



The Future of Food with Chris Vogliano, PhD, RDN (ep – 38)

[00:00:00] **Chris Vogliano:** We need to be looking at the triple bottom line of people, planet, and the profit if we truly want a food system that's sustainable. And so, that starts by growing the right foods, but then also making sure that we have equitable access. That is a huge barrier to so many folks living in the United States.

[00:00:21] **Ginger Hultin:** Welcome to the Good Clean Nutrition Podcast. I'm your host, Ginger Hultin. I'm an Integrative Registered Dietitian Nutritionist. Today, I'm talking with my friend and colleague, Chris Vogliano. He's a PhD dietitian and a technical advisor of food systems within the United States Agency for International Development.

Chris has worked to promote equity and sustainability across the food system, including designing policies and programs both nationally and internationally. I've worked with Chris for many years in several different capacities and I'm really excited for you to get to meet him today too. Chris brings a wealth of knowledge from his experiences in varying cultures and communities around the world.

Sharing with us the importance of dietary diversity, the power of legumes in both nutritional and environmental health, and the critical relationship between personal food choices and global sustainability efforts. In the last episode, we talked with Chris about sustainable food choices on the environment and our health.

Today, we're diving into the fascinating intersection of nutrition, sustainability, and the future of food systems. And we're going to explore the connection between people and planet and how we can make strides towards a more sustainable global food system. From the benefits of a plant-based diet to the impact of agricultural practices on biodiversity, and even the future of food technologies like lab grown meat, we're covering it all.

But first When I was a nutrition student getting my master's degree in nutrition at Bastyr University, we had to do volunteer hours in three areas. We had to do

clinical practice, community, and food service. So the thought there is that you're going to get lots of different experiences. in different ways that you might work in the future.

My community work really was around being in food banks, working with food access in the Seattle area. And that really spurred my interest in the hunger issues that we have in the U. S. And then in 2017 I got the opportunity to write an article about lab grown meat. That's also sometimes called cultured meat.

It was for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and it was this emerging topic and I got to dive into the research and explore This new food technology at the time, it was not available. It had just been developed in 2013 and that project to make, I think it was a burger that they made, was 300, 000. I was so intrigued by this type of food technology.

We've always known that consumer acceptability That's going to be the biggest problem. But there's clear pros too, that I think are really incredibly important. Less greenhouse gas emissions, possibly less animal suffering and importantly, better food safety. So less outbreaks and recalls. When people ask me about this technology.

I love to ask people, like my clients, will you try it? Will you not? I like to think about that for myself. What does it mean for people that have religious restrictions? What does it mean for people that are vegan? The truth is people in this country, people globally, do not have enough access to food.

They certainly don't have enough access to protein. So when we look at the environment and food and individual health, we really need to be open minded about what we're doing. Where have we been? What are the problems that we're facing right now? And how do we look into the future and how do we feed people long term in a way that's going to positively benefit health around the world?

In the last episode, Chris, we talked about individual health and how it connects to planetary health. So I actually want to zoom out and talk more globally. So what is a path forward to a more sustainable global food system?

[00:04:02] **Chris Vogliano:** That's, that's the million-dollar question, Ginger. But if. If we were to take some broad brushstrokes of how to make our global food system more sustainable, I would advocate for food systems that are locally resilient and culturally representative of the people living there, but that are also globally connected, right?

We all like to eat bananas. We can't grow bananas in Ohio or really most places in the United States. So there's a kind of a give and take there. But I do think that regionalizing our food systems as much as possible can help prevent disruptions in our food supply chain and ensure a more stable source of nutrition throughout the year.

We need to produce food in a way that actively restores biodiversity rather than eliminates it. And right now our food system is the the number one driver of biodiversity loss in the world. And there's an opportunity for us to use a different agricultural practices such as ecology or regenerative agriculture, regenerative aquaculture, to not only produce food, but produce food in a way that actively restores biodiversity and ecosystem services.

[00:05:08] **Ginger Hultin:** It sounds like we need to be thinking about this in a new way and creating new technology that is supportive of the environment and also gives us good food.

[00:05:16] **Chris Vogliano:** Technology is a big piece of it. The types of foods that we are producing and I also mean, you know, how policy and the Farm Bill, for instance, is influencing the subsidies and types of foods that we produce in America.

So there's an opportunity on all levels. to diversify our food system, make it more resilient against climate change, more efficient and equitable too.

[00:05:39] **Ginger Hultin:** What changes do we need to start with?

[00:05:44] **Chris Vogliano:** We need to be looking at the triple bottom line of people, planet, and the profit if we truly want a food system that's sustainable.

And so that starts by growing the right foods, but then also making sure that we have equitable access. That is a huge barrier to so many folks living in the United States. You know, I worked in the middle of East Cleveland and I saw firsthand that getting fruits and vegetables is near impossible. There are no major grocery stores.

There are food deserts or food swamps, if you will. Food desert means there's no food, but food swamp means there's food, but it's loosely defined as food because it's highly processed and not super nutritious. There's a real opportunity for us to build food environments that promote, um, health and that are affordable, that are accessible, that are culturally appropriate.

And right now our current food system is not doing a good job at that. So ensuring equitable access is also critically important. And then on the individual level, um, just diversifying our diets. That's like my number one recommendation to anyone who's like, how do I get healthier? I'm just like, eat as many food groups as possible.

Eat as many colors as possible. Um, combine them into different, uh, meal patterns, because that is truly like, if you, if you think about you're eating a diverse diet, we're more than have to grow those diverse foods, which is much better for the planet than growing an individual monoculture over and over again.

So diverse balanced diets is my kind of high level recommendation for individuals.

[00:07:17] **Ginger Hultin:** I really like that. And that's something that I can help my clients easily incorporate. And then I could also do for myself.

[00:07:22] **Chris Vogliano:** And if you wanted to add a bonus, if you can diversify your diet with what we call forgotten foods or neglected and underutilized species.

So rather than just always opt in for the same grain, try a new one. I mean, if you go to the bulk store, bulk section of stores, there are probably many grains that you see and haven't tried like, uh, Frico or Faro is my personal favorite. There are so many grains and legumes and vegetables that we may not be as familiar with, but I would say try to be adventurous and invest a little bit and see what they taste like and you might be pleasantly surprised.

[00:07:53] **Ginger Hultin:** Yeah. I have a millet recipe on my website, which is really cool food. And I mean, I feel like even things like buckwheat, right? I mean, you don't, or barley, you don't always think about as a major grain and there's a lot you can do with them.

[00:08:07] **Chris Vogliano:** They all have their own flavor profiles and unique nutrition, uh, contribution too.

Yeah. Cool. to our diets.

[00:08:12] **Ginger Hultin:** This reminds me that I wanted to talk about plant based diets with you. You're a true plant based expert. You were talking about diversifying our food sources and getting people to eat more plant based sources

of protein. The research pretty clearly shows that we need to be having more plants.

And a lot of times we have too much saturated fat. There's a lot of saturated fat in meat. And so again, it's just an easy way to reach individual health goals in a way that is evidence based for the planet. You did mention that one of the three main crops is soy, and I'm wondering how you feel about like tofu and tempeh, like soy based foods.

Are those still beneficial?

[00:08:47] **Chris Vogliano:** Absolutely. Yeah, the majority of the soy that we produce is actually for animal feed. Most of that goes into cattle feed and soy feed. chicken feed. We're only consuming a fraction of a percent directly as soy based products. But that said, those soy based products, like you mentioned, tempeh and tofu and soy milk, are foods that are incredibly nutrient dense, culturally relevant, and I personally eat all of them most days.

I love soybeans. I'm a huge fan. I think that there's a lot of confusing narratives around soy based foods. I know Ginger, you're more of an expert in this space than I am and maybe you can comment on kind of where that confusion comes from and why we should be confident in eating soy based foods.

[00:09:27] **Ginger Hultin:** Oh, absolutely.

It's something I talk about constantly. I think there's so much confusion about it. And especially in the cancer space, I'll hear things like, I shouldn't eat soy because I had breast cancer or what have you. And I am always like, false, that is not true. And the evidence doesn't support that anymore. So what I do recommend is similar to what you're saying is whole base soy foods like tofu, tempeh, edamame, miso.

Those are the kinds of foods that are beneficial for your health. And it sounds like also for the planet.

[00:09:54] **Chris Vogliano:** Absolutely. I mean, at the end of the day, soybean is a legume. And as we talked about, legumes are nutrient and planetary powerhouses. So yes.

[00:10:01] **Ginger Hultin:** We're looking at the plate and we're looking at protein.

What are some of the sources that you really think people should focus on for planetary health?

[00:10:08] **Chris Vogliano:** There are 10,000 varieties of legumes that exist. So, um, whether that's black beans, kidney beans, pinto beans, navy beans, green, red, brown lentils, peas, chickpeas. The other one is peanuts. We think of peanuts as a nut, but really it's a legume.

I love peanut butter. I put it in everything. My smoothies, I cook with it in curries. Um, Peanuts are incredibly nutrient dense, a good source of protein as we know, but they're also nitrogen fixers like legumes. So they are beneficial to the environment as well.

[00:10:41] **Ginger Hultin:** And I actually hear a lot of myths about peanuts.

I hear a lot of people say, oh, they're not as good as other nuts or what have you. But my understanding is that is not true at all. Like you said, they're great for the environment, but they're rich in protein. They've got antioxidants, they've got unsaturated heart healthy fats. They're a really powerful alt. protein source.

[00:10:58] **Chris Vogliano:** And not to discredit other nuts and seeds because they also have their benefits but peanuts on their own are excellent sources of nutrition.

[00:11:06] **Ginger Hultin:** So Chris, why is eating for a better planet also better for my heart or microbiome?

[00:11:12] **Chris Vogliano:** As we talked about in the last episode, there's a considerable overlap between what a sustainable diet is and what a healthy diet is.

And as registered dietitians, we both know that a healthy diet has a myriad of benefits that contribute to our well being and the well being of those around us. So, for instance, having a balanced diet with Essential nutrients, vitamins, and minerals is, is necessary for optimal health and the proper functioning of our body for disease prevention, such as developing heart disease, diabetes, certain types of cancer.

It's also really important for digestive health, specifically fiber. I know we've talked about that fiber quite a bit, but fiber is, a massively under consumed nutrient that's sourced from fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and that can promote healthy digestion, reduce the risk of digestive, um, disorders, and also protect us from disease.

There's also a strong link between what we eat and the healthfulness of our diet and mental health. Um, there's growing, growing evidence that a healthy diet can truly support mental health and reduce the risk of depression and anxiety and other mental health challenges.

[00:12:24] **Ginger Hultin:** When we're talking about eating more fruits and veggies, and we're talking about eating more beans and legumes, that naturally increases fiber.

And that is good for your gut health, but it also is known to help with cardiovascular health. So lowering cholesterol, for example. Of course, the gut microbiome now we're figuring out is linked to the immune system and strongly linked to mental health. I really liked your connection with the environment and mental health.

The conversation is vast, but there's a strong connection between planetary health, sustainability, and personal health. I want to move into a section where we're going to talk about some food buzzwords and I want to get into some nitty gritty details of things I have a passion around and really want to hear your expertise on.

Are you game for that?

[00:13:09] **Chris Vogliano:** Yeah, sounds good. Let's do it.

[00:13:10] **Ginger Hultin:** Okay, I've got some heavy hitters in here. First up, lab grown meat, also called cultured meat. Thoughts on that?

[00:13:20] **Chris Vogliano:** Okay, I think, uh, instantly people have that ick factor when they hear lab grown meat. So maybe, maybe cultured meat is the PR spin to make it more appealing.

To me, I'm interested to see where this industry goes because there are many pros of lab grown meats. For instance, it reduces or almost eliminates the need for animal farming, which can be much more sustainable and definitely more humane. As we know, 95 plus percent of Cattle, for instance, are raised in CAFOs or confined animal feeding operations in the United States, which are not humane.

And so this provides an opportunity to supply meat in a more humane way. Also, the data is pretty compelling around the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. And of course, you need much less land to produce lab grown meat

or cultured meat than traditional production. However, I, I think the, there are some barriers to the adoption.

One is just the ick factor. It's also currently really, really expensive and it's not widely available yet. So until that price point comes down, it's not going to be a viable option. Um, and I'm really curious to see how nutritionally it, compares to traditional meat and other sources of protein. Um, I don't think we'll have a good picture on that until we hit that price point and the industry hit the strides to where they can produce it at the pace and scale required.

[00:14:47] **Ginger Hultin:** Another piece of this, in my understanding, is that it could reduce the risk of infections or the foodborne illness like E. coli, salmonella. It could really, really benefit food safety practices.

[00:15:03] **Chris Vogliano:** The antibiotics we use today are used as routine feed amendments in animal agriculture. That helps them avoid illness, but it also helps them grow faster.

If you look at Even Center for Disease Control, they have highlighted that confined animal feeding operations where we produce our meat can be ground zero for our next pandemic because of that superbreeding of bacteria that exists in those spaces. So yes, to your point, I think lab grown meat reduces that risk significantly.

[00:15:34] **Ginger Hultin:** There's a consumer acceptability challenge, like you mentioned, I do want to talk you and me, like, would we, would we try it or not? So we can talk about that. But the reality is. A lot of people around the world don't have enough protein, right? And so I'm always intrigued by how could this help food access and equity around the world, like you've been talking about.

[00:15:54] **Chris Vogliano:** Yeah, no, that's a good point. Would I try it? Yeah, absolutely. I'm a pretty adventurous eater, so would you try it?

[00:16:00] **Ginger Hultin:** I would try it. You know, there's some very interesting ethical stuff about religious restrictions on meat consumption, right? Or plant based. If you're a vegan, would you try this? Do you count it as meat?

I think you're right about the nutritional. One other thing I've heard is, well, you can kind of grow it any way you want. You could add omegas. You could reduce the saturated fat. We have this interesting control. And so there's a lot to learn about this, but the food technology and how it relates to human health and planetary health is really intriguing.

[00:16:31] **Chris Vogliano:** I mean, if we're producing meat in the exact format that it's currently in, we know consuming it at the levels we're currently consuming, which is around 210 pounds per person per year is not healthy. And so replacing our current meat with lab grown meat, would be an environmental benefit, but maybe not a health benefit, unless we're also reducing the amount of meat we eat too, or tailoring the lab grown meat to make it more nutrient dense and less deleterious to our health.

[00:17:02] **Ginger Hultin:** On the topic of sustainability, I'm excited to share an innovative new product. Orgain's highly anticipated lactose free protein powder, Better Whey, is now available. Unlike animal-based whey from milk, Orgain's Better Whey protein powder is created through a gentle fermentation process inspired by traditional methods, yielding a high-quality protein source.

This results in a lactose free, hormone free, and easier to digest product. It's made with 10 times less water, 10 times fewer greenhouse gas emissions, and requires 1.5 times less energy consumption when compared to traditional whey. It tastes really great too. Each serving contains 21 grams of high-quality whey protein isolate, 5 grams of branched chain amino acids, and 1.

5 times the leucine of traditional whey. To learn more, visit Orgain.com. One area where there is a lot of misinformation is aquaculture. I have clients who have certain beliefs about farmed fish, and I often push back on that because there is a lot of ways to farm fish, and it has come a long way over the past few years.

I'm really curious to know how you feel about farmed fish and aquaculture.

[00:18:10] **Chris Vogliano:** It really depends on how farmed fish is produced. It can be done very well and sustainably, and it can be done pretty horribly, to be honest. It really does take a little bit of investigation as to where that product and that fish is produced, how it's produced.

But thankfully there are guides. We at Food and Planet are partnering as the official nutrition partner with Monterey Bay Aquarium and their Seafood Watch program. And so highly recommend checking out their website, the super green list. We're partnering with them over the next year to promote the most sustainable seafood options that exist.

And that includes nutrition. It also includes environmental and the ecological considerations when we're talking sustainable. It's really exciting that there are organizations that are working to do that background research. It simplifies the

complexities of making sustainable seafood choices. On that list, some of the species are farmed, and some of them are wild caught.

And if they're wild caught, or if they're farmed, it even goes down to the geographic area that's best. So all of those considerations are taken into account, uh, through third party verifications and educational materials.

[00:19:20] **Ginger Hultin:** I use that resource a lot. I think we should put it in the show notes for sure. And I love that you're partnering with them because it's Uh, they do a really nice job.

So I often will go over there and help my clients look at what is sustainable and also look at the nutritionals. Like you mentioned, I think they have some good mercury resources and things like that, that can be really, really helpful, um, depending on your health

[00:19:39] **Chris Vogliano:** goals. I do think that. Aquaculture and aquatic foods are going to be more and more prevalent on our plates and the future of our food systems.

74 percent of our planet is comprised of oceans and fresh water, so there's a real opportunity to leverage that space and reduce our environmental footprint on land, terrestrial foods, and Hopefully not. Hopefully learn from our mistakes of monoculture in land and not monoculture in the ocean. Um, that, that's at Food and Planet, what we're really advocating for is more of a regenerative aquaculture, meaning growing multiple species together and having ecosystem service benefits outside of the food production.

So producing more shrimp around seaweed, for example, or if you're growing oysters that can produce and help you. fish grow healthier and stronger. Looking at aquaculture in a regenerative, holistic way rather than what we have previously done on land and looked at it as like an extractive model and a monoculture model.

[00:20:39] **Ginger Hultin:** Right, right, right. And I want to hear more about regenerative aquatic species. But before we do that, tell me, Personally, do you eat farmed fish? Would you?

[00:20:50] **Chris Vogliano:** I do eat farmed fish, yes. I have some in my freezer right now. The farmed fish that I bought was from Iceland, and I know that their practices are more sustainable.

They don't use dyes. They don't use antibiotics. I feel more confident in buying, say, farmed salmon because I know that wild salmon Salmon specific species of wild salmon are near endangered.

[00:21:11] **Ginger Hultin:** Yeah, it's a great point. I do too. There's some really interesting aquaculture going on off the coast of the Pacific coast over here and up in Canada.

So, um, there's some people that are doing amazing work. I agree with that. But tell me about regenerative aquatic species like clams, oysters, mussels. bivalves.

[00:21:29] **Chris Vogliano:** So when we say regenerative aquatic species, there are two class of species we're talking about, either seaweeds or bivalves, and as you said, like bivalves include clams, oysters, mussels.

Um, I personally, I grew up in the Midwest, uh, where oysters, mussels were not. a common everyday food. And I personally didn't even like them until recently, until I started working in this space and realizing how beneficial they are. And now I've actually included them in my diet because the evidence is so clear that they are nutrient powerhouses, but also require no inputs to grow.

So what makes them regenerative is that they are actively expanding biodiversity if we farm them in the oceans. But they don't require fertilizers. They don't require pesticides. They just extract nutrients from the water. So they're incredibly sustainable. And when you look at the nutrient profiles of say a muscle, it compares to beef gram per gram.

And sometimes it's even higher. Muscles have higher, higher iron content. They have higher omega content. Calcium is higher. So there are nutrients. that beef excels in that actually mussels do better.

[00:22:35] **Ginger Hultin:** I did not realize the comparison there with beef. I do know that a lot of those bivalves are really, really high in zinc, and I recommend them for that all the time.

I feel lucky up here in the Pacific Northwest where I live. They're just on the beach, you know, they're everywhere, but not everybody has access. When people don't have access to fresh mussels, how do you recommend they incorporate them into their diets?

[00:22:58] **Chris Vogliano:** Canned mussels are an amazing source of nutrition, but they're shelf stable, right?

And they're much more affordable. So you can go to your local grocery store to, um, Giant Eagle to, uh, Aldi to Trader Joe's to Whole Foods, any of the stores and find canned mussels and they're, you know, a dollar or two max. And, and that is so nutrient dense, so much protein, so much, as you said, zinc and quite affordable and accessible.

And you don't have to worry about them going bad. They're already pre cooked. So you don't have to worry about food safety. So there are a lot of benefits to eating canned mussels. In addition, you can also find frozen versions of that. I was at Aldi the other day and I saw frozen scallops. I saw frozen oysters as well.

So the frozen options exist as well.

[00:23:45] **Ginger Hultin:** That's interesting. I need to look for that next time I'm out at the store, for sure. And bivalves, like you said, they're incredible. They help clean the ocean and we really need that right now. Well, you also mentioned seaweed and there's nothing I love talking more about than seaweed and sea vegetables.

They're so fascinating. How does that help?

[00:24:02] **Chris Vogliano:** Seaweeds are natural carbon sequester, sequester. So they actually sequester carbon from the atmosphere and, and through their roots and through kind of their tendrils, they sequester into the bottom of the ocean. So they're a carbon sink. So producing seaweeds actually is a net negative carbon emission food, which is just amazing.

And there are so many varieties of sea vegetables from. Dulse to kelp to wakame nori are the more common ones, but there are, you know, hundreds of varieties that are being explored for possible human and animal nutrition options. And so this space is likely going to explode over the next like few years.

Um, there's a lot of work and investment being done to produce these foods regionally. Um, I know at Food and Planet personally, we have been working with, uh, farmers from the Gulf Coast, the Atlantic Coast, uh, Pacific, Hawaii, Alaska, and Puerto Rico. And we are going to have them send in samples of their unique species.

So we can do a first of its kind nutrient analysis on these species. So we can understand the benefits of these foods, because right now, oftentimes these underutilized species don't even have a nutrient analysis done on them. So we

don't really know like how beneficial they are. So stay tuned. The data from those exercises will be released likely by the end of this year.

[00:25:26] **Ginger Hultin:** I am really, really excited about that. It seems like such an untapped resource, but my understanding is that seaweed has really incredible sources of different fibers. It also is really rich in different minerals, especially it's got iodine and it's got really unique antioxidants. Like it is an intriguing food.

[00:25:47] **Chris Vogliano:** If you look at some of the healthiest diets around the world, oftentimes seaweed is an important part of their diet pattern.

[00:25:54] **Ginger Hultin:** It's interesting though, kind of like the lab grown meat, are people going to accept that? Right now, seaweed is not very much a part of the traditional American diet. Could it be?

Like, what do you think the future of that is?

[00:26:06] **Chris Vogliano:** We actually did some testing on the term seaweeds and consumer testing and nutrition professional testing, and folks prefer the term sea vegetables. So I think that's a good place to start is calling them sea vegetables and not seaweeds because we think weed, we think something negative, but sea vegetables have been part of almost every culture around the world.

Historically speaking, so it's, it's a food that, uh, many cultures have forgotten, but have previously consumed. Many indigenous communities around the world are still consuming them, but I was in Scotland recently, uh, for a conference, and I was at the farmer's market there, and they had a massive array of seaweeds for sale, and I asked them, I was like, is this, is this new or, you know, what?

And they're like, no, we've always, you know, eating seaweeds. And it's an important part of our culture. Even at restaurants there, it came up on the menu way more than it does here. So I think it's just how we introduce or reintroduce these foods to folks that have forgotten how to integrate them in their diet and doing it in a way that is, is approachable, calling them like, like sea vegetables, or even incorporating them onto menus at restaurants.

So they can become more familiar with how they taste and what foods they pair with.

[00:27:13] **Ginger Hultin:** So bring on the seaweed. Are there any crops that are high in nutrition or really good for the environment that you're especially passionate about?

[00:27:22] **Chris Vogliano:** One of the most nutrient dense foods that we're not eating enough of, to me, are dark green leafy vegetables.

And there are so many varieties that we don't even fully have access to here in the U. S. But, so I do, um, work with the Global Diet Quality Project where we're measuring what the world eats and looking at diet quality across the world at a country level. And so I've had the opportunity to, like, Zoom, um, virtually Zoom around the world to conduct key informant interviews with, uh, nutritionists and everyday folks in, like, dozens and dozens of countries around the world.

And the dark green leafy vegetable food group category has always intrigued me because there are so many dark green leafy vegetables I've never even heard of, but we know that the research shows that these dark green leaves. contain an incredible density of nutrients, vitamin K, vitamin A, vitamin C, and um, are really connected strongly with positive health outcomes.

[00:28:15] **Ginger Hultin:** Let's get into how we make some of this happen. We obviously need some changes here. From a high level perspective, with your global expertise, how do we get people to make changes to what they eat and how they approach food and

[00:28:31] **Chris Vogliano:** Behavior change is hard, first and foremost, so not to Discount that. It is a challenge, but there are small and significant ways that we can alter what we eat that can improve our health and make a positive impact on the planet.

Again, I'm just going to preach diversification of our food system and diversification of our diets, including a wide variety of plant based foods. Also, there's a real opportunity for Fresh meal preparation kits, services, um, medically tailored meals is going to be an up and coming area that I'm really interested in watching closely because that's an opportunity for insurance to cover healthy, balanced meals.

Diverse diets, uh, meals rather for, you know, a low income or a population that is suffering from a various disease or chronic disease. There's real opportunity to diversify our food systems, and that shows up so many different ways, whether that's at the individual level, whether that's the policy level, and anywhere in between.

[00:29:30] **Ginger Hultin:** I'm also hearing more maybe neutrality and less influence from industry and really looking at the future of food in a way that looks forward.

[00:29:41] **Chris Vogliano:** I mean, industry is driving the narrative right now, and I'm taking most of the subsidy money to continue business as usual, and I feel like we, as consumers, truly need to vote with our dollar and advocate for systems change by choosing a wider variety of foods.

If we keep choosing the same food, the system will remain the same.

[00:30:03] **Ginger Hultin:** It's not business as usual anymore. Like, things are changing and I do think we need to think about things in different ways. And that's one thing that I help my individual clients think about, right? I talk about, yes, eat more greens than beans, but how do you do that?

And where do you buy them? And how do you prepare them? So I think knowledge is really helpful for the individual. You know that I do a lot of work around menus and meal planning. So a lot of times it's about knowing what to buy, having the confidence that you have a recipe to use them, and then also I think overlapping the food waste conversation in there could be helpful too.

And like we talked about using more canned and frozen food. So there's so much individuals can do. They just need to be more flexible. empowered to do so, have some education about it, and get that how to put it into practice going.

[00:30:53] **Chris Vogliano:** Absolutely. Well said. And, you know, I live alone in Ginger right now, so it's sometimes hard for me to buy all of these foods and create a meal that I'm just gonna be eating by myself.

There's a, there's a rise in these, healthy, fast, casual restaurants that I've been seeing when I lived in Seattle and then also New Zealand here in Cleveland. And I go and get like a poke bowl or a salad or something for around 10, 12, but there are maybe like 15 different species of foods in this one dish that I could not individually go out and buy all of these for an affordable price and have a such a diverse plate.

And so there's, there's a real opportunity for, I think, industry or the retail sector rather. Even like frozen foods to provide these diverse affordable meal options for us as well, especially those that are on the go or living by themselves and don't have the time or bandwidth to create a massive meal every night.

[00:31:51] **Ginger Hultin:** I'm really glad you brought that up because I don't want it to seem like people have to do everything from scratch and everything at home. That's definitely not true. And I hope that some of the future of this conversation is with more climate minded places to eat out and that have a focus on Indigenous foods or diverse foods.

That would be really, really amazing to see more of that. Who helps drive this change?

[00:32:15] **Chris Vogliano:** Industry is probably most at fault here just because they have the most to gain from business as usual. They're creating record profits year after year while charging more, shrinking package sizes, and giving us the illusion of choice.

When really there are only a few companies that control most of the brands in our grocery store, especially the processed and packaged foods, when you zoom into the ingredients of that diversity of choice, they're often made with just a few of the same basic staple ingredients, such as corn, rice, and wheat.

And so I, I think, and I even challenged a cereal company that I was talking to one of their dietitians, like how do we integrate more underutilized grains into cereals rather than only relying on wheat time and time and time again? There, there's opportunity for industry to step up to the plate, understand where the evidence and science is, and really offer foods that are beneficial to people and the planet.

[00:33:10] **Ginger Hultin:** Yeah, it would be really, really good to see more diversity, like millet. Cheerios or what have you. Yeah, I like that idea. And it sounds like government is doing some things right, actually, like when you mentioned the healthy plate and some of the suggested foods that we should be consuming, that seems to be on target for planetary health.

[00:33:30] **Chris Vogliano:** It's not perfect, but. If everyone followed the government dietary recommendations, we'd be in a much better place. I think even if you look at meat recommendations, the average American is consuming 210 pounds of meat per person per year, and the government recommendation is around 90 pounds per person per year.

We're consuming two and a half times what even the government is recommending. We could fine tune the government recommendations and we can argue about the nuances of that, but it's a really good starting point.

[00:33:57] **Ginger Hultin:** The research pretty clearly shows that if you actually follow that and you have half your plate B vegetables.

It really mimics what we're talking about here. So it makes me wonder, do people really understand the recommendations? Are they familiar with them? A lot of dieticians and other really highly qualified health experts are on the boards that develop those and they are evidence based recommendations.

[00:34:17] **Chris Vogliano:** The plate is not culturally representative of how all cultures eat, right?

Like you and I might eat off of a plate, but other cultures use a bowl or use chopsticks and not a fork and a knife. And so I think having the plate is already exclusionary to some cultures in some food ways. And dairy is often not included in many cultures because like half of the world's lactose intolerant.

I think having dairy as a food group on the USDA plate is exclusionary by itself. So there's a real opportunity to update it. to be more culturally inclusive. I do think that the dietary guidelines for Americans are acknowledging that and in the next rendition we'll probably see even more cultural inclusion.

The one area where there's a huge miss is the connection from human health and nutrition to planetary health. Food and Planet did a survey of the top leading national food based dietary guidelines and checked them all for sustainability indicators. I think there are like 25 indicators we looked at.

And, um, Out of all the top ones, the United States was performed by far the worst. Like, we don't talk about anything related to sustainability because of the politics behind food in our country. I think 2030s DGAs will include sustainability, but there are already, there are already other countries that are.

integrating sustainability science. For instance, Australia just announced yesterday that their 2026 guidelines will include sustainability. New Zealand updated theirs to include sustainability a few years ago. So did Canada. Brazil. We cannot think about human health and nutrition isolation from planetary health.

And so moving forward, I think we'll see guidelines honor that.

[00:35:52] **Ginger Hultin:** I'm excited to see some of the changes. I know even Canada recently made some very big changes to their dietary guidelines and these are important. They come out every five years and they really shape policy and planetary health and individual health.

What are some things that I could do at home to increase my health and the planet's health?

[00:36:12] **Chris Vogliano:** I love promoting food production at home. I think every little bit counts. Um, if you have a balcony and you grow some tomatoes, it connects you with that process of growing food. Um, even if you just have a small harvest, it's something, right?

And so I'm always a proponent. I have a rooftop garden in my apartment. It's a small little box, but um, it's something that keeps you connected to the process and gives you that respect and humility around food. So you end up wasting less, I find. I think it's important to kind of remember. Everything that goes into our food as we're eating it.

I do think that urban gardens and play a critical role in education and promoting regional food system resilience. I don't know if we can grow all of our food in an urban setting for an urban, urban population. That's just not really feasible at this point, at least with our current technology. Um, so I do think it will take a variety of farming systems to continue to produce enough food in the quantities and varieties that we need.

[00:37:07] **Ginger Hultin:** One of my big takeaways from today is definitely more of a focus on food waste. I just didn't realize the impact of some of the things you were educating about. So if we get into the details of how an individual can reduce food waste, one thing that I recommend is go into your week with a plan. Not that it has to be perfect, but plan ahead.

How many beets are you going to buy? How many carrots are you going to snack on? I think that going in with a plan can automatically help reduce food waste. What would you suggest as tangible takeaways here?

[00:37:40] **Chris Vogliano:** A little bit of forethought can really help reduce the amount of food that you waste, and frankly, save you money.

As we talked about earlier, the expiration date or the idea of expiration dates is really flawed and that there really is a Best Buy, Used By, Sell By date that's a quality date and not a safety date. So checking out resources that help you navigate how much longer after that Best Buy date, your food is still good.

I love freezing food. I, I freeze my leftovers all the time or if my bananas are going bad and I don't want to make banana bread again, I will freeze those and put them in smoothies. I'll freeze my fruit that might be going a little off and put

those in smoothies later too. There are a variety of, uh, kind of preservation methods.

that you can use. Lastly, I would just say composting. Even when you do have food waste, if you have the ability to compost, that does prevent it from entering the landfill and producing methane, and actually it turns it into a nutrient rich soil amendment. When you are throwing away food, which we all do, we're all guilty of it, notice Notice what food you're throwing away.

Like, is it, am I constantly always throwing away grapes every week because I buy too many? Then maybe buy less. If you're throwing away, um, your leftovers every, every time, you know, maybe cook less. So monitor what you're, what you're throwing away and adjust your habits, buying habits, cooking habits accordingly.

[00:39:05] **Ginger Hultin:** I got to tour a really amazing food repurpose program in Denver and they were taking food from like gas stations and grocery stores. And then they were reporting back to them, providing them information about what kind of foods that they were taking and what kind of food waste was coming out of their facilities so that the, the store itself could learn more about their purchasing and more about what their food waste was.

So I think we can do that on an individual level, but there's so much cool opportunity for larger level businesses. restaurants, cafes, grocery stores, and gas stations to learn about this. So you love looking at the future and thinking ahead. What's your prediction for how our food system is going to evolve, say, over the next five years?

[00:39:57] **Chris Vogliano:** I think that we are going to see a rise in processed foods that are not ultra processed, but are processed in a way that preserves nutrients and is healthier. Right now we have an onslaught of what we call ultra processed foods where the nutrients are stripped out and they're, you know, level 11 out of 10 on flavor, but they are not necessarily that healthy for us.

So I think there's like a medium, happy medium ground. For instance, the other day, like, Chickpeas that were kind of like a snack, they're baked with some seasoning on it and a package bag. Those were, those are processed foods, but they're also, you know, healthy processed foods. So kind of that middle ground between healthy, sustainable and convenient.

I think there'll be an explosion in that area.

[00:40:46] **Ginger Hultin:** And where do you think we're going to be say like 20 or 25 years from now? So way into the future, what kind of master changes do you think we're going to see globally even?

[00:40:56] **Chris Vogliano:** Well, I hope that if we see a diversification of our food system and not rely on such few species is just not smart from a genetic resiliency standpoint with crops, pests, disease, change in climate.

I'm hoping that we can honor what our region is naturally able to produce and produce more of that and then share with each other. As I said earlier, we're not going to grow tropical fruits in the United States, but um, we can grow grains here really, really well. And so having a food system that represents the agroecological zone in which it's in while still remaining global and that you can trade and share and enjoy the benefits of a diverse global cuisine.

[00:41:39] **Ginger Hultin:** You and your colleagues are going to be part of that future of food, I think. So I'd love to hear what you're going to be working on next.

[00:41:47] **Chris Vogliano:** So we have a couple things coming down the pike. One opportunity is we're partnering with the Periodic Table of Food Initiative to look at the food 300 most commonly consumed protein foods and comparing and contrasting them nutritionally, environmentally, and how that impacts our health outcomes.

It really does have a climate focus, but it's looking at, say, fungi or underutilized grains, underutilized beans, and comparing those with. Beef, lab grown meat, and possible burgers and just having like kind of a database. So I think there's real exciting opportunities there to work at different sources of protein.

We're also partnering with American Heart Association to create a global curricula for dietitians that is based in evidence, but is also adapted to various cultures. So we're going to be leaning on dietitians around the world to develop case studies around how they're implementing and integrating sustainability within their specific practices.

[00:42:49] **Ginger Hultin:** Thank you for everything you're doing to educate dietitians and other healthcare providers and also just help us have food now around the world, but also far into the future.

[00:42:59] **Chris Vogliano:** Thanks for having me. It's been a great conversation.

[00:43:04] **Ginger Hultin:** Our show is sponsored by Orgain and produced in collaboration with Larj Media.

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