



By FOFJ Editorial Staff

### 12th FENS European Nutrition Conference



Today questions on nutrition are attracting a larger audience, as different forms of malnutrition exist in developed as well as in developing countries. Proper nutrition together with adequate physical activity prevents a number of sicknesses. For example, in Europe cardiovascular diseases are the main culprit for the 40% of deaths annually, costing billions of Euros for the European economies. To tackle a wide variety of nutrition-related diseases and present the latest findings, the 12th European Nutrition Conference took place in October 20-23, 2015 in Berlin. The conference’s slogan was “Nutrition and health throughout life-cycle – Science for the European consumer”. Besides nutritionists, also attending the event were food engineers, doctors, individual researchers, and marketing specialists from food industry, university lecturers and government officials. Taking place simultaneously, the sessions were divided into thematic areas as the number of speakers was high. There were interesting lectures on reducing food waste, the effect of organic food on health, the effect of globalization on sustainable nutrition, importance of spices and herbs in improving public health, mental performance and many other insightful presentations. A special space was

provided for industry where food firms could present the usefulness of their products backed up with latest research.

Although the main research findings were coming from European countries, there was a possibility to listen to the experiences of countries from other geographical areas during the poster sessions. It requires much effort and talent to gather people in one event and conduct a conference with a massive audience and speakers. It is testament to the German Nutrition Society and the Organizing Committee of the 12th FENS European Nutrition Conference which conducted such an event on high level. The next FENS Conference will take place in Dublin in 2019.

### WHO report - processed meat can cause cancer



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The recent findings of the World Health Organization (WHO) may now make meat gourmards think twice before consuming their favorite food. According to its statement, increased consumption of processed meat products and red meat raises the chances of getting cancer. Around two ham pieces (50g) a day increase possibility of bowel cancer by 18%. Carcinogenic activity increases due to the additives which extend the expiry date and preparing methods such as fuming and preservation. Sau-



sages, bacon, corned beef, canned beef, ham and hot dogs refer to processed meat. Processed meat was put into the Group 1 category meaning that sufficient evidence was found in relation to causing cancer. It stands along with such substances as asbestos, alcohol, tobacco smoke, but they do not have the same level of hazard. The risk of getting lung and other types of cancer because of smoking is much higher than in the case of consuming processed meat.

Experts believe that consumption of processed meat should be discouraged, but in no way it should be eliminated. In the UK, 34,000 deaths a year could be related to diets based on processed meat. Although in comparison to tobacco and alcohol the effect of processed and red meat is not that big, one needs to ensure a proper diet including more fibre, fruits and vegetables coupled with physical activity. The results concerning red meat are tricky. Red meat is meat such as beef, pork, lamb, veal, goat, mutton and horse. During processing and cooking red meat produces certain types of carcinogens. However, it is still unclear whether the way meat is prepared causes cancer or not. The relation between red meat and cancer is loose and has little evidence. However it is advised to reduce its consumption as there is a probability of emergence dangerous chemicals during cooking. Along with decreasing red and processed meat consumption, it is advised to base diets on poultry, fish and beans. It is important to mention that controversy over this topic was even in the panel as out of 22 votes, 7 members decided either to disagree or to abstain.

WHO research is not new to controversy.. A recent report evaluated the impact on human health of glyphosate. According to the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the world's most popular weedkiller, known as Roundup, might be carcinogenic to humans. Glyphosate is mainly used in large-scale farming to grow corn, soybeans and cotton through spreading on the fields. Due to the increased usage of this pesticide, glyphosate levels in water increased five times in EC/EU. This forced water standards to be reconsidered in the Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality Working Group meeting in Geneva 2004. Controversy over the impact of this pesticide led to debates between skeptics and promoters of Roundup. In discussing

advantages and disadvantages of the substance, it is crucial to differentiate between the assumptions whether it could or does cause cancer. On the one hand, the probability that it might cause cancer is based on two types of evidence. First, laboratory studies show that DNA and chromosomes in human cells can be damaged because of this chemical which eventually might cause cancer. Second, exposed to glyphosate rats and mice tend to develop cancerous tumours. On the other hand, large-scale studies show that its effect on human health is not evident as farmers exposed to glyphosate did not have a high cancer rate. It is assured that no danger exists in final food products which use this chemical during its production as glyphosate residues are destroyed during heavy processing. However, gardeners, farmers or children playing on the field where it was spread should be careful. The topic will remain controversial as no strong evidence has been demonstrated through studies of glyphosate on human health. The Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality Working Group meeting in Geneva 2004 decided that it was not necessary to change standards.