Taking the Library to the World: Innovative Outreach and Services Beyond Borders

Wendy Davis, RD, MBA
USDA/ARS
National Agricultural Library
The United States government has published dietary advice for over one hundred years. In response to popular interest in these documents, the National Agricultural Library has collected, digitized, and united them into a single online tool, the Historical Dietary Guidance Digital Collection.

This collection allows users to browse and search the full text of over 1,000 historical and contemporary federal dietary guidance publications. As a part of the National Agricultural Library Digital Collections, it also provides reliable, long-term online access to this content.

Because many of these documents are historical, they may not reflect contemporary science or the views of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. For current food and nutrition information, please visit nutrition.gov.
Interpreting Nutrition Guidance: Dietary Recommendations as Texts
The Historical Dietary Guidance Digital Collection

Christian James, M.L.S. Candidate, University of Maryland, College Park
Digital Curation Fellow, National Agricultural Library

Introduction
Since 1990, federal dietary guidance publications have been informed by periodic reassessments of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) and Department of Health and Human Services’ (HHS) Dietary Guidelines for Americans and are therefore frequently revised or retired. A forthcoming research tool, the National Agricultural Library’s (NAL) Historical Dietary Guidance Digital Collection (HDDC), incorporates three contemporary publications with older, retired content dating back a century. By enhancing access to this legacy content, NAL enables humanities researchers to analyze dietary publications as cultural texts.

Dietary guidance has reflected a dynamic range of recommendations over history, from promoting:
- workers’ capacity to maintain energy and spend money efficiently,
- self-sufficiency over domestic work,
- improved health,
- or, after disease prevention.

Scholarly Interpretations
Primary source analysis reveals the subjectivity of dietary guidance over time:
- Bilbock: “Dietary ideals are cultural, subjective, and political.”
- Jones: Health-related texts reveal “ambiguous worldviews and values,” complexity, and power.

The HDDC allows scholars to interpret these documents for themselves. The wealth of content reveals evolving attitudes towards families, health, consumer culture, and other topics.

Notes
USDA’s DRI Calculator App

BMI, Calorie and nutrient recommendations, right at your fingertips!

Additional Features
- Access resources such as pregnancy weight gain charts, DRI glossary terms, nutrition education handouts and more
- Bookmark your favorite features
- Save your calculations for later use

Available at iTunes and Google Play stores for smartphone and tablet and at www.fnic.nal.usda.gov
Two Digital Exhibits from NAL’s Information Products Division

1. *Frost on Chickens* about Robert Frost’s time spent as a poultry farmer and the articles he wrote for agricultural trade journals
2. *Mailboxes, Mom and Pop Stands, and Markets* about local foods—past and present

- Showcases digitized items from NAL’s collection within a narrative context
- Highlights past and current USDA initiatives on poultry farming and local foods
- Gives visual interest to current and historical items that might be seen as dry or technical
- Provides pathways to new ways of thinking about agriculture and new audiences
- Built using the *Omeka* platform for digital exhibits — an application used more commonly in the humanities

Available at www.nal.usda.gov/exhibits
• Literature search training for those required under the Animal Welfare Act to consider alternatives to potentially painful or distressful procedures in research involving animals
• First training occurred at NAL in 1991
• Train ~60 people in-house at NAL every year
• Expect that expanding into an e-learning format will allow us to reach and train more customers.
• The course will remain FREE to registrants
• Four modules covering the history of the Animal Welfare Act, the definition of 3Rs alternatives, using bibliographic databases, and designing effective search strategies to find alternatives information
• Expected release date – October 2015
Contact

Wendy Davis
Program Lead, Nutrition & Food Safety
National Agricultural Library
ARS/USDA
Wendy.davis@ars.usda.gov