October 25, 2016

Meredith Young
Committee to Review the Process to Update the Dietary Guidelines for Americans
Health and Medicine Division
The National Academies
Keck Center
WS724
500 Fifth St. NW
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Comments relevant to the “Review of the Process to Update the Dietary Guidelines for Americans”

Dear Committee members:

The Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the “Review of the Process to Update the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.” Our comments relate to the selection of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC) members, specifically, the inclusion of food scientist(s) and technologist(s) in the DGAC. Founded in 1939, the Institute of Food Technologists is committed to advancing the science of food. Our non-profit scientific society—more than 17,000 members from more than 95 countries—brings together food scientists, technologists and related professionals from academia, government, and industry.

IFT believes that food science and technology play an integral role both in the development and implementation of the Guidelines. We were disappointed that food scientists and technologists were not among members of the 2015 DGAC.

Regardless of the focus of the Guidelines—whether on eating patterns, food groups, or individual components or nutrients in foods—we believe that it is important to consider the advances in our food system that have been made through food science and technology. Food science and technology have and will continue to play an integral role in the availability of safe, nutritious,
accessible, affordable, and palatable foods. Food science and technology enhance our ability to deliver nutrients via foods. Integration of food science and technology and nutrition along with collaboration among these disciplines is important to improve the availability and nutritive quality of foods. Importantly, through food science and technology, we have been able to decrease sodium, saturated fat, \textit{trans} fat and sugars, and address many of the “shortfall” nutrients, such as calcium, dietary fiber, and magnesium in the food supply as noted in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Food scientists and technologists provide support to a dynamic and rapidly changing food environment, through product reformulation, fortification, and enrichment, for example. It is crucial that the dietary recommendations are not only evidence-based but practical, realistic, and achievable by all consumers, including the vulnerable groups.

During the development of future Dietary Guidelines, discussions related to changes in the food system and supply are best addressed by food scientists and technologists. The critical insights of these professionals can make significant contributions towards the development of dietary recommendations, consumer behavior, and the health of Americans. More specifically, food science and technology professionals can provide valuable insights into existing technological capabilities and limitations germane to the food supply and its impact on food manufacturing and food safety; sensory attributes; cost and time constraints; and consumer acceptance. Their efforts continue to address innovations related to nutritional challenges, food safety, sensory appeal, and other aspects of the food supply chain.

An integrated approach to improving the nation’s health is critical. IFT strongly urges the agencies that as they plan the process for selecting individuals for the DGAC for future editions of the Dietary Guidelines, consideration be given to mandating representation from various disciplines including food science and technology. Expertise from food scientists and technologists, nutritionists, medical professionals, and many other professionals will lead to evidence-based Dietary Guidelines that are implementable, along with the development and availability of safe, more nutrient dense, and affordable food choices. The Dietary Guidelines is the foundation for many federal, state, and local food and nutrition programs, public health interventions, and new product formulations and reformulations. Therefore, IFT also recommends that the agencies continue to ensure that the future DGAC recommendations are supported by the best scientific evidence available at the time.
IFT and our members are committed to assisting with the Dietary Guidelines process. We believe our technological and scientific capabilities will continue to be of value in the development of the Dietary Guidelines and improved food choices for all Americans. IFT respectfully requests that the Review Committee recommend to the Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services that food scientists and technologists be included in the future DGAC. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please contact Farida Mohamedshah, Director, Food Health & Nutrition, (fmohamedshah@ift.org; 202-330-4986) if IFT may provide further assistance.

Sincerely,

John Coupland, Ph.D., CFS
President, IFT