2016 Food and Nutrition Trends

Many trends come and go, some stay a bit longer, and some become norms. Food and nutrition trends are no exception. The field of nutrition is constantly evolving and changing, based on new discoveries of food interactions, physiological functions, and much more. These discoveries along with the influence of media lead to new trends every year, with some lasting longer than others. In the December issue of Today’s Dietitian, staff spoke with many Registered Dietitians to determine what topics will be at top of mind for consumers this year. The trends they discovered for 2016 are:

- **Souping** – Similar to juicing, except that with souping the fiber is not thrown out. Often, soups contain the whole vegetable, providing all the nutrients the whole food has to offer.

- **Sprouted Grains** – Sprouted grains have been around for some time, and they may just be one of those trends that sticks and becomes more of a norm.

- **More Products with Less Sugar** – Regardless of the type of sugar or how natural of a source it is, Americans could benefit from consuming less sugar. Search the media and you will find much to be said about the “war on sugar.”

- **Probiotics** – Probiotics are not a new trend, but they continue to gain attention, both in research and in media. This goes right along with the trending interest in gut health.

- **Full-Fat Dairy** – Consumption of whole-milk dairy products is on the rise. While some experts may agree with this, others do not.

- **Pulses** – Pulses are lentils, dry beans, peas, and chickpeas. They are a vital source of plant-based proteins and provide a variety of health benefits. In fact, the United Nations has claimed 2016 to be the **Year of the Pulses**. Read more about pulses below.

- **Beets** – Not only do beets provide a bounty of vitamins and minerals as well as fiber, but they also boast antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and chemo-preventative properties.

- **Relaxing Cholesterol Restrictions** – It was previously recommended that dietary cholesterol be limited to 300 mg/day. However, the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans does not bring forward this recommendation, since evidence shows no appreciable relationship between consumption of dietary cholesterol and serum cholesterol.

- **Sustainable Diets** – Environmental consciousness seems to be increasing, and there will likely be more emphasis on more sustainable food products and dietary patterns.

- **Managing Food Waste** – Related to the sustainability movement is the growing emphasis on reducing food waste in restaurants, hospitals, and grocery stores as well as in the home, where 60% of food waste occurs.

- **Renewed Push for Protein** – We can expect to see more research and interest in higher intakes of high quality proteins, primarily in middle-aged adults.

For more details about these trends and what they found, visit the site here:

By Jessica Clifford
International Year of Pulses 2016

Thinking globally about sustainable agriculture and solving the world’s hunger issues, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations is promoting the International Year of Pulses 2016 (IYP 2016) in an effort to heighten public awareness of the nutritional benefits of pulses and focus on means of sustainable food production that can enhance food security and nutrition worldwide. Doing so requires collaboration among governments, non-governmental organizations and other relevant stakeholders to establish connections throughout the food chain that would better utilize pulse-based proteins, further global production of pulses, better utilize crop rotations and address challenges in the global trade of pulses. A lofty ambition—but one that can make a significant contribution to making quality protein sources available where malnutrition is so prevalent.

Pulses are “food grains,” defined as crops harvested solely for the dry seed (legumes such as dry beans, chickpeas and lentils) that are grown and utilized specifically as protein food sources. Excluded from those being promoted by the United Nations are vegetable crops-like green beans and green peas and crops mainly grown for oil extraction (like soybeans or peanuts) as well as crops grown for sowing (clovers, alfalfa). India is the world’s largest producer and the largest consumer of pulses, with significant economic contribution globally by Pakistan, Canada, Burma, Australia and the United States, and pulse production is expected to grow. Encouraging connections to further global production of pulses along with addressing challenges in the global trade of pulses are key areas of focus.

Considered “nutrition powerhouses,” pulses are high in vegetable protein, iron, magnesium, and dietary fiber. Pulses are also especially beneficial as nitrogen fixers to help replenish nutrients in the soil. Lentils and peas are fairly low-water use crops so can be a plus to farmers in drier regions. With such positive attributes and potential to make a global impact on ending world hunger, this United Nations initiative will help bring funding and focused research to the forefront on increasing consumption and production of pulse crops worldwide.

From a food safety standpoint, pulses are considered low risk since they are shelf-stable and can be safely stored at room temperature. If stored in a cool, dry environment in unopened packaging, they have a shelf-life of several years without losing quality. Most beans contain a class of protein called lectins, which have the ability to interfere with the cell membrane repair process that occurs as a part of digestion. Phytohaemagglutinin (PHA) is a lectin that binds with sugars and is used by the plant for defense, but in mammals it can bind to intestinal walls causing nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. PHA is present in many species of beans, but the highest concentration occurs in red kidney beans. Red Kidney Bean Poisoning and Kinkoti Bean Poisoning are caused by the consumption of raw or undercooked kidney beans. Symptoms may be severe but recovery is usually rapid (3 – 4 hours after onset of symptoms) however repeated exposure can result in poor growth, malnutrition, or liver damage.

Several foodborne illness outbreaks have been associated with beans prepared in ‘slow cookers’ or in casseroles which had not reached an internal temperature high enough to destroy the lectin. Heating to 175°F may potentiate the toxicity five-fold, so partially cooked beans are more toxic than if eaten raw. Boiling dry beans for 10 minutes before using a slow cooker will destroy PHA.

Sources:
Food Source Info; Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legume
Crops for Health: http://www.cropsforhealth.colostate.edu/
FDA, Bad Bug Book: Phytohaemagglutinin at: http://www.fda.gov/Food/FoodborneIllnessContaminants/CausesOfIllnessBadBugBook/ucm071092.htm

By Mary Schroeder and Marisa Bunning