

## Book Review

### *Fat Economics: Nutrition, Health and Economic Policy*

By Mario Mazzocchi, W Bruce Traill and Jason F Shogren

Published by Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK 2009

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As the obesity epidemic grows, not only in advanced economies, but in virtually every economic context, even in the face of essential nutrient deprivation, its economics has become of increasing interest. Most of the analysis has had to do with the costs of the health outcomes of obesity and of its management (Access Economics, 2006: Wahlqvist, 2006). Increasingly, the economic determinants of obesity, especially in terms of food choice and access to body composition-friendly environments have been explored, which is the purview of 'Fat Economics' by Mazzocchi and colleagues published in 2009.

The Mazzocchi book is rich in information about the economic epidemiology of obesity, especially in its appreciation of settings like communities and households and their exposure to various market forces. This is worth seeing in the light of Katan's critical appraisal of the relative ineffectuality of various diets for obesity compared with community interventions to reduce the adverse trends (Katan, 2009) as in northern France (Fleurbaix and Laventie), in Victoria, Australia (Colac and Horsham) and in Massachusetts, USA (Somerville). Thus the present volume leads on to evidence-based policy making and policy intervention which can embrace not only clinical, but school, workplace and community settings in a cost-effective and lasting way.

What is now needed is greater attention to the ecological factors in the pathogenesis of obesity, which have been articulated in the eco-nutrition view of the origins of so-called chronic disease including obesity (Wahlqvist, 2004); and the environmental costs incurred as a consequence (Marlow et al, 2009; Carlsson-Kanyama et al, 2009). These considerations point to most, but not all, plant-based diets as being less demanding on the environment, its energy reserves, soil health and water status. It is this broader cost-sustainability-effectiveness canvass for nutritional economics to which we now must look. The present book is an important brush stroke along the way.

#### References

1. Access Economics (2006) The economic costs of obesity: a report for Diabetes Australia.
2. Published by Access Economics, Canberra, Australia (info@AccessEconomics.com.au)

3. Wahlqvist M L Health economics and weight management: evidence and cost Asia Pac J Clin Nutr 2006;15(Suppl ):1-2.

By Mark L Wahlqvist

## Future Events

July 20, 2009

*World Nutrition, Health & Disease Conference 2009, Biopolis, Singapore*

<http://www.foodtechnutrition.com/nutrition2009>

August 12-16, 2009

*10th CAPGAN Conference on Diarrhoea and Malnutrition, Blantyre, Malawi*

[www.capgan.org](http://www.capgan.org)

September 7-18, 2009

*International Course in Nutritional Epidemiology, London, England*

[http://www1.imperial.ac.uk/medicine/teaching/shortcourses/sc\\_epidem/nutritionalepidemiology/](http://www1.imperial.ac.uk/medicine/teaching/shortcourses/sc_epidem/nutritionalepidemiology/)

September 27-30, 2009

*World Congress On Oils and Fats & 28th ISF Congress, Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre, Sydney, Australia*

<http://www.isfsydney2009.com>

October 4-9, 2009

*19th International Congress of Nutrition 2009, Nutrition Security for All BITEC, Bangkok, Thailand*

<http://www.icn2009.com>

October 11-24, 2009

*Production and use of food composition data in nutrition (9th edition), Wageningen, The Netherlands*

<http://www.vlaggraduateschool.nl/eduvlco.html>

October 18-21, 2009

*7th Euro Fed Lipid Congress "Lipids, Fats and Oils: From Knowledge to Application", Graz, Austria*

<http://www.eurofedlipid.org/meetings/graz/index.htm>

November 5-6, 2009

*2009 AICR Annual Research Conference on Food, Nutrition, Physical Activity and Cancer, Washington, DC.*

[http://www.aicr.org/site/MessageViewer?em\\_id=9401.0&dlv\\_id=12281](http://www.aicr.org/site/MessageViewer?em_id=9401.0&dlv_id=12281)

November 12-14, 2009

*1st Congress of Fatty Liver and Metabolic Syndrome, Budapest, Hungary*

<http://www.akcongress.com/>

December 10-12, 2009

*4th Shanghai International Congress & Exhibition on Nutrition, Fitness and Health (NFH 2009), Shanghai, China*

<http://nfh.sstec.com.cn>

**January 28-30, 2010**

*The 1st International Congress on Abdominal Obesity,  
Hong Kong, China*

<http://www.kenes.com/abdominal-obesity>

**September 20 – 23, 2010**

*23rd biennial congress of the nutrition society and the  
11th biennial congress of the association for dietetics*

<http://www.nutritioncongress.co.za>

**Important Deadlines:**

*4th July 2009*

*Deadline for Early-Bird Registration*

*20th September 2009*

*Deadline for Regular Registration*