



Lomonosov Moscow State University

Eurasian Center for Food Security

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The February issue of the Newsletter is dedicated to nutrition and health. Medical direction experts of ECFS launch a new research project on getting new data to support the school feeding program in Armenia, as well as review the CAPNUTRA symposium in Bulgaria on sustainable food systems.

The Calendar of Events 2019 is again replenished with new activities in the field of food security. Don't forget to register for the most interesting to you.

ECFS Participates in the Implementation of the School Feeding Program in Armenia

By Anastasia Fabrichnova

The Eurasian Center for Food Security (ECFS) has begun to work on collecting new data to support the Development of Sustainable School Feeding in Armenia program.

The issue of school meals is very important for Armenia. According to the data presented in the Republic of Armenia's National Strategy for Food Security and Improving Nutrition, in 2015,

as a result of malnutrition, 9 percent of children under five years of age were stunted and 14 percent were obese.

A healthy, balanced diet is one of the key mechanisms for maintaining health, ensuring the normal physical and mental development of children. Because children spend a significant part of their time at school, the proper organization of

school meals contributes to improving their health. After the collapse of the USSR and Armenia's independence, the school feeding system in Armenia ceased to exist. Only in 2010, within the framework of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) project Development of Sustainable School Feeding in Armenia, did school meals begin to recover. This project is a part of the United Nations Development Assistance Goals and contributes to the achievement of WFP's goals for eradicating hunger and malnutrition; it also contributes to achieving universal primary education. The Development of Sustainable School Feeding in Armenia program is carried out with donor support from the Government of the Russian Federation and a tripartite agreement on the school nutrition program between the UN's WFP and the governments of Armenia and Russia was signed in March 2010.

Since 2013, Armenia has been transitioning from the WFP Development of Sustainable School Feeding in Armenia program to the National School Feeding Program conducted by the Government of the Republic of Armenia. In August 2013, the government adopted the Sustainable School Feeding Development Strategy, which defined regulatory and coordination functions for government structures and schools. Until 2018, in the framework of the strategy, primary school pupils received meals in the Ararat, Shirak, Syunik, Tavush, and Vayots Dzor regions.

In the future, because of the progressive implementation of the strategy, all pupils in primary and preschool institutions will be included in the school feeding program. In 2019, the Aragatsotn region will be connected to the program, in 2021 Gegharkunik and Lori regions, in 2022 the Armavir region, in 2023 the Kotayk region, and in 2024 Yerevan. A total of about 147,000 students will be receiving food under



ECFS experts with colleagues in Armenia

the program. The project is aimed at providing schoolchildren with hot meals in schools, providing balanced, safe, and quality nutrition for students in preschool institutions and primary schools.

In October 2018, **Larisa Samokhodskaya**, **Andrei Pirogov**, and **Anastasia Fabrichnova** (of the medical division of ECFS), and **Artashes Armaganov** (of the Medical Research and Education Center, or MSEC, of Moscow State University) visited Armenia at the invitation of the National Center for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDPC) of the country's Ministry of Health. The experts took part in series of roundtable events devoted to the assessment of the organization of school meals, as well as the study of the physical development of schoolchildren and its relationship with nutrition in educational institutions of Armenia.

Together with the Minister of Health of Armenia **Arsen Torosyan** and his colleagues from the ministry, the staff of ECFS and the International Medical Center Moscow State University discussed a plan for the study of school meals. Joint meetings were held with the leadership and staff of the NCDPC, where the goals and objectives of the program and the ways of its implementation were discussed.

In 2019, ECFS experts—with the cooperation of the NCDPC—plan to conduct a study of the health status and physical development of schoolchildren from the age of six up to nine

years, and to look also at their tendency toward an unhealthy weight (excess and deficiency) and their relationship with nutrition. The study will also assess the organization and quality of food in educational institutions.

The program is planned to initiate the following actions:

1. Assess the indicators of children's physical development (height, weight, body mass index or BMI, blood pressure) and identify groups that require constant monitoring using the technology of remote monitoring of health indicators.
2. Assess the compliance of the food products provided by the school, as well as the food products provided in the framework of the food program, with the country's legal requirements.
3. Determine the amount of trans fats and sugars in samples of these food products.
4. Conduct a survey on out-of-class nutrition of schoolchildren among parents of primary school pupils with the aim of determining a general assessment of the effect of nutrition on the physical development of children and their health indicators.
5. Analyze the data and their statistical processing. Develop recommendations for a balanced diet in schools and develop recommendations for periodic monitoring of food quality and health indicators, including for parents of students.
6. Develop proposals for legislation and prepare appropriate educational programs for teachers, schoolchildren, and their parents, as well as for the general public.

In order to study the organization of nutrition in schools in practice, ECFS experts visited two secondary schools in the Armavir region: one school included in the nutrition program and one not included in the program. During their visit,



Primary school in Armenia

experts discussed issues of nutrition and the health of children with teachers and medical staff of each of these schools.

The first school, which was included in the school feeding program, had free hot meals that were balanced in composition and nutritional value. The second school, which was not included in the program, had a buffet where cookies, chocolate bars, and sweet carbonated drinks were sold. According to the staff, some of the children bring food from home such as sandwiches and fruit. Some children do not eat at school.

In both schools, the kitchen, dining room, and buffet were located in rooms not originally intended for this purpose. At the first school, the dining area is organized in one large room (perhaps the former gym), and the kitchen is fenced off from the common dining area with a curtain screen. At the second, the dining room and kitchen had previously been located on another floor, while the premises for them were reconstructed long ago.

These visits were the first to study the issue of food security in Armenia in matters of school feeding in particular. At the meetings with Arsen Torosyan and the staff of the NCDPC it was decided to continue the joint study of the provision of school meals, since it can make a significant contribution to the quality of the implementation of the school feeding program.

Food Security Issues in Central and South Eastern Europe Discussed at the CAPNUTRA Symposium

By Anastasia Fabrichnova

The annual CAPNUTRA (Capacity Development Network in Nutrition in Central and Eastern Europe) Symposium was held on October 15–17, 2018, in Belgrade, Serbia. The event was focused on sustainable food systems in Central and South Eastern Europe and included integrated training on collecting nutritional data and enhancing regional interaction.

The international nutrition community CAPNUTRA was established in 2013 in Belgrade. The organization was developed from the UN Standing Committee on Nutrition and the United Nations University nutrition capacity building network in Central and Eastern Europe, established in 2005 in Budapest.

ECFS medical workers were invited to the international symposium for the second time in a row. This year the event was attended by representatives of 39 countries, including the Balkan and Baltic states, Central Europe (Poland, Czech Republic), Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, and Sweden, as well as observers from the Middle East (Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and Pakistan).

The purpose of the symposium was to support the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans, working toward the enhancement of individual, institutional, and organizational capacity in food and nutrition. The symposium was also intended to develop the first regional database on the composition of food, to be created in collaboration with the [EuroFIR Food Platform](#) (United Kingdom). After the symposium was closed, training on nutrition data was held for representatives of a number of countries. The goals of the symposium included the exchange of information and cooperation with European and international networks and associations.

This year the symposium program was devoted to the organization of sustainable food systems. According to experts, sustainable food systems emphasize the central role of nutrition in the link between food systems and their impact on nutrition and health. Food supply chains, food infrastructure, and consumer behavior are key to nutrition and health. In this regard, sustainable food systems are an economic, social, and organizational base that allow food security to exist and a healthy nutrition system to be created for future generations.

The main issues addressed by the symposium were related to the organization, management, and control of nutrition infrastructure; the activities of public health organizations on nutrition; educational and research activities; nutrition security issues; ways to improve nutrition in socially vulnerable groups; problems of nutritional supplements; and labeling to prevent antibiotic resistance, among others.

For effective dialogue, the organizers of the symposium suggested that the representatives of the participating countries fill out a questionnaire regarding the above topics.



Anastasia Fabrichnova (ECFS) participated in the CAPNUTRA Symposium

Participants were also asked to choose 10 traditional dishes that are typical of the region and describe their composition and method of preparation. In addition, they were asked to indicate which nutrient-rich foods available in the region are rarely used in cooking. Ten-minute reports describing the organization of food infrastructure in the country were presented by experts from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, and Slovenia.

During the symposium, **Peter Van't Wiir**—scientist, nutritionist, and professor of the department of nutrition and human health at Wageningen University (Netherlands)—stressed the lack of multidisciplinary professionals who work on a broad range of issues such as nutrition, food production, economics, agriculture, and ecology. Such a universal specialist could carry out an expert assessment from the position of nutrition that is optimal for human health.

A report on the state of food security in Russia was presented by **Anastasia Fabrichnova**—an ECFS medical department expert who is a doctor and endocrinologist-dietician. In her presentation, she informed symposium participants about the organization, research,

and control of nutrition by the Russian Federation's ministries and departments, the availability of legal documents on various aspects of nutrition, programs for the prevention of diseases, the collection of statistical data, existing information systems, standards for nutrition, the organization of quality control in the food industry, issues of training in the field of nutritiology and dietology, and the rules of product labeling, as well as the problem of antibiotic resistance in Russia.

In particular, Fabrichnova talked about the Doctrine of Food Security of the Russian Federation of 2010 and its implementation. Her presentation used data provided by **Vasiliy Uzun** and **Vitaly Nagornov** at the Annual Conference on Food Security in the Eurasian Region, held in Moscow on October 2–4, 2018. The organization of the nutrition system and food security issues in Russia was of interest to many of the conference participants.

According to the results of the symposium, the CAPNUTRA Organizing Committee prepared a document recommending the measures to be taken to improve the state of food security in Central and South Eastern Europe. The document will be submitted to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for optimization and harmonization of further steps.

Event Calendar 2019

Date	City, Country	Event
February 28	—	International Innovation Award for Sustainable Food and Agriculture (Please submit a nomination before 28 February 2019)
March 24–26	Budapest, Hungary	3rd Agriculture and Climate Change Conference
April 8–12	Moscow, Russia	International scientific conference of students and young scientists "Lomonosov-2019"

April 23–24	Geneva, Switzerland	FAO/WHO/WTO International Forum on Food Safety and Trade
March 11–13	CREATE Tower NUS, Singapore	2019 E2S2-CREATE and AIChE Waste Management Conference
May 13–15	Brussels, Belgium	Frontiers in Food Safety And Nutrition
May 20–24	Antwerp, Belgium	AquaConSoil: Sustainable Use and Management of Soil, Sediment and Water Resources: 15th International Conference
May 28	Moscow, Russia	The International Conference on Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition in Eurasia Featuring IFPRI's 2019 Global Food Policy Report (Conference website will be available later)
June 20–21	Istanbul, Turkey	International Conference on Agronomy and Food Science and Technology (AgroFood)
June 26–28	Halle (Saale), Germany	IAMO Forum 2019: Small Farms in Transition: How to Stimulate Inclusive Growth?
September 10–13	Leeuwarden, the Netherlands	Saline Futures Conference
October 29–31	Yerevan, Armenia	The Eurasian Food Security Conference 2019 (Updated website coming soon)
December 5–6	Sochi, Russia	World Soil Day–2019 (Conference website will be available later)