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7 January 2026

Statement from Jerold Mande, CEO, Nourish Science on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030

Simple Advice, Uneven Evidence

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans are meant to serve as the nation's clearest expression of nutrition science translated into everyday practice. Yet each update also reflects a series of tradeoffs between evidence and implementation, aspiration and political reality. The 2025-2030 Guidelines are no exception.

Despite much speculation of a potential change to saturated fat guidance, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025-2030 issued today maintain the long-standing 10% cap. By maintaining saturated fat's status quo, the Administration avoided reopening a debate that would invite academic fragmentation, regulatory whiplash, and state-by-state divergence. That stability matters if we want dietary guidance that can realistically be implemented and is a win for both public health and the food system.

The decision to hold the saturated fat limit steady effectively nudges dietary patterns toward plant-based protein sources without mandating sweeping reformulation or creating a new compliance burden every election cycle. Big food clearly understood this as a negotiated outcome, and one grounded in predictability.

What's most notable, however, is not just what stayed the same but what still doesn't add up.

An unprecedented emphasis on protein, despite already high intakes of protein by most Americans and limited evidence that higher protein intake will result in any population-level health benefits, distracts us from more important matters. A better approach would be to encourage eating plant protein to replace the refined carbohydrates we are correctly being asked to eat less of. Indeed, the Limit Highly Processed Foods, Added Sugars, & Refined Carbohydrates is among the most useful sections in the new Guidelines.

The Guidelines also place responsibility for determining calorie intake squarely on individuals yet offer little guidance on how to determine "the right

calories for you.” That omission is especially problematic given what follows: an immediate emphasis on protein and three daily servings of dairy. When the recommended servings are added together, it becomes nearly impossible for many people to remain under the 10% saturated fat cap – particularly without clear translation of servings into real-world measures like cups or ounces.

By emphasizing first protein and dairy, these Guidelines distract from the foods that serve as the foundation of any healthy dietary pattern – vegetables, fruits, and whole foods. A more coherent approach would be achieved by reordering the sections as follows:

- Eat Vegetables & Fruits Throughout the Day
- Limit Highly Processed Foods, Added Sugars, & Refined Carbohydrates
- Focus on Whole Grains
- Incorporate Healthy Fats

Sections on protein and dairy should appear further down the order.

While many of the Guidelines’ vague recommendations simply won’t work for most American households, there are several positive updates to commend.

The clearer stance that processed meats are not part of a healthy diet is long overdue. The emphasis on significantly reducing refined carbohydrates is also welcome. The firmer approach to added sugars represents a meaningful shift away from substitution and toward reducing overall sweetness and dependence on highly processed foods. While sodium targets remain unchanged, the emphasis on using salt as a flavoring is notable and poses questions around the science-based rationale for doing this.

The end of MyPlate and SNAP-Education will harm child health.

The Administration’s introduction of a new food pyramid is an unfortunate mistake. MyPlate is a successful, easy to understand, graphic representation of the DGAs, with a simple actionable message: *make half your plate fruits and vegetables*. Equally important, it has been in our schools for 15 years building a powerful brand for healthy eating backed by several billion dollars in SNAP-Education funding. That is now all being erased and we are starting over with a new graphic whose message is confusing and without the \$500 million per year in state SNAP-Ed funding to help schools use it.

Overall, the new Guidelines contain both progress and persistent problems.

The numbers don't always add up, the ordering undermines clarity, and consumers are left to reconcile internal contradictions on their own. Still, the stronger emphasis on less highly processed foods, especially refined grains, reduced reliance on sugars, clearer limits on processed meats and greater attention to plant-based protein represent a step in the right direction.

Building on that momentum requires a clearer focus on outcomes, equity, and long-term health. At Nourish Science, we welcome the positive updates made in these Guidelines and will remain committed to advancing nutrition policy that's focused on ensuring every child reaches age 18 at a healthy weight and in good metabolic health, reducing food-caused chronic disease especially in our children, closing long-standing nutrition disparities, and strengthening the resilience of our food system in the face of rising costs, climate pressures, and future public health threats.

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About Nourish Science

Nourish Science is a new non-governmental organization (NGO) that is focused on solving the country's current nutrition crisis, by investing in science, rejuvenating FDA nutrition regulation, and leveraging USDA's nutrition programs to ensure every child reaches age 18 at a healthy weight and in good metabolic health. To learn more about Nourish Science, visit www.nourishscience.org. Follow us on X @Nourish_Science and on LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/company/nourish-science.

