



Achieving adequate nutrition in a malnourished world: the role of sustainable diets and animal source foods

T. Beal¹

¹Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), Washington DC, USA

Malnutrition affects over half the world's population, manifesting in myriad forms. Nearly 1 in 4 children never reach their full growth potential, while 1 in 2 lack key micronutrients essential for health and development.¹ Furthermore, 1 in 3 women suffer from anemia, and 2 in 3 do not get enough vital micronutrients. At the same time, over 2 in 5 adults are overweight or obese, and 1 in 5 live with high blood pressure. These various forms of malnutrition lead to physical and cognitive impairments, increased susceptibility to infections and chronic diseases, and reduced quality and length of life. They also impose immense economic, social, and health burdens. In addition to harming human health, our food system damages the planet, generating greenhouse gas emissions that drive climate change and depleting freshwater reserves. It also causes deforestation and habitat destruction which drive species to extinction. These grave harms to both human and environmental wellbeing demand urgent action. Transforming our food systems is imperative to promote nutritious diets that deliver adequate nutrition and protect against noncommunicable diseases, while simultaneously protecting our planet, its biodiversity, and natural resources. As a response, many call for drastically limiting consumption of animal source foods like meat, eggs, and dairy. They argue that these foods jeopardize both human health and environmental sustainability. However, is it possible to meet the nutritional needs of the global population with few animal source foods? What are the full impacts, both positive and negative, of animal source foods on human health and the environment? In this presentation, I will review the latest scientific evidence surrounding these questions. I will examine whether mindfully produced and consumed animal source foods can be part of the solution. Join me to explore these critical issues¹ concerning sustainable nutrition and the role of animal source foods in our food system transformation.

Reference

1. Stevens GA, Beal T, Mbuya MN *et al.* (2022) *The Lancet Global Health* **10**(11), e1590–e1599.