

Editorial

People, planet and plates

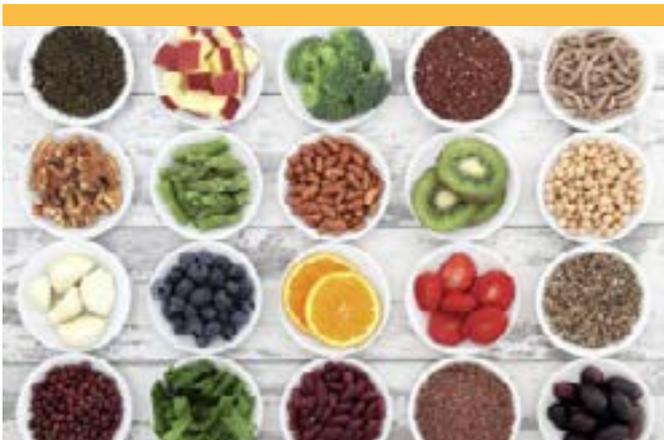
People and planet matter to all of us, therefore sustainability has become a key concept. One of the ambitions of the **European Commission's Circular Economy Package** is to foster sustainable economic growth. Most not-for-profit organizations, and also private companies already integrate sustainability into their activities and management. Yet it is not always clear what sustainability is and how we can integrate it in our daily lifestyle. A necessary move is to have a look at our plate. Our diet can be sustainable as well. A sustainable diet should be at least environmentally friendly and nutritionally healthy. This idea is taken up in **the recently revised Dutch Dietary Guidelines**, which consider ecology when formulating nutritional recommendations.

It is now general consensus that diets which include a lot of plant-based foods are more sustainable than those made of foods from animals. Plant-based diets are not only key to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease as well as diabetes; they also have a lower ecological footprint than animal-based diets. For IMACE, plant-based diets are the way forward.

We believe in our products' potential to bring more sustainability into people's plates. Our products are made with high quality vegetable oils rich in healthy unsaturated fatty acids. They also provide you with the necessary Vitamin A, D and E. Their plant-based composition makes them environmentally much lighter on their feet than animal fat sources. We must take care of both people and our planet. Margarines and spreads can be part of the solution and of the diet of the future.

In the spotlight

Spread margarine on your bread instead of butter,
say the Dutch dietary guidelines



The 2015 Dutch Dietary Guidelines recommend to include more plant-based foods into our diet. Not only do they help to lower the risk of cardiovascular disease, they also have ecological benefits.

According to the Health Council of the Netherlands, we should shift from an animal-based diet to a diet including more plant-based products. By doing so, we can improve our health compared to a traditional Dutch diet.

The Advisory Committee preparing the Dutch Dietary Guidelines identified several “recommended dietary patterns” with a focus on health benefits. Among them, the traditional Mediterranean dietary pattern, the New Nordic Diet and the American Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH diet). These diets proved to have a very positive impact on our health. Interestingly, they all involve less animal-based food and more plant-based food, than a conventional Dutch diet. One of the scientific secretaries to the Committee, Doctor Janette De Goede from Wageningen University, explains the conclusions of the Committee: “it has been convincingly demonstrated that the recommended dietary patterns

reduce the risks of coronary heart disease and stroke. They are also associated with lower risks of diabetes, colorectal cancer and mortality from any cause.” Among the foods having a positive health impact, the Advisory Committee specifically mentions soft margarines and vegetable oils. Margarines and spreads are made of vegetable oils, which originate from plants such as rapeseed, linseed, soybeans, palmfruit. Their fat content is healthier than the one of animal fats such as butter, for example. Indeed, the unsaturated fatty acids present in margarine have a more positive impact on our cholesterol levels than the saturated fatty acids, mostly present in animal fat sources such as dairy and meat.

“Research has shown that a reduction in LDL “bad” cholesterol, which is a causal risk factor for coronary heart disease, is achieved by replacing butter with soft margarine and replacing saturated fatty acids with polyunsaturated fatty acids reduces the risk of coronary heart disease. In addition, cohort studies show that this replacement of fatty acids is associated with a lower risk of coronary heart disease”, confirms Doctor De Goede.

It is also the first time that ecological considerations are taken into account in the Dutch Dietary Guidelines. The new Guidelines were drafted in light of a 2011 [Report on the ecological aspects of the Dutch dietary guidelines](#), requested by the Dutch government. “As well as having health benefits, a diet that includes less food from animals and more plant-based food has a lower ecological burden than a conventional Dutch diet”, says Doctor De Goede. She advises to “limit meat and high dairy product consumption. This is more favourable from an ecological perspective”.

Margarines and spreads, with their advantageous fat composition (low saturated fats, high unsaturated fats) appear as an ideal source of fat in the context of a healthy and balanced diet.

Janette De Goede is a Postdoctoral researcher at Wageningen University. She was also part of the Advisory Committee for the Dutch Dietary Guidelines 2015.

News from the EU

TFA: If Commission goes for a legal limit, hydrogenation labelling must be deleted



If the Commission decides to go forward with a legal limit on TFA content of food products, it would not be problematic for margarine producers. For more than a decade now, margarines and spreads' TFA content is well below the level where there is a health concern. Yet, hydrogenation labelling must be deleted as it is discriminatory and with no added value.

On 3 December, the European Commission published its [report on trans fatty acids \(TFA\) in foods and in the overall diet of the Union population](#). The report suggests that setting a legal limit for industrial TFA content would be the most effective measure in terms of public health, consumer protection and compatibility with the single market.

Hydrogenation labelling unclear to consumers

The current labelling requirements for vegetable oils and fats are misleading the consumers and do not help consumers to make proper healthy food choices. Today, vegetable oils and fats have to be labelled on food products, indicating whether full or partial hydrogenation was performed. Yet this compulsory mentioning of full or partial hydrogenation does not give any information on the actual TFA content. Even worse, is not or wrongly

understood by consumers, as outlined by the Commission's report. Consumers think that TFA occur during the full hydrogenation process, while it is actually the opposite!

Margarine products TFA levels already below 2%

Because there is absolutely no mention of possible ruminant TFA presence on food products, the current mandatory labelling stigmatizes the European margarines and spreads industry wrongly. This is difficult to swallow for an industry, which realized major improvements, during the last 20 years, in bringing down the TFA content in their products to a level below 2%. This is a level upon which there is no longer a public health concern according to EFSA.

The industry's efforts to reduce the TFA level in margarines and spreads include reformulation and optimization of refining processes. Nowadays, the current TFA levels in retail margarines and spreads are well below 1% on fat basis. In business-to-business margarines, TFA content has decreased from 7.1 to 1.4% on fat basis in the last decade. As a consequence, over 60% of the current TFA intake in Western Europe is now coming from ruminant sources.

All TFA sources have detrimental effects

As the current main TFA source in Western European diets is ruminant TFA, and [given the fact that both TFA sources are equally 'detrimental' to public health](#), it would be logical that they are dealt with in an equal way. Hence, for IMACE, any new policy regulation on TFA should imply an equal treatment of all TFA sources. This includes the deletion of the mandatory misleading and discriminatory labelling of 'partially hydrogenated' versus 'fully hydrogenated' vegetable oils.

Health & Nutrition

New study confirms that ruminant and non-ruminant trans fat have similar detrimental effects on health



Trans fatty acids surely should be avoided as much as possible, according to the latest published research. They increase levels of “bad” cholesterol in our bodies. But do all types of trans fatty acids have the same effects on our health? A new study* brings in interesting findings to the question.

Most people ignore where trans fatty acids (TFA) originate from. They are present in partially hydrogenated vegetable oils (PHVO) and they can be found in ruminant sources, such as meat and dairy fat. While a lot of research has been conducted on the health effects of TFA present in PHVO, studies are quite scarce when it comes to ruminant fatty acids - the ones which naturally occur in the rumen of cows.

In November 2015, the results of a study on the effects of ruminant TFA vs. industrial TFA were published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. This largest individual study on the topic so far demonstrates that **the two types of TFA, ruminant and non-ruminant, have similar detrimental effects on the risk of cardiovascular disease**. The results confirm the conclusion from an earlier review that, on a gram for gram basis, all dietary TFA have the same effects on lipid and lipoproteins (Brouwer et al, 2013).

As explained by [Professor Stender from the Copenhagen University](#), it is thus irrelevant to distinguish between “bad” and “good” trans fatty acids. Most ruminant TFA can be as bad for cholesterol as non-ruminant TFA. Yet only the latter can be easily removed from our food!

This high-quality study supports IMACE’s position that industrial (from PHVO) and ruminant trans fats (dairy, beef) have similar adverse effects on the blood lipid risk profile for coronary heart disease.

**** Vaccenic acid and trans fatty acid isomers from partially hydrogenated oil both adversely affect LDL cholesterol: a double-blind, randomized controlled trial ([here](#)).***

Sarah K Gebauer, Frédéric Destailats, Fabiola Dionisi, Ronald M Krauss, and David J Baer, American Journal Of Clinical Nutrition, 2015.

Sustainability & Environment

EU Circular Economy Package: the road to food waste reduction



On December 2, 2015, the Commission launched its Circular Economy Package. Contrary to an old proposal which tackled only waste reduction, this new Package covers the full economic cycle. The Commission considers the Circular economy to offer “an opportunity to reinvent our economy, making it more sustainable and competitive”.

The Package targets, amongst other things, packaging waste, landfill, and industry cooperation. Several targets are set for 2030: 75% of the packaging waste should be recycled, while landfill

should only represent 10% of all waste - only the latter is a binding measure. Economic instruments to discourage landfilling will be promoted. Several measures are planned to encourage industries to cooperate and form symbiosis. One industry's by-product should be re-used by another industry as a raw material. Economic incentives should encourage the industry to develop recycling schemes, for example for packaging.

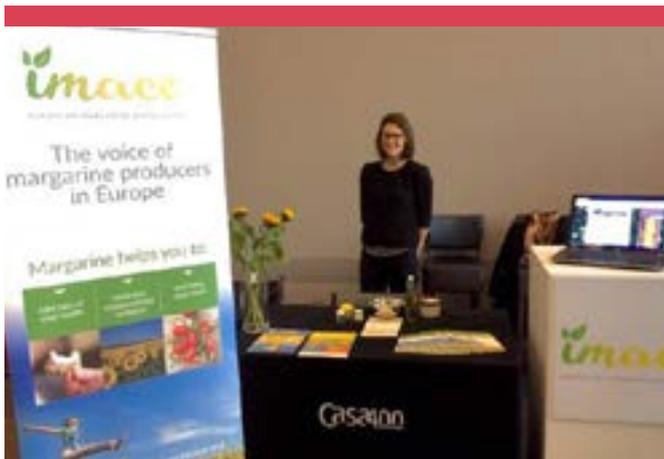
The proposal explicitly underwrites the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and its target of halving food waste by 2030. Uniform methodologies to measure progress on food waste reduction should be established, with bi-annual reporting on food waste levels. For the Parliament, the proposal does not go far enough. In July already MEPs asked for a binding food waste reduction target of 30% by 2025.

Along the full margarine life cycle, food waste is estimated to be only between 1 and 5% of total production, with a concentration during the agriculture and consumer stages. Food waste at the margarine production sites is less than 1%. Minimizing food waste is a constant point of attention in our sector. Most of the food waste in our sector is recycled as animal feed or used as biofuel.

News from IMACE

IMACE meets the European dietitians!

On 23-24 October 2015, IMACE was present at the Annual Conference of the European Federation of the Association of Dietitians (EFAD). IMACE booth found a great interest amongst dietitians, who shared their views on margarine and spreads, and their inclusion in their patients' diets.



The Conference gathered more than 400 dietitians from all over Europe. It was the occasion for IMACE to better understand where dietitians stand when it comes to the fat intake, and also what is their attitude towards margarine products.

Most dietitians acknowledged that margarine & spreads have a more interesting fat profile compared to animal fat sources, however, they often have difficulties to convince patients to include margarine and spreads in the diet due to the negative perception some patients have on the product.

For IMACE it is great news to see that nutrition specialists are already convinced about the nutritional benefits of margarine products. And we count on them to help us spreading the good word!

IMACE Events Calendar



- **WHO Better Food for Better Health workshop,**
16 February 2016
- **Food product improvement Conference, organised by
the Dutch Presidency,** Amsterdam, 22-23 February 2016
- **ESPOAG event (IMACE coorganiser), hosted by MEP Julie Girling,**
Brussels, 5 April 2016
- **EPOA European Industry Meeting on Palm Oil,**
Brussels, 6 April 2016