

ASN Advisory Committee on Ensuring Trust in Nutrition Science
CALL NOTES
Tuesday, March 20, 2017

Bert Garza, Chair
Sylvia Rowe
Eric Campbell
Patrick Stover
Martha Field
Cathie Woteki
Ed Cooney
Michael McGinnis
Robert Steinbrook
Catherine Bertini
Judith Alonzo
John Courtney
Sarah Ohlhorst, staff

Chair Bert Garza welcomed the committee. There were no additions or changes to the agenda.

1. Stakeholder Consultation Update

The Stakeholder Consultation opened in January, and closed at the end of February. A call for input was shared broadly with the ASN membership (5000+), and targeted outreach was conducted to more than 20 stakeholder organizations. There were 8 questions in the consultation and only 17 anonymous responses were received. We had of course hoped for a greater response. We are still reviewing the responses, which did not provide novel insights beyond the committee's considerations to date, although new references were forwarded that were not captured by the committee's initial literature search. Responses received show that stakeholders feel the Advisory Committee is on the right track with the domains being considered and the approach taken to date, and offered little new information/references for consideration.

Committee members advised that targeted outreach to 5 or so reputable players asking for their input on the stakeholder consultation be considered to gain more useful feedback. We should ensure that the stakeholders selected are representative, while not duplicating earlier targeted efforts.

ACTION: Sarah Ohlhorst will share the stakeholder consultation responses with Advisory Committee members following this call.

2. ASN Scientific Session and Annual Meeting Update

Updates on the Advisory Committee's progress will be shared with ASN Annual Meeting attendees in a general session, as well as nutrition and food science department heads during their annual breakfast. Bert Garza will provide a procedural update and review the "public trust related" domains the committee is exploring. He plans to ask individuals for questions and comments based on that limited focus. He has 20 minutes on the agenda at

department heads breakfast meeting, and one hour at the general update session. Committee members suggested that targeted questions (such as those from the stakeholder consultation) be provided to gain specific input during for the open discussion portion of the general update. These will be added to the general session presentation.

3. Publicly Available Survey Data

Martha Field and Judith Alonzo independently screened publicly available survey data to ensure there were no gaps with what the literature review has found or discrepancies between their contents and general conclusions reached in material that has been reviewed. Nothing nutrition-specific was available. This review highlighted that, in general, there is more trust in academic scientists than in government, industry, and other scientists. This is in line with the information gleaned from the Advisory Committee and literature review.

Cathie Woteki and Sylvia Rowe recently attended a GUIRR workshop on trust in science and a speaker from the Pew Research Center, Cary Funk, presented on this topic. Her presentation supported what the literature review and review of publicly available survey data have found. Trust in science has remained stable, although when you focus on specific areas of apparent regulatory relevance such as climate change, organic foods, GMOs, etc., there is evidence of mistrust in related science.

4. Committee Review of DRAFT Report Sections

I. *Statement of the Problem*

The opening statement of the report doesn't flow smoothly; more transitional paragraphs seem to be needed. Committee members felt it should focus on the current crisis in trust in nutrition science and why it is timely for ASN to address the topic. This could be framed as why trust is important and necessary, and how trust has led to successes and will be critical to the future of nutrition research. A rewrite of this section will proceed after the April call when we anticipate discussion of the remainder of the draft and initiating a discussion focused on recommended best practices.

II. *Landscape Analysis of Public Mistrust in Science and Nutrition*

There is an evidence base for science-wide trust and confidence, although not much specific evidence for a lack of trust in nutrition science and the food system beyond GMO discussions. In contrast, it is easy to find opinion pieces in newspaper reports and monographs that relate to public trust in food and nutrition, e.g. lack of funding transparency that likely erodes confidence in those efforts.

III. *Players and Actors in Nutrition and the Food System and the Need for Multi-sectoral Engagement in Nutrition Research*

Cathie Woteki will provide additional references that should be included, such as the level of federal support for nutrition research.

The section on public-private partnerships could do a better job of showcasing the importance of PPPs for knowledge sharing and information exchange. Sylvia Rowe will send language on this to include in the report.

The National Academies of Sciences were not listed as a player and should be. Ed Cooney will send additional language on players, including on clarification regarding consumer groups.

It was questioned whether state governments' (in addition to the federal government's) roles as players and actors should be included (e.g., extension).

The section on the need for multi-sectoral engagement focuses too much on funding, which Committee members felt detracts from the report and is outside of the Committee's charge. This report should not be about funding, but about trust. This language will be excluded from the report.

Appendix: Case Studies Examples

The case studies currently involve the broader food system. The BMJ article on the Dietary Guidelines could be used as a communication case study, although some of the other case studies are much broader. Concern also was expressed re bringing greater attention to a commentary/editorial publication that appears to have been substantially discredited.

ACTION: Committee members should send references and language to add to the report to Bert Garza and Sarah Ohlhorst.

Next Steps

The remainder of the draft report will be sent to Committee members in early April, for review prior to the next ASN Advisory Committee call on **Monday, April 10th at 10:00am Eastern.**

The call adjourned at 11:01 AM.