

GUEST EDITORIAL

The aim of Food Science & Technology is to advance the science of food for use in the production, preservation and utilization of wholesome food for the consumer. Adequate information dissemination enables the consumer to make intelligent choices of eating a balanced nutritious diet. Food security has been a topical issue for quite a while. The World's Food Summit (1996) has as its goal, eradication of hunger and reduction of the number of undernourished people by half no later than 2015. However, the possibility of this noble aim is dim since Food security involves more than just production: it involves the distribution, acceptance and the use of food; issues which are sometimes less scientific, but cultural. As an example, one may note that efforts to produce nutritious cereal crop with desirable yield, draught tolerance, and enhanced nutritional properties for use in the tropics have failed not because of failure to produce the described crop, but because the crop failed to satisfy the utility test.

A World Health Organization article once noted "Food security is based on three pillars: Food availability (sufficient quantities of food available on a consistent basis), food access (having sufficient resources to obtain appropriate foods for a nutritious diet), and food use (appropriate use based on knowledge of basic nutrition and care), as well as adequate water and sanitation".

The issue of food availability appears to be the easiest to solve. Since some have claimed that there is presently enough food to adequately feed everyone on earth. There also appears to be resources to increase food production if necessary. However, the technology and/or the ability to acquire it is not evenly distributed worldwide.

The issue of access is a little more difficult to resolve since not all the countries of the world are equally developed or have adequate resources to produce or purchase the required

food for their populace, while others have too much. Also there is the issue of differences in taste and acceptability, which differs from one region to another. The issue of access has resulted in a situation where over half the world's population are malnourished; half are undernourished, while a growing population, due to changing world economies are overnourished. It has been reported that apart from some developed countries which are notable for obesity, there is an increase in the number of obese people in the developing economies of the world including India and China. The problem of obesity is a problem of choice caused by ignorance of issues regarding the use and abuse of food.

A young high school student (Mallory Greiner of Indianola High School, Indianola USA) writing on "The issue of Food security in the Caribbean and Latin American region" summarised the solution to the global food problem thus: "To become a successful region everyone has to be willing to help. It is not going to change by a few people trying to make a change for everyone. Everyone has to be willing to achieve one goal at a time, as a team". What an insightful conclusion for one so young. The world's food problem will not disappear. We all have a part to play in attempts at resolving it.

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