

CENTER FOR Science IN THE Public Interest

*Promoting safe,
nutritious food
for everyone.*



40
YEARS

1971-2011

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From The Executive Director

In 1970, fresh out of graduate school, I drove from Cambridge to Washington to begin my career in public-interest science. My first project was writing a book about food additives. A year later I came to a surprising conclusion: food additives posed some risks, but they weren't nearly as detrimental as the foods in which they were used. The foods—think hot dogs, white bread, and soft drinks—were contributing massively to problems ranging from tooth decay to heart disease.

While working on that book, I met two other young scientists, and the three of us decided to create the Center for Science in the Public Interest as a means of both applying our skills to solving social problems and to set an example for other scientists.

Nutrition and food safety has always been a major focus of CSPI, and over the years the science gradually evolved, making it ever clearer that CSPI's work was critically important. Beyond tooth decay and heart disease, new evidence demonstrated that the typical American diet also was causing obesity, cancer, strokes, and diabetes. In fact, as many as several hundred thousand people a year were dying unnecessarily, just because of what they were eating—and were encouraged to eat by government agencies, dietitians, and the food industry.

Now, 40 years after we founded CSPI, I'm so proud of our role in creating a nationally recognized organization that has significantly improved the American diet and the public's health. CSPI led efforts to get artificial trans fat—gram for gram the most harmful type of fat—out of foods. We lit the fire that got government and the food industry working to lower salt levels in food. We led efforts to get healthier foods into—and junk foods out of—schools and to stop junk food marketing

aimed at kids. And, back to my initial work on additives, we have waged battles against harmful food additives. We took on deadly sulfites, food dyes that harm children's behavior, stomach-churning olestra, and more. And we're the consumer watchdog that has stopped countless deceptive ads and labels for products made by some of the nation's biggest food marketers.

CSPI brings to the food movement independent and science-based analysis, pursued by a top-notch team of scientists and lawyers and supported by tens of thousands of individual donors and by foundation grants. Grateful for that support, I make sure that CSPI squeezes every penny's worth out of our donors' contributions. Helping with that has been a wise and financially cautious board of directors that takes the long view when reviewing CSPI's program and budgets.

I am encouraged by the recent and very real progress toward a healthier food system. I am hopeful that the nascent food movement our Food Day project is helping nurture will grow ever more formidable and successful. And I look forward to working with you in our second 40 years.

Mike Jacobson

Transforming the American Diet

Forty Years of Science ... in the Public Interest



CSPI is leading a revolution that is both reforming the American food industry—an industry that has a profound impact on our environment, our economy, and our health—and transforming the way Americans eat.

CSPI’s founders aspired to create an organization that would attract young scientists and encourage them to bring their skills to bear on matters of vital public importance. While other nonprofit organizations founded around 1970 focused on such matters as environmental conservation, civil rights, and auto safety, much of CSPI’s focus was on the safety and healthfulness of the nation’s food supply. From its humble beginnings in a borrowed office, CSPI has grown into an influential science-based consumer advocacy organization with four decades of accomplishments and a clear and ambitious agenda for making fundamental improvements in the American diet.

CSPI has consistently focused on food problems—and with good reason. Unhealthy eating, together with physical inactivity, kills several hundred thousand Americans prematurely each year. Obesity alone—not counting diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and other diet-related afflictions—accounts for nine percent of all medical spending. Furthermore, unsafe food—contaminated with such dan-

gerous bacteria as *Salmonella* or *E. coli*, and unsafe food additives—kills several thousand Americans each year and sickens tens of millions more.

In our next 40 years, CSPI is committed to building on its many accomplishments, preserving its rigorous science-based advocacy, and taking on 21st-century nutrition and food-safety challenges.

“As our nation’s health care costs continue to rise, due in significant part to the growth of preventable, diet-related problems in our population, Dr. Jacobson’s seminal work will continue to play a critical role in our nation’s public health for many years to come.”

—Michael Bloomberg, Mayor of New York City, March 12, 2010

Trusted and Tenacious

CSPI takes every word in its name seriously — most importantly, ‘science.’

—Slate magazine, March 2010

Sound science informs everything that CSPI does. Led by Michael F. Jacobson, who holds a Ph.D. in microbiology from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, CSPI’s senior scientists and lawyers are regularly called to testify before Congress or other policymaking bodies. Scientific journals such as the *New England Journal of Medicine*, *Environmental Health Perspectives*, and the *American Journal of Public Health* publish articles by CSPI’s experts. Journalists depend on CSPI’s trusted, independent analysts to explain, on-air and on-line, the latest findings in nutrition and food safety. Marian Burros of *The New York Times* has written that CSPI is “one of the most powerful food voices in the country ... its influence is vast.”

CSPI’s credibility benefits from the organization’s strong track record of reliability and results and an insistence that its positions be based on facts and science, not “beliefs” or political philosophy, even if its positions differ from those of other non-profit groups. That is why so many government officials, journalists, and corporate executives trust CSPI.

CSPI’s credibility also springs, in part, from its independence. Unlike many nonprofit organizations, CSPI neither seeks nor accepts money from corporations or government agencies. All of CSPI’s funding comes from the 800,000-plus subscribers to its award-winning *Nutrition Action Healthletter*—which has never accepted advertising—and from foundations and individual donors who want to promote food policies that support the environment and public health. That time-tested independence enables CSPI to act as an effective counterweight to the powerful influence of industry and industry-supported organizations and individuals.

IMPROVING THE FOOD LANDSCAPE — IMPROVING HEALTH

1975-1977

CSPI sponsors national Food Days to raise awareness of food safety and nutrition issues.

1987

FDA bans the use of sulfite preservatives (a deadly toxin) in most fresh foods.

1990

Historic Nutrition Labeling and Education Act paves the way for “Nutrition Facts” labels on nearly all processed foods. (CSPI later wins passage of a similar law in Canada.)

1974

CSPI publishes the “Nutrition Scoreboard” poster and distributes more than two million copies over the next 20 years. CSPI *Nutrition Action Healthletter* makes its debut.

1982

FDA rule requires sodium to be included on the labels of many foods.

1988

Federal legislation requires a health warning label on all alcoholic beverage containers.

1994

CSPI’s pioneering study shows that movie-theater popcorn offers up to three days’ worth of saturated fat and half a days’ worth of calories and sodium.

CSPI takes on marathon campaigns as opposed to sprints. Obtaining the Nutrition Facts label on packaged foods and mandatory testing of meat and poultry for pathogens took years of research, grassroots organizing, and advocacy. For three decades, CSPI assisted advocates in dozens of school systems and state legislatures across the country to replace junk food in schools with

wholesome, nutritious foods before winning national legislation in 2010. And CSPI’s ongoing work to reduce sodium and eliminate artificial trans fat in packaged foods, and to reduce junk-food marketing aimed at children, has, because of relentless industry opposition to government action, extended over decades.



Accolades for Advocacy

In 2010, the CDC Foundation—which supports the work of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—awarded CSPI’s executive director Michael F. Jacobson its Hero Award in recognition of his significant contributions to improving the public’s health.

CDC DIRECTOR DR. THOMAS FRIEDEN (L)
AND DR. MICHAEL F. JACOBSON (R)

1997

CSPI’s *Nutrition Action Healthletter* becomes the largest-circulation health newsletter in the world with 1,000,000 paid subscribers.

2002

CDC’s budget increased from \$2 million to \$27 million (and later to over \$40 million) for promotion of better nutrition and more physical activity.

2006

FDA adds a line for trans fat on Nutrition Facts labels.

2006

CSPI’s legal threats end misleading ads and labels by Tropicana, Quaker, and Frito-Lay.

1995

CSPI’s 1% or Less social marketing initiative proves to be a landmark dietary-change campaign. The campaign to encourage a switch to lower-fat milk is translated into Spanish and replicated in communities nationwide.

1998

Congress adds \$75 million in new funding for food-safety inspections.

2004

The Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act requires food labels to list allergens like peanuts, wheat, milk, soy, and egg.

2006

CSPI’s threat to sue soft-drink companies helps spur them to remove sugary drinks from schools.

Accomplishment and Vision

When CSPI was founded, it was a lonely voice urging safer, healthier food. But concern about food policy now stretches from Main Street to the White House.



Food policy has profound and far-reaching influence for better or for worse on hunger, the environment, farmer and farm-worker wellbeing, local and national economies, and on the health of each and every individual. Millions of Americans, including key policymakers, have come to support CSPI's recommendations for more sensible, comprehensive policy solutions.

Most Americans today take for granted sweeping measures for which CSPI fought long and hard: the Nutrition Facts label, health warning notices on alcoholic beverages, and disclosures of the most common and harmful allergens — like shellfish, peanuts, and wheat — on packaged foods.

CSPI led the efforts of a small number of organizations to win passage of the 1990 law that defines “organic” food. Today, an organic garden flourishes just outside the Oval Office, organic foods are available in more and more grocery stores, and the number of farmers markets is growing at a rate of 16 percent a year.

In the 1970s, CSPI led the very first national “Food Day” campaigns to call for a healthier food supply and a frontal attack on hunger. Today, hundreds of organizations around the country are collaborating to bring back Food Day, set for October 24, 2011, to promote healthy affordable food that is produced in a sustainable, fair, and humane way.

CSPI's early action to improve school foods is yet another example of its vision. Generations of school children have endured school lunches that deteriorated nutritionally with each passing year.

2007

CSPI's threatened lawsuit prompts Kellogg (and later a dozen other major companies) to adopt nutrition standards for marketing foods to children.

2008

California bans trans fats in restaurants, following bans in Boston, New York City, and other cities.

2010

President signs the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act — a federal plan to get junk food out of schools.

2007

Following a CSPI lawsuit, KFC agrees to remove artery-clogging trans fat from its foods.

2008

Lawsuit against Airborne supplements, which claimed to prevent colds, settles for \$23 million.

2009

FDA issues new regulations to keep *Salmonella* out of eggs.

In 2010, President Obama signed the strongest child-nutrition legislation in American history—a bill for which CSPI organized a nationwide grassroots and grasstops coalition of support. That sweeping legislation, among other things, could double the amount of fruits and vegetables served and at long last get junk foods out of schools.

Prominent organizations have recognized CSPI’s catalytic role in improving the American diet and health. As Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Dr. David Kessler credited CSPI’s work as “one of the greatest public health advances of the century” and awarded CSPI the agency’s highest honor, the Special Citation/Harvey W. Wiley Medal. That honor was in recognition of CSPI’s persistent, effective efforts to promote the importance of the link between diet and health. (In 2010 Kessler joined CSPI’s board of directors.) Even the food industry has publicly acknowledged CSPI’s important role. The supermarket trade associa-

tion’s Food Marketing Institute, conferred its 1992 Esther Peterson Consumer Service Award on executive director Michael Jacobson and CSPI.

Influential as an advocate, CSPI also is prominent as an educator. In the pages of *Nutrition Action Healthletter*, in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, in Michael Jacobson’s Huffington Post column, and in countless media appearances by other staff members, CSPI provides timely information to help people in every corner of the country choose healthier diets.

With its decades of scientific and policy expertise, its encouragement to eat healthy and delicious fare, and its willingness to take aim at packaged salty, fatty, sugary, artificially colored, unhealthy food, *CSPI is at the center of a robust, nationwide movement that is changing the way America eats—for the better.*

2010

The health care reform bill includes a major CSPI-inspired provision that requires chain restaurants to list calorie counts on menus and menu boards.

2010

USDA requires ground meat and poultry to have Nutrition Facts labels.

2011

Communities nationwide celebrate Food Day on October 24th.

2010

Under pressure from CSPI and others, PepsiCo to phase out full-sugar sodas from all schools worldwide.

2011

President signs the landmark FDA Food Safety Modernization Act, giving the FDA the authority to recall contaminated foods, increase its farm and factory inspections, and crack down on domestic and foreign malefactors.

2011

FDA holds a public hearing on artificial food dyes’ impact on children’s behavior.

A Healthier Food Supply

When CSPI first arrived on the national scene, the federal government, most health professionals, and others discounted the importance of diet as an influence on health. People could eat just about anything “in moderation” and live a healthy life. But CSPI has long urged the federal government to recommend diets centered around fruits, vegetables, and whole grains—and lower in saturated fat, cholesterol, sugar, salt, and refined white flour. With science as a foundation, CSPI has long battled with the food industry as it urged the federal government to align its policies with the scientific evidence on diet and health.

A Farewell To Artificial Trans Fat



“No other organization has had anywhere close to the impact that CSPI has had on the U.S. food supply.”

—William Dietz

*Director, Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

At the award ceremony naming Dr. Jacobson the 2010
CDC Foundation Hero

Thanks in large part to CSPI, artificial trans fat is disappearing from both packaged and restaurant food. Not long ago, trans fat was everywhere. While small amounts of it occur naturally in milk and meat, most trans fat is artificially produced during the manufacturing of partially hydrogenated vegetable oils. Trans fat, one of the most harmful substances in food, is a potent promoter of heart disease. It raises one’s LDL—the “bad” cholesterol that promotes heart disease. Trans fat also lowers HDL, the “good” cholesterol that reduces heart disease risk.

CSPI led a ten-year fight to urge the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to list trans fat on food packaging, culminating in the addition of trans fat to Nutrition Facts labels in 2003. Labeling spurred many food manufacturers—Kellogg, General Mills, Kraft, ConAgra, and others—to reformulate thousands of foods in order to eliminate or reduce artificial trans fat so as to list “0 grams” on labels.

Fortunately, companies have generally replaced the partially hydrogenated oils with more-healthy vegetable oils.

CSPI’s campaign also has had a dramatic impact on major chain restaurants. McDonald’s, Burger King, Wendy’s, and KFC, which used to fry foods in partially hydrogenated oils, have switched to healthier oils. CSPI’s campaign used publicity, litigation, and grassroots advocacy. CSPI’s campaign helped advocates in New York City, the state of California, Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland, and a dozen other jurisdictions win laws that eliminated trans fat from restaurants. Nonetheless, in 2011 some popular packaged and restaurant foods still contain trans fat.

Since 2004, CSPI has pushed the federal government to revoke its acceptance of partially hydrogenated oil as a “safe” food ingredient and get rid of it once and for all.



Better-for-you Fried Food?

In 2006, a large order of McDonald’s fries had 8 grams of trans fat and 4 grams of saturated fat. Today, a large order of fries has 0 grams of trans fat and 3.5 grams of saturated fat. In 2006, a large order of popcorn chicken at KFC had 7 grams of trans fat. Just weeks after CSPI filed a class action lawsuit against the chain, the company announced it would stop using partially hydrogenated oil. Now, the same item contains 0 grams of trans fat.

Salt — Too Much of a Good Thing

Salt is essential to life. But consuming too much increases blood pressure and the risk of heart attacks, strokes, congestive heart failure, and kidney disease. Elderly people and African Americans are at an especially high risk. Salt is so widely and abundantly used by makers of processed and restaurant foods that the average American is unwittingly consuming about 4,000 milligrams per day—more than twice the limit of 1,500 mg recommended for most adults. In fact, some restaurant meals load several days' worth of sodium on one plate!

Scientists estimate that cutting sodium levels in processed foods in half would save about 100,000 to 150,000 lives and tens of billions of dollars in health-care costs each year. That's why CSPI considers salt the most harmful substance in the food supply.

CSPI's seminal 2005 report, *Salt: The Forgotten Killer*, was a call to arms. Since then, CSPI has worked with New York City, which led numerous health agencies to call on industry to cut the salt. Then, a 2010 landmark report by the Institute of Medicine concluded that voluntary

industry efforts to reduce salt over the past 40 years had utterly failed, and that the FDA should set mandatory limits on sodium in packaged foods—exactly what CSPI had been calling for since 1978. As a result of that report (which CSPI worked to get funded), more companies have begun to lower sodium levels while the FDA explores its options.

CSPI urged retail giant Walmart to set sodium limits on the foods it offers. In 2011, Walmart announced a plan to do just that. That action, publicly lauded by First Lady Michelle Obama, will enhance the public health community's efforts to lower sodium consumption. (Walmart also said it would stop buying products made with trans fat and institute a consumer-friendly nutrition-labeling program, two other CSPI objectives.)

And CSPI is leading the charge to get restaurant chains to voluntarily reduce salt levels. CSPI's 2009 report "Heart Attack Entrees and Side Orders of Stroke" exposed the saltiest restaurant meals in America and brought national attention to the fact that diners have no idea how much sodium is in their meals.

Thought for Food

A repeat guest on "The Colbert Report," Michael Jacobson has taken on the president of the Salt Institute and lampooned the abundance of saturated fat in Ben and Jerry's AmeriCone Dream ice cream, inspired by host Stephen Colbert.



Healthy School Food Fosters Healthy Children

When President Obama signed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 into law, he laid the groundwork for putting America's youth on a path for a lower risk of overweight, obesity, diabetes, and other costly diet-related diseases. That legislation capped a campaign that CSPI launched three decades ago to get junk foods out of schools and to expand children's access to nutrient-rich fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

Largely fueled by small donors, CSPI built an effective campaign involving countless local and national organizations. CSPI conducted the research necessary to convince schools that they could raise the same—if not more—funds by stocking their vending machines with healthier options. CSPI lent technical assistance to school food advo-

cates and policymakers nationwide and created a wealth of resources for parents, teachers, and school administrators, including model wellness policies, ideas for healthy school fundraisers and healthy snacks.

CSPI harnessed state and local school food reform successes to win national-level measures that reach far more children and families. From its grassroots assistance and strategic advice, CSPI built a movement that now includes more than 300 local and national children's health advocates, major health groups, medical associations, policymakers, and inspired business leaders. That network—plus the scientific rigor, advocacy expertise, and grassroots muscle provided by CSPI—is prepared to accomplish much more.



A Healthy Start

Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) and CSPI Nutrition Policy Director Dr. Margo Wootan celebrate at the signing ceremony for the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act that could, among other things, double the amount of fruits and vegetables served and get junk foods out of schools.

“Your tireless commitment to the health and well-being of our children, and your involvement in the Let’s Move! campaign has been vital to our success....Thank you for all that you do.”

—Letter from First Lady Michelle Obama to CSPI Nutrition Policy Director Dr. Margo Wootan, December 18, 2010

Protecting Children from Unfair Marketing

Children are bombarded by junk food marketing almost everywhere they go—on television, on the Internet, on food packaging, via fast-food companies featuring toys with meals, and even in school. Food marketers take advantage of young children’s developmental immaturity by tempting them with foods that harm their health.

CSPI is supporting parents by working to reduce the incredible volume of junk-food marketing to children. Efforts in the 1970s hit a brick wall of opposition, but now, with skyrocketing rates of childhood obesity, government and the food industry are taking notice. CSPI’s campaign—including our threatened lawsuit against Kellogg—prompted food companies that are the largest advertisers to create a voluntary self-regulatory program, the Children’s Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative.

CSPI continues to encourage more companies to join that initiative and to hold them accountable when they do adopt nutrition standards.

In its leadership role, CSPI is coordinating a national effort to encourage state, local, and national policymakers to adopt sensible measures to protect children. CSPI successfully urged the formation of a federal Interagency Working Group on food marketing aimed at children, comprised of officials from the FDA, US Department of Agriculture (USDA), the CDC, and the Federal Trade Commission. That body proposed strong nutrition standards for the kinds of foods that are marketed to children. CSPI is co-leading a nationwide Food Marketing Workgroup of advocates and academic experts to have those standards adopted by industry or made mandatory.

Setting Standards

Led by litigator Stephen Gardner (l) and Michael Jacobson (r), CSPI reached a historic settlement agreement with Kellogg that put in place precedent-setting nutrition standards for the foods that the company markets to young audiences.



Liquid Candy: Soda is Making America Sick

No other food or beverage has as much culpability in the obesity epidemic as soda and other sugary drinks. They are the single-biggest source of calories in the American diet—and those calories both displace healthy foods and promote obesity, diabetes, tooth decay, and other health problems. Diet sodas, fortunately, don't have calories, but they do have tooth-eroding acids and questionable artificial sweeteners. And the caramel coloring in colas brings with it cancer-causing contaminants.

CSPI's influential 1998 Liquid Candy report alerted health experts and the public to the impact sugary drinks were having on health. Since then, CSPI has made reducing soda consumption a major public health priority.

CSPI has helped expel soft drinks from schools, both by working with local advocates and by threatening to sue Coke and Pepsi. But school sales have never represented more than a tiny portion of what's consumed. So CSPI is urging that hospitals, government, and other public buildings replace soda in cafeterias and vending machines with healthier drinks and water fountains. Hard-hitting government-funded advertising campaigns could drive home the point that drinking sugary drinks—including "fruit" drinks—packs on the pounds.

CSPI has long advocated that government tax sugary drinks both to reduce consumption and raise billions of dollars that could be used to counter junk-food advertising and encourage healthier lifestyles.



Sickeningly Sweet

Cheap and ubiquitous empty calories undermine diets and guarantee costly healthcare bills years later for diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular disease. The beverage industry purchases "innocence by association" when it gives big grants to children's hospitals and professional health associations—silencing would-be critics.

Ensuring Safe Food

Foodborne pathogens and inadequately tested food additives are all too common in our food supply. They can cause deadly infections, allergic reactions, and even cancer. Bringing sound science to the debate, CSPI works with policymakers to reduce risks and ensure the safety of our food—whether it comes from a farm or a factory.



Reforming the FDA and Preventing Outbreaks

Americans—and industry—have been buffeted by recall after recall of foods such as spinach, tomatoes, cookie dough, and more. The headlines served up horror stories of peanut factories with bird droppings dripping from the ceiling and intolerable conditions at egg farms. The nation learned that some food processing facilities went years—even a decade—without an inspector from the FDA visiting the premises.

That's why CSPI teamed up with other consumer groups and reputable food companies to make sure the FDA had the inspectors—and the authority—to keep our food safe. And in the closing days of the 111th Congress, the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act was passed. President Obama signed it into law in January 2011—and presented a pen used to sign the historic bill to CSPI.

Most Americans would be stunned to learn that until that bill's enactment, the FDA lacked the authority to issue mandatory recalls and, instead, relied on companies voluntarily to recall tainted foods. The agency lacked the resources to ensure the safety of the increasing volume of imported foods. And it lacked the technology to trace poten-

tially contaminated foods up and down the food chain. As a result, the FDA was reduced to reacting to outbreaks on a crisis-by-crisis basis. But CSPI led the charge to reform the FDA—to give it a mandate to prevent food from being contaminated in the first place and to prioritize inspections of other high-risk facilities like those that caused recent foodborne illness outbreaks.

Passing the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act was a major victory for CSPI and for consumers. Now CSPI is closely monitoring FDA's implementation of the new law, and joining with other consumer groups and companies to press Congress to provide adequate funding. Other improvements are needed to strengthen the food-safety responsibilities at the USDA, which oversees poultry and meat products.

CSPI provides sound science to policymakers, regulators, and the press. Its *Outbreak Alert!* database shows which foods and which pathogens are making Americans sick. And CSPI is working to improve the quality of outbreak reporting at the local and state levels, so that public health officials and policymakers have better information.



Taking Oath

CSPI Food Safety Director **Caroline Smith DeWaal** testified in Congress more than a dozen times before Senate and House Committees regarding aspects of the Food Safety Modernization Act.

Victory on Egg Safety

Since 1998, CSPI had been urging FDA to improve the safety of eggs and to clean up egg farms. The FDA had never been able to conduct food-safety inspections on egg farms—even those that had decades-long histories of major health, immigration, and workplace-safety violations. In 2009, the FDA at long last finalized a rule requiring large egg producers to adopt measures designed to prevent *Salmonella* Enteritidis and allow the FDA to conduct inspections.

Modern Regulation for Modern Technology

CSPI believes that humankind should harness scientific advances of all types, including in agriculture. Hybridization, the use of X-rays and chemicals to generate new strains of seeds, and the development of optimal organic-farming meth-

ods have long led to higher crop yields, higher farm income, and other benefits.

More recently, corn and soybean seeds developed through biotechnology have been widely adopted by farmers, leading to cost-savings, improved yields, and reduced the use of safer pesticides. In India and China, biotech cotton has reduced farmer poisonings from pesticides and increased yields and profits for small farmers. But with antiquated laws still in place for approving biotech seeds, consumer confidence and the viability of agricultural biotechnology are uncertain. So CSPI is advocating for legislation that would provide a regulatory framework to increase assurance that genetically engineered plants (and animals) are safe for people and the environment. CSPI’s scientists and lawyers play a unique role, plotting out a sensible, evidence-based course designed to reap the benefits of the technology, while minimizing risks.

Deadly Delicacy

CSPI is leading a campaign aimed at eradicating deadly *Vibrio vulnificus* bacteria from shellfish—despite pushback from the industry and its allies in Congress. One solution would be to require that oysters harvested during warm months be pasteurized before they are sold to consumers.



Blowing the Whistle on Mercury

Fish and seafood are highly nutritious, rich in protein and omega-3 fatty acids, and low in saturated fat. But pregnant women need better advice to avoid some fish high in methylmercury, a neurotoxin that can traverse the placenta. The FDA should encourage stores to post point-of-purchase reminders of which fish have high mercury levels. And the agency should keep the highest-mercury fish off the market by enforcing its mercury limit of 1 part per million.



Unsafe Food Additives: Not Worth the Risk

Since its founding, CSPI has monitored the safety of commonly used food additives and protected the public from harmful ones. Thanks to CSPI, the use of several additives has been curtailed or banned.

Taking Action Against Artificial Food Colorings

Thousands of foods—particularly brightly colored breakfast cereals, fruit drinks, and candy designed to attract young children—are colored with synthetic dyes, such as Red 40, Yellow 5, and Blue 2. Those additives are often used to mask the absence of healthy food ingredients, particularly fruits. Americans’ consumption of them has increased five-fold in the past 50 years. But numerous controlled studies have shown that those chemicals can have a profoundly disruptive impact on children’s behavior—triggering, in some kids, hyperactivity and tantrums. In addition, several widely used dyes pose a small cancer risk and can cause allergic reactions.

CSPI first blew the whistle on food dyes in a 1999 report, *Diet, ADHD, and Behavior*. Then, in 2008, CSPI petitioned the FDA to ban all dyes because they impair children’s behavior. Government agencies and industry are taking notice of the dye problem. The British government has largely pushed synthetic dyes out of the food supply, and the European Union requires a warning notice on most dyed foods.

With CSPI’s encouragement, some forward-looking companies like Frito-Lay and Starbucks are dropping dyes from their recipes in the United States. In 2011, in response to CSPI’s petition the FDA held a public hearing on food dyes. Getting the FDA to ban those chemicals voluntarily—or getting industry to stop using them—would be an important health advance for kids, parents, and teachers.



NOT WHAT NUTRITIONISTS MEAN WHEN THEY SAY

“Eat a colorful diet”

Many studies have shown that mixtures of dyes cause hyperactivity in some children. Three dyes (Red 40, Yellow 5, and Yellow 6) contaminated with known carcinogens are also the three most widely used.

CSPI: READING THE FINE PRINT

Violet 1 dye

a carcinogen once used to stamp USDA’s “inspected” mark on meat

Sulfites

a preservative that probably killed thousands of people

Sodium nitrite and nitrate

meat preservatives that lead to the formation of carcinogens

Olestra

a fake fat that can cause severe gastrointestinal symptoms

Quorn mycoprotein

a fake meat that causes near-fatal allergic reactions

Informed Eating

One of CSPI's top goals is to ensure that consumers have credible information about what they eat and drink. In 2010, CSPI won the greatest victory for nutrition labeling since the Nutrition Facts label. Calorie labeling on menus at chain restaurants, included in the health care reform bill and signed by President Obama into law, gives diners one critical piece of nutrition information they need to guide their choices.

CSPI's campaign for healthier meals in chain restaurants began by helping policymakers in Philadelphia, New York City, California, and numerous other jurisdictions. CSPI helped advocates pass laws to empower consumers by listing calories on menus and menu boards. CSPI worked with its allies in Congress to include menu labeling among

other disease-prevention measures in the 2010 health care reform law. It requires that all restaurants with more than 20 outlets list calorie counts on menus and menu boards, making it easier for diners to choose better meals when eating out and encourage restaurants to offer more lower-calorie options.

Dirty Dining

Restaurants are responsible for nearly half of illness outbreaks linked to food. But consumers are given little choice—and little information—about the cleanliness of restaurants. CSPI is leading a movement to bring easy-to-see letter grades for restaurants, based on their most recent food-safety-inspection report. New York City adopted such grades. In Los Angeles posting of the grades has proven effective in reducing foodborne illness hospitalizations.



Calorie Counting

CSPI brought Americans calorie labeling which provides a modicum of information about the nutritional quality of their choices.



“All Americans have benefited enormously from CSPI’s work to eliminate trans fat, reduce sugar-sweetened beverages, prevent the widespread use of olestra, and improve our diets in many other ways. Its team has effectively connected the best of nutritional science with public policy in ways that no other organization has done. CSPI can take great pride in what it has achieved over the last 40 years, but I know that they will not celebrate sitting down until their mission is truly accomplished.”

—Walter Willett MD, DrPH, Chair, Department of Nutrition, Harvard School of Public Health

Honest Labels on Packaged Foods

Food marketers love exploiting consumers’ desire for healthy foods. But sometimes instead of innovating to create healthy new foods, companies have innovated by dressing up the same old packaged foods with an array of health claims, buzz words, and half-truths. And sometimes outright lies. Minute Maid has marketed an orange juice as if it would help cure arthritis. Thomas has bragged that one English muffin product was “made with whole grains,” but it actually was mostly white flour. And scores of products, including cereals, juices, and frozen vegetables, have claimed to boost “immunity” to unspecified diseases.

CSPI is taking on misleading labeling by publicizing the worst offenders and pushing for long-overdue enforcement of federal truth-in-labeling laws. CSPI is working to make calories more prominent

on package fronts and to have the FDA develop easy-to-use front-of-package labeling to convey, at a glance, a food’s overall nutritional value. Ingredients lists should be in the same kind of high-contrast, readable print that is used on Nutrition Facts labels. And if food manufacturers want to boast about their “whole-grain goodness,” they should disclose the percentages of whole grains and white refined flour.

Winning the fight to put Nutrition Facts on food labels is one of CSPI’s most enduring and important victories. And making sure food companies are honest requires constant vigilance on the part of watchdog groups like CSPI. Thanks to CSPI’s publicity, complaints to government agencies, and litigation, companies such as Quaker, Frito-Lay, Sara Lee, and Kraft have stopped making certain misleading claims.



Sugar + Water + Hype

Few labels have been more deceptive and unsubstantiated than those of Coca-Cola’s vitaminwater line of drinks. Coke claimed that the sugary beverages are good for eyes, joints, focus, immune systems, and so on. Varieties like “endurance peach mango,” “focus kiwi strawberry,” and “XXX acai blueberry pomegranate” had no peach, mango, kiwi, strawberry, blueberry, or pomegranate juice. CSPI sued the company over that deception, and a federal judge found that the name “vitaminwater” is deceptive in itself, as it obscures the amount of sugar in the drinks. That example is typical of how CSPI’s litigation arm protects consumers (and honest companies) on matters big and little.

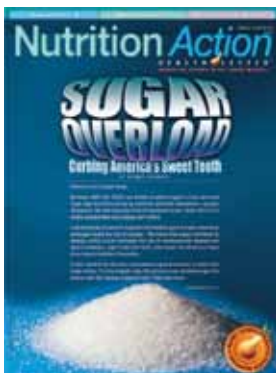
Empowering Consumers to Make Healthy Choices

CSPI's reach is much broader than its impact on policymakers and industry executives. We reach millions of Americans daily through the press and ten times a year through our advertisement-free newsletter, fulfilling our mission to provide useful, objective information to the public.

Nutrition Action Healthletter

Millions of Americans have benefited from the information and advice that CSPI publishes in its award-winning *Nutrition Action Healthletter*. The largest-circulation health newsletter in the world, *Nutrition Action* has more than 800,000 subscribers in the U.S. and Canada. Talk show host Oprah Winfrey has called *Nutrition Action* "the mastermind critic that sounded the food alarms."

Remember the famous exposés of the nutritional quality of movie theater popcorn, or the calorie and fat content of Kung Pao Chicken or steakhouses' deep-fried onion appetizers? Millions learned about those findings on the news... but *Nutrition Action* readers had the full scoop delivered to their doors. With objective reviews of brand-name products, healthy recipes that are delicious and easy to prepare, and CSPI's scientists' analyses of the latest nutrition research, *Nutrition Action* makes an important contribution to the nation's health. It also makes a great gift.



In Canada ... and Around the World

CSPI publishes a separate Canadian edition of *Nutrition Action Healthletter*, which is produced with the help of several researchers across Canada. CSPI also maintains a legislative office in Ottawa, representing some 100,000 Canadian CSPI members' interests before parliament and Health Canada.

As in the United States, CSPI has been an important force in modernizing government policies and industry practices to improve the nutritional quality of the Canadian food supply and the public's health. CSPI's Canadian staff has won nutrition labeling, and are fighting for calorie labeling at restaurants, reductions in sodium, and the elimination of artificial trans fat and artificial dyes. Furthermore, CSPI represents Canadian and American consumers at important global conferences on nutrition, food safety, trade, and biotechnology.

Xtreme Eating Awards. Deep-fried balls of macaroni and cheese. Burgers stuffed inside quesadillas. Hubcap-sized pizzas meant for one. CSPI's Xtreme Eating awards shocked the nation in 2007, and have since become an annual event. 2010's "dishonorees" included the Pasta Carbonara with Chicken from the Cheesecake Factory—2,500 calories' worth of white flour, bacon, chicken, artery-clogging cheese, butter, and salt. CSPI will continue dishonoring Xtreme meals like that one. (But thanks to menu labeling, the calorie counts won't just be an annual surprise.) Pass the Pepto-Bismol, please.



Food Day: 2011 and Beyond



To mark its 40th anniversary, CSPI didn't throw itself a fancy party. Instead it re-launched a project it first organized in the 1970s: national Food Day. Using Earth Day as a model, CSPI and its allies are organizing and publicizing thousands of celebrations, debates on college campuses, and legislative hearings on October 24, 2011—all centered around healthy, affordable food produced in a humane, fair, and environmentally sustainable way.

The girth of Americans and toxins in our waterways point to the enormous need to improve what farmers and manufacturers produce and how they produce it, what supermarkets sell and restaurants serve, and what consumers grow, buy, and eat. It is time for a quantum leap in the public's understanding of the effects of the food system on health, the environment, hunger, and animal welfare. With a stellar Advisory Board chaired by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT), Food Day is designed to educate the general public, involve countless people in local activities, and catalyze more effective advocacy for a better food system.

Kudos for CSPI and *Nutrition Action Healthletter*

"I cannot even tell you how much I thoroughly enjoy reading your newsletter. I've been a 're-formed' health nut for the past 10 years and my mom got me a subscription last year for my birthday. You are the ONLY newsletter that I truly feel is unbiased and honest about findings, food, nutrition, and wellness. Thank you for your relentless and amazing work!"

—Mike Huling
Pilates Instructor
Washington, DC

"Nutrition Action is published by the Center for Science in the Public Interest, which has probably done more to improve food in America than any other organization."

—Washington Post
Marguerite Kelly, Family Almanac Columnist
February 28, 2011

"I just renewed my subscription to Nutrition Action and congratulate you on 40 years. We have subscribed for something over 20 years. We started after my husband had heart surgery in 1986-7 and have received it ever since. We have it as our bathroom reader and always find something worth reading and finding out about nutrition. Thanks."

—Yvonne Derosier
Spearfish, SD

"The Washington, DC-based consumer group often tells us what no one else does, and what we sometimes might not want to know—but should know... [their] take on food is one we might not always want to hear, but usually, eventually, appreciate."

—Cleveland Plain Dealer
Evelyn Theiss, Medical Writer
February 22, 2011

About CSPI's Expenses & Income

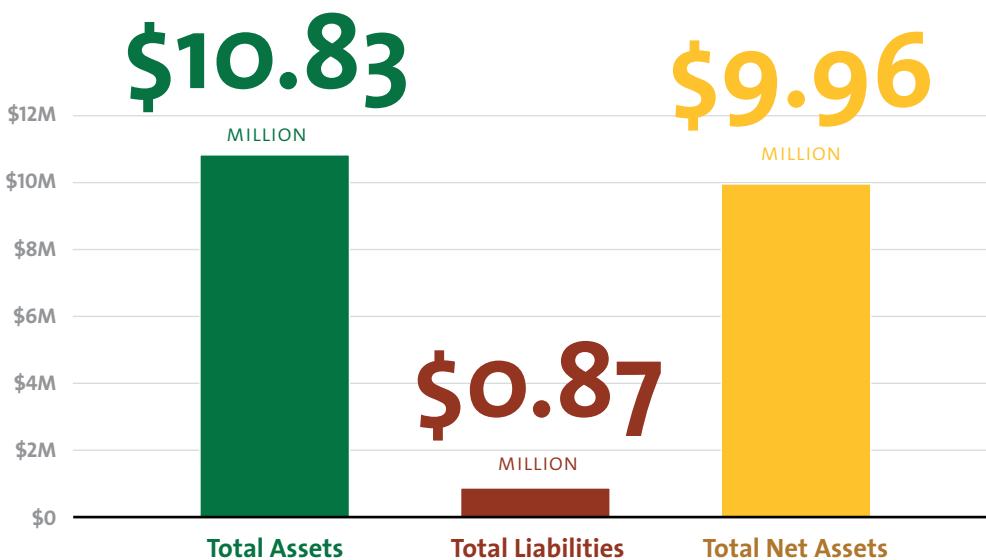
CSPI's 40 years have been financially strong and stable, thanks primarily to *Nutrition Action Healthletter* subscribers and the generosity of individual donors. More than 90 percent of CSPI's revenues come from subscriptions and individual donations. CSPI does not accept funding from government or corporations, and *Nutrition Action* accepts no advertising. Underpinning CSPI's success has been the recognition that careful financial management and a sound and stable infrastructure are essential for the long-term success of CSPI's advocacy and education programs.

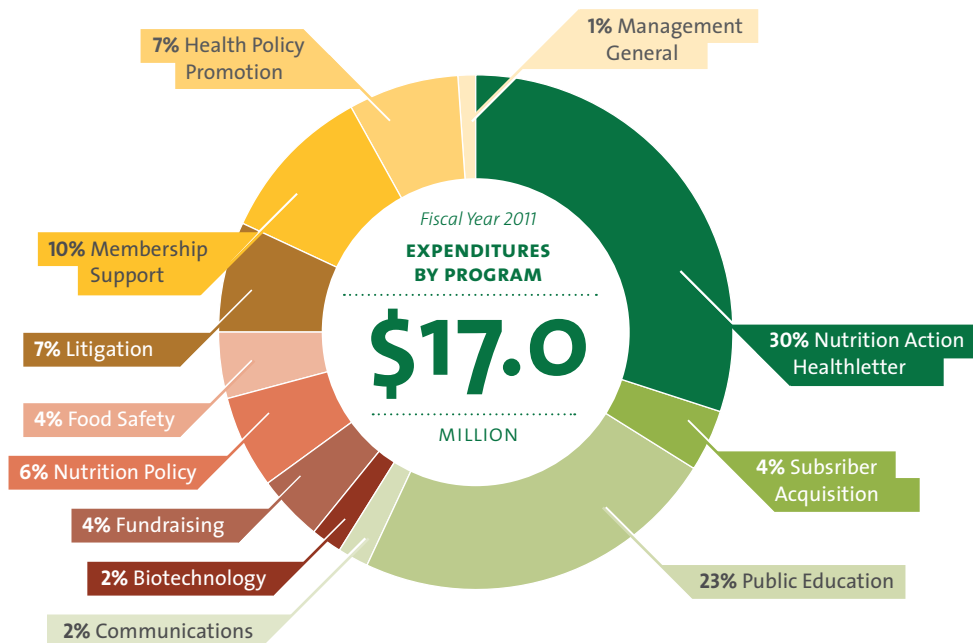
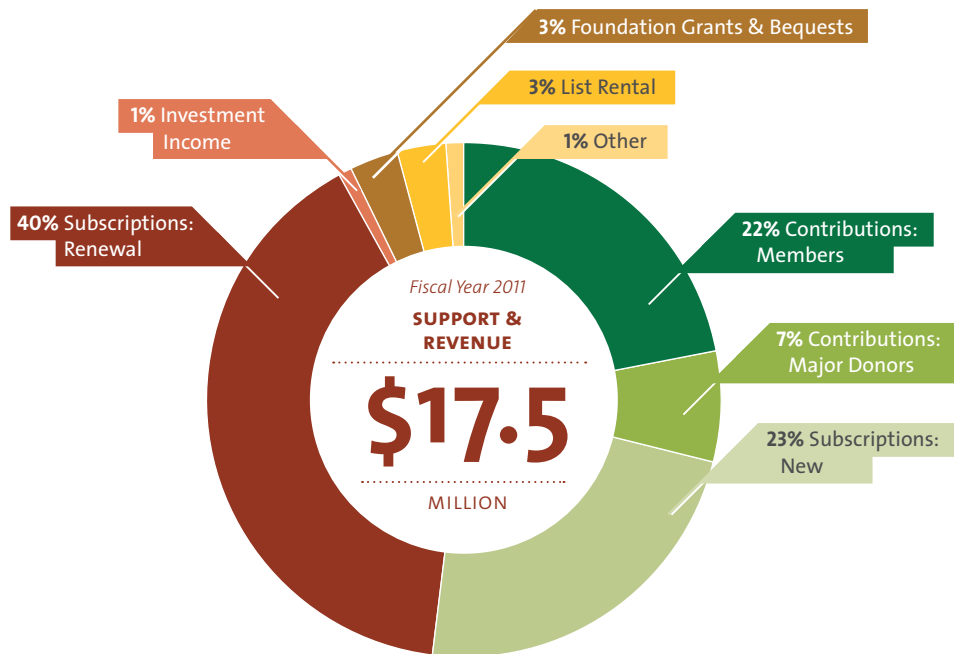
CSPI's annual budget is about \$17 million. More than 80 percent of CSPI's expenditures go directly to program services and education projects. CSPI meets the stringent financial accountability and management standards of the Council of Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance, is a "valued partner" with Guidestar, and is rated a "high-impact" nonprofit by Philanthropedia. These independent ratings help ensure that donors' contributions and foundation grants are used to maximum effect.

ACCESS REPORTS ON CSPI AT

→ www.give.org → www.guidestar.org → www.myphilanthropedia.org

FINANCIAL POSITION AT BEGINNING OF FISCAL YEAR 2011





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