

12/03/2003 Entry: "ABC NEWS TO AIR ONE-HOUR SPECIAL REPORT ON GOVERNMENT AND FOOD INDUSTRY ROLE IN AMERICAN OBESITY EPIDEMIC"

ABC NEWS TO AIR ONE-HOUR SPECIAL REPORT ON GOVERNMENT AND FOOD INDUSTRY ROLE IN AMERICAN OBESITY EPIDEMIC

"Peter Jennings Reporting – How To Get Fat Without Really Trying" Airs Monday, December 8, 2003 at 8:00PM EST

Today in the United States nearly two-thirds of the population is overweight and almost one third is obese. In this important hour-long ABC News special, Peter Jennings reveals how government policies and food industry practices are helping to make Americans fat.

"Peter Jennings Reporting: How To Get Fat Without Really Trying" will air Monday, December 8th at 8:00 pm EST on the ABC Television Network.

"Obesity is fast becoming the largest public health crisis in America," Mr. Jennings said. "The simple answer is to tell people to just eat less and exercise more. What few people know is how much of the problem with the American diet is a direct result of federal government policy and food industry practices."

Mr. Jennings begins in the farmlands of America, examining agricultural subsidies and their impact on the American diet. He found that most agricultural subsidies go to the foods Americans should be eating less. Nutritionists and health advocates say these policies are contributing to obesity. Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson tells Mr. Jennings that agricultural subsidies are based on political decisions that are not likely to change soon.

Mr. Jennings then examines what kind of products the processed food industry makes with all those subsidized farm ingredients. A packaged food industry representative tells Jennings that the industry is simply providing "choice" to consumers. Mr. Jennings finds however, that the vast majority of new foods introduced each year are those foods government says are the least healthy.

Finally, Mr. Jennings reports that aggressive food marketing is contributing to the growing obesity problem among children. He raises a surprising question: Just as children are protected from cigarette advertising, should children be protected from advertising for unhealthy foods?

Peter Jennings Reporting HOW TO GET FAT WITHOUT REALLY TRYING shows how the obesity epidemic in America is not only a health problem, but a problem of misguided public policy, failed political will and the unintended consequences of at least 20 years of food industry practices that have all helped Americans to get fat – without really trying.

"Peter Jennings Reporting – HOW TO GET FAT WITHOUT REALLY TRYING" is produced by Keith Summa. Tom Yellin is the executive producer of "Peter Jennings Reporting."

ABC News Media Relations Contact: Cathie Levine (212) 456-4934

- ABC -

Jacqueline Domac

www.nojunkfood.org