

What did Mother Jones' Tom Philpott miss in recent Golden Rice piece?

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

[Editor's note: Alexander J. Stein is an economist interested in agriculture, food, nutrition, health, technology, sustainability, economic development & poverty alleviation worldwide.]

These comments were written in response to an [article](#) by Tom Philpott in *Mother Jones*, in which he made (i) the eternal argument against Golden Rice that, purportedly, in poor populations' diets there is not sufficient fat for the vitamin A (beta-carotene) from Golden Rice to be absorbed . . . And in which he suggested that (ii) current successes in the fight against vitamin A deficiency (VAD) would make Golden Rice superfluous anyway:

"Fairly balanced article (for Mother Jones), except for the eternal argument about the purported lack of sufficient dietary fat.

(1) Critics of Golden Rice often make the Marie-Antoinisque argument of "let them eat carrots" . . . but the fat content of most fruit & veggies is even lower than the fat content of rice. Hence these critics have to decide, either eating more fruit & veggies helps, and so can Golden Rice, or neither. . . .

(2) There IS sufficient fat in the diets of the target groups: Only 5 grams of fat per day have to be consumed in the food mix for beta-carotene to be properly absorbed. . . .

Even in populations in Asia in which low fat intake was identified as a more general nutrition problem, e.g. the average fat intake of children aged 1-3 years was still 22 grams/day. . . .

. . . .

Regarding the successes in fighting VAD, if "vitamin A supplementation, dietary diversification, food fortification and promotion of optimal breastfeeding" have helped reduce VAD, great! However, that's not necessarily an argument against Golden Rice:

(1) As soon as supplementation and fortification efforts are stopped, the prevalence of VAD is set to rebound. . . .

(2) Golden Rice promises to be much more cost-effective than supplementation or fortification. . . .

Read full, original post: [Comment on: WTF Happened to Golden Rice?](#)