

Media Contacts:

Wendy Thompson, 617-896-4888, wendy@oldwayspt.org

Sara Baer-Sinnott, 617-896-4848, sara@oldwayspt.org

November 8, 2004

**SCIENTISTS REACH NEW CONSENSUS ABOUT SWEETNESS;
RELEASE CONSENSUS STATEMENT FROM MEXICO CITY CONFERENCE**

*Responding To Escalating Consumer Confusion About Diet/Health Links,
Oldways Gathers Leading Scientists and Communications Experts To
Develop Tools Consumers Can Use To Manage Sweetness and
Focus on the Total Diet Instead of "Bits and Pieces"*

MEXICO CITY, November 8, 2004 – A scientific consensus statement released this weekend concludes that “Sweetness is an innate and strong force in shaping human evolution” that “continues as a strong force in food and drink selection,” adding that “Good health depends on wise management of calories from all food and drink sources, coupled with wise lifestyle choices that include regular exercise.” The consensus was reached at a three-day international scientific and communications conference in Mexico City titled “**Managing Sweetness.**”

The meeting introduced this innovative “**Managing Sweetness**” concept as a new tool to help dietary educators and advisors reach clients and consumers effectively, because the evidence of steadily-rising obesity and overweight statistics makes clear that conventional tools are not motivating consumers to follow sound dietary advice. This new “**Managing Sweetness**” tool departs from the conventional by focussing on the inherent duality of foods and drinks: they bring us the welcome pleasures of eating and drinking, but they also require us to manage them wisely for a life of good health.

The Mexico City conference was organized by Oldways Preservation Trust, a nonprofit food issues think tank and developer of the Mediterranean Diet Pyramid. It brought together an international group of leading scientists and communications experts to examine:

- the latest research on sweetness sugars, sweeteners and carbohydrates;
- the extent of consumer confusion on sweetness and its sources;
- the history of dietary guides and other programs to change consumption patterns, and
- the potential for new dietary messages that will encourage consumers to manage sweetness and other elements of their total diets.

The format for the conference was specifically designed as a search for solutions, built on a process of scientific straight talk and not on a series of debates.

“Conventional dietary guidance is failing to persuade American about the ‘twin peaks’ of wise eating and drinking, which are first, to stick with solid advice and avoid fad eating patterns, and second, to stick with the calorie equation by balancing calories taken in against calories burned off,” said K. Dun Gifford, President of Oldways. “We convened a panel of top experts in carbohydrates and nutrition science to inject some common-sense thinking and straight talk into the current fractious diet debate and to help find common ground. We introduced the concept of **“Managing Sweetness”** as a breakthrough that will help consumers who are confused and disheartened in their search for successful, practical dietary guidance solutions.”

“Fad diets or dietary advice based on demonizing any one food, including sweetness and sugars, are diet plans that are doomed to fail,” said John Foreyt, PhD, Professor of Medicine and Director of the Behavioral Medicine Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine, a co-chair of the Scientific Consensus Committee as well as a leading US obesity expert. “The issue is portion control, and the concept of managing sweetness is an innovative step forward which has real potential to affect consumer behavior positively,” Foreyt stated.

See the Scientific Consensus Statement and the Conference context for key findings.

About Oldways Preservation Trust

Oldways is the widely-respected nonprofit "food issues think tank" praised for translating the complex details of nutrition science into the familiar language of food. This synthesis converts high-level science into consumer-friendly health-promotion tools for a wide array of cultural preferences.

Best known for its Mediterranean Diet Pyramid, Oldways develops and organizes a wide variety of programs and materials about healthy, traditional and sustainable food choices for consumers, scientists, the food industry, health professionals, chefs, journalists and policy makers, and its effectiveness is well known.

Sponsorship

Oldways is pleased to acknowledge the support of the Beverage Institute for Health and Wellness, Coca-Cola, Ajinomoto, Cargill, Nutrinova and Tate & Lyle on this project. “We are really pleased that they accepted our proposal for a scientific conference to develop the new concept of “managing sweetness,” said Oldways President K. Dun Gifford. “The lessons of history teach that working cooperatively with industry technical experts and independent scientific experts has the highest possible chance for reaching realistic, successful and effective outcomes.”