(2006) underline the need for new directions if national economies are to overcome the limitations that exist on access to food.

10.4 The Nutritional Language of Food

Nutritionists have their own terms for food, particularly ‘good food’ and how it contributes to health and well-being. They have introduced concepts such as calories, carbohydrates, and anti-oxidants to the language for talking about food. Their concern is to show the health risks associated with poor food choices and ways of consuming food. They calculate the various elements against standard quantities of each in order to assess levels of inadequacy. They start from a biological perspective on the human body as an organ that requires inputs of food and outputs of energy, with the aim of calculating where supplements are needed to improve intake that will achieve a balanced diet and good health.

An adequate diet is assessed against Recommended Dietary Intakes (RDIs) that have been calculated to achieve the best intake for mid-latitude western consumers. Measurement against these standard figures is based on an adequate caloric intake for men and for women, by age bracket, together with the suggested adequate levels of vitamins, minerals, and anti-oxidants. Nutritionists collect data from their patients/clients in order to calculate an alternative pattern of food intake. Where specific intakes are difficult to assess, an overall programme of less salt, fat, and sugar and more protein is recommended. Transferring those ideas to non-English speaking communities is difficult, in particular where the chemical components of local foods have not yet been analysed. The language of nutrition education is especially difficult for people whose food concepts differ markedly from those in the English-speaking world. A complex dish such as a pizza may have been given a ‘standard’ composition of elements in an appropriate table of food components, but for any of the side dishes that are served in Chinese gastronomy the
p. 242 ingredients are often very unfamiliar, and have not been analysed. For the Gurage of Ethiopia's ↳ diet of *ensete* bananas (Shack 1966) or taros eaten in Pacific communities (Pollock 1992), there are questions about how to determine the adequacy of their diet. Recommendations to improve such diets require analysis built on ‘insider’ knowledge.

‘Good food’ is a local concept embedded in social values as well as in the material aspects of particular foods and their combinations. Those bananas, or taros, or that rice have gained their cultural values within the local gastronomic settings. The food pyramid developed by Euro/American nutritionists places carbohydrates at the base of the pyramid, with protein, particularly meats, at the apex. The tapering nature of the model is also designed to indicate relative amounts of foods, with more vegetables and carbohydrates allowed than meat and eggs. But that model has proved difficult for nutritionists working in communities where food values have their own weightings. For the Inuit, fish and seal blubber dominate their food landscape, while for many other communities, any form of protein is hard to obtain. In urban settings the cost of supermarket meat is beyond the pockets of low-income consumers, so they fill up on rice and potatoes and bread (Pollock, Dixon, and Leota 1996).

The place of meat in these recommended diets is derived from what Smil (2002) refers to as the American ‘excessive carnivore’ diet. Although the recommended quantities of meat as the main source of protein have been reduced in the last twenty years from 75 grams per person per day to 30 grams, the amounts are still unattainable for two-thirds of the world's population. Not just the meat itself, but the concepts behind meat eating are being challenged: ‘man the hunter’ has lost many chances to bring home the kill, and with those the prestige and status that used to be given to the ‘breadwinner’. Prestige foods in the form of meat, fish, or chicken may be given prime place when guests are present, but such feast occasions are rare. Smil advocates moderation in the amount of meat eaten, and adds environmental concerns, suggesting that of all the meat types, chicken is the most sustainable (Smil 2002). Similarly, Pollan (2006) has demonstrated the