

# Scandinavian Journal of Food and Nutrition – Renewal based on 50-years' tradition

This is the first issue of *Scandinavian Journal of Food and Nutrition*, and yet its 50<sup>th</sup> volume. The journal was launched in 1957 as “*Näringsforskning* (Swedish for “Nutrition Research”) with the aim to inform a broad circle of professional readers interested in the progress of nutrition research. The publication was made possible through a grant from the food industry.

The Swedish Nutrition Foundation took over the journal once this foundation had been established in 1961 and continued publishing reviews on progress in nutrition research. In 1972 when the first Swedish professors in human nutrition had been appointed, one of them, *Leif Hambræus*, took over the editorship and was succeeded by *Bo Hallgren* in 1978. In the 1980's there was an increased interest in publishing original research papers and a formal reviewing process for such original contributions was established. The preferred language for original papers was English and the journal hence renamed to *Scandinavian Journal of Nutrition/Näringsforskning*. *Gösta Samuelson* continued and elaborated this development as Editor-in-Chief from 1996, assisted by *Anita Laser Reuterswärd*. The *Editorial Board* was enlarged with nutrition scientists outside Scandinavia, and four *Assistant Editors* were appointed. From 2002, an agreement was made with Taylor & Francis as publisher of the *Scandinavian Journal of Nutrition*.

It is a challenging and demanding task to take over as *Editor-in-Chief*, and I would like to express our sincere thanks to *Gösta Samuelson* whose devoted work successively improved the journal and paved the way for a renewed development. Our special gratitude also goes to one of the *Assistant Editors*, *Jan I Pedersen*, who resigned after 2005. We welcome his successor *Asim Dutta*, who will serve in the group of *Editors*, together with the previous assistant editors *Mikael Fogelholm*, *Lars-Åke Persson* and *Inge Tetens*. The success of the journal is highly dependent upon the continuous engagement and input from the Editors as well as the Editorial Board.

At the prospect of issuing the 50<sup>th</sup> volume a number of considerations had to be made. Questionnaires about the need of a Scandinavian journal in the field of nutrition revealed a great interest from potential contributors as well as different groups of readers. A scientific nutrition journal with a Scandinavian/Nordic profile and an internationally competitive quality was considered as needed, even essential. A suggested change of name to *Scandinavian Journal of Food and Nutrition*, *SJFN*, was supported and considered useful to indicate a broad scope covering different aspects of nutrition, and with an emphasis on food-related nutrition.

## In this issue

Nutrition and nutrition research is a broad subject, which can be considered as both its strength and its weakness. It was not until 1968 that the International Union of Nutritional Sciences (IUNS) was included in the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) and thereby recognised as a science in itself. This was pointed out in the 30 years anniversary issue of the journal by *Björn Isaksson*, at that time Secretary General of IUNS. His view on human nutrition research was that it should primarily generate result and facts necessary to underpin recommendations on how foods should be used and combined at various ages in order to promote optimally the health of the consumer.

In this first issue of *SJFN*, the *New Nutrition Science* project of the IUNS and the World Health Policy Forum is presented by *Geoffrey Cannon* and *Claus Leitzman*. The overall goal of that project is worded as “to enable nutrition science to gain all possible relevance in the circumstances of the twenty-first century”. “The three dimensions of the new nutrition science are biological as well as social and environmental. Its concerns are personal, population, and also planetary health and welfare. It is only by combining biological, social and environmental approaches that nutrition science can fulfil its potential to preserve, maintain, develop and sustain life on earth.” So, although nutrition is

the mother discipline of biochemistry, as pointed out in the article, it is a very broad field, and no doubt, a key science for mankind.

Large scale industrial food production has the potential of enhancing – or deteriorating – the nutritional value. Foods with scientifically proved added value, in addition to providing normal nutrients, are often referred to as “functional foods”, although this concept is often used more broadly for different kinds of nutritionally improved foods. In spite of the present emphasis on functional foods very little research has been done on consumer understanding of benefits of such foods. The paper by *Mari Niva* is therefore particularly interesting showing how socio-demographic factors and personal health efforts play a role in the adoption of functional foods.

*Serena Tonstad et al.* used a similar methodology, computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI), in their study on weight concerns and beliefs in Norway. The desire to lose weight was motivated primarily by the desire for better health and well-being. While the role of heredity was widely recognized, very few of the interviewees believed that medical treatments were effective.

A series of mini-reviews on the importance of early feeding for later health are based on presentations at a conference on the subject in Stockholm 16 November 2005. One important conclusion was that although breast-feeding diminishes the risk of infections, there is no evidence for any protective

effect against allergy, which is often put forward as an argument for breast-feeding. Although exclusive breastfeeding for six month according to current WHO recommendations is important from many points of view, not the least in developing countries, data from recent research in relation to the “epidemic” of celiac disease in Sweden in the early 1990s indicate that gluten-containing foods should be gradually introduced during breastfeeding.

In the discussion the temporal nature of advice was pinpointed. Both advisors and recipients have to be aware that advices may change when science develops. It was stressed that advise should be scientifically well founded and without risks, considering also possible psychological side effects.

You are most welcome to read the first issue of the *Scandinavian Journal of Food and Nutrition*. To fulfil the goal to produce a high-quality international journal, we are dependent upon you readers to submit excellent contributions, original papers as well as reviews on current issues and controversies. The journal can offer a rapid high-quality reviewing process and publication, with papers posted online as soon as they are accepted for fastest possible availability.

*Nils-Georg Asp*  
Editor-in-Chief  
E-mail: [asp@snf.ideon.se](mailto:asp@snf.ideon.se)

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