



### Cape Branch

The Cape Branch of the Nutrition Society of South Africa hosted a half-day mini-symposium entitled “Ethics in nutrition - Current issues” on Thursday 17 May, 2012 at the Nutritional Intervention Research Unit of the Medical Research Council, Cape Town. This was attended by 31 nutrition professionals, of whom 58% were dietitians. Dr Harris Steinman, Director of Food and Allergy Consulting and Technical Service (FACTS), gave a thought-provoking presentation entitled “Scam Science, pseudo-science – Is this science at all?” This was followed by Lorna Olckers from the School of Public Health at UCT, who explored “Professionalism in Medical Practice”, based on her review of relevant literature and teaching models for medical students. Lastly, Dr Maretha Opperman of CPUT reported on her research project, “Analysis of omega-3 fatty acid content of South African fish oil supplements”, on the quality and labelled content of fish oils available to the South African consumer. This echoed themes covered by the

## NSSA newsbits

first speaker, and led to an interesting, lively debate, with good audience participation.

### Northern Branch

A joint symposium was held by the ADSA North-West and NSSA Northern branches. The very relevant topic “North West province making strides in breastmilk banking” was discussed on 25 July 2012, at the North-West University. Stasha Jordan from the South African breastmilk reserve gave an in-depth overview of breastmilk banking in the country. This was followed by talks on “Breastmilk banking – the nurses perspective” by Dr Welma Lubbe of North-West University, and “The successful implementing of a breastmilk bank” by Prof Suzanne Delpont of Kalafong Hospital, who was one of the pioneers in breastmilk banking in the country. The session was CEU accredited and was well attended by the healthcare professions and medical fraternity.



**10 years of innovation & partnership:**  
better nutrition for half a billion people



### 10 Years of Fighting Malnutrition in South Africa

GAIN's tenth anniversary is an opportunity to reflect both on our achievements and areas for improvement. The program in South Africa adding essential nutrients to wheat flour and maize meal is one of GAIN's first investments and will soon be celebrating its tenth anniversary as well. GAIN has provided technical expertise in areas including: program design; food fortification; product development and production; quality assurance and control; measurement of program impact; and development of public policy around nutrition.

### Impact at Scale

Approximately 30 million South Africans are consuming these healthier foods, or 60 percent of the total population. About half of these individuals are women and children, groups most vulnerable to malnutrition. The program has also contributed to a 30% reduction in neural tube birth defects, a life threatening condition for a newborn caused by insufficient folic acid in the diet of the mother.

### Challenges and Opportunities

Not satisfied with reduction in vitamin A and iron deficiencies led us to re-engage with partners and address some of the gaps to realize the full potential of the program. Further discussions with the South African Department of Health identified low compliance with fortification regulations as a potential concern. To better understand the situation, GAIN's program team and consultants designed and carried out a survey of bread flour and maize meal at retail outlets.

Results of the survey showed generalized low levels of nutrients compared to the fortification regulations. GAIN has therefore been engaging with the private sector, government and other agencies to advocate for a more comprehensive approach to reduce micronutrient deficiency. The survey results will be published in a supplement to the *Food and Nutrition Bulletin* in December 2012.



Efforts are underway to improve consistency in micronutrient dosage during fortification, improve fortificant choices and propose a wider range of micronutrient intervention strategies. The example is one of many where GAIN is contributing to improve the nutrition of millions of people through partnerships, technical support and advocacy.

### About GAIN in Africa

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) builds innovative partnerships so people in more than 30 countries can access affordable and nutritious foods. GAIN supports nutrition programs in 14 African countries. Forty-nine percent of the more than 610 million people GAIN reaches globally are in Africa. For more information, please visit us at [www.gainhealth.org](http://www.gainhealth.org) and on Twitter [www.twitter.com/GAINalliance](https://twitter.com/GAINalliance) and Facebook [www.facebook.com/GAINalliance](https://www.facebook.com/GAINalliance)

1. Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda