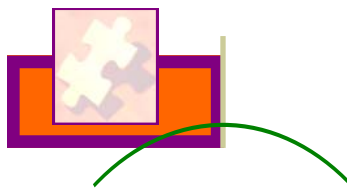


October 2005



Summary Report

NUTRITION CONNECTIONS
PEOPLE • PROGRAMS • SCIENCE • COMMUNITY



FNS NATIONAL NUTRITION
EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2

Inside...






- Registrant Profile
 - Program Highlights
 - Exhibits
 - SNAP Sessions
 - Evaluation Results
-

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Introduction



With the spectacular Washington, DC skyline as a backdrop, the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) convened its second National Nutrition Education Conference on September 12-14, 2005 at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City in Arlington, Virginia. The Conference, "Nutrition Connections: People, Programs, Science, and Community," attracted 883 registrants and 789 attendees from all 50 States, the District of Columbia and most U.S. territories. This report provides an overview of the Conference's highlights and achievements.

Two things dominated the conference:

-  Vigorous and enthusiastic discussion of nutrition education issues raised in the excellent presentations, and
-  A friendly atmosphere where people enjoyed learning and networking.



**Roberto Salazar,
FNS Administrator**

The Conference's primary goal was to provide a public forum for nutrition professionals from across the nation to come together, exchange information, and forge partnerships that will grow and strengthen the nutrition education provided to FNS program participants. Attendees made connections everywhere -- over the breakfast table, via PowerPoint presentations, while enjoying the Sunset Energy Walk, and dancing during Energizer Breaks.



Conference highlights included more than 150 expert presentations, including presentations in 47 plenary and concurrent sessions and workshops, 42 poster presentations, and over 60 exhibits. International speakers shared a global perspective on obesity and related issues. Major U.S. food manufacturers shared the food industry perspectives on contemporary nutrition issues and how they are addressing them.


The Conference helped attendees:


- Understand FNS nutrition priorities, current and emerging initiatives, and the resources and tools available to help implement nutrition education programs that work;
- Apply networking and partnership skills to coordinate nutrition education across FNS nutrition assistance programs and improve collaboration among State and community partners;
- Enhance skills in planning, implementing, and evaluating nutrition education;
- Share strategies for advancing State Nutrition Action Plans (SNAPs); and
- Implement successful nutrition education activities and interventions in their communities.

Registrant Profile



Nearly 900 people registered for the conference, representing multi-levels of government, including State, local, and Federal levels along with nonprofit and stakeholder organizations from all parts of the country: 96% from the U.S., 3% from U.S. territories, and 1% from international communities. Numerically, registrations were similar to the 2003 Conference.

 All FNS nutrition assistance programs and nutrition-focused USDA agencies (e.g., FSIS, ERS, AMS, CSREES, CNPP, ARS, NAL) participated along with other federal agencies including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); Administration on Aging; Department of Defense Fresh Produce Program; the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute; Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion; and the Institute of Medicine.

 Key organizations and partners included: National WIC Association (NWA), School Nutrition Association (SNA), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) National Professional Association, National Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) Association, National Association of Food Distribution Programs on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), American Public Human Services Association (APHSA), and the American Dietetic Association (ADA).



Focused Messages Supported by Attendees

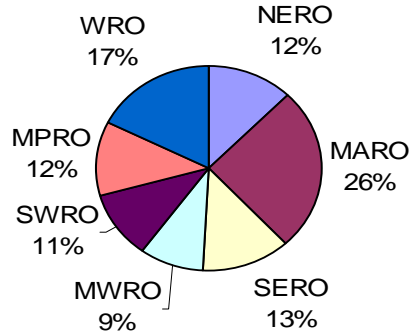
Conference attendees shared their thoughts on narrowing the scope of nutrition education efforts to focus on one or two key behaviors.

- 75% felt that it is “very feasible” to promote one or two key nutrition behaviors in their State. The remaining 25% believed that this was “somewhat feasible.”

- 85% agreed that focusing collaboration efforts on one or two key behaviors would increase the potential for achieving the desired outcomes.

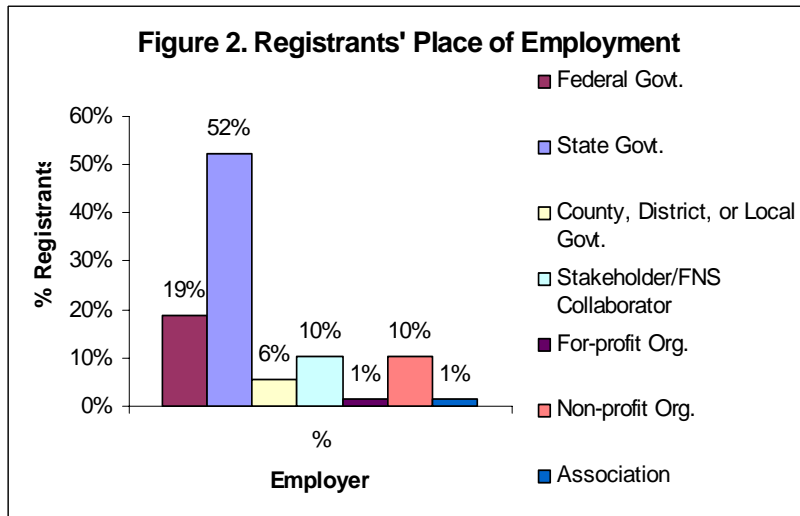
Registrants represented all seven Regions (Figure 1). Slightly more than 25% of registrants lived in the MARO (not including FNS headquarters’ staff).

Figure 1. Percentage of Registrants by Region



Most Conference registrants are employed by Federal, State, or local government (Figure 2). State government employees constituted the majority of conference registrants (52%), with Federal and local employees comprising 19% and 6%, respectively. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) employ the remaining 22% of registrants. NGOs include stakeholders and FNS collaborators, non-profits, for-profits, and associations.

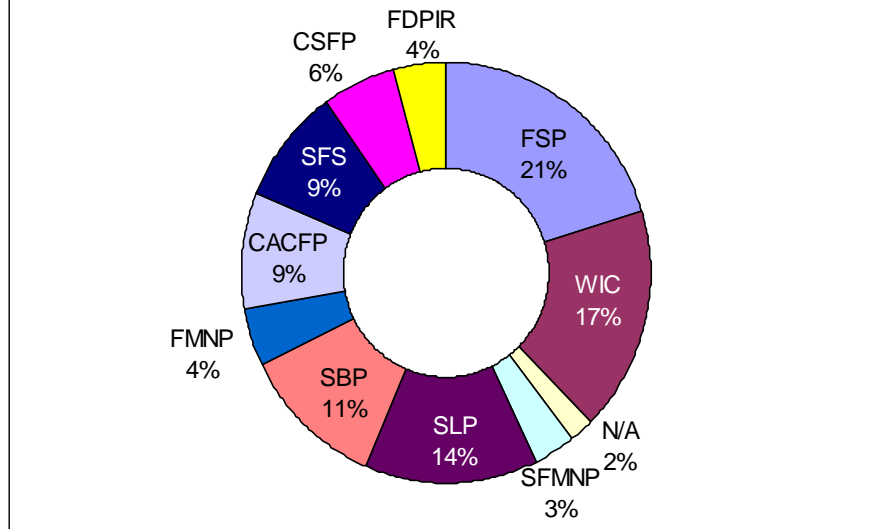
Figure 2. Registrants' Place of Employment





Conference registrants work with a variety of FNS programs; most work with the Food Stamp Program (21%), WIC (17%), the School Lunch Program (14%), or the School Breakfast Program (11%). Slightly fewer work with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (9%) or Summer Food Service (9%).

Figure 3. Registrants' FNS Program Affiliation*



*Note: Some registrants are affiliated with multiple FNS programs.



Due to the unfortunate effects of Hurricane Katrina, many colleagues in affected areas were unable to participate in the Conference as planned. Of more than 883 registrants, 789 people actually attended. All 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands were represented along with numerous Indian Tribal Organizations.

Pre-Conference Workshops



Aida Miles leads a pre-conference workshop on motivational interviewing.

More than 180 people participated in four pre-conference interactive workshops designed to build nutrition education skills. Jann Keenan, of The Keenan Group, Inc., presented on the challenges of health literacy, and offered 83 participants practical tips and strategies to build health literacy and make nutrition materials more relevant and culturally appropriate.

The Marcus Institute's Aida Miles led a session on motivational interviewing, a client-centered counseling style that helps people clarify and resolve mixed feelings about changing health-related behaviors. Forty-nine participants attended.



Participants discuss how to use social marketing in nutrition education efforts.

Carol Bryant, from the University of South Florida, shared her research on social marketing. Fifty-three attendees learned techniques for using social marketing to design nutrition interventions -- from the initial planning, formative research, and materials development steps, to program implementation and tracking.

The National Coalition for Food-Safe Schools held a session on Food Safety, and introduced a comprehensive toolkit designed for school-based teams to assess needs and take action to prevent food borne illness outbreaks. Participants worked together to navigate the toolkit, and learned how to build a team and develop an action plan.

Exhibits & Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

Eric Bost, Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, and Deputy Under Secretary Kate Coler opened the Conference at noon on Monday at the ribbon-cutting ceremony that welcomed the attendees and opened the Conference exhibits.

The exhibit hall featured the latest in creative and innovative nutrition education and physical activity products and services, and a USDA Pavilion that included 14 USDA agencies. The Conference attracted more than 60 exhibitors, including 20 NGOs and partner agencies from across the country, and 28 table-top exhibitors showcasing State and local agencies.

The exhibit hall also featured an Energizer Area where Conference participants could join in organized fitness activities.

Conference attendees voted for their favorite exhibits. Conference Choice awards were presented to six exhibitors based on exhibit design and content in two categories: exhibit booths and table-top exhibits. Exhibit booth winners were: CDC Food Safety, Produce for Better Health Foundation, and Wellness, Inc. Table-top exhibit winners were: Administration for Socioeconomic Development, Puerto Rico; Florida Bureau of Child Nutrition; and New York State Department of Health.



Under Secretary Bost welcomes attendees into the Exhibit Hall.



Under Secretary Bost and Deputy Under Secretary Coler open the Exhibit Hall.



What attendees thought...

“This session was exciting and energizing. The planned physical activities were great.”

“Dietary Guidelines Presentation – very informative. Information is current and very enlightening.”

“Very interesting (sessions). Great variety of topics and inspired speakers.”



Charles F. Conner,
Deputy Secretary of
Agriculture

Plenary Sessions

The opening plenary session on September 12 emphasized the importance of working together to achieve results and USDA’s commitment to working in collaboration with partners at all levels to facilitate needed changes at all levels. Deputy Agriculture Secretary Charles Conner delivered the keynote address that reminded attendees of our common goal: working to improve our nation’s health, and the importance of partnerships in achieving that goal.

The panel that followed featured Alberta Frost, FNS; Dr. Eric Hentges, CNPP; and Dr. Linda Meyers, Institute of Medicine (IOM). Presentations emphasized use of collaborative approaches and working together to advance key behavioral changes, implementing the 2005 Dietary Guidelines, and lessons learned from IOM’s Report on Preventing Childhood Obesity.

Tuesday’s plenary session was all about transforming scientific research into practice and making a difference in the lives of the target population. FNS Administrator Roberto Salazar moderated the session, which featured an esteemed panel of presenters who highlighted interventions that work in communities of color, what parents need to know to promote healthy eating, ideas for improving school meals, and the Arkansas approach to combating obesity.

Speakers included Dr. Shiriki Kumanyika, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine; Dr. Jennifer Fisher, Baylor College of Medicine; Alice Waters, Edible Schoolyard and Chez Panisse Restaurant; and Joe Quinn, Office of the Governor of Arkansas. This session received high marks. Eighty-nine percent of attendees completing evaluations rated this session as informative and interesting.

Feedback from attendees...

"Thank you for bringing the global perspective to this conference!"

"I really enjoyed learning from this session on international obesity and malnutrition."



Dr. Kumanyika discusses interventions that make a difference in communities of color.

The closing plenary session shared a global view of the obesity epidemic, including global trends, implications, and solutions. The session included a lively panel of distinguished international nutrition professionals: Dr. Helmut Heseker of Germany, Dr. Dorit Nitzan Kaluski of Israel, and Dr. Yu Xiaodong of China.

Each speaker described unique aspects of the problem in their country and efforts to combat obesity, including obesity trends, current and future plans to move citizens toward healthier lifestyles; challenges and potential solutions identified; and suggestions for addressing obesity on a global-level.



Website Use:

- Almost half of all respondents reported having visited the SNAP Web site. Among respondents reporting previous SNAP involvement, 65% had visited the SNAP Web site.
- After listening to the SNAP Overview: Process, Challenges and Opportunities presentation, many respondents noted their intent to visit and share information with others about the SNAP Web site.



SNAP Mini-Plenary Sessions

Conference attendees filled the rooms for the three interactive sessions addressing State Nutrition Action Plans (SNAPs) on Monday afternoon. These sessions, entitled *SNAPping into Action: State Nutrition Action Plans at Work*, featured a variety of speakers from national, regional and State levels. FNS leaders provided an overview of the history, purpose and focus of SNAP as well as shared the FNS vision for SNAP. FNS also outlined emerging strategies for strengthening the connections among nutrition education offered by FNS programs and discussed future directions. State nutrition staff shared how they have put SNAP into action, especially the challenges they faced, steps taken to overcome these challenges, and their achievements.

Feedback from Attendees on SNAP Sessions

Two hundred and eighty conference attendees (35%) completed evaluations for these sessions. Respondents included persons working at local, State, regional and national levels with representatives from most FNS programs. Fifty-one percent of respondents reported previous involvement with their State SNAP. Many of the remaining 49% stated that they were new to their positions or simply interested in the SNAP process.

States found the presentations on State SNAP efforts particularly useful and cited presentations on Illinois' Nutrition Council and Kansas' collaborative efforts relating to their Body Walk and Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ activities as especially interesting. When asked what they would take away from these State presentations, respondents said:

- *“Good to hear specifically how a State approached SNAP.”*
- *“Great ideas on how to start a program and collaborate with other agencies.”*
- *“Involving others who may not have been at initial meetings and forming relationships.”*

Connecting for Success: Networking Breakfast



On Tuesday morning, more than 600 people gathered around State-specific tables for the Networking Breakfast entitled “Real Collaboration for Real Results: Taking SNAP to the Next Level.”




Guests were welcomed by Clarence Carter, Food Stamp Program Deputy Administrator, who shared FNS’ vision for cross-program collaboration: how combined expertise and funding can support common goals and achieve more comprehensive and far-reaching results.

At the 2003 Conference, States began to collaborate through SNAP. This breakfast provided State teams uninterrupted time to reconnect, assess their SNAPs, and enthusiastically discuss how to move their State forward in the SNAP process.



Celebrating Excellence! Awards Luncheon

The awards luncheon celebrated excellence, and honored exemplary nutrition education programs from across the U.S. and U.S. territories. FNS presented Leadership, Innovation, and Nutrition Collaboration (LINC) Awards to winners in three categories:

-  Wyoming's Cent\$ible Nutrition Program (for Excellence in Practice);
-  New Mexico's Cooking with Kids (for Partnerships and Collaborations); and
-  California's WIC Branch (for Nourishing Tomorrow's Leaders).

Special Recognition was given to Share Our Strength's Operation Frontline, a nutrition education program that serves FNS program participants across the country.

The luncheon crowd was moved to their feet during an electrifying performance by the AT Jumpers, a precision jump rope team from Annandale Terrace Elementary School in Annandale, Virginia.

Roberto Salazar, FNS Administrator, unveiled the revitalized Eat Smart. Play Hard.[™] spokescharacter Power Panther and his nephew, Slurp. Slurp is an enthusiastic, energetic, happy-go-lucky kid, but he's also mischievous and unpredictable, so he gets into trouble from time to time just like other tweens. Power Panther's new look is more athletic and powerful, he also wears new "cool" clothes, shoes, and "power" gloves. Power Panther's new look will help his image with tweens, who will see him as an older but cool, friendly guy who they can emulate. He will help guide them to use their "inner power" and make healthy eating and physical activity choices.

Power Panther and Slurp[™] will be appearing together soon in Eat Smart. Play Hard.[™] materials and activities.



Eat Smart. Play Hard.[™]
spokescharacters
Slurp and Power Panther.

Getting Energized!

One attendee commented...

"The physical exercise was a nice touch. A 'practice what you preach' message."



The Conference put research into practice by providing a healthy environment for learning. Attendees had many opportunities to invigorate their minds and bodies. Throughout the Conference, attendees could be found moving, stretching, dancing, and enjoying nutritious refreshments. The Energizer Breaks provided extra opportunities for moving.

More than 200 people joined Power Panther and FNS Administrator Roberto Salazar on a one-mile Sunset Energy Walk to the Crystal City Water Park. A Sunrise Energizer got early-birds ready to conquer the day!

Throughout the conference – at the Welcome Reception, Networking Breakfast, and Awards Luncheon – attendees were fueled by a healthy menu of foods and beverages.



Sunset walkers take a photo break with Power Panther at the Crystal City Water Park.



Post-Conference Meetings



Program-focused post-conference meetings provided a forum for Conference-inspired attendees to focus their energy and address program-specific issues. The Food Stamp Program session, “Planning Our Route to the Future: The Road Map to Effective Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNE)” featured presentations on the recently released FSNE Guiding Principles, and the Education and Administrative Reporting System (EARS). More than 180 nutrition educators attended the meeting.

Child Nutrition Division conducted a post-conference meeting, which reviewed Team Nutrition’s first ten years, conducted a planning session for the next ten years, and explored the new Wellness provisions of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004.



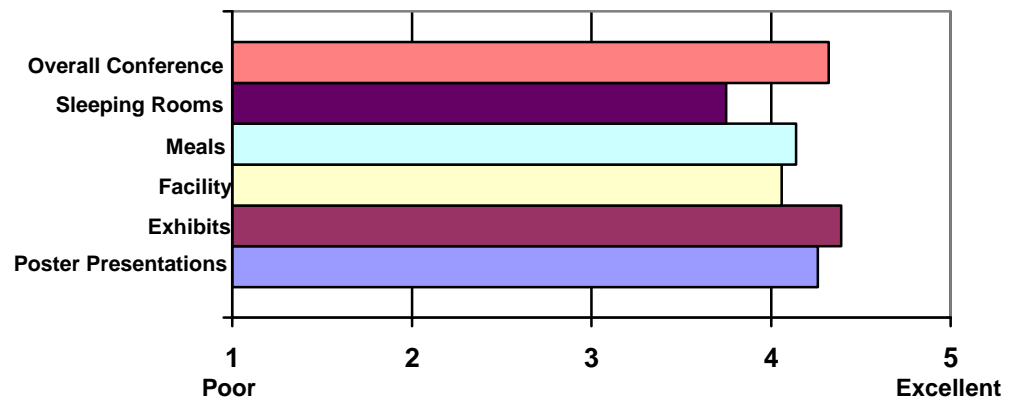
WIC’s meeting focused on Value Enhanced Nutrition Assessment (VENA), a new tool being developed to improve nutrition services in the WIC Program by establishing standards for the assessment process used to determine WIC eligibility, and to individualize nutrition education, referrals, and food package tailoring.

Dr. Dan Acuff, founder of Youth Marketing System Consulting and the Character Lab, presented a late-breaking session on social marketing to kids. His discussion included a dialogue about what appeals to kids at different developmental stages. Dr. Acuff is currently working with FNS to revitalize and enhance Power Panther’s appeal to kids. Approximately 35 people attended the session.

Conference Evaluation

About 180 conference attendees (approximately 23%) completed evaluation forms for the overall conference. Respondents considered the conference to be a success, with 92% rating their experience as “good” or “excellent.” Exhibits and poster presentations were particularly well received with ninety-four percent of respondents rating these as “good” or “excellent.”

Evaluation of Conference Features







* Rating Scale: 1=poor, 2=marginal, 3=acceptable, 4=good, 5=excellent


What Attendees Found Most Beneficial

Conference attendees commented that opportunities to network with other FNS program staff and partners were among the most beneficial aspects of the conference. Many respondents mentioned enjoying the Closing Plenary Session on *The Obesity Epidemic: Global Trends, Implications and Solutions*. Approximately ninety-five percent of respondents found this session to be informative and interesting.

A sampling of the comments received about the most beneficial aspects of the conference include:


-  *“Showcasing quality programs that we can use without having to recreate.”*
-  *“I really enjoyed the last session on Global Trends.”*
-  *“Gaining knowledge about how other states are integrating the same message throughout all or most FNS programs.”*


 *“Sharing of ideas both formally & informally; opportunity to meet/ask questions of HQ personnel.”*


 *“Knowing now what is being done around the world. Knowing now what is happening across our country.”*


What Attendees Plan to Do Differently or New


Conference attendees stated that they were inspired and motivated to take action by session presentations and networking activities. Many stated their intent to share ideas with their colleagues, re-think existing practices or refresh their collaborative efforts. Below are just a few of the responses we received.

 *“Pay more attention to the SNAP process and play an integral role in that process.”*


 *“Practice what I preach -- apply principles to my own life to be a better role model.”*


 *“I have a list of several things I want to do, from revising staff training to providing new nutrition education materials to using new techniques with participants to collaborating with others.”*

 *“Work with schools on wellness policies.”*

 *“Work more at identifying opportunities for collaboration, particularly between FNS programs.”*

 *“Promote motivational interviewing.”*

 *“Implement new physical activities that we participated in at the conference.”*

 *“I will approach my job with a rejuvenated mind.”*

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**FNS NATIONAL NUTRITION
EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2**



Next Steps?

Follow-up Activities

Follow-up is a vital component of the process for putting what we learned into action. It is also essential that we share this information with colleagues that could not attend the Conference. To assist with this process, FNS will:

-  Publish proceedings from the conference that shares the discussion in the plenary and key concurrent sessions. This report will be published on the Conference Web site in coming months.
-  Update the Conference Web site <http://www.fns.usda.gov/oane/menu/NNEC/NNEC.htm> to include presentations from the Conference.
-  Follow-up with States and continue to work with them to put SNAP into action.
-  Update the SNAP web site to include summaries of discussion and presentations regarding SNAP in order to assist in this process.