

**The agricultural sector, food  
supply chains, and cardiovascular  
health**

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# **Types of possible collaboration with the agricultural sector**

- **Production practices**
  - Research and development (eg breeding)
  - Feeding practices
- **Agricultural policy**
  - Designing heart-friendly input policies, production policies, trade policies
- **Agricultural marketing**
  - Investment in marketing heart-healthy agricultural products

# Historical examples of collaboration I

- **Norway's farm-food-nutrition policy (1975-85)**
  - Subsidies for grass feed; food subsidies (skim milk/whole; poultry/beef); research (breeding cows for lower fat milk); provision of consumer information.
  - *Net fall in fat intake occurred at same time*
- **North Karelia, Finland (1972-)**
  - Assistance to producers (berry production); research - working with researchers, food industry, dairy producers (margarine); community-based interventions with health workers
  - *Credited with leading to declining rates of CVD*

# Historical examples of collaboration II

- **Canadian oilcrop research (1970s)**
  - Breeding of rapeseed oil into canola; marketing promoted consumption
  - *Economic analysis suggests that contributed to reduced CV deaths*
- **Poland (unintentional) (early 1990s)**
  - Removal of agriculture/consumer price subsidies (higher prices of animal source foods); trade liberalisation (entry of margarine); marketing (more margarine promotion)
  - *Sharp decline of CHD deaths during same time period*

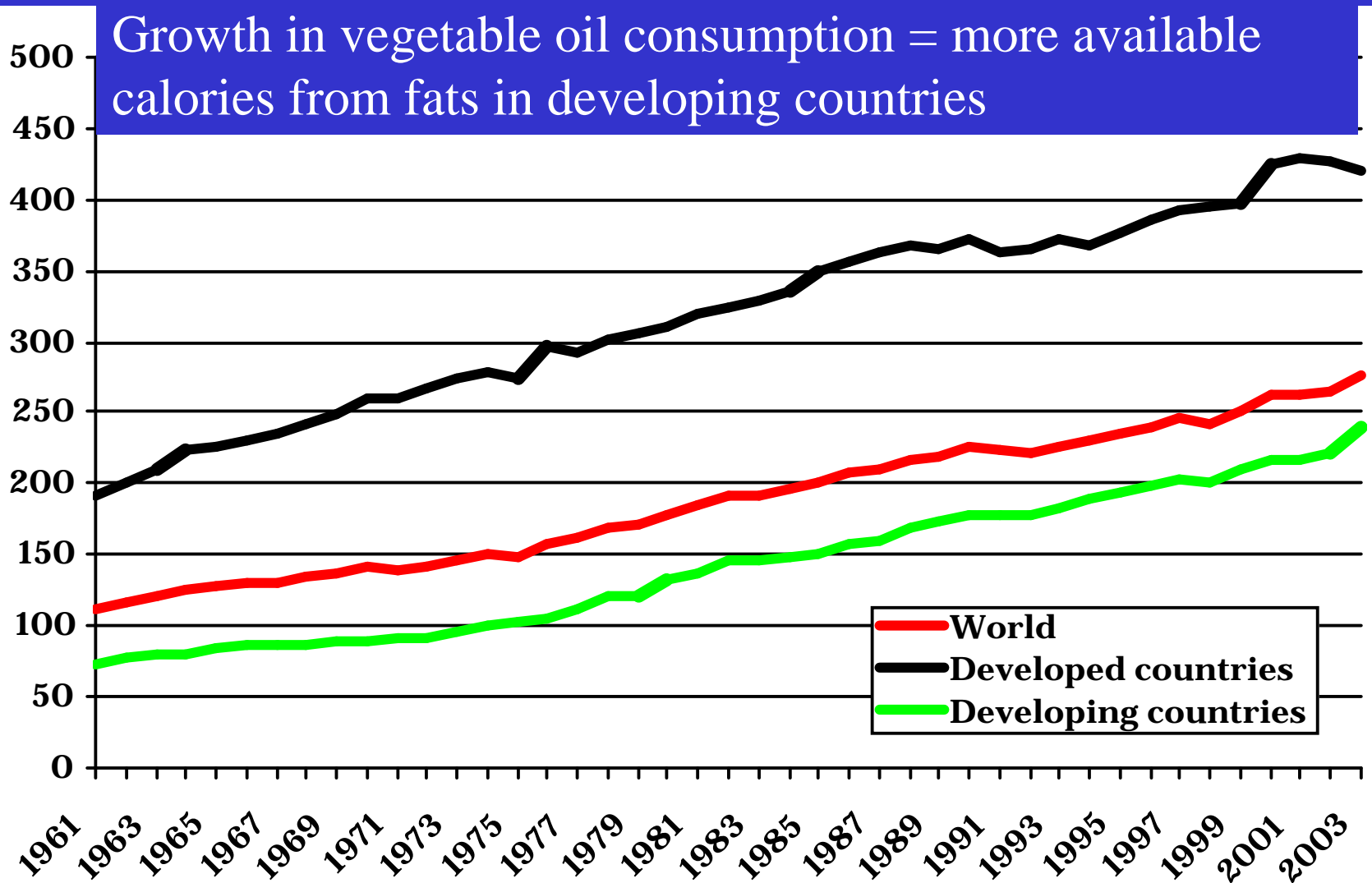
# Recent/current examples

- **EU School Fruit Scheme**
  - National/local implementation but stimulated and part-funded by DG Agri
- **Farm-school, farmers market programs, US**
  - Evaluations of programs suggest boost fruit and vegetable consumption
- **Health Enhancing Food & Drink project, Scotland**
  - Government-funded; consumer marketing of key agricultural products: berries, oats, omega 3s
- **Breeding of NuSun sunflower oil, US**
  - Collaboration between National Sunflower Association, private sector, USDA

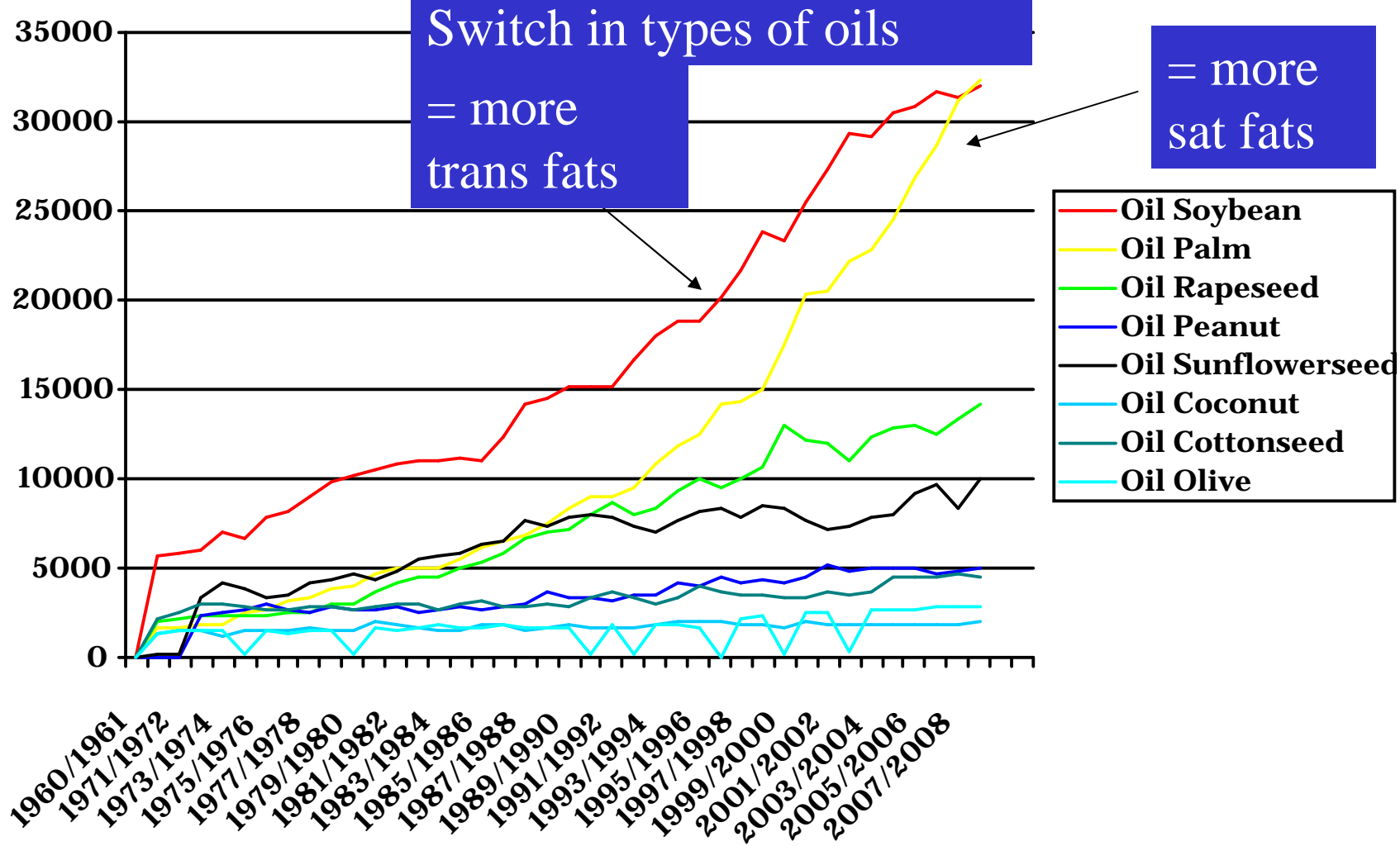
# Missed Opportunities

- **Policy development: little collaboration in setting agricultural policy**
- **Private sector: R&D, learning lessons from, putting pressure on**
- **Food supply chain: lack of attention to changes in food markets by health sector**
  - **Key example for developing countries - soaring production, trade, consumption of vegetable oils**

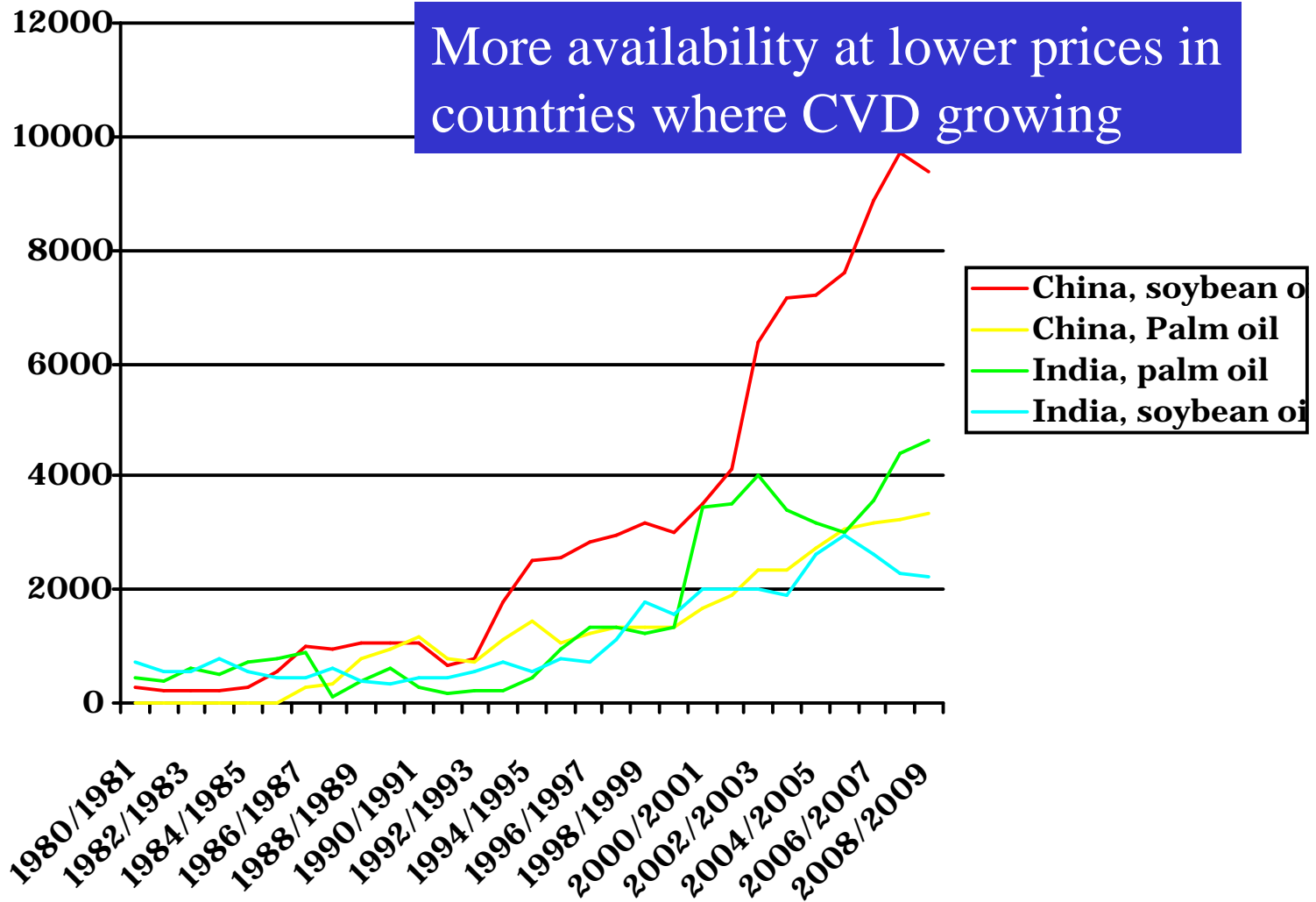
Growth in vegetable oil consumption = more available calories from fats in developing countries



Source: FAOSTA



Source: USDA FAS F



Source: USDA FAS PS

Inputs into veg oil production

Oilcrop production

Transport and trade

Primary processing (crushing)

Secondary processing  
(hydrogenation, processed foods)

Sale through retailers and caterers

.....Promotion and labelling

**Why?**

**Taking a food supply  
chain approach**

R&D in new varieties, fertilizer subsidies (Brazil)

Yrs of soy subsidies; only since 1990 for minor (US)

Low export taxes (Indonesia, Malaysia)  
Lower import barriers (India, China)

Lower barriers to foreign investment in crushing  
(Argentina, Brazil)

Excess liquid oil = incentive to hydrogenate  
by large capital intensive companies (global)

Retail strength = incentive for value pricing/strong  
brands (global )

Regulation on soy health claim (US, 1999)  
Regulation on trans fat label (US, 2006)

More soy/palm oil available; lower prices; more marketing

Greater consumer demand

Greater consumption

## **Lessons learned: challenges**

- **Lack of collaboration between agriculture and health sectors**
- **May threaten national and private interests**
- **Agricultural strategies can be a “blunt instrument”**
- **Risk of single food product focus leading to unintended consequences (substitutes, calories)**

# **Lessons learned: opportunities**

- **Not just agriculture, but the entire food supply chain that matters; agricultural strategies will not work well in isolation**
- **Focus on concrete problems where food supply is in clear conflict/coherence with CV health**
- **Identify where in the food supply chain there are conflicts/opportunities for coherence and introduce incentives for change**
- **Consider the role of the private sector**