As the importance of food and nutrition becomes more widely recognized by practitioners and researchers in the health sciences, one persisting gap in the knowledge base remains: what are the economic factors that influence our food and our health?—Oxford University Press

Food & Nutrition Economics fills a gap in health science (more specifically nutrition) education. Those in the health sciences will find benefit in taking a look at client choices through the lens of economics. Economics can help to appreciate why food, nutrition, and health choices are made.

Beyond choosing what is healthy, consumers are constrained by a variety of factors. Clients will benefit as recommendations and programs can be tailored with the clinician’s understanding of their limiting factors. Quickly flipping through the text, one might be daunted as charts and mathematical formulas build from chapter to chapter. This initial intimidation is soon alleviated.

Exercises accompanying new material and the supportive use of the 4 languages (graphical, numerical, mathematical, and verbal) allow readers to visualize concepts and offer multiple avenues toward understanding. Rather than being cumbersome, the formulas presented aid in illustrating multifaceted models.

The overall tone is comfortable and resists the matter-of-fact, dreary language often found in textbooks. Incorporated into each chapter, the authors use conversation between a fictional economist and a nutritionist to introduce major points. Although at times this dialogue reads a bit scripted and contrived, it is nonetheless effective at preparing the reader for the section ahead and summing up content at the close of the chapter.

Broadly, the conversation illustrates the value of a collaborative relationship between foods and nutrition and economics disciplines. The examples used throughout are timely and relevant. Explanations are fitting and are often set in the context of real-life situations. The book indicates the intended audience, and I would tend to agree that this text is geared toward college upperclassmen and professionals.

Those in the field of dietetics, health program planning, and other health-related disciplines could certainly benefit from the material presented. Instructors could likely find value in building content into lower-level courses as well. Nutrition data sources; the ideas of hedonic and health utilities; the impact of income level, timing, and preference on choices; behavioral economics; and the workings of the food system could be included in a variety of settings. That being said, the book can stand on its own and would be more than sufficient to use in a full course dedicated to this topic alone. Overall, Food & Nutrition Economics is a well-constructed, well-timed, and useful material that fills a much-needed space in health studies education.

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