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Module 8

Opportunities for Public Health
Concluding Commentaries

We Hope You Enjoyed This Course

- We hope you enjoyed “Food Production, Public Health, and the Environment”!
Final Question Posed to Lecturers

- In your opinion, what is the most important role public health can play in promoting food security and sustainable agriculture?
Brother David Andrews

- “Eating as a Moral Act”
Brother David Andrews

- Advocate for a healthy and moral food system and be clear about what is healthy and what is not healthy and what is immoral about the current food system

- Be clearer about what is the pathway to health in a more sustainable food system
Mark Winne

- “Closing the Food Gap”
Mark Winne

- Important partner in reducing food insecurity

- Recognize and communicate how ...
  - Hunger and food insecurity as well as obesity are public health problems
  - Methods of food production affect public health via environmental degradation or toxic food
“Cultural and Historical Roots of Food Choices”
Ask

Listen

Value what others know and share with you

You may be surprised at what you learn from local people
“A Brief History of Agriculture and Food Production”
Shawn McKenzie

- Build bridges between public health and agricultural communities, especially locally

- Examples
  - Establish section within APHA specifically focused on agriculture
  - Build study of food systems and agriculture into curricula within ASPH (Association of Schools of Public Health)
M. Gordon “Reds” Wolman (1924-2010)

- “Ecology, Agriculture, and a ‘Green’ Green Revolution”
- Keep people healthy so they can participate in food production

- Key contributions public health can make to the life of the world
  - Water supply
  - Waste disposal
  - Early vaccination
  - Measles prevention
  - Etc.
Fred Kirschenmann

- “The Future of Agriculture”

- Optional lecture, “What Does Agriculture Have to Do with Public Health?”
Public health can partner with the agriculture community to shift paradigm from a therapeutic intervention approach to a natural systems approach

Create a common food declaration
  - Note: eventually done: http://fooddeclaration.org/

Transition health care systems and hospitals to become large purchasers and purveyors of products of community-supported agriculture
Public health can have the greatest and broadest impact by promoting policy change

One policy change can affect millions at a time

Need for public health skills such as …
- Research to identify policies to change and document need
- Grassroots organizing to identify the benefits
- Communicate implications
“What We Know and What We Need to Know about the Risks of Industrial Animal Production (IAP)”

Optional lecture, “Occupational Impacts of IFAP”
Overall goal is to change the way we are producing protein from food animals

Specific actions to reduce impacts of IFAP

- Remove antibiotics, including arsenic, for growth promotion in food animal production, e.g., Denmark
- Stop permitting use of new antibiotics in food animal production, e.g., virginiamycin
- Improve animal waste management
- Increase and improve surveillance
- Address social and economic impacts on farmers and workers in the IFAP system
Ellen Silbergeld

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“The Ins and Outs of IFAP: A Public Health Perspective”
Better document and report risks and impacts of food animal production, including the hidden costs, so-called “externalities”

Be more effective at increasing awareness about these risks and impacts on health and the environment as consumers make their food choices
Amy (Chapin) Sapkota

- “Community Health Effects of Swine CAFO’s”

- Optional lecture, “Water and Air Quality around CAFOs: Research Providing Answers”
Amy (Chapin) Sapkota

- Conduct rigorous research on health and environmental effects of food production

- Communicate the research results and implications in lay terms to key stakeholders
  - E.g., press releases about research results
  - E.g., meet with policymakers and community groups
Bill Weida

- “Agriculture, Economic Principles, and Rural Communities”
Communicate with the community and the public about risks and likely outcomes of the outcomes they are considering to help prevent the situations that make people unhealthy
“Organizing for Justice: The Delmarva Poultry Justice Alliance”
Individuals—as eaters—and public health professionals need to learn where our food comes from and the true costs of the different choices available.

As Wendell Berry says, “… if they eat, people have agricultural responsibilities …”
Terry Spence

- “From Farmer to Advocate”

- “Alternative Methods of Cattle Production; Transitioning Farmers to Sustainable Systems”
Terry Spence

- Be proactive in the *application* of public health research about the food system and food safety

- Protect a healthy food supply for current and future generations
Michael Heller

- “A Vision for Agriculture”

- Optional lecture, “The Farm Bill—A Farmer’s Point of View”
Public health should get active in federal farm policy
  - Stop inconsistencies between what we are telling people to eat and what we are paying farmers to grow

As individuals and consumers, you can participate in your local food system
Wayne Roberts

- “Moving Towards a Better Food System”

- Optional lecture, “Moving Towards a Better Food System: Inch by Inch, Row by Row, Gonna Make Some Real Food Grow”
Adapt to the future and the new problem of scarcity of food as population grows while arable land and water become more scarce.

Help develop common sense strategy for creation of regional food systems:
- Urban agriculture where possible
- Peri-urban agriculture where feasible
- Rural agriculture where necessary

Public health should move upstream in food systems and agriculture planning.
Wayne Roberts

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Lori Stahlbrand

- “Growing Local, Sustainable Food Systems: The Local Food Plus Approach”
Lori Stahlbrand

- Help build relationships and “collaborative infrastructure”
  - Concepts, competence, connections

- Help lobby for “hard infrastructure” to rebuild local food processing, storage, and distribution
  - Capital, plants, equipment

- Educate the public about local food systems—why they are healthy for us and multiple benefits for society
- Optional lecture, “Global Nutrition Transition”
Global health leaders have agreed on a blueprint for addressing diet-related chronic diseases in developing countries.

It is up to governments and community leaders to implement the blueprint.
Edward Broughton

- Optional lecture,
  “Aquaculture: IAP in the Sea”
Edward Broughton

- Communicate truthful information about the effects of food production on the environment and public health
- Focus on SOLUTIONS
- Emphasize POSITIVE messages
Optional lecture, “The Healthy Stores Projects: Environmental Interventions in Practice”
Move toward use of:

- Environmental interventions
  - Can have broader impact than smaller, individual behavioral interventions
- Multiple institutional approaches
  - Incorporate program in multiple venues
  - Reinforces messages
  - Example: schools, churches, and food stores
Understand and advocate for food policies based on ecological principles

Get informed and involved in the decisions about how our food is produced and how the environment is used in the process

“The whole problem of health—in soil, plant, animal, and man—is one great subject.” — Sir Albert Howard, 1939, founder of the organic farming movement

Promote food security for all by creating food systems that are fair, healthful, and equitable for consumers and for those who produce our food
Bob Lawrence

- Provide synthesis of many key determinants of health
- Speak out about how current food production negatively affects the environment and public health
- Advocate for better, long-term sustainable regional agricultural practices that will improve quality of the food supply and assure its availability for future generations