

Composition of Dietary Guidelines committee questioned

By ACSH Staff — March 21, 2014



The Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA), a joint project of

the Department for Health and Human Services and the USDA, must be re-evaluated and updated every five years. The last set of DGAs was produced in 2010, and thus the next set is due in 2015. While the DGA is simply advisory for most Americans, it sets the agenda for the military, school food programs, prisons and federal workplaces.

The purpose of the DGA is to provide information on the best scientifically demonstrated bases for food and nutrition advice. But there s the rub. In a recent [commentary](#),^[1] Erik Telford, Senior Vice President of the Franklin Center for Government and Public Integrity, criticizes the makeup of the committee that makes these determinations. In particular, he is concerned about the fact that most of the committee members are academics with prior expressed political agendas who could exert untoward influences on committee determinations. For example, he cites Dr. Frank Hu from the Harvard School of Public Health as having an agenda designed to promote vegetarianism, and Dr. Alice Lichtenstein of Tufts University as approving former Mayor Bloomberg s wish to ban large portions of sugared sodas.

Mr. Telford urges the committee to focus on assessing the scientific data and establishing the appropriate consumption of nutrients for health, and not to try to determine how to support sustainable food production methods, for example. He also suggests that individuals with more real world experience in the areas of food production and feeding programs be members of the committee.

ACSH s Dr. Ruth Kava agrees. She says, The focus of the DGAC should be nutrition, not supporting any particular political agenda. She also informs readers that they may comment on proposed moves of the committee [here](#)^[2].

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Links

[1] <http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2014/03/20/why-are-ivory-tower-types-in-charge-food-choices-for-millions-americans/>

[2] <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2015/comments/default.aspx>