Are U.S. Government Food Subsidies Making People Fat?

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Ever wonder why Big Macs and boxed macaroni and cheese are so cheap? The answer involves food subsidies paid out by the U.S. government that currently prioritize the production of meat, cheese and corn over healthier options, such as fresh fruits and veggies. The result of these food incentives, suggest findings from a recent report published in JAMA Internal Medicine, is that Americans are becoming fatter and unhealthier, reports NBC News.

For the study, researchers at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reviewed food diary entries from more than 10,000 people who took part in a federal health survey. Scientists found that on average, 56 percent of the calories from the foods people remembered eating came from corn, soybeans, wheat, rice, sorghum, dairy and livestock subsidized by the government.

Researchers also found that people who ate the most of these particular foods were 37 percent more likely to be obese, 41 percent more likely to be saddled with excess belly fat and 21 percent more likely to suffer from unhealthy blood sugar levels.

“The present finding that higher subsidy scores are associated with adverse cardiometabolic risk highlights the effect that agricultural subsidies may be having on health disparities in the United States, in part due to the lower cost per calorie of unhealthier food and the higher cost per calorie of healthier food,” concluded study authors.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture argued that the beef, dairy and grain industries are integral to supporting the U.S. economy. But health experts have stressed for years that the federal government should drop these unhealthy incentives and instead help farmers produce cheaper fruits and vegetables, which have been proved to be key to a balanced diet.

Fortunately, there are tips and tricks you can use to help make sure you’re making the right dietary choices without breaking the bank. Click here to learn more about healthy eating on a shoestring budget.

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