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The 2007 IAAF Consensus Conference on Nutrition for Athletics

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EDITORIAL

The 2007 IAAF Consensus Conference on Nutrition for Athletics

Over the past 4 years, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and FIFA (Federation Internationale de Football Associations) have held updates to the original consensus meetings on nutrition for their athletes that were held in 1991 and 1993 respectively. Following this lead, the Medical and Anti-Doping Commission of the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) recently hosted an update of the 1995 IAAF Consensus meeting on Nutrition for Athletics (*Journal of Sports Sciences*, 1995, Volume 13, Special Issue). The meeting was organized according to the previously employed formula of presentations and discussion. However, a further evolution was to focus more carefully on the specific range of sports and events that fall under the banner of the IAAF – track and field, cross-country, race-walking, and road running – to ensure that each group of athletes would feel that their unique needs were addressed.

The meeting involved people from a range of professions, including research, sports medicine, and clinical nutrition practice, and from different regions around the world, so that a true range of opinions could be represented. These participants were brought together at the IAAF headquarters in Monaco on 18–20 April 2007 to deliberate the consensus. Other key people to join the group were Mr Lamine Diack (IAAF President) and members of the Medical and Anti-Doping Commission of the IAAF.

The first 2 days of the consensus conference were spent on an in-depth discussion of the 12 topics chosen to cover Nutrition for Athletics. The lead author of each review made a formal presentation of key points, before handing over to co-authors to host a detailed, and often lively, debate on issues raised in the review. Towards the end of the discussion, all conference participants considered a list of practical guidelines raised for each topic, with strategies divided into “guidelines for”, “guidelines against”, and “equivocal guidelines”. On the final morning, the group prepared a one-page consensus statement that integrated all the information discussed over the previous days into a brief statement of the main principles of eating for optimal performance. This document was uploaded on to the IAAF website

(www.iaaf.org) within days of the consensus meeting.

In addition to the series of scientific papers published in this supplement to the *Journal of Sports Sciences*, the meeting led to a range of additional outcomes:

- A symposium at the 2007 American College of Sports Medicine in New Orleans, 30 May to 2 June.
- A CD-rom containing audio-visual versions of all presentations from the consensus meeting.
- A booklet targeted at athletes and coaches, containing a practical summary of the guidelines for nutrition for athletics. This booklet was released to coincide with 11th IAAF World Championships in Athletics, 25 August to 2 September 2007 in Osaka (Japan).

It is hoped that these resources will allow athletes, coaches, sports scientists, and sports nutritionists to update their knowledge and practice of the specific nutrition needs of participants in the sport of athletics.

We are very grateful to the IAAF for their commitment to this project and for the enthusiastic participation of their staff, including in particular Chris Butler, Luc Magnus, Peter Thompson, and Gabriel Dolle. The initial idea was promoted via the IAAF’s Medical and Anti-Doping Commission, and we thank all their members, including Frederic Depiesse, Stéphane Bermon, and Juan-Manuel Alonso who participated in the meeting. We are also grateful to Mike Boit, Tim Olds, Asker Jeukendrup, Jim Waterhouse, Jaclyn Maurer Abbot, and Lynn Cialdella Kam, who contributed to the manuscripts and to the review process but who were unable to attend the consensus conference in Monaco. Finally, we are grateful to Powerade, whose generous financial support made the conference possible.

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