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Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. My name is Shannen Kelly with the American Spice Trade Association, representing the U.S. spice industry. The current Dietary Guidelines for Americans recognizes that spices and herbs can add to the enjoyment of nutrient-dense foods, reduce intakes of sodium, added sugars, and saturated fat, and support cultural foodways. We encourage the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee to leverage these recommendations and build on them within the context of 2025-2030 DGA goals.

As the Committee endeavors to present its findings and recommendations through a health equity lens, we recommend consideration of how spices are used in cultural and traditional eating patterns. These eating patterns reflect diet and lifestyle preferences of an increasingly diverse U.S. population, including those of vulnerable communities. Since spice use among Americans is at an all-time high, ensuring that spices are well-represented in dietary patterns will help DGA recommendations reach a wider audience and meet consumers where they are.

Spices can also help expose Americans to more nutrient-dense foods across dietary patterns and life stages. By adding flavor to recommended food groups like fruits, vegetables, lean protein, and legumes, as well as making reduced-sodium, -sugar, and -fat foods tastier, spices encourage sustained, healthier food choices in a culturally inclusive and cost-effective way. Emerging and growing research also suggests that bioactive compounds, including plant polyphenols found in spices, are linked to several positive health outcomes.

Although the Committee has not identified any specific research questions related to spices and health, there are still great opportunities to consider the role of spices in healthy and equitable eating patterns, especially when translating the evidence to recommendations. Doing so would be consistent with current government and public health advice, while resonating with a diverse array of American eating patterns.

We look forward to sharing more information with the Committee in our forthcoming written comments. Thank you.