



粮食及  
农业组织

ORGANIZATION  
OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS

L'ALIMENTATION  
ET L'AGRICULTURE

LA AGRICULTURA  
Y LA ALIMENTACION

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Our Ref.: NU 7/98

Your Ref.:

4 February 1998

Dear Dr. Mann and Dr. Cummings,

I should like to thank both of you (the similar letter from Professor Este Vorster of the University of Potchefstroom, South Africa, to which you refer, has not arrived, but I will copy this reply to her) for your correspondence concerning the presentation of Mr. William Clay, Chief of the Nutrition Programmes Service of the Food and Nutrition Division, at the recently convened Asia-Pacific Sugar Conference. I appreciate your concern with what you consider to be FAO's inappropriate use of the findings of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Carbohydrates in Human Nutrition, and I trust that we can allay your fears that Mr. Clay's presentation is either "misleading" in regard to the Consultation report or based on a "substantial misinterpretation of scientific data".

For your information, I am attaching the final version of the paper, which was delivered at, and will be included in the proceedings of, the Sugar Conference, instead of the early draft of the paper that for some reason was provided to your colleague in Fiji. Even though there are considerable differences in the texts of the two versions, the basic points and conclusions are the same. Still, I believe that some of the misunderstanding has arisen from your reading an unfinished draft.

I should also point out that the Conference participants were primarily economists, sugar producers, food processors, commodity specialists, and traders all having a keen interest in sugar and its consumption. Mr. Clay's presentation was intended to introduce to this audience of non-scientists some basic nutrition and health concepts related to sugar consumption. Specifically, his aim was to give them some insights into current scientific thinking about a commodity that is often unjustly treated but on which many developing economies depend. Although I was not there, I understand that the actual presentation was very well received and that Mr. Clay did a skilful job of simplifying complex nutritional and health issues for a non-technical audience.

In order to respond to your specific concerns, I asked Mr. Clay to comment on the more salient points of your letters. I believe that the easiest way to communicate his thoughts would be to simply share his comments with you. Please find attached his responses to some of your expressed concerns.

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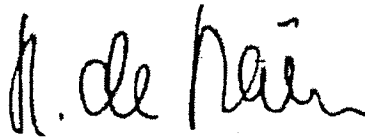
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16 FEB 1998

I trust that these comments will help clarify FAO's position regarding the role of sugar in human nutrition. You may wish to contact either myself, or Mr. John R. Lupien, the Director of our Food and Nutrition Division, or Mr. Clay directly should you wish to further discuss any of the points made.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'H. de Haen', with a stylized, cursive script.

Hartwig de Haen  
Assistant Director-General  
Economic and Social Department