

## Our Role in Achieving Food Security for All

I HAD THE PLEASURE OF ATTENDING a summit meeting in Washington, DC, in late June, co-sponsored by the Academy, titled “The Future of Food: Food Security in the 21st Century.” This fascinating and important meeting was co-sponsored by the Academy and the Innovation Center for US Dairy and was hosted—and broadcast online—by the *Washington Post*.

In opening remarks, I said Academy members are ready to continue and increase our commitment to this vital issue that affects us all. At the conference, it was announced that the Academy has joined with Feeding America and the National Dairy Council on a new initiative to end hunger and achieve food security.

The summit and this new initiative represent the Academy putting two of our organizational values into action: *innovation* and *social responsibility*. We have a duty to society to come up with new, workable solutions to our most pressing problems.

At the “Future of Food” summit, I paraphrased the Academy’s position paper on “World Hunger, Malnutrition, and Food Insecurity,” which states that we as food and nutrition experts are dedicated to combating hunger and malnutrition as well as promoting food security and creating sustainable food solutions that respect environmental and economic concerns.

### EFFECTIVE APPROACH

Our position paper also states that solving the food security crisis “requires political, economic, and social changes that include empowering the disenfranchised, widening access to assets and other resources, narrowing the gap between rich and poor, and adjusting consumption patterns to foster good stewardship of nature.” It is, in other words, the socially responsible thing to do—but finding viable solutions to issues like food insecurity is not easy.

An effective approach is to engage in innovative collaborations with like-minded organizations. The Academy has partnerships with such groups as

the Food and Research Action Center (FRAC), Bread for the World, Congressional Hunger Center, National Association of Aging and Nutrition Programs, Meals on Wheels Association, Share Our Strength, and Community Food Security. I am proud to say Academy members are actively making a difference in each of these groups along with their service to our own organization.

### MEMBERS MAKE CONTRIBUTIONS

To name only a few examples among many: Our relationship with FRAC includes a great partnership with Academy member Geraldine Henchy, MPH, RD, who is their director of nutrition policy and early childhood programs. Cathy Nonas, MS, RD, CDE, directs the New York City Health Department’s Physical Activity and Nutrition Program, where she helped develop the Green Cart Initiative that expanded the number of mobile food vendors selling fresh fruits and vegetables. For more information, I urge you to watch the online video *Apple Pushers* ([www.applepushers.com](http://www.applepushers.com)).

Susan B. Foerster, MPH, RD, chief of Network for a Healthy California in the state’s department of public health, heads nutrition education in California. Angela M. Tagtow, MS, RD, LD, promotes food security with the Iowa Food Policy Council. Working with the Minnesota Twins major league baseball team, Susan D. Moores, MS, RD, conceived Roots for the Home Team, “a new and innovative program that works with youth garden programs to further the vital work they do to help shape kids’ lives and livelihoods. By using vegetables and herbs they have grown, along with produce from local farmers, participating youth helped develop and will sell tasty, creative salad recipes exclusively at Target Field,” the Twins’ home park.<sup>1</sup>

The Academy and our members also support systematic and sustained programs that are instrumental in improving access to an appropriate food supply throughout the life cycle of our fellow citizens. Key legislation such as the Older Americans Act, which pro-



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vides funding to support feeding programs, is instrumental in helping Americans maintain good nutritional status and an excellent quality of life.

### FACING THE CHALLENGE

As a keynote speaker at the Academy’s 2012 Public Policy Workshop in April, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack described the Farm Bill, which was up for reauthorization, as “the Farm, Food, and Jobs Bill.” Why? Because, he said, it is much more than just a Farm Bill—it is an economic engine in communities, creating and supporting jobs in communities while providing a safety net for farmers and individuals needing food assistance. The more we work together, the more everyone benefits.

Collaborating with existing organizations and starting new alliances both individually and as Academy organizational units locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally will be instrumental in developing solutions to food insecurity. This is a challenge we need to face on all levels.

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### Reference

1. Roots for the Home Team™ partners with the Minnesota Twins Community Fund: Innovative program nourishes families and communities [press release]. Minneapolis-St Paul, MN: Minnesota Twins Press Release; May 24, 2012. [http://minnesotatwins.mlb.com/news/article.jsp?ymd=20120524&content\\_id=32161980&vkey=pr\\_min&c\\_id=min](http://minnesotatwins.mlb.com/news/article.jsp?ymd=20120524&content_id=32161980&vkey=pr_min&c_id=min). Accessed July 9, 2012.