



May 8, 2015

2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee
Dietary Patterns, Foods and Nutrients, and Health Outcomes Subcommittee
U.S Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
1101 Wootton Parkway, Suite LL100
Rockville, MD 20852

Dear Food Sustainability and Safety Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

The Organic Trade Association (OTA) is the membership-based business association for organic agriculture and products in North America. OTA is the leading voice for the organic trade in the United States, representing over 8,500 organic businesses across 50 states. Its members include growers, shippers, processors, certifiers, farmers' associations, distributors, importers, exporters, consultants, retailers and others. OTA's Board of Directors is democratically elected by its members. OTA's mission is to promote and protect ORGANIC with a unifying voice that serves and engages its diverse members from farm to marketplace.

OTA thanks the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee for its work in drafting the Guidelines, and specifically thanks the Committee for considering sustainability in the food system. We appreciate the forward-thinking nature of your Committee, and your commitment to an ecosystem that can support a diversity of agriculture over the long-term that can feed a healthy population.

We would like to encourage the Committee to continue to examine additional ways to incorporate a commitment to sustainability as it moves forward on the Dietary Guidelines, this year and in years to come. The connection between the environment and our diets is especially important given data supporting the role of ecosystem services in food security. Food production takes a heavy toll on our natural resources. Without careful consideration of how to manage our land, water, and energy our agricultural production could decline significantly.

Additionally, American consumers are increasingly interested in how their consumption habits affect the environment, and need guidance on complicated decisions regarding the confluence between diet, nutrition, and environmental awareness.

Of course, OTA encourages the Committee to, in particular, incorporate a commitment to organic agriculture into future Guidelines. Organic agriculture can be a key tool for you as you focus on sustainability, the environment, and the health of the American public. And the data continue to show the role that production



practices – particularly organic practices – play in ultimate nutritional outcomes, so a commitment to organic agriculture is a commitment to the nutrition of American eaters.

To meet future food needs and guide consumers in their food choices we encourage you to continue to develop Guidelines that increasingly incorporate sustainability. This will enable the Guidelines to serve not only as a tool to direct consumer eating habits toward healthier alternatives, but also to shift eating habits toward less resource-intensive diets. In this regard, sustainability in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans will serve to improve individual and population dietary choices and patterns, and serve as an incentive for improvement of environmental conservation in agricultural and production practices that meet food and nutrition needs.

Again, on behalf of our members across the supply chain and the country, OTA appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and for your commitment to furthering the health of the U.S. population and food systems in general.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marni Karlin". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Marni Karlin
Vice President of Government Affairs / General Counsel
Organic Trade Association