the whole community.

Thank you, *Sight and Life!*”

First Foods – Accelerating Global Progress to Improve Complementary Feeding



Recent years have seen nutrition in the global spotlight. This attention has catalyzed political commitment and increased the need to identify concerted actions to end childhood under-nutrition. In November 2015 a global meeting, First Foods, was held in Mumbai, India, with the object of accelerating progress on complementary feeding in young children. To date, a variety of program strategies to improve complementary feeding practices have been implemented all over the world with varying rates of success. The chief successes have been achieved by nutrition education and behavior change communication using locally available foods and improving food systems, and the provision of specialized food products, food fortification and supplementary food programs. Progress in implementing large-scale, sustainable, complementary feeding programs has been slow, but some recent country examples show that it is possible to achieve significant improvements in complementary feeding.

The First Foods meeting provided an opportunity to review, discuss and rethink existing programs and to look at research gaps. The report is easy to read and practical, providing country case studies and key take-away messages from each of the sessions. It is essential reading for anyone working in the field of young child nutrition.

“Recent country examples show that it is possible to achieve significant improvements in complementary feeding”

Seven key recommendations to accelerate progress on complementary feeding for young children are included in the meeting report, available at www.firstfoodsforlife.org/summary/First_Foods_Global_Report.pdf:

1. Programs should communicate clearly that adequate complementary feeding contributes to a broad spectrum of short- and long-term outcomes.
2. Programs need to combine two or more strategies for improving complementary feeding in order to effectively increase the adoption of optimal feeding behaviors across diverse population groups.
3. To be effective, sound situation analysis and formative research tailored to the local context must serve as the basis for the design, planning and implementation of complementary feeding programs. Tools to do this are easily accessible and adaptable.
4. To be successful, complementary feeding programs need to involve multiple sectors relevant to food systems, such as health and gender, whose roles and responsibilities need to be mutually agreed upon and clearly articulated based on situation analysis.
5. Evidence-based behavior change communication is an essential component of strategies to improve complementary feeding practices in all settings.
6. Monitoring and evaluation tools and processes must be aligned with program design, information needs, and the available time and resources.
7. Advocacy for complementary feeding programs needs to address the significant resources required to build capacity and scale up and institutionalize effective programs and strategies for the longer term.

Access to Nutrition Index 2016: Ranking 22 of the largest companies on their contributions to tackling obesity and undernutrition

The Access to Nutrition Index (ATNI) is published by the Access to Nutrition Foundation, an independent non-profit organization dedicated to objectively assessing and improving the contribution the private sector makes to addressing global nutrition challenges. The Foundation publishes a set of indices that assess and rate major food and beverage manufacturers' nutrition policies, practices and disclosure, for use as a benchmarking tool by investors, health advocates and companies themselves.

The 2016 Global Index is the second in the series to be released. It evaluated each of the companies on its corporate strategy, management and governance related to nutrition; formulation and delivery of appropriate affordable and accessible products; and positive influence on consumer choice and behavior, through nutrition information, food marketing and labeling. In addition, the 2016 ATNI also assessed the policies and practices of the world's largest breast-milk substitute manufacturers to gauge whether their marketing aligns with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes and subsequent World Health Assembly resolutions.

The findings show that while some companies have taken positive steps since the last index in 2013, the industry as a whole is moving far too slowly. Out of a possible scoring of 10, the highest score was 6.4, with Unilever leading the list. Within the breast-milk substitute category of manufacturers, the research found that none of the six companies assessed was fully compliant with the Code, although there was significant variation in their performance.

To access the 2016 index, please visit
www.accesstonutrition.org/index/2016

“The food and beverage industry is moving far too slowly on their nutrition-related commitments, practices and levels of disclosure”

Ending Rural Hunger: Need and actions for food and nutrition security

“Success in ending rural hunger requires at least doubling the current rate of progress. This makes a new approach critical”

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have formally set the target of ending world hunger within the next 15 years. According to the Ending Rural Hunger Report, however: “Success will not come easily. It requires at least doubling the current rate of progress... This makes a new approach critical.” Especially critical if we are to ensure that in reaching SDG 2, we leave no one behind.

The report thus focuses on the three-quarters of the 795 million undernourished people in the world who live in rural areas within developing countries, where the issue is about more than growing enough food. It is about demand for, as well as supply of, food; quality as well as quantity; an adequate diet today, and the assurance of one tomorrow. Emphasis must be placed on the needs of small-scale farms, including the special challenges faced by women farmers if the goal of zero hunger is to be achieved. To date there has been too little long-term strategic planning and accountability.

The report, which is accompanied by a toolkit, aims to help track and compare the efforts of developing and developed country governments to end rural hunger. It contains the key results and actionable recommendations of a comprehensive effort to quantify the rural food and nutrition security needs, policies, and resources in 116 developing countries, alongside an assessment of 29 developed countries’ domestic agricultural and biofuel policies, plus their food and nutrition security aid policies.

On a positive note, the report highlights six trends that hold the promise that the end of rural hunger lies within reach:

1. Distortions in global agricultural markets have fallen substantially.
2. Global resources for food and nutrition security are increasing.
3. Public and private actors are increasingly collaborating to solve global food and nutrition security problems.
4. The global SDG negotiations have sharpened focus on infrastructure priorities that are critical to small-scale farmers’ physical and informational connectivity with markets.
5. Agricultural research is making inroads on many key farming constraints.
6. A number of high-level initiatives have been announced at major meetings of the UN, G-20, G-7, and African Union which, if sustained and properly scaled, could signify the start of long-term international leadership.

What is new and different is that the report is accompanied by an interactive website:

www.endingruralhunger.org. This website presents the full results of the analysis together with the underlying data, allows you to view country profiles and map specific country data, and includes ready-made research and advocacy tools.

Did You Know?

- > 3/4 of the 795 million undernourished people in the world live in rural areas within developing countries.
- > There are about 500 million small farms around the world that provide livelihoods for up to 2.5 billion rural people.

Continuing Education and Engagement



- > The eNutrition Academy (eNA) is a global nutrition training platform that was founded by the African Nutrition Society, the American Society for Nutrition, the Federation of African Nutrition Societies, the International Union of Nutritional Sciences, and the Nutrition Society of the United Kingdom and Ireland. **Visit** www.enutritionacademy.org/ **to register and trial the available nutrition modules.**
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- > Education for Effective Nutrition in Action (ENACT) is an 11-week undergraduate course in planning, promoting and implementing effective nutrition education and communication. The module has been developed by the FAO together with partner universities in seven African coun-

tries. **The course can be downloaded FREE** from www.fao.org/nutrition/education/professional-training/enact/en/.

- > Alive & Thrive is an initiative to save lives, prevent illness, and ensure healthy growth and development through improved breastfeeding and complementary feeding practices. Alive & Thrive has a series of case studies – including short how-to videos, sample communication strategies and adaptable research tools – that illustrate the principles and processes for designing strategic behavior change programs. **Just go to** www.aliveandthrive.org and click on the “Resources” tab.

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- > The SUN Movement has launched an interactive online SUN Forum. The Forum is hosted by en-net, and offers a space to support knowledge management across the SUN Movement. People in the Movement are being invited to share their views, ask questions and make their experience, expertise and opinions available to others via this new virtual learning space. **To engage, please go to** www.en-net.org/sunmovement.

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- > We cannot fail. We will not fail, as success is in our collective hands.

World Health Assembly Adopts Resolution to Further Protect and Promote Breastfeeding



The World Health Assembly in action

Ensuring optimal infant and young child feeding has been recognized as a critical issue that should be incorporated in country nutrition plans and policies with a view to promoting long-term development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 69th World Health Assembly (WHA), held in Geneva, Switzerland at the end of May, adopted a resolution (WHA 69.9) that provides policy guidance for member states on two issues:

1. Follow-up formula and so-called growing-up/toddler milks are breast-milk substitutes. As such, they should not be promoted, because they fall under the International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes and subsequent relevant Health Assembly resolutions. A breast-milk substitute should be understood to include any milks (or products that could be used to replace milk, such as fortified soy milk), in either liquid or powdered form, that are specifically marketed for feeding infants and young children up to the age of three years (including follow-up formula and growing-up milks).
2. There is now clear guidance concerning promotion that applies to all commercially produced foods marketed as being suitable for infants and young children between the ages

of 6 and 36 months. The seven recommendations recognize the role of appropriately formulated complementary foods, but aim to ensure that breastfeeding is promoted, protected and supported; that obesity and non-communicable diseases are prevented; that healthy diets are promoted; and that caregivers receive clear and accurate information on feeding that is free from commercial influence.

Summary of the seven recommendations to end the inappropriate promotion of foods for infants and young children

Recommendation 1

Optimal infant and young child feeding should be promoted based on the Guiding principles for complementary feeding of the breastfed child and the Guiding principles for feeding non-breastfed children 6–24 months of age.

Recommendation 2

Products that function as breast-milk substitutes should not be promoted.



Representatives of civil society presenting their statements at the 69th World Health Assembly

Recommendation 3

Foods for infants and young children that are not products that function as breast-milk substitutes should be promoted only if they meet all the relevant national, regional and global standards for composition, safety, quality and nutrient levels and are in line with national dietary guidelines.

Recommendation 4

The messages used to promote foods for infants and young children should support optimal feeding, and inappropriate messages should not be included.

Recommendation 5

There should be no cross-promotion to promote breast-milk substitutes indirectly via the promotion of foods for infants and young children.

Recommendation 6

Companies that market foods for infants and young children should not create conflicts of interest in health facilities or within health systems. Health workers, health systems, health professional associations and non-governmental organizations should likewise avoid such conflicts of interest.

Recommendation 7

The WHO set of recommendations on the marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children should be fully implemented.

The full guidance can be found at:

http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA69/A69_7Add1-en.pdf

The resolution WHA 69.6 itself can be found at:

http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA69/ACONF7Rev1-en.pdf