



NUTRINET newsletter

Nutrition Research Information Network

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*Working
towards an
improved food
and nutrition
information
system in the
country*

NUTRINET Celebrates at 18



DOH Secretary Francisco T. Duque, III and the NUTRINET Governing Board Chairman, Dr. Mario V. Capanzana with Ms. Carmelita C. Guilatco of FNRI and Ms. Rosario F. Lopez of STII.

The Nutrition Research Information Network or **NUTRINET** recently celebrated its 18th anniversary with the holding of an annual **NUTRIFAIR**. It was conducted jointly with the Department of Health (DOH) which celebrated its 107th foundation anniversary. As a founding member of the network, DOH graciously co-sponsored this year's activity held under the auspices of DOH, San Lazaro Compound, Sta. Cruz, Manila.

The joint celebration adopted the DOH theme, ***"The DOH and Nutrition: 107 Years of Helping the Filipino People to be Healthy and Strong."*** The activities were held at the DOH compound on June 20 to 23, 2005. These included an exhibit on the *Landmarks of Philippine Food & Nutrition Programs and Projects*; display/sale of food products with *Sangkap Pinoy* seal, books/publications on food, health and nutrition, ornamental and functional plants; and a free clinic for bone density test, blood glucose and blood cholesterol levels.

On the opening day, experts gave a demo on the Integrated

Library Management System (ILMS) and the Philippine E-lib project. Highlights of the two-day fair were lectures on the following: (a) Nutrition Situation in the Philippines; (b) Government Response to Micronutrient Malnutrition Problem; (c) Food Fortification Program; (d) Technology Info/Updates; (e) Landmarks of Food & Nutrition R&D in the Philippines and Their Application to the Promotion of Optimum Health. Other events included demonstrations on meat processing, traditional alternative health care products, pan de sal making plus a bonus demonstration on acupressure.

All the founding members actively participated in this year's NUTRIFAIR. ITDI in particular, through its representatives, played a major role in organizing the activities. It provided for a resource person for the lecture-demonstration on processing of chicken ham and corned beef and a Master of Ceremonies for the Technical Sessions on Day 2 and the Closing Ceremonies.

The kick-off ceremonies were held immediately after the regular early morning flag ceremony wherein the newly installed DOH Secretary Dr. Francisco T. Duque III, gave a brief message warmly welcoming all participants. After the flag ceremony and Mass, Secretary Duque likewise led the visitors to the ceremonial ribbon-cutting for the formal opening of the NUTRIFAIR exhibit. □

*RTGenato
ITDI-DOST*

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**The NUTRINET
Technical Committee Member
of the CHE-IHNF, UPLB**



MS. VICTORIA A. SANDOVAL

Ms. Sandoval is a 1977 Bachelor of Science in Home Technology graduate at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB). She worked in several projects, most of them based at the College of Human Ecology (CHE). She later served as library-in-charge of the College from May 26, 1994 to the present. Her zero knowledge in library operations, management and services drove her to pursue a Master's degree in Library and Information Science at the Institute of Library and Information Science in University of the Philippines Diliman (UPD). She took advantage of her reduced fee benefit and enrolled in School Year (SY) 1999-2000 with classes during Saturdays. Finally, she graduated at the end of first semester SY 2004-2005. Ms. Sandoval has attended several seminars and trainings to hone her expertise in library science.

In partial fulfillment of the course, she took the opportunity of being a NUTRINET Technical Committee member by assessing the network after 17 years of existence. Data collection was easy due to her rapport with NUTRINET members. For this, she is grateful to the NUTRINET Technical Committee members and the heads of the member institutions for having been a part of the study. She hopes that the study made useful contributions to the NUTRINET system and member institutions for their future plans and activities.

Ms. Sandoval is blessed with four children. Her two children, Lacelli and Allan finished their degrees at UP Los Baños and thus also enjoyed the UP study privilege.



See The NUTRINET... on p.7

Nine NUTRINET Members Join Philippine e-Lib Project

Nine member-agencies of NUTRINET form part of the Philippine e-Lib project. There are three member-agencies from the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) namely, the Science and Technology Information Institute (STII), Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) and Industrial Technology Development Institute (ITDI). Two agencies come from the Department of Agriculture (DA) which are the National Nutrition Council (NNC) and Agricultural Training Institute (ATI). Likewise, four colleges of the University of the Philippines (UP) are members of the Network. These include the College of Home Economics (CHE) in Diliman, College of Medicine (CM) and College of Public Health (CPH) in Manila, and College of Human Ecology, Institute of Human Nutrition and Food in Los Baños.

The e-Lib project is one of the 11 government-funded projects of the Committee on Information and Communication Technology (CICT), formerly the Information Technology and E-Commerce Council (ITECC). It is a joint undertaking of the National Library, University of the Philippines (UP), DOST, Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and DA.

The Philippine e-Lib aims to give the Filipino people access to the wealth of information available not only in the Philippine libraries but in the world.

The P166-million web portal located at www.elib.gov.ph has now a collection of more than 800,000 bibliographic records. These records consist of more than 25 million pages of local and international materials, 29,000 full text local journals and 15,000 theses and dissertations. A significant part of these data were taken from the five participating NUTRINET member-agencies. The nine NUTRINET members will be provided with 2 kiosks each to enable their clients to have access to the e-Lib.

DOST Undersecretary, Fortunato T. de la Peña, spearheaded the conceptualization of the project. In December, 2003 the project was approved by ITECC. The signing of the Memorandum of Agreement

(MOA) by heads of participating agencies was conducted last February 4, 2004.

The objectives of the project are:

- To provide access to information to citizens for life-long learning;
- To enrich local library content in digital format for community and global access;
- To build local capabilities and expertise in the creation and generation of digital information sources;
- To provide local library and information services network to academic and government institutions for optimum use of resources;
- To promote and accelerate the exchange of knowledge resources among various sectors of society, including regional and international users; and
- To establish a mechanism of income generation and other means to sustain the e-library.

The project's salient features include:

- a. Creation and integration of "critical mass" for the e-Library infrastructure and services;
- b. The use of current library systems and existing network of participants;
- c. Emphasis on Philippine materials for current build-up in all formats;
- d. Cooperative acquisition and shared access to e-databases;
- e. Provision of local nodes with access to existing facilities for better public access;
- f. Provision of training and skills development to the network staff; and
- g. Income generation for sustainability.

Through the Philippine e-Lib, the public can access to current local and foreign information materials efficiently and effectively. As envisioned, it will serve as a springboard in the planning and implementation of programs and projects for national development.



See Nine NUTRINET... on p.7

New RP Plan of Action for Nutrition Unveiled

Improvement of the quality of life Filipinos through better nutrition is the ultimate goal of the draft Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition (PPAN) 2005-2010. The PPAN was unveiled at the just concluded Golden Anniversary and Annual Convention of the Nutritionist-Dietitians' Association of the Philippines (NDAP) last February 23-25, 2005.

In presenting the draft PPAN, Executive Director Elsa M. Bayani of the National Nutrition Council (NNC) welcomed comments and suggestions that will help refine the program designed to address nagging nutritional problems of the country.

Ms. Bayani stressed that the consequences of malnutrition affect not only the survival and growth of young children but also their capacity to be economically productive, competitive and socially active in adulthood.

Malnutrition, she added, also causes deepening strain in the already scarce financial sources of poor families and magnifies government expenditures for delivery of basic services, including nutrition and health education.

The PPAN sets a number of "guiding principles" to achieve specific objectives. These objectives include reduction in the prevalences of low birthweight, iron deficiency anemia among infants and pregnant women, vitamin A deficiency disorders among lactating women and children, and iodine deficiency disorders among school children and women of reproductive age.

"Food is key to survival and critical for physical and mental development" is the first principle in the draft Plan of Action for Nutrition. Efforts to improve quality of life should start at improving access to food, it says. "Good nutrition is the right of every Filipino", asserts another principle, adding that it should be provided to everyone regardless of his socio-economic and political status or religious belief.

Another important principle is "good nutrition is a sound investment". This emphasizes that helping poor families gain access to food supply and means to buy their own food in the short term will enable them to "break from the chain of extreme poverty and hunger".

The draft PPAN outlines various programs, projects and activities envisioned to contribute to improvement in food and nutrient intakes and health status. The local government units are key partners in implementing programs like community, school and home food production, nutrition information and education, food assistance in calamity-stricken areas, and livelihood assistance to families with malnourished children.

The multisectoral NNC, chaired by Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap, spearheads the formulations planning, monitoring and evaluation of the Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition. Meanwhile, the local nutrition committee under the leadership of the local chief executives provides the appropriate mechanism for integration and coordination of all local nutrition efforts guided by nationally-set directions and guidelines.

As an integral component of the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan, the NNC executive director pointed out that the PPAN helps form a well-nourished, healthy and mentally able human resource that can be instrumental to the nation's socio-economic development. □

*Contributor: MCRVSta Ana
NNC*

2005 Nutrition Month Theme:

"Batang may kinabukasan, sa wastong nutrisyon simulan."

RESEARCH UPDATE

Overweight is a Risk Factor to Diabetes and Hypertension

The 1998 National Nutrition Survey of the Food and Nutrition Research Institute, Department of Science and Technology (FNRI-DOST), revealed that there is an increasing trend of overweight among adults aged 20 years and over of both sexes from 1993 to 2003. In 1993, there were about 17 out of 100 adults who were overweight. This figure increased to 20 and 24 out of 100 in 1998 and 2003, respectively. Disaggregating the data by sex, more adult females than males were found to be overweight. In 1993, about 14 out of 100 males while 19 out of 100 females were overweight. The same trend was observed in 1998 when about 17 out of 100 males and 23 out of 100 females were overweight. In 2003, 21 out of 100 males and 27 out of 100 females were detected as overweight. Overweight when left unattended may result to many chronic degenerative diseases like heart diseases, hypertension and diabetes mellitus.

The latest National Nutrition Surveys conducted in 2003 by the FNRI-DOST revealed that 7 out of 100 Filipinos adults aged 20 years and over are suffering from impaired glucose level and diabetes. In the same survey, the prevalence of hypertension was 22 out of 100 Filipino adults.

Diabetes is a disease that affects the way the body uses food. It causes sugar levels in the blood to increase. Individuals with fasting blood sugar level equal or greater than 100 - 125 mg/dl have impaired glucose level while those with blood sugar level equal or greater than 125 mg/dl are considered diabetics. The signs and symptoms of diabetes are numerous. These include frequent urination, excessive thirst, extreme hunger, sudden weight loss, weakness and fatigue, recurring or hard-to-heal wound or gum infection, drowsiness, tingling or numbness in hands or feet, itching of skin and genitals, sudden vision changes, and blurred vision.

Hypertension, on the other hand, is a disorder characterized by sustained systolic blood pressure reading of ≥ 140 mmHg and/or a diastolic blood pressure reading of ≥ 90 mmHg. Hypertension increases the danger of acquiring heart diseases.

These health data indicate that policy makers need to develop healthful and appropriate policies and strategies to prevent the continuing increase in the number of overweight Filipinos.

Nowadays, there are various brands of reducing pills available in the market and fad diets that promise magnificent results. These attract a lot of people who want to look slim. It is important to take caution and consult a doctor or dietitian before taking these pills and diets.

"Go Natural" is the advice of nutritionists to those who need to reduce weight. They likewise recommend losing weight by eating less food or less high-energy foods and exercising more. Reducing weight does not mean starving oneself because everyone has a basic nutritional requirement to meet each day. Rather than going without meals altogether, everyone is encouraged to practice a healthy lifestyle through a proper diet, good nutrition, increased physical activity, and regular exercise habit. A healthy lifestyle is also synonymous to not smoking and avoiding alcoholic beverages. This is Message no. 10 of the Nutritional Guidelines For Filipinos which says "For a healthy lifestyle and good nutrition, exercise regularly, do not smoke, and avoid drinking alcoholic beverages".



 *See Overweight ... on p.7*

RESEARCH UPDATE

The Sweet Taste of Vitamin A

Vitamin A fortified sugar is ready for distribution in the local market. The Food and Nutrition Research Institute, Department of Science and Technology (FNRI-DOST) developed the technology for fortifying sugar with vitamin A, which was adopted by First Sugar Corporation. The vitamin A fortified sugar was introduced recently to retailers in Marikina City Public Market. It is available at ½ kilo and 1 kilo retail packs.

According to Dr. Mario V. Capanzana of the Food and Nutrition Research Institute, Department of Science and Technology (FNRI, DOST), the vitamin A concentration of fortified refined sugar is 15 micrograms retinol per gram of sugar. About 2 level teaspoons of fortified sugar approximately 10 grams will give 150 microgram retinol. This means that approximately 1/3 of the Recommended Energy and Nutrient Intake (RENI) of vitamin A for children, aged 1 to 12 years old is met.

The government recognizes food fortification as a strategy to combat hidden hunger or micronutrient deficiency. Food fortification is the addition of nutrients at acceptable levels to processed food or food products that is widely consumed by the population. Food fortification is now being considered as a sustainable and cost effective approach to combat micronutrient deficiency. Thus, RA 8976 or the Food Fortification Act of 2000 mandates the fortification of staples like rice with iron, cooking oil and sugar with vitamin A, and flour with vitamin A and iron.

FNRI-DOST reports that vitamin A deficiency (VAD) remains as public health problem in the country. The 6th National Nutrition Surveys (NNS) result showed that VAD among children 6 months to 5 years old increased from 38% in 1998 to 40.1% in 2003. VAD among lactating mothers increased from 16.5% in 1998 to 20.1% in 2003. VAD however, declined among pregnant women from 22.2% in 1998 to 17.5% in 2003.

Another strategy to combat VAD is through nutrition education and diet modification. The results of the



food consumption survey conducted by FNRI-DOST showed that the average consumption of green and yellow vegetables, vitamin C-rich fruits and root crops are low in the Filipino diet. Thus, the Nutritional Guidelines for Filipinos (NGF) encourages the consumption of more fruits, vegetables and root crops to help correct the micronutrient deficiencies.

Green leafy vegetables such as kangkong, kamote, malunggay, pechay, mustasa, and saluyot are rich in beta-carotene. The beta-carotene in these vegetables is efficiently converted to vitamin A when dietary fat is present. It is wise to prepare one-dish meals like sinigang, nilaga, suam, tinola, or pochero. The natural fat from the meat, chicken or fish will serve as a medium to help absorb the beta-carotene in the leafy vegetables. Adding a little oil or sauteing is also an excellent way to prepare these vitamin A rich vegetables. In addition, these green leafy vegetables are also good sources of vitamin C as well as iron, calcium, dietary fiber, folic acid, vitamin E and other phytochemicals.

For more information of food and nutrition, you may write or call: The Director, Food and Nutrition Research Institute, Department of Science and Technology, General Santos Avenue, Bicutan, Taguig City Telephone/Fax No. 837-2934, 837-3164; e-mail: mvc@fnri.dost.gov.ph, FNRI-DOST website: <http://www.fnri.dost.gov.ph>. □

*CSMartinez
FNRI-DOST*

 **The NUTRINET ... from p.2**

Lacelli finished a degree in BS Forestry, while Allan graduated in BS Agriculture. Immer, another child, was a baseball player since elementary and used this talent to enroll for free at the University of Santo Tomas. Larissa, her youngest daughter is a senior high school student this SY 2005-2006.

To Ms. Sandoval, library work is a very fulfilling job. Librarians, she says, are not necessarily information experts. She added that the mere fact that she is able to provide the information needed by the users at the right time makes her happy and satisfied with her job. Sometimes, she gets a negative feedback due to her facial expression and the way she talks. Nevertheless, she is always willing to help and serve her clients.

Of being a Library Network member, she is for a "give and take" relationship between and among members and the Network system. She thinks that the linkage serves not only to increase knowledge and skills in library operations and management but also improves inter and intra-relationship with other sectors of society. □

 **Overweight ... from p.4**

Those who need to lose weight should:

- Eat less energy-dense foods, especially foods high in fat
- Eat more foods rich in fiber, such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grain cereals
- Eat at regular meal time; constantly going hungry is not the answer
- Drink 6-8 glasses of water a day
- Drink alcohol moderately (not more than 2 bottles of beer per day)
- Exercise regularly in at least about 20 to 30 minutes/day in order to use up energy stores

For more information on food and nutrition, you may write or call: The Director, Food and Nutrition Research Institute, Department of Science and Technology, General Santos Avenue, Bicutan, Taguig City Telephone/Fax No. 837-2934, 837-3164; e-mail: mvc@fnri.dost.gov.ph, FNRI-DOST website: <http://www.fnri.dost.gov.ph>. □

*IAngeles-Agdeppa.
FNRI-DOST S&T Media Service*

 **Nine NUTRINET ... from p.6**

The Philippine e-lib was formally launched last April 19, 2005 at the Ground Floor Lobby of the National Library. Senator Ramon D. Magsaysay, Jr., a long-time information technology advocate in the Senate, graced the event along with the CICT Chair, Virgilio Peña and DOST Undersecretary Fortunato T. de la Peña. Heads of some participating institutions and representatives were also present during the occasion.

You can now access the Philippine e-Lib at <http://www.elib.gov.ph>. □

*CCGuilatco/RF Lopez
FNRI-DOST/STII-DOST*



Sen. Ramon D. Magsaysay, Jr. during the ceremonial ribbon cutting along with the CICT Chair, Virgilio Peña, DOST Secretary Estrella F. Alabastro, DOST Undersecretary Fortunato T. de la Peña and heads of participating agencies.

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