

February 2, 2026

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services  
200 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Brooke L. Rollins  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Kennedy and Secretary Rollins:

As over 200 members of the medical and research community, we are deeply concerned that the advice in the recently released **2025–2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA)** is, at best, confusing, and, at worst, harmful to public health. By rejecting the majority of evidence-based recommendations from the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee, we believe the document falls short of its legal mandate—from the National Nutrition Monitoring and Related Research Act of 1990 (Public Law 101-445)—for the Guidelines to be based on “the preponderance of the scientific and medical knowledge which is current at the time the report is prepared.”<sup>1</sup> This DGA process also does not comply with President Trump’s May 2025 Executive Order No. 14303, “Restoring Gold Standard Science.”<sup>2</sup>

Instead, the new DGA purports to be based on a newly released “Scientific Foundation,” developed with much less rigor and transparency than the DGAC report. The Scientific Foundation uses inconsistent standards of evidence across food groups, starting from a baseline assumption (without scientific justification) that “minimally processed, naturally nutrient-dense foods are the reference point for dietary guidance.”<sup>3</sup> While the authors required no evidence that minimally processed foods are universally beneficial and highly processed foods are harmful, they required an extremely high standard of evidence (“strong causal evidence”) to disprove this assumption.<sup>4</sup> In contrast, the DGAC applied the same standards of evidence across food groups. Furthermore, the majority of the Scientific Foundation’s evidence reviews were narrative reviews, largely authored by one person. Given that the majority of authors had relevant conflicts of interest and were largely reviewing the

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture & U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Scientific Foundation for the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030*. January 2026. [https://cdn.realfood.gov/Scientific%20Report\\_1.8.26.pdf](https://cdn.realfood.gov/Scientific%20Report_1.8.26.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> The White House. “Executive Order on Restoring Gold Standard Science,” May 23, 2025. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/05/restoring-gold-standard-science/>

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture & U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Scientific Foundation for the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030*, p 1. January 2026. [https://cdn.realfood.gov/Scientific%20Report\\_1.8.26.pdf](https://cdn.realfood.gov/Scientific%20Report_1.8.26.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture & U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Scientific Foundation for the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030*, p 1. January 2026. [https://cdn.realfood.gov/Scientific%20Report\\_1.8.26.pdf](https://cdn.realfood.gov/Scientific%20Report_1.8.26.pdf)

scientific literature in a non-systematic way, **the risk of bias across the Scientific Foundation’s reviews is much higher compared to the DGAC’s reviews**, which were systematic, conducted by a group of authors with diverse perspectives, peer reviewed by external reviewers before publication and open to public comment after publication. Our concern over conflicts of interest in the new report is not merely theoretical: **seven of the nine authors had relationships with food and supplement companies, including the meat and dairy industries.**

Additionally, **some of the DGA recommendations have no scientific justification** (e.g., limiting added sugars to 10g per meal), while others conflict with each other. For example, the 2025-2030 DGA continues the longstanding recommendation to limit saturated fat intake to 10% of calories, but simultaneously recommends meeting serving recommendations for protein, dairy, and healthy fats with red meat, full fat dairy, and butter and beef tallow. Attempting to follow these serving recommendations could easily result in exceeding the daily saturated fat limit. Unlike the DGAC, the Scientific Foundation authors seem to have conducted no food pattern modeling, which is used to harmonize food group and nutrient recommendations and avoid contradictions like this one. **This inconsistency is dangerous given the strong and consistent evidence linking saturated fat to increased risk of cardiovascular disease.**<sup>5</sup> A DGA grounded in science would reinforce the saturated fat limit with recommendations to limit red and processed meat and full-fat dairy, given their high saturated fat content and the association between higher consumption of red meat and increased risks of heart disease and cancer.<sup>6,7,8</sup> Heart disease is the leading cause of death for men, women, and across most racial and ethnic groups in the United States; the stakes could not be higher.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, some of the reviews used to justify new recommendations were not generalizable to a healthy population, the target audience for the DGA. For example, a review of the effects of high protein diets for weight management in adults with overweight and obesity was a large part of the justification for a dramatic increase in recommended protein intake for everyone.

**Finally, the departure from the 2025 DGAC’s recommendations in favor of meat and dairy industry-friendly advice is likely to undermine public trust in the DGA as an evidence-based resource.** The conflict of interest is clear not only from the relationships of the Scientific Foundation’s authors, but from the USDA’s pre-existing (October 2025) commitment to use the DGA to “fortify the American Beef Industry.”<sup>10</sup> That is not the purpose of the DGA.

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<sup>5</sup> Dow C. Is saturated fat good or bad? Center for Science in the Public Interest. January 2026. <https://www.cspi.org/article/saturated-fat-good-or-bad>

<sup>6</sup> American Institute for Cancer Research. Limit consumption of red and processed meat. American Institute for Cancer Research. <https://www.aicr.org/cancer-prevention/recommendations/limit-consumption-of-red-and-processed-meat/#overview-top-tips>

<sup>7</sup> American Heart Association. Saturated fats. American Heart Association. August 23, 2024. <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/fats/saturated-fats>

<sup>8</sup> World Cancer Research Fund. Meat and cancer. World Cancer Research Fund. <https://www.wcrf.org/preventing-cancer/topics/meat-and-cancer/>

<sup>9</sup> Murphy SL, Kochanek KD, Xu J, Arias E. Mortality in the United States, 2023. National Center for Health Statistics Data Brief No. 521. December 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db521.htm>

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture. USDA Plan to Fortify the American Beef Industry: Strengthening Ranches, Rebuilding Capacity, and Lowering Costs for Consumers. October 2025. <https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2025/10/22/secretary-rollins-announces-plan-american-ranchers-and-consumers>

**We call on the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)—as well as professional medical and nutrition associations—to issue science-based dietary guidance that truly promotes health and prevents chronic disease.** Further, since several government nutrition programs are tied to the DGAs, and the current version is neither scientifically sound nor detailed enough to guide implementers, we urge the agencies to provide further guidance for implementation that is grounded in scientific consensus.

Sincerely,

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