

Science to Policy: Improving Diets and Food Systems for Health and Sustainability

Addressing Nutritional Deficiencies and Environmental Pressures Through Evidence-Based Food Policy and Innovation

Poor human nutrition and unsustainable food systems present urgent global challenges, impacting both public health and the environment.

Tackling these interconnected issues requires evidence-based approaches to guide food innovation, policy, and sustainable development.

Professor Jolieke van der Pols has led internationally influential research into the health effects of food ingredients and supplements, generating evidence that has shaped major global and national dietary policies. Her research of vitamin D, for instance, directly informed national guidelines in Ireland (Food Safety Authority of Ireland), the United Kingdom (Public Health England), and contributed to international recommendations on food fortification.

Professor van der Pols' investigations into selenium's role in cancer prevention have been cited by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in its official guidance to the European Commission. Additionally, her work on the effects of coffee and hot beverages influenced the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), in updating their policy on beverage consumption and cancer risk.

Recognising the need to balance nutritional benefits with environmental sustainability, Professor van der Pols also co-authored a foundational UN Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) report, shaping guidance that integrates both health and environmental impacts of food production. This has contributed to broader food supply chain policy recommendations by the OECD.



Impact highlights

- Professor Jolieke van der Pols led research informing vitamin D guidelines in Ireland, the UK, and international fortification policy.
- Her work on selenium and cancer prevention was cited by EFSA in European health guidance.
- Research on hot beverages and cancer risk shaped IARC's global policy.
- This work contributed to OECD food system policy recommendations, benefiting international agencies, national health authorities, and global populations.



Professor Jolieke van der Pols



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