

Nutrition and Ecology: Health and Community Flourishing

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Rooted Community Health

The Rooted Community Health (RCH) initiative seeks to engage partners across the Vanderbilt campus and communities of Middle Tennessee in service to ecological sustainability, health promotion and human flourishing, and an ethically responsible understanding of our interdependency as a community within the vision of population health. Through partnering with the Osher Center for Integrative Medicine, colleagues in nutrition services, and other sustainability and health professionals, RCH aims to enhance community engagement through programming around ecology, sustainability, and health care. RCH is committed to facilitating trans-institutional transformation at Vanderbilt and enhancing our community's health through community engagement, scholarship, and research in ecology, health, and sustainability.

Health of the Community

“Health is not just the sense of completeness in ourselves but also is the sense of belonging to others and to our place; it is an unconscious awareness of community, of having in common”

Wendell Berry, *Health is Membership*, 1995

affection as the motivator

“The *primary* motive for good care and good use is always going to be affection, because *affection involves us entirely*... Without this informed, practical, and *practiced* affection, the nation and its economy will conquer and destroy the country.”

Wendell Berry, *It All Turns on Affection*, 2012

Ethics of Care

“The ethics of care values the ties we have with particular other persons and the actual relationships that partly constitute our identity.”

Virginia Held, *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global*, 2006

The Work

- Community Supported Agriculture
- Dietetic Internship
- Teaching Kitchen Collaborative
- Menus of Change University Research Collaborative

Obesity and Nutrition

- Eating in Moderation
- Physical Activity/Exercise
- Eating more fruits and vegetables
- Avoiding processed foods and refined sugars
- Reducing salt

Community Food

1.Relational

1.Accessible

1.Ecological

1.Culturally Appropriate

1.Caring

Ecological



Environmental Nutrition

“Environmental nutrition examines the public health impacts of social, economic, and environmental factors related to the entire food system.”

Health Care Without Harm

Figure 1: Not All Apples Are Created Equal

Environmental Nutrition Redefines What Constitutes Healthy Food

TRADITIONAL NUTRITION

Focuses on biochemical components of food and individual food consumption

Asks:

How much Vitamin C?

How many calories?

How much fiber?



ENVIRONMENTAL NUTRITION

Accounts for social, political, economic, and environmental factors related to the food system as a whole

Also asks:

Was it grown with harmful pesticides or synthetic fertilizers?

What labor standards were used?

Were toxic chemicals used in packaging?

Source: HCWH, *Environmental Nutrition*

Meat Consumption

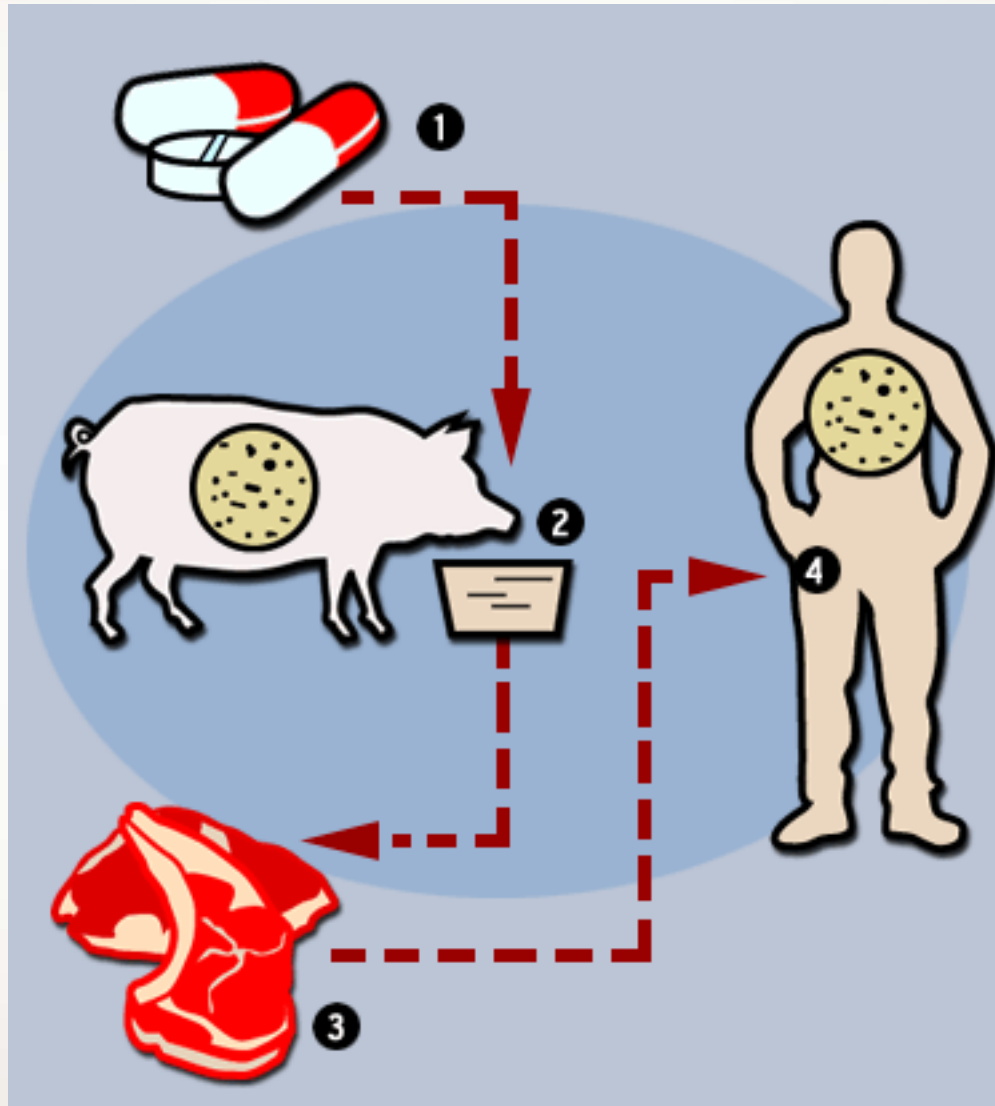
- Steady rise in meat consumption since 1960s
- Shift to Confine Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO)
- Increased use of antibiotics in animal agriculture to stimulate growth and prevent disease.
 - 70% of all antibiotics used in the U.S. are administered in industrial farm animal production.



Source: <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/imported-ol/other-resources/2012/07/13/pew-environment-group-urges-senate-to-reject-cloaked-attack-on-contract-poultry-growers>



Source: <http://brandyaddison.blogspot.com/>



Soil Erosion

- Caused by rain, wind, lack of soil structure, exposed soil
- Agricultural methods such as monoculture, lack of cover cropping, intensive plowing, and over grazing encourage soil erosion
- U.S. loses 10.8t/ha/year
 - Soil regeneration rate is 0.5-1.0t/ha/year

Soil Erosion

- Increased water runoff
- Loss of vital organic material and plant nutrients
- Loss of biodiversity



Source: <http://modernfarmer.com/2017/03/wes-jackson-the-land-institute-kernza/>

Corn and HFCS

- High Fructose Corn Syrup is one of the primary sweeteners used in the U.S.
- Corn is a major commodity crop in the U.S.
- 511 million bushels of corn went to HFCS production in the 2000s
- Pesticide and fertilizer use threatens watersheds and drinking water

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