

Asia Pacific Clinical Nutrition Society Award for 2024

Professor Barbara Burlingame PhD

Riddet Institute, Massey University, New Zealand



Barbara Burlingame is a scientist and professor of nutrition and food systems. She received her Ph.D. from Massey University in 1997 (New Zealand) and bachelor's degree from University of California, Davis, in nutrition science and environmental toxicology in 1983. Her research expertise includes food composition, nutrient requirements, dietary assessment, biodiversity for food and nutrition, indigenous peoples' food systems, sustainable diets, and provision of scientific/policy advice on food security and nutrition.

Since 2016 she has been professor at Massey University, first in the School of Public Health, and since 2022 as adjunct professor at Massey's Riddet Institute while continuing her international work. Her teaching and supervision of post-graduate research students has focused on sustainable diets and biodiversity for food and nutrition, specifically in Pacific small island developing states, and generally in a global context. The integration of nutrition and environmental sustainability has long featured in her research and policy work.

Prior to her current role at Massey University, she worked for 16 years at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as Chief/ Deputy Director of Nutrition, and Senior/Principal Nutrition Officer (1998-2014). Here her responsibilities included food composition, dietary assessment and provision of scientific advice on nutrition for UN member states, international commissions (e.g., Codex Alimentarius) and global initiatives (e.g., One Health, One Planet, SUN). She is credited with integrating environmental sustainability issues into nutrition programmes at FAO and for establishing initiatives on sustainable diets and biodiversity for food and nutrition.

Before joining FAO, she spent 12 years as Nutrition Programme Leader at the New Zealand Institute for Crop & Food Research and Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (1987-1998) where she was responsible for the research programme in nutrition science, with a major focus on food composition, both chemical analyses and biological evaluations. And in the earliest days of her career, while living in Singapore in the mid-1980s, she worked at the National University of Singapore analysing dietary supplements and Chinese medicinal materials, in addition to co-authoring a weekly nutrition column in the Straits Times and contributing regularly to professional journals and popular magazines in Southeast Asia.

For more than 30 years she has served as coordinator and advisor to many projects and programmes on food composition around the world. From 1993-2011, she was global coordinator of INFOODS, the International Network of Food Data Systems. She spearheaded the development and publication of national, regional and global food composition tables and databases, including the Pacific Islands Food Composition Tables, and the ASEANFOODS Food Composition Tables. In New Zealand she was awarded the Science and Technology Medal by the Royal Society of NZ for this work.

She is the author of 60+ papers in international, peer-reviewed journals, 17 books as author, 24 book chapters, 18 books as editor, and hundreds of contributions to reports and UN publications. She is/has been the editor of several food and nutrition journals, including 13 years as Editor-in-Chief of Elsevier's Journal of Food Composition and Analysis, and since 2013 as Specialty Chief Editor at Frontiers in Nutrition.

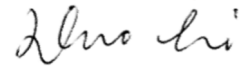
Throughout her career, she has been a member of many scientific advisory boards and international committees including Dietetic Products, Nutrition and Allergies (NDA), European Food Safety Authority; Expert and Representative in One Planet, Sustainable Food Systems. She was a recent member of the Steering Committee of the High Level Panel of Experts for the Committee on World Food Security (2019-2023).

Currently she is co-chair of the Sustainable Diets Task Force for the International Union of Nutritional Sciences (IUNS), specialty chief editor of Frontiers in Nutrition and Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems, member of the Global-Hub on Indigenous Peoples' Food and Knowledge Systems, and member of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub. Recognitions during her career, in addition to the Royal Society Medal mentioned above, include several distinguished lectureships (e.g., the American Society of Agronomy on 'Sustainable Diets: Linking Agriculture, Health, and the Environment') and lectures (e.g., Greenfield-Southgate Award lecture, 'Saving the Planet – Sustainable Diets, Biodiversity and Food Composition'), the Ancel and Margaret Keys Prize in recognition of her contributions to valorization of the Mediterranean Diet as a model for sustainable diets, and the Hallbars Hall of Fame Award 2021, Best In the World, representing the editorial board for 'Indigenous Peoples' food systems: Insights on sustainability and resilience from the front line of climate change'. In 2022 she was made a Fellow of the International Union of Nutritional Sciences and elected to its council.

She was born in Boston, Massachusetts on 19 February 1953. Soon after graduating from high school in 1971, she spent a few years in religious studies before starting her nutrition education. She interspersed career development, motherhood, and activism/advocacy over the course of her adult life, much of which has been spent in the Asia-Pacific region. From the earliest stages of her career, she recognised the importance of linking human nutrition with the natural environment.

Citation by

Professor Duo Li MD, PhD



Chair of Nomination Committee
Asia Pacific Clinical Nutrition Society Award