

Review of Second Annual Conference

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As Joan Karkeck mentioned, people at Utah State University hosted the second annual nutrient data bank conference. Though at that conference there were no formal plans made for further meetings after 1976, our conference was a logical outgrowth of the first data bank conference held in Seattle. There was interest expressed at the Seattle conference in continuing some kind of data bank group so I and two of my colleagues, Dr. R. Gaurth Hansen and Dr. Bonita W. Wyse of Utah State University offered to host the second conference at Utah State campus. Endorsement for the conference was obtained from the original data bank conference organizers and the plans were laid with the help of Joan Karkeck, Harborview Medical Center, Seattle, Washington and Dr. Donough O'Brien, University of Colorado. The conference was co-sponsored by the American Dietetic Association and the Academy of Pediatrics as was the first conference. The 1977 National data bank conference was a two-day working meeting where nutrition data users and compilers discussed ways of sharing, expanding and better utilizing the existing computerized nutrient data.

We refined our goals and objectives from some of the grandiose expectations that emerged from the first data bank conference and tried again as Joan has indicated to focus on ideas that were practical and projects that we could reasonably expect to accomplish. The meetings were held April 28, and 29, 1977 on the Utah State campus. We provided participants an opportunity to hear talks on the current state of nutrient data banks and current use being made of them. Small task force meetings and open discussions within the general assembly of participants were designed to let each participant contribute his unique expertise and to recommend solutions to the many problems related to the computerized nutrient programs. Each person was also asked to communicate their own individual needs (or their program needs) related to specific applications of nutrient information. It was hoped that the participants would get immediate feedback from their colleagues with similar problems or from persons who may have information on how to solve some of these problems. The participants represented a broad spectrum of data bank users and contributors and included representatives of basic research, epidemiology, dietetics, food service managers, nutritionists, educators, clinical-health care providers, the armed forces, private computer services (food industries), and various government

agencies. However, the majority of the participants at our conference were directly concerned with health research or health care delivery. Based on the discussions of the 1976 conference the following objectives were identified for the 1977 data base conference:

1. To discuss the ways in which nutrition data on computer files can be shared or expanded.
2. To review the progress made in nutrition data banks (since the 1976 data bank conference) and review their accessibility to users.
3. To discuss ways users can increase input into the design and use the data bases being compiled.
4. To identify actual and potential users of nutrient data banks and assess their needs.
5. Identify those sources which can add new data or new output format.
6. To show the versatility of computerized nutrition analyses in clinical and institutional settings.
7. To review the current research requiring a nutrition data bank.
8. To explore the sources for financial aid to improve data bases.
9. To formulate methods of information and for sharing procedures.
10. To find ways to standardize data bases so that data from research studies or clinical computer analyses can be compared.
11. To discuss new techniques in computer science that can be applied to the construction of nutrition data bases and their application.

Our agenda was divided into two parts. There were formal addresses with question periods and separate sections for group discussion. There was time provided for summaries of the section meetings and open discussions among the participants. I'm not going to go through the program but speakers included representatives of industry, basic research, clinical studies and various segments of the nutrition community involved with computerized data. Each participant selected membership in one of the following task forces. The task forces are:

- 1st task force: the expansion of research and clinically oriented nutrition data.
- 2nd task force: users of computerized nutrition data.
- 3rd task force: methods for funding and administering nutrient data bases.
- 4th task force: methods of data sharing and standardization.

The Second Annual Conference produced several resolutions and actions. The proceedings of the second national nutrient data bank conference was published and distributed to all conference participants and to interested persons who wrote and requested copies. There was also a resolve to continue an organization of data bank users and organizers and as this commitment

emerged a committee was organized to do the following things:

1. To identify users and compilers whom may wish to join our group.
2. To develop, distribute, and analyze the data from a questionnaire that was designed to provide information on existing data bases. The questions attempted to determine where data bases were located and the types available to other users and to determine the specific nutrients and foods and sources of data contained in these data bases. The questionnaire also ascertained the organization storage capacity, retrieval techniques of the data bases as well as the types of software programs developed to utilize the data bases.
3. A decision was made to hold a third national nutrient data bank conference. Dr. Robert Rizek accepted the responsibility on behalf of USDA to organize that conference which was subsequently held in Washington, D.C. in April of 1978.