



联合国
粮食及
农业组织

FOOD AND
AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
OF THE
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DES NATIONS
UNIES POUR
L'ALIMENTATION
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Dear Colleagues and Friends

FAO takes a special pleasure in joining WABA and partner organizations in celebrating World Breastfeeding Week, 2005. This year's WBW theme on breastfeeding and family foods fits well with FAO's commitment to household food security.

FAO joins UNICEF and WHO and other agencies in recommending that mothers breastfeed their babies exclusively for the first six months of life, followed by a combination of breast milk and complementary foods. This year's WBW theme draws attention to complementary feeding as well as exclusive breastfeeding for two reasons. First, premature introduction of complementary foods is a major threat to exclusive breastfeeding; and second, nutritionally inadequate complementary foods are a major cause of child malnutrition.

This year's WBW action folder uses the phrase, family foods; this is a reminder that infants and young children are fed from the same kitchens as other family members. While households in some communities may add fish, chicken and/or vegetables to complementary foods for infants over six months of age, other households add fruit or legumes; the bottom line is that babies must get "the best bits" of whatever food is available to the household.

The 2004 Report of a Joint FAO/WHO/UNU Expert Consultation on Human Energy Requirements recommended that energy requirements for infants be reduced by 12 -20 percent compared with the 1985 FAO/WHO/UNU Expert Report. The new recommendations are fully consistent with the fact that breast milk can adequately cover infants' energy needs for growth during the first six months of life. The WBW action folder draws attention not just to family foods suitable for young child feeding, but also to the methods of feeding. "Love" and "care" are difficult to quantify, but loving and careful attention to feeding infants and young children is an important step forward in the struggle to end childhood malnutrition.

FAO Food and Nutrition Division staff members in Rome and in field projects are involved in infant and young child feeding through programmes such as dietary and anthropometric assessment, household food security, food and nutrition education, special programme in food security, and nutrition in emergencies.

FAO congratulates WABA on this year's WBW action folder, and looks forward to collaborating with them, along with other UN agencies such as UNICEF and WHO, to improve young child feeding, and ultimately to meet the Millennium Development Goals to reduce poverty, hunger and malnutrition.

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