

Saturday 10 July 2021

What will we be eating in 2050?

Embracing a diverse range of plants and foods like fungi, seaweed and insects are just some healthy and sustainable examples of what our growing population will be eating over the next 30 years.

Deepening understanding and value of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples ecological knowledges, high-tech food production, locally grown produce and enhancing our cooking skills will be vital to transform our food supply and ensure these foods reach our plates in 2050.

That's according to the dietitians who will be discussing this issue at tomorrow's *'What will we be eating in 2050?'* session at the Dietitians Australia National Conference.

Science communicator Associate Professor Paul Willis will guide a panel of five Accredited Practising Dietitians (APDs) through a hypothetical scenario of what our food supply will look like in 2050.

APDs Professor Mark Lawrence, Dr Rosemary Stanton, Nicole Senior, Tracy Hardy and Emma Stirling will each represent different food system stakeholders to provide a perspective on public health, culinary nutrition, food production and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander food culture.

The panel faces a challenging task, with current trends placing doubt over our future food supply.

"Globally, we're facing serious food security issues, as we grapple with how to produce enough nutritious food to feed our growing population in a warmer and more turbulent climate," said Paul.

"Our panel will explore what the future might look like and what we need to do, to ensure our population is adequately nourished with sustainable foods in the future."

Calls for the food industry to accept greater ethical responsibility, and the need to advance food science to produce more nutritious food will be made. However, Dr Rosemary Stanton sees one fundamental issue to be addressed.

"We must change our mindset from thinking of foods as just a profitable commodity and put the health of our population and the environment first," said Rosemary.

"We need to prioritise food production that is both nutritious and supports our environment. This means highly processed, nutrient-poor foods need to be dramatically reduced, and we also need to consider the types and quantities of animal foods we produce."

Tracy Hardy, a proud Gamilaroi descendant, encourages looking to the past successes of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples care and management of the land to embrace a brighter food future.

"First Nations Peoples of Australia hold a wealth of knowledge about landcare, native food production and connection to Country that we can celebrate and make part of our food heritage," said Tracy.

"It's about working in partnership with mutual respect with First Nations Peoples towards the shared goal of producing unique, nutritious and sustainable food in harmony with the land."

While use of technology – such as precision agriculture, artificial intelligence, and robotics – will play a key part in the future of food production, there's a lot each of us can achieve with traditional gardening and cooking skills.

Growing food locally, cooking and sharing meals not only supports a more resilient and sustainable food system, but brings many social and psychological benefits as well.

To achieve this, prioritising community engagement and food literacy for all is a must, and dietitians are well placed to help.

“Implementing community gardens, urban agriculture and kitchens in homes, schools and workplaces are just some of the ways communities can access nutritious food and work towards a zero-food waste target,” said Rosemary.

“When it comes to food, we need to get back to a more empowered, hands-on, personal approach.”

ENDS

For media enquiries and interviews, contact Pattie King, Dietitians Australia 0409 661 920.

The Dietitians Australia National Conference is being held online from 11-13 July 2021.

For more information and program details, visit: da2021.com.au .

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