

Ref: JHC 1157

6 March 1998

Professor A J Rugg-Gunn
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Dear Andrew

**Re: Carbohydrates in human nutrition
Report of a Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation**

Oh dear! Why is it always sugar that causes all the trouble? The stories I could tell you arising out of the FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Carbohydrates which took place last year and the subsequent manoeuvrings is probably best left for an evening over dinner some time.

We did our best at the consultation and there were certainly forces operating throughout to protect and promote sugar in the most subtle ways. These forces extended up to the senior management in FAO and I understand this is now causing some concern higher up in the organisation. Whenever we tried to say anything slightly cautious about sugar a number of members of the committee erupted and would protect it with everything they had. Particularly prominent was an FAO official called Dr Ratko Buzina who would not let the slightest bit of criticism creep in.

There was unanimous agreement amongst the nutritionists on this panel that sugar was a major factor in dental caries and we were very concerned that it was a factor in obesity in developing countries where fat intakes are low but overweight is a rapidly rising problem. We tried to get this into the report and I thought we had more or less achieved this, although the paragraph you quote suggests that there has been some post-Rome modification to the text which we agreed. I am not able to identify which document you have since none of the ones that are in my file currently have a paragraph 18 or a page 35, but that is by the way.

As an example of the commitment of FAO to sugar I am enclosing a remarkable document issued by FAO last October. Myself, Jim Mann and Este Vorster were absolutely appalled to see this and I enclose a copy of my letter of concern to the Director-General of FAO on this account.

Cont'd...

Professor Lineback is a chemist and his address is as follows:

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If John invites me to Newcastle I will certainly come if I am free and of course hope to meet you there. I certainly won't talk about sugar!

Best wishes
Yours sincerely

Dr J H Cummings