

NUTRITION AND HEALTH PROVIDED BY ANIMAL PRODUCTS

Rationale:

A diversity of food sources remains a key element to a balanced diet, good health and even survival.¹ Animal-sourced foods provide high-quality dietary protein that contains a balanced mixture of amino acids critical to normal growth and development of children, weight management in adolescents and adults, and prevention of sarcopenia in the elderly.^{2,3,4} Animal products also are excellent sources of other nutrients including iron, zinc, and vitamin B-12.



Thus, consumption of animal-sourced foods plays an important role in achieving a nutritionally balanced diet.

As societies develop economically, their diets become more diverse.⁵ Typically, animal products are more expensive than vegetable products but animal products are well recognized for bringing a more balanced nutritional status to a population. Diets that exclude animal products often are inadequate in providing essential nutrients and require dietary supplements.^{6,7} Furthermore, meat, eggs and dairy foods provide complementary nutrition to most indigenous diets, resulting in improved nutritional status and health of global populations.

Policy Statement:

ASAS strongly supports efforts to improve the nutritional status of the global population by expanding the diversity of foods available to all, especially through the inclusion of nutritionally dense animal products.

Policy Objectives:

- ASAS supports having available to all people all the foods necessary for a balanced diet and optimal nutritional status. Nutrient density represents a major factor that is efficiently delivered through dairy, meat and egg products.
- ASAS can provide to any agency or educator nutritional data and educational assistance showing how local diets can be optimized to improve the nutritional status in a given population.
- ASAS is committed to developing new technologies that will enhance sustainability while decreasing the cost of production of animal products and thus the cost to consumers.
- ASAS encourages funding for research and education programs that focus on improving the nutritional status of all people.

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¹ Arimond, M. and M.T. Ruel. 2004. Dietary diversity is associated with child nutritional status: Evidence from 11 demographic and health surveys. *J. Nutr.* 134:2579-2585.

² Tang, M., and N.F. Krebs. 2014. High protein intake from meat as complementary food increases growth but not adiposity in breastfed infants: a randomized trial. *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 100:1322-1328.

³ Leidy, H.J., P.M. Clifton, A. Astrup, T.P. Wycherley, M.S. Westerterp-Plantenga, N.D., Luscombe-Marsh, S.C. Woods, and R.D. Mattes. 2015. The role of protein in weight loss and maintenance. *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 101:1320S-1329S.

⁴ Paddon-Jones, D., W.W. Campbell, P.F. Jacques, S.B. Kritchevsky, L.L. Moore, N.R. Rodriguez, and L.J.C. van Loon. 2015. Protein and healthy aging. *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 2015 101:1339S-1345S.

⁵ Reynolds, L.P., M.C. Wulster-Radcliffe, D.K. Aaron, and T.A. Davis. 2015. Importance of animals in agricultural sustainability and food security. *J. Nutr.* 145:1377-1379.

⁶ Ross, A.C., B. Caballero, R.J. Cousins, K.L. Tucker, and T.R. Ziegler. 2014. *Modern Nutrition in Health and Disease*. Lippincott, Williams, and Wilkins.

⁷ Elmadfa, I., and I. Singer. 2009. Vitamin B-12 and homocysteine status among vegetarians: a global perspective. *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 89:1693S-1698S.