

A photograph of a woman and a young girl at a market stall. The woman, with long dark hair and a light blue shirt, is smiling and looking at a display of fruit. The girl, with curly dark hair and a green shirt, is also looking at the fruit. They are surrounded by various fruits, including apples and grapes. A scale is visible in the background.

43rd Annual

National Food Policy CONFERENCE

Examining key food policy issues affecting consumers, the food industry and government

MARCH 11 & 12, 2020 • RENAISSANCE DC DOWNTOWN HOTEL, WASHINGTON, DC

For 42 years, the National Food Policy Conference has been a Washington institution and a unique collaboration between consumer advocates, the food industry and government. The conference is organized by the Consumer Federation of America and is a key national gathering for those interested in agriculture, food and nutrition policy.

Participants in this year's conference will explore how the newest generation of consumers is making its presence felt; the controversy surrounding the Dietary Guidelines for Americans; the rising popularity of plant-based proteins; and the role of "ultra-processed" foods in the American diet. Breakout panels will examine timely food policy topics including changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the factors that define an environmentally sustainable diet, and the emerging evidence linking antibiotic resistant urinary tract infections to pathogens in food.

➔ **For updates and the latest information, go to www.consumerfed.org.**

Promotional Support provided by Powell Tate Food, Nutrition and Wellness Practice.

Program

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

8:15 am **Welcome**

8:30 am **Keynote Address**

9:00 am **Facilitated Discussion: Food Policy for the Next Generation**

Generation Z, iGen, Generation Y-Fi. Whatever you call them, the newest generation of consumers has distinct preferences for food, and food policy, that is increasingly making itself felt. A panel of experts discusses what the next generation of consumers want, and the implications for the food industry and policymakers.

10:00 am **Food Policy Ideas Salon—Roundtable Discussion**

11:10 am **Breakout Panels**

Breakout 1: Artificial Intelligence and Food

The food industry is increasingly relying on machines and automation to grow, process, and deliver food. From driverless tractors, to robots flagging factory workers without hairnets, to grocery delivery by drone, technology is transforming the food sector. What changes will matter most in the coming years to consumers, workers, and other stakeholders? How should policymakers respond?

Breakout 2: Curbing Childhood Obesity

In recent decades, obesity and diet-related disease has proliferated in the United States. Of particular concern, childhood obesity rates remain stubbornly high, with nearly 1 in 5 kids clinically obese. Not all of the news is bad, however. In some states, obesity rates are declining, and enrollees in some federal public assistance programs have shown significantly improved health outcomes. What are the best approaches to reducing childhood obesity rates and how can public policy help make Americans healthier?

Breakout 3: Regenerative Agriculture

While generally referring to farming practices that add to the soil, and thereby sequester greenhouse gases, regenerative agriculture means different things for different people. This panel will explore those meanings, and related issues such as the role of livestock in regenerative agriculture, how regenerative agriculture relates to more well-defined standards like USDA-certified organic, and how it applies to large-scale farming operations.

12:15 pm **Lunch**

1:00 pm **Keynote Address**

1:30 pm **Facilitated Discussion: Behind the Rise of Plant-Based Foods**

The number of new U.S. food and drink products that mention “plant-based” grew 268 percent between 2012 and 2018 according to one market analyst. What is driving this trend? Are marketers using the term “plant-based” in a way that misleads consumers about nutrition? What are the most important issues for policymakers to consider?

2:30 pm **Networking Break**

3:00 pm **Panel Breakouts**

Breakout 1: Regulating Gene-Edited Food

New, less costly genetic engineering techniques, such as Crispr and Talens, are being widely used to create novel foods—from non-browning mushrooms to high oleic acid soybeans. These “gene-edited” plants are subject to less federal regulation than foods made using older techniques, raising concerns among some consumers. At the same time, some developers claim that existing restrictions, such as mandatory premarket approval for gene-edited food animals, are stifling innovation. What is the future of gene-edited food?

Breakout 2: CBD as a Food Additive

Products containing cannabidiol, or CBD—including gummy bears, sodas, popcorn, and even breakfast cereals—are fast becoming a multi-billion dollar market. Yet serious questions surround the risks and safety of CBD, and reports of mislabeling and adulteration of CBD products have become common. This panel will explore the regulatory regime for CBD and its future.

Breakout 3: Eating to Save the Planet

Recent surveys show that over half of consumers consider sustainability an important consideration in deciding what to eat, but what does this mean? How do consumers act on sustainability concerns, and how do these actions affect their nutrition?

4:05 pm **Facilitated Discussion: The Dietary Guidelines for Americans—What’s at Stake?**

The 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans are currently being debated and discussed. For the first time, the Guidelines will include recommendations for infants and toddlers up to the age of 24 months. Controversy has surrounded the development of the Guidelines lately, with critics from many sides alleging bias, poor scientific protocols, and political interference. This panel will discuss these claims, and the most significant impacts likely to arise out of the next Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

5:15 pm **Adjourn**

THURSDAY, MARCH 12

- 8:15 am **Welcome**
8:30 am **Keynote Address**
9:15 am **Breakout Panels**

Breakout 1: Food Traceability

Recent foodborne illness outbreak investigations have revealed that tracing the origin of a contaminated food is often an arduous and time-consuming, if not impossible, task. What are the obstacles to faster and more comprehensive traceability across the food supply chain? What is the role of new technologies, like blockchain? Do regulators have the tools they need to facilitate traceability in the food system?

Breakout 2: Exploring the Link between E. coli in Food and Urinary Tract Infections

New research that employs whole genome sequencing has shown that food may cause not just gastrointestinal illnesses, but also urinary tract infections. And these infections are increasingly resistant to key antibiotics. Some researchers have proposed classifying and reporting urinary tract infections as a foodborne illness. This panel will consider the evidence linking so-called “extra-intestinal” pathogenic E. coli, or ExPECs, to food, and the implications for public policy.

Breakout 3: A SNAP Snapshot

Enrollment in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is forecast to decline to its lowest levels since the early days of the Great Recession. Still, an estimated 37.1 million people will rely on the food assistance program in 2020, and a significant proportion will use SNAP to purchase groceries online. This panel will explore the latest efforts to change SNAP, including recent proposals to tighten SNAP eligibility rules as well as efforts to expand SNAP digitally, and explore how those changes are likely to affect those who depend on the program.

10:10 am **Networking Break**

10:40 am **Keynote**

11:15 am **Facilitated Discussion: Processed Foods—“Scoundrel or Scapegoat?”**

Recent studies suggest that diets high in “ultra-processed foods” may cause obesity and other health problems. How significant are these findings? How are they influencing consumers? How should public policymakers respond?

12:15 pm **Adjourn**

Registration

REGISTER ONLINE AT **www.consumerfed.org**

Registration Fees

Includes all sessions, conference materials, lunch on Wednesday and continental breakfast on Thursday

Industry, trade and professional association representatives and nutritionists or dietitians employed by industry	\$425
Government, academic and non-CFA public interest groups and independent nutritionists and dietitians	\$175
Designated representatives of CFA member groups	\$125
College or graduate students	\$75

CFA will be applying for Continuing Education credits from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and the American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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