

Food Imports & Production in St. Kitts & Nevis: Implications for Public Health

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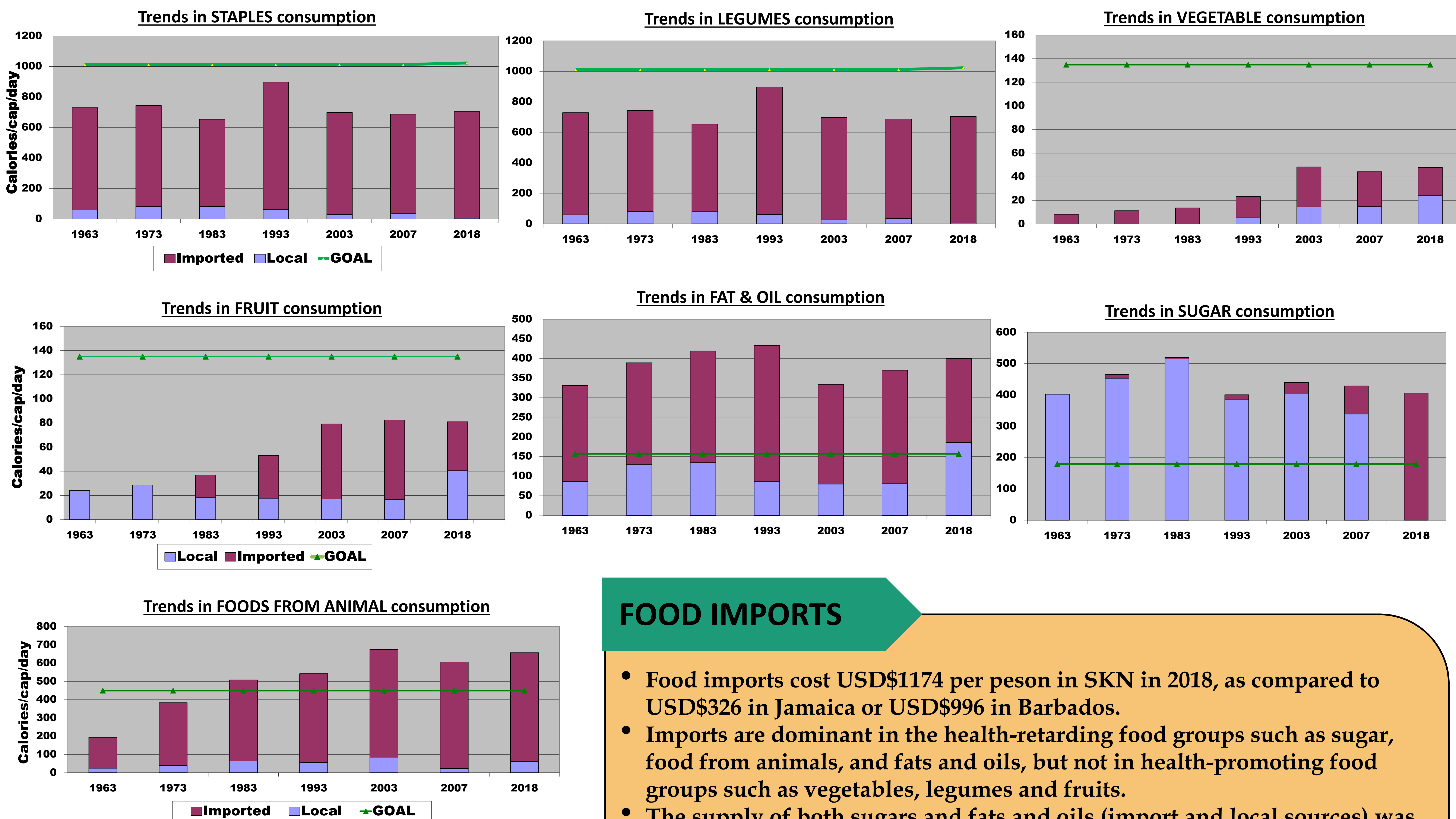
FOOD SECURITY IN SKN

Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

IS ST. KITTS & NEVIS FOOD SECURE? In terms of energy intake, per capita, per day – YES. But when this energy intake is broken down by food groups – NO.

“...Food Security in the Caribbean is also related to obesity, stroke and heart attacks...”

Thus, countries agreed in 2011 to a “25 by 25” target: to reduce premature death from 4 main non-communicable diseases – (cardiovascular diseases, chronic respiratory diseases, cancers, and diabetes) by 25% from 2010 levels by the year 2025.



FOOD IMPORTS

- Food imports cost USD\$1174 per person in SKN in 2018, as compared to USD\$326 in Jamaica or USD\$996 in Barbados.
- Imports are dominant in the health-retarding food groups such as sugar, food from animals, and fats and oils, but not in health-promoting food groups such as vegetables, legumes and fruits.
- The supply of both sugars and fats and oils (import and local sources) was more than double the health goal.
- Foods that are more than minimally processed account for 58% of the food imports. More importantly, the dangerous health-retarding ultra-processed foods contributed 14% of the food import bill. Sugar-sweetened beverages is the biggest contributor, costing US\$6.4 M in 2018.
- There is a decline in local food production over several decades.

KEY QUESTIONS

- Can SKN meet the CARICOM Heads “25 by 25” target?
- What are the local substitutes for the “unnecessary” imports?
- What are the replacements for the ultra-processed food imports?

