

## 1936 Report to the 74th Congress

### 1. 1936 Report on Mineral Depletion

In 1936, the US Senate was presented with the results of a scientific study it had commissioned on minerals in our food by a Mr. Fletcher. The nutritional pioneers and geniuses of nutrition in this era demonstrated that countless human ills stem from the fact that impoverished soil in America no longer provided plant foods with the mineral elements essential to human nourishment and health! What follows are pertinent excerpts from this report.

Senate Document 264

74th Congress, 2nd Session 1936

Excerpts pertaining to Soil Mineral Depletion

"Do you know that most of us today are suffering from certain dangerous diet deficiencies which cannot be remedied until the depleted soils from which our foods come are brought into proper mineral balance?"

"The alarming fact is that foods - fruits, vegetables and grains - now being raised on millions of acres of land that no longer contains enough of certain minerals, are starving us - no matter how much we eat of them!"

"This talk of minerals is novel and quite startling. In fact, a realization of the importance of minerals in food is so new that the textbooks on nutritional dietetics contain very little about it. Nevertheless it is something that concerns all of us, and the further we delve into it the more startling it becomes."

"Laboratory tests prove that the fruits, vegetables, grains, eggs and even the milk and meats of today are not what they were a few generations ago. No man of today can eat enough fruits and vegetables to supply his system with the mineral salts he requires for perfect health...."

"No longer does a balanced and fully nourishing diet consist merely of so many calories or certain vitamins or a fixed proportion of starches, proteins, and carbohydrates. We now know that it must contain, in addition, something like a score of trace mineral salts."

"It is bad news to learn from our leading authorities that 99 percent of the American people are deficient in these minerals, and that a marked deficiency in any one of the more important minerals actually results in disease. Any upset of the balance, any considerable lack of one or another element, however microscopic the body requirement may be, and we sicken, suffer, and shorten our lives."

"This discovery is one of the latest and most important contributions of science to the problem of human health."

"Dr. Northern asked himself how foods can be used intelligently in the treatment of disease, when they differed so widely in content. The answer seemed to be that they could not be used intelligently. In establishing the fact that serious deficiencies existed and in searching out the reasons therefore, he made an extensive study of the soil. It was he who first voiced the surprising fact that we must make soil building the basis of food building in order to accomplish human building. Bear in mind, says Dr. Northern, that minerals are vital to human metabolism and health - and that no plant or animal can appropriate to itself any mineral which is not present in the soil upon which it feeds."

"We know that vitamins are complex chemical substances which are indispensable to nutrition, and that each of them is important for the normal function of some special structure of the body. Disorder and disease result from any vitamin deficiency. It is not commonly realized, however, that vitamins control the body's appropriation of minerals, and that in the absence of minerals they have no function to perform. Lacking vitamins, the system can make some use of minerals, but lacking minerals, vitamins are useless."

"Certainly our physical well being is more directly dependent upon the minerals we take into our system than upon calories or vitamins or upon the precise proportions of starch, protein or carbohydrates we consume."

"So it goes, each mineral element playing a definite role in nutrition. A characteristic set of symptoms, just as specific as any vitamin deficiency disease, follows a deficiency in any one of them. It is alarming, therefore, to face the fact that we are starving for these precious health-giving substances."

"The minerals in fruit and vegetables are colloidal; i.e., they are in a state of such extremely fine suspension that they can be assimilated by the human system. Therein lays the short cut to better health and longer life."

"Sick soils mean sick plants, sick animals, and sick people. Physical, mental and moral fitness depends largely upon an ample supply and a proper proportion of minerals in our foods. Nerve function, nerve stability and nerve cell-building likewise depend upon trace minerals."

"Our soils which are seriously deficient in trace minerals, cannot produce plant life competent to maintain our needs, and with the continuous cropping and shipping away of those trace minerals and concentrates, the condition becomes worse".

"One sure way to end the American people's susceptibility to infection is to supply through food, a balanced ration of trace minerals. An organism supplied with a diet adequate to, or preferably in excess of, all mineral requirements may so utilize these elements as to produce immunity from infection quite beyond anything we are able to produce artificially by our present method of immunization. You can't make up the deficiency by using a patent medicine or drug."

"Prevention of disease is easier, more practical, and more economical than cure. Disease preys most surely and most viciously on the undernourished and unfit plants, animals and human beings alike, and when the importance of these obscure mineral elements is fully realized, the chemistry of life will have to be rewritten. No man knows his mental or bodily capacity, how well he can feel or how long he can live, for we are all cripples and weaklings."

"It is a disgrace to science. Happily, that chemistry is being rewritten and we are on our way to better health by returning to our bodies the things (trace minerals) we have stolen from it."

Editor's Note: No longer are our crops rotated, soils re-mineralized and flooded with life-giving rain and floods which bring forth the minerals, starting the chain of life.

Now-a-days, crops are grown season after season on the same soil, polluting our natural resources with excess phosphorus and nitrites from useless fertilizer and the farmer tries to get as much use from that same soil to maximize his profits. Dams are built and canals, locks and pump stations are manufactured all in the name of progress, flood control and big government, when in actuality, they all promote the loss of the re-mineralization of the very life-giving substances we consume in the quest for life itself....

Reprint from READER'S DIGEST - March 1936