

public health nutrition that seems very consistent with the New Nutrition Science<sup>(2)</sup>.

'Public health nutrition is the art and science of promoting population health status via sustainable improvements in the food and nutrition system. Based upon public health principles, it is a set of comprehensive and collaborative activities, ecological in perspective and inter-sectoral in scope, including environmental, educational, economic, technical and legislative measures'<sup>(3)</sup>.

The 'newness' of the New Nutrition Science is not so important as the underlying principles. How we view and describe our discipline is important, but not more important than what we do under this disciplinary banner. Action speaks more than words.

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*Leaf concentrate. Undernutrition. AIDS*

#### **The elimination of NOMA (*Cancrum oris*)?**

Madam

In support of the letters you have published from Glyn Davys and Professor John Waterlow<sup>(1,2)</sup>, I testify as follows. I am a medical doctor, and a member of the charity Enfants du Monde, with whom I work regularly in the province of Yatenga in Burkina Faso.

My clinical observation is that when children in bush villages and schools, malnourished in the first, second or third degree, take daily leaf concentrate made from lucerne, their general state of health quickly improves, as evidenced for example by weight gain, liveliness, correction of pre-existing anaemia, and better attention span at school.

Today 6000 children are taking 10 grams of leaf concentrate daily. Tolerance is excellent. Among children with AIDS the results are particularly spectacular, and also those who are wounded or infected and cared for by our travelling ambulance recover more rapidly. Finally, Enfants du Monde pursues a determined campaign against NOMA (oral gangrene). The children taking leaf concentrate are unscathed by this awful affliction.

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USAID. UN SCN. Food aid

#### **Tom Marchione**

Madam

The relatively early death of Tom Marchione<sup>(1)</sup> has come as a shock for his friends and colleagues, in addition to his family. He is remembered as a passionate advocate for the poor, hungry and malnourished, bringing a rare range of skills and insights in anthropology, nutrition and statistical analysis to his work.

His research for his dissertation in social anthropology was done in Jamaica where he found that families growing their own food were less likely to have malnourished children than those growing bananas for export. Local food increased in price following local inflation but the price of bananas did not. Since then, we have seen that poor countries have been pressured into increased import dependency for food. He predicted the impact the current meteoric price rise in food would have, and published a substantial number of influential papers and contributions to books<sup>(2,3)</sup>.

For many years Tom worked at the US Agency for International Development (USAID). Within the limitations of his job description, his achievements were impressive. He helped ensure the nutritional quality of food aid, and adequate food control, and also supported breast-feeding throughout his career.

I knew and admired Tom since 1981. Particularly the last ten years or so we worked together within the UN Standing Committee for Nutrition. His enthusiasm for the work of the SCN helped to generate the support it received from USAID.

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