

36th National Nutrient Databank Conference

The National Nutrient Databank Conference: What is it?

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Abstract

Food composition databases (FCDs) are a foundation of nutrition research, monitoring and surveillance of the food supply, commercial applications, and nutrition in clinical practice. The National Nutrient Databank Conference (NNDC) is a gathering of researchers and users dedicated to the development, maintenance, and use of FCDs. The NNDC has met regularly since 1976 to provide a forum for researchers and users to share information about current resources and activities involving FCDs. The NNDC is governed by a Steering Committee and led by an Executive Committee that defines the purpose of the organization, monitors the needs of the nutrition community, carries out professional responsibilities associated with FCDs, and recommends priorities for the future. In an ever-changing food marketplace, emphasis on dietary surveillance around the world, and the need for additional food composition data to answer new scientific questions, the NNDC is more critical to the nutrition community today than ever before. The annual assembly of a group of FCD experts and users with the purpose of identifying and preparing for new possibilities in food composition is critical for the future of nutrition research and clinical practice.

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1. Introduction and Background

In 1976 at the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington, 33 food composition database (FCD) developers and users convened to discuss innovations occurring in compilation and distribution of FCDs; the impact new technology had on the quality and standardization of databases; and to share their knowledge and experiences to better understand the resources available for using food composition data [1]. Small periodic meetings gradually grew in size as interest broadened, and eventually the meetings became an annual conference called the National Nutrient Databank Conference (NNDC) that today

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attracts researchers from around the United States and abroad. The group became incorporated as a non-profit corporation in 2004 and is now governed by a Steering Committee that holds regular elections for leaders that serve 2-4 year terms.

The NNDC is convened as a 3-day conference every other year, and a 1-day conference in the alternate years scheduled to coincide with larger nutrition meetings. The conference attracts government agencies that oversee the creation and compilation of FCDs and resources for interpreting the data, commercial and research groups that contribute to an understanding of user needs, researchers and educators who develop unique computer applications using food composition data, clinicians who depend on accurate information to support their work, and students and others who want to learn more about FCDs and how they are developed.

1.1. National Nutrient Databank Conference Organization

The NNDC is governed by a Steering Committee of approximately 25 professional researchers in government, academia, industry, and for profit organizations. The Steering Committee is led by an Executive Committee that includes a chair, chair-elect, treasurer, grant administrator, and past-chair. The Executive Committee defines the purpose of the organization, continuously assesses the needs of the nutrition community, and sets priorities for the future. The working agenda includes guiding the preparation activities for the annual conference and ensuring adequate funding. Table 1 presents the current Steering Committee and Table 2 lists the Executive Committee chairs elected since incorporation in 2004.

Table 1. Steering Committee of the NNDC for 2013

Carol Boushey, U of Hawaii Cancer Ctr., Honolulu, HI	Lisa Jahns, USDA ARS GFHNRC, Grand Forks, ND
Elizabeth Braithwaite, ESHA Res., Salem, OR	Marie Kuczmariski, U of Delaware, Newark, DE
Catherine Champagne, Pennington Biomedical Res., LA	Suzanne McNutt, Westat, Rockville, MD
Ruth Charrondiere, FAO, Rome, Italy	Diane Mitchell, Penn State U, University Park, PA
R. Sue Day, University of Texas, Houston, TX	Alanna Moshfegh, USDA, ARS, FSRG, Beltsville, MD
Josephine Deeks, Health Canada, Ottawa, Canada	Suzanne Murphy, U of Hawaii Cancer Ctr., Honolulu, HI
Rachel Fisher, NIH, NIDDK, Bethesda, MD	Laura Sampson, Harvard SPH, Boston, MD
Julie Eichenberger Gilmore, U of Iowa, Iowa City, IA	Susan Sanders, Coca Cola Company, Atlanta, GA
Lisa Harnack, U of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN	Phyllis Stumbo, U of Iowa, Iowa City, IA
David Haytowitz, USDA, ARS, NDL, Beltsville, MD	Rose Tobelmann, General Mills, Minneapolis, MN
Joanne Holden, USDA, ARS, NDL, Beltsville, MD	Thea Zimmerman, Westat, Rockville, MD

Table 2. Chairs of the NNDC 2003-2013

Phyllis Stumbo, Iowa City, IA	2004-2006 (transition to non-profit status)
Suzanne Murphy, Honolulu, HI	2007-2008
Rose Tobelman, Minneapolis, MN	2009-2010
Suzanne McNutt, Rockville, MD	2011-2012
Diane Mitchell, University Park, PA	2013-2014

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