

# THE DEAN'S LETTER FOR TUFTS NUTRITION



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## RESEARCH UPDATES

Professor **Jeanne Goldberg** and Assistant Professor **Christina Economos** have been awarded a contract from the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation to help identify promising approaches to obesity prevention in 6- to 12-year-old children in Massachusetts, Maine and New Hampshire.

The report, which will be completed in January, will help the foundation decide which activities to support over the next five years, as well as provide practitioners with information that will guide their future activities. Assistant Professor **Jennifer Sacheck** and **Sara Folta** of the John Hancock Center for Physical Activity and Nutrition are also working on the project.

**Davidson Hammer**, adjunct associate professor, received a grant from the Thrasher Research Foundation to carry out a double-blind, placebo-controlled trial of zinc for the treatment of severe pneumonia in Ecuadorian children. This two-year study will take place in Quito and is designed to evaluate the impact of zinc along with standard antimicrobial therapy on the length of hospital stays and signs of pneumonia in children. Hammer and his colleague, Fernando Sempertegui of Quito, will also look at the differential impact of zinc supplementation on bacterial versus viral pneumonias, something that has not been done by any other research group.

The 2006-07 annual report of the **Feinstein International Center** is now available online at <http://fic.tufts.edu/downloads/FICAnnualReport07.pdf>. The report gives an overview of the center's work on the politics and policy of aiding the vulnerable, on protection and rights in crisis situations and on the restoration of lives and livelihoods. In addition to its expanding research in Sudan and Uganda, the center's ongoing efforts in Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Iraq, Nepal and several other places affected by violence, malnutrition, loss of assets or forced migration are all outlined here.

## HERE & THERE

Professor **Johanna Dwyer** will give both the keynote address and a talk on the Dietary Guidelines at the 40th anniversary conference of the Korean Nutrition Society in November.

Professor **Simin Nikbin Meydani** was co-chair of the 2007 FASEB Summer Research Conference, held in Arizona. As keynote speaker, Meydani gave a retrospective presentation on "A Road Less Traveled: Personal Reflections on Three Decades of Nutritional

Immunology.” This is the second national FASEB meeting in the field of nutritional immunology that she has co-chaired. Friedman faculty members **Dayong Wu, Mohsen Meydani, Martin Obin** and **Xiang-Dong Wang** also gave presentations at the meeting. Simin Meydani was also invited to be a member of the NIH Cellular Mechanism of Aging and Development study section.

Professor **Beatrice Rogers** gave the opening keynote talk, “Measurement and Monitoring of Household Food Insecurity and Their Relationship with Nutrition and Social Policy,” at the first annual conference on Household Food Security Measurement in Latin America and the Caribbean, which was held in Antioquia, Colombia, in June. About 80 academics and policy makers from the United States and Latin America attended the three-day meeting. Also in June, she traveled to Quito, Ecuador, to present the results of her project on “Mapping Malnutrition Prevalence in Ecuador,” at a meeting organized by the United Nations World Food Programme.

### FRIEDMAN FACULTY IN THE NEWS

With the Farm Bill currently up for debate, **Hugh Joseph**, project developer for the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, wrote an op-ed for *The Boston Globe* urging food consumers to make their voices heard in favor of local food while they can.

A letter by Professor **Alice Lichtenstein** to the editor of *The New York Times*, published in August, found a serious drawback in an article that suggested people could indulge in trans-fat-free foods “without guilt or have one more helping.” She called it “misguided fantasy,” because foods made free of trans fats can contain the same number of calories as foods made with trans fats, and those calories still add up.

An article in *U.S. News & World Report* on the potential risks of folic acid fortification quotes Assistant Professor **Joel Mason** and includes information on his recent research: “What we’ve discovered ... is that folate seems to have a paradoxical effect...” According to Mason’s latest research, “folic acid fortification may be causing 4 to 6 colorectal cancers annually per 100,000 people—and alternative explanations, such as increasing rates of cancer screening, don’t seem to account for the spike...” His research was also featured in *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Boston Globe*.

The work of Associate Professor **Daniel Maxwell** on international food aid policy was featured in a front page article in *The New York Times* about CARE’s historic withdrawal from the use of one form of American food aid. He was highlighted as the senior manager at CARE whose experience and research (in particular, for his book, *Food Aid After Fifty Years*) brought about a shift that led to CARE’s decision to stop selling American farm products in African countries, in some cases competing with the crops of local farmers.

Research led by Professor **Allen Taylor** determined that eating certain types of carbohydrates might contribute to the development of age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and associated vision loss later in life. “Sugar [in carbohydrates] is fuel for the cells, but too much is destructive,” Taylor told *The New York Times*. As reported by WebMD, Taylor and his colleagues’ study suggests that people “go for carbohydrates that don’t make your blood sugar spike quickly.”

The Blogspotting column of the August 13 issue of *BusinessWeek* had high praise for Assistant Professor **Parke Wilde's** U.S. food policy weblog (<http://usfoodpolicy.blogspot.com>) and its coverage of the Farm Bill.

### COMING RIGHT UP

Going to the annual American Dietetic Association (ADA) Convention? Do you live in the greater Philadelphia area? Please join us at an **Alumni & Friends Reception** on Sunday, September 30, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at the Philadelphia Courtyard Marriott. Registration is required. For more information and to register, go to <http://nutrition.tufts.edu>.

The **2007 Friedman School Symposium** is set for October 29-31. This year's program, "What You Eat. What You Do. Who You Are," is an examination of food choices, behavior, interventions and genetics in an era of emerging technology. Highlighting the two and a half days of panel discussions and expert speakers will be a keynote address by David Barker, known for his ground-breaking research on how nutrition and growth before birth affect the development of heart disease, hypertension, stroke and Type 2 diabetes later in life. Barker's address will be webcast live on the United Nations University's website. Register by September 30 for the best rates at [www.friedmansymposium.com](http://www.friedmansymposium.com).

### SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendars to join us at the **2008 All-Alumni Reunion** on April 12-14, 2008. Reunion will feature the 2008 Alumni Association Awards, events that discuss critical issues in nutrition and the opportunity to re-connect with old friends and mentors. We're also planning a reception just for Friedman graduates from the early 1990s. More information will be posted on <http://nutrition.tufts.edu> soon.

The deadline for the next issue of the *Dean's Letter for Tufts Nutrition* is Wednesday, October 17. Please send your submissions to Julie Flaherty at [julie.flaherty@tufts.edu](mailto:julie.flaherty@tufts.edu).