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Food policies to support healthy eating

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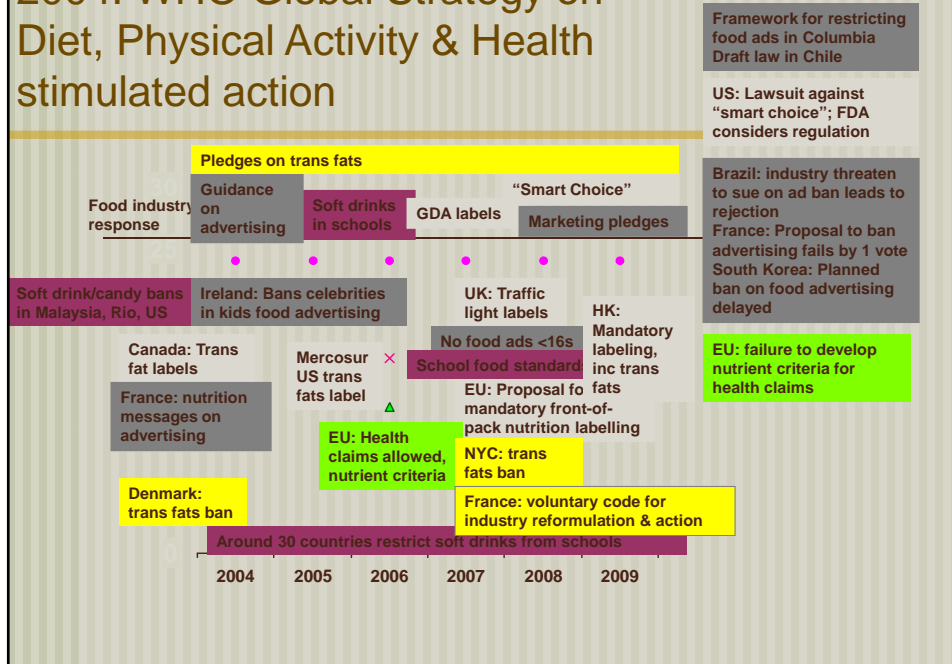
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HOW HAVE FOOD
POLICIES BEEN
USED SO FAR TO
PROMOTE HEALTHY
EATING?

First steps in the 1990s

- Nutrition labelling in United States
- Salt content restrictions in Finland
- Signposting symbols in Finland and Sweden

2004: WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity & Health stimulated action



Food policies to promote healthy eating around the world tend to focus on:

- Nutrition labelling
 - Nutrient claims & health claims
 - Marketing to children
 - School food standards (drinks)
 - Food content (reformulation)
- “Information” environment
- Content & standards

Nutrition labelling

POLICY TRENDS

- More mandatory labelling (13)
- More transfat labelling (8)
- More graphical labelling (industry, UK, EU)
- More menu labelling

CHALLENGES

- Costs
- What nutrients & how many?
- Do they work?

EVIDENCE

- Helpful for people already aware of nutrition
- Consumers confused by lots of information & variety of labels
- Graphical approaches may help

Restricting food marketing to children

POLICY TRENDS	CHALLENGES	EVIDENCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ More explicit policies (22)■ More self-regulation■ More specific restrictions & messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Private sector opposition■ Details of policy design■ Do they work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Known that TV advertising influences purchase requests and consumption■ Can reduce exposure by children

Soft drinks in schools

POLICY TRENDS	CHALLENGES	EVIDENCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ More restrictions (30)■ Voluntary action but governments more restrictive on drinks than industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ School opposition■ What drinks?■ Do they work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Mixed evidence on consumption but indicators inconsistent■ No research on preferences or longer-term consumption

Product reformulation

TRENDS

- More salt reduction programs
- Voluntary industry action on trans fats

CHALLENGES

- Costs
- Technology
- Do they work?

EVIDENCE

- Reduced salt intake in Finland, UK
- Less trans fats in foods
- No evidence on calories

WHAT ELSE IS BEING DISCUSSED?

Pricing & financial incentives

- Why is it being discussed?
 - Consumers say prices are important
 - Food retailers have sophisticated pricing strategies
 - Clear response to price promotions
- Challenges
 - Effect of prices on purchasing difficult to quantify - varies with consumers, foods etc
 - How to implement?

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- What's been done so far?
 - Local or targeted financial incentives
 - Recent review published in UK identified around 35 local or national examples to encourage healthier eating
 - Manipulation of food prices
 - Provision of subsidies
 - Use of rewards

Retailing

- Why is it being discussed?
 - Studies suggest access to shops can be important
 - Majority of decisions made at point of purchase
 - Heavy sales promotions in supermarkets
- Challenges
 - Clash between “buying more” supermarket strategy and “eating less” public health strategy
 - Voluntary approaches, incentives or regulation?
 - Working with supermarkets or encouraging alternative retailing channels

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- What’s been done so far?
 - Location of supermarkets and markets in communities with poor food access
 - Improving the “healthiness” of convenience/mom & pop stores
 - Voluntary action on sales promotions, product lines, fruit & vegetable promotion

Agriculture

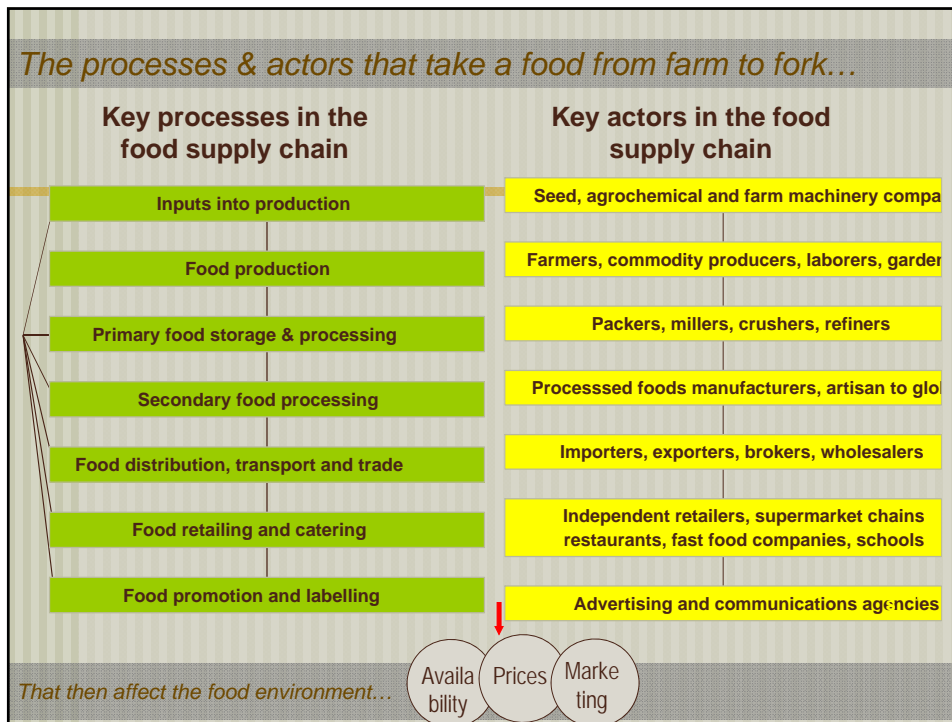
- Why?
 - Big subsidy programs = incentives for consumption
 - Local approaches benefit farmers and consumers
 - Consumers identify “naturalness” with health
- Challenges
 - A “blunt” instrument?
 - National agriculture influenced by global agriculture
 - Different interests of agricultural sector
 - Scaling up “local” approaches

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- What’s been done so far?
 - Nothing on subsidy side
 - Proliferation of direct marketing initiatives
 - Farmers markets
 - Farm-to-school
 - Supply chains from local producers
 - Large-scale food industry wanting to be perceived as the “farmers friend”

The situation so far

- Food policies around the world mainly used to control the information environment & food content/standards
- Aim is to affect consumption, not supply
- Subject of political battles
- Key challenge is defining “healthy”/“unhealthy” foods
- Evidence suggests that making some difference although comprehensive picture not available yet
- Interest expanding in other approaches

CONTEXTUALIZING &
BROADENING THE
FOOD POLICY
APPROACH: AN
ORGANIZING
FRAMEWORK



Leads to a definition of “food policies” for healthy eating...

- Policies that intervene or draw on some aspect of the food supply chain to create a healthier food environment
- Distinct from health promotion campaigns & programmes targeted directly at consumers in the absence of actions in the food supply chain
- But *should* take into account the affects of the consumer on the supply chain

... & an approach to identifying & formulating food policies

- First identify problem in the food environment
- Then map the supply chain, and identify the incentives & disincentives in the chain (policy, technology, financial, organisational) that affect the food environment
- To create sustainable and effective change, food policies need to lever the incentives and disincentives in the chain to change the food environment

At the moment, incentives in many supply chains do not favor a healthy environment

■ Start by identifying the problem

- Key incentives to identify are organizational, financial, technological, regulatory/policy - and the consumer

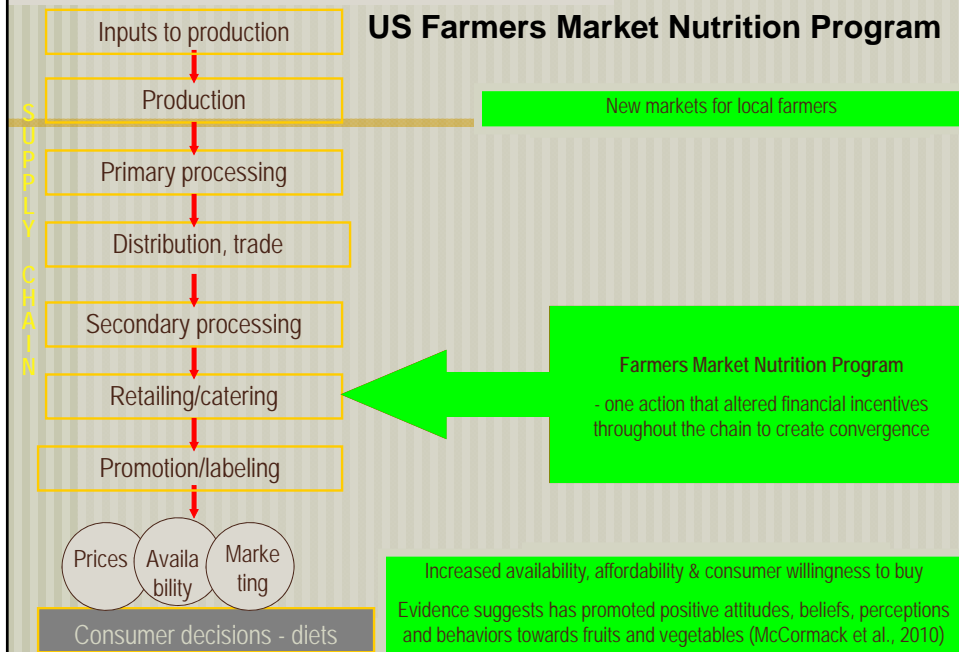
■ Why are soft drinks in schools?

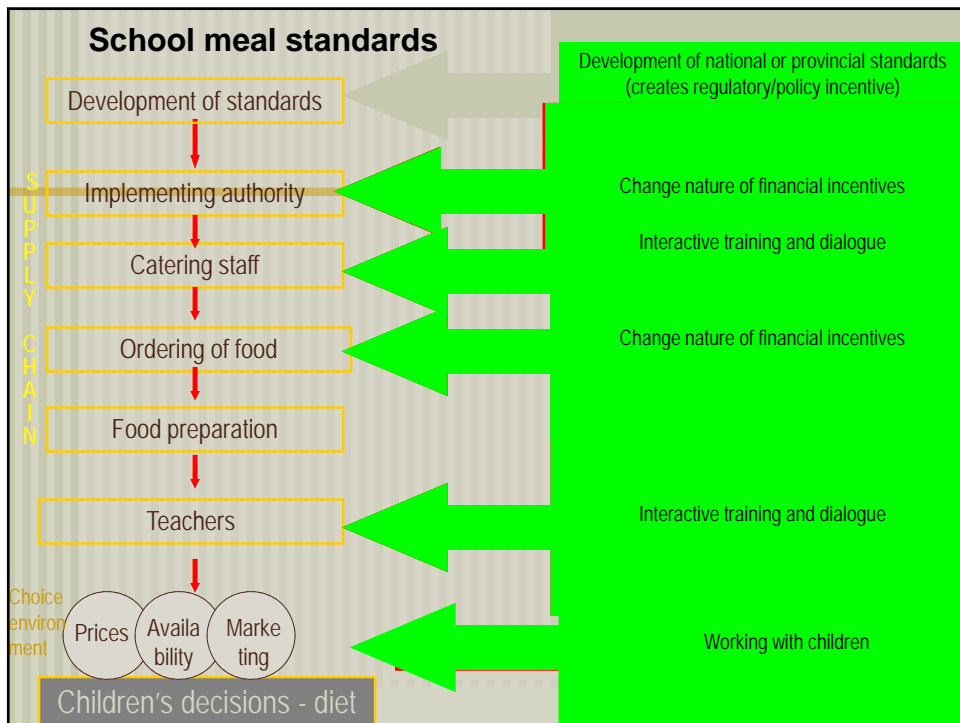
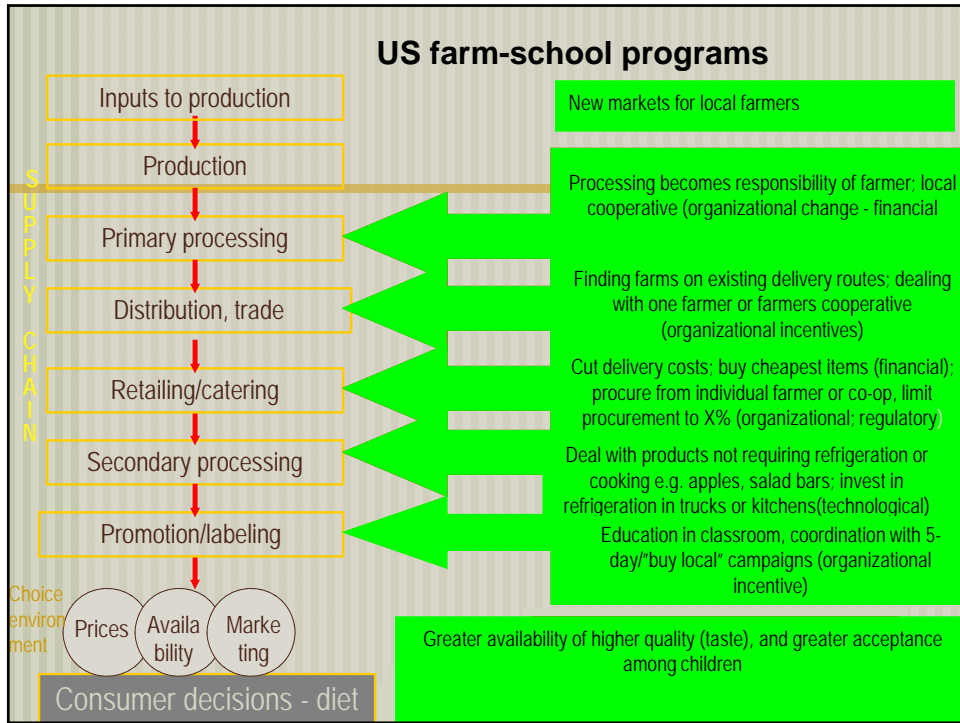
- **Organizational**
 - Weak power of schools
- **Financial**
 - Vending machines as high margin outlets for Bottlers
- **Technological**
 - Efficient vending technologies
- **Policy/regulation**
 - Placement permitted in schools
- **Consumers**
 - Appeal to young people

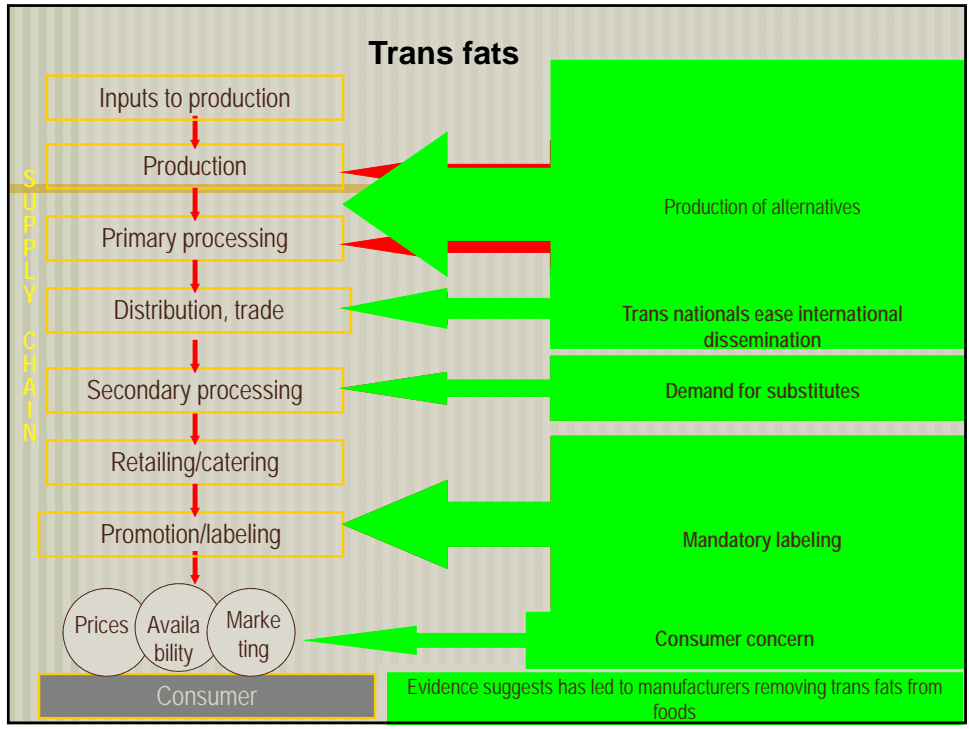


THE CHALLENGE FOR FOOD POLICIES IS TO CREATE THE COHERENCE THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE FOOD CHAIN

Examples



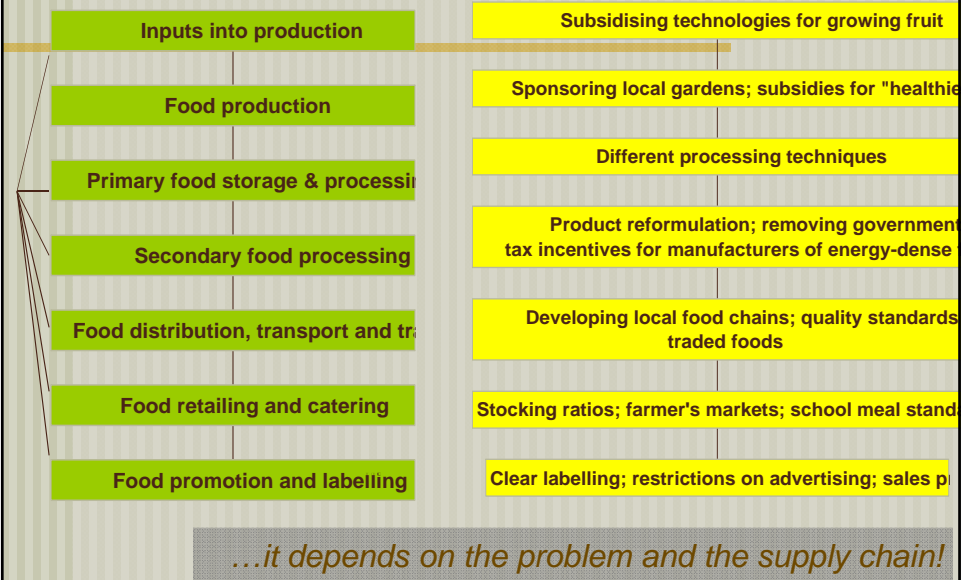




CONCLUSIONS

What are the food policy options?

Numerous.... any action in the food supply chain...



Conditions for success

- Take a supply chain approach
- Think innovatively about where the best place to intervene might be
- Work with other actors in the food supply chain but recognize that interests are different
- Gather the evidence so far & place in this context
- Monitor & evaluate based on an appropriate set of indicators

Limitations of food policy approaches

- Requires commitment and investment
- Different actors in the food supply chain will always have different interests - political battles are likely
- Difficult to measure the effects over the short-term

Strengths of food policy approaches

- A framework for linked solutions to different problems (health, sustainability) and for different groups (farmers, eaters)
- Have the potential to create positive long-lasting change in the food environment

Thank you!
