

The Danone International Prize for Nutrition and the Danone Institutes: one of Danone's commitment to health

In the beginning, there was the Danone group, already inherently permeated by the values of nutrition and health. In 1991, Danone decided to promote public health by developing and spreading knowledge about nutrition, diet and health, and set up its first Institute. Eighteen years later, there are now 17 Danone Institutes worldwide operating under the aegis of the Danone Institute International. The latter has been awarding the *Danone International Prize for Nutrition* every two years since 1997 to a research scientist or research team conducting noteworthy studies in human nutrition. This prize is today one of the Institute's key activities but also highlights Danone's long-standing commitment to nutrition and health.

The *Danone International Prize for Nutrition* has been awarded every two years since 1997 by the Danone Institute International. This prize is today one of the Institute's key activities and is completely in line with the Institute's original mission to promote health through the development and spread of knowledge about nutrition, diet and health.

The Danone Institute International: advancing knowledge on nutrition

The first Danone Institute was created in France in 1991 thanks to Danone's desire to go beyond its own products in order to promote health. This was an ambitious project, with the group seeking to create an independent and transparent non-profit association in order to promote public health by developing and spreading knowledge about nutrition, diet and health. To achieve this, Danone brought together eminent members from the scientific community (on the scientific committee), together with nutritional experts and Danone representatives (office), under the presidency of an independent scientist. This organisation is entirely free to use funds provided by the group. Seventeen years later, there are now 17 Danone Institutes worldwide that are funded by local Danone subsidiaries. The Danone Institute International is responsible for steering the network, which provides rich and continual exchange between the different countries. To date, over 900 research projects have been supported (with a global budget of 16 million Euros), dozens of educational programmes have been launched, and close to one hundred symposia organised.

Actions undertaken by the Institute include support for cutting-edge research, as carried out by the group itself, which has always invested heavily in research and development. In this respect, the *Danone International Prize for Nutrition* represents a key activity.

**In the words of Prof. Serrano Rios****President of the Danone Institute International and Spanish Danone Institute**

“The Danone International Prize for Nutrition is the equivalent of a Nobel Prize for nutrition”

“The Danone Institute actively supports research in health and nutrition, allowing advances to be made in the latter field. This may be seen in my own country, Spain, where I am president of the national Danone Institute: many research projects are currently being conducted thanks to the financial support provided by the Institute. The *Danone International Nutrition Prize*, with its 120,000 € cash award, also provides a formidable stimulus for the winner of the prize, awarded every two years since 1997. In my view, it is nothing less than the equivalent of a Nobel Prize for nutrition. Our goal at the Danone Institute International is to create a true nutritional reference centre where all ideas concerning this domain may be freely exchanged and debated.”

Nutrition and health: long-standing Danone values

Since its inception, Danone has always been closely associated with nutrition and health and has always demonstrated complete commitment to these activities at every stage of its history. Already in 1789, the Marquis de Lessert discovered the health benefits of Evian water. In 1881, Joseph Léon Jacquemaire, a pharmacist in Villefranche-sur-Saône, and his associate, Maurice Miguet, founded a laboratory to carry out food research, particularly concerning baby foods, and this resulted in the foundation of Blédina, the infant nutrition department, in France. In 1919, Isaac Carasso supplied pharmacies in Barcelona with the first Danone yoghurts for children with digestive problems. These yoghurts were manufactured using bacteria provided by the Institut Pasteur.

Danone continues to develop health-related products: fresh products (Actimel, Danacol, etc.), mineral waters and products for children (growth milk enriched with iron, cereals, fruit desserts, etc.), as well as clinical nutrition products sold through pharmacies and hospitals for sick, undernourished or elderly patients.

Research is a major pillar of Danone's innovation strategy concentrated within the Danone research centre – Danone Research – with more than 1,200 employees. For example, Danone Research enables the company to identify nutritional deficits in countries in which the group has operations, adapt the nutritional quality of its products accordingly, and offer products tailored to local cultural specificities (taste, circumstances of consumption, portions, etc.), demonstrate the health benefits of its products, etc.

Furthermore, in order to develop scientific knowledge within a specific domain, Danone Research creates partnerships with many internationally renowned institutions (e.g. Institut Pasteur, University of Washington, etc) in areas including probiotics, infant nutrition and medical nutrition.

Danone Institutes

Nutrition and health: at the heart of Danone's corporate governance

Nutrition and health are formally part of Danone's corporate governance as attested by its Food, Nutrition and Health charter based on five fundamental commitments;

- develop products that meet consumers' needs in term of nutritional content, taste and affordability
- strive to develop products with relevant and scientifically proven health benefits, providing consistent nutritional profile,
- inform consumers in a clear and factual manner through nutritional labeling and consumer-friendly claims, as well as to advertize responsibly, especially toward children,
- engage with consumers and local communities, including employees, on nutrition, balanced diets, physical exercise, and healthy lifestyles,
- address major public health and nutrition-related societal challenges through active dialogue with stakeholders , societal innovation and special care to environment.

The Danone Institutes and their projects actively and independently contribute to these commitments through their multiple programmes to support research and provide health care and education professionals with information.



**Interview with Franck Riboud
CEO of Groupe Danone**

"Health has always been of primordial concern in Danone products"

What is the place of the *Danone International Prize for Nutrition* in the Group's policy?

Health has been historically linked to Danone products. Research has consistently been a major pillar of the Group in meeting its objective to provide consumers with products combining optimal flavour, nutritional benefits and safety guarantee. Beyond our investments to promote research for our own products, it is also essential to support academic research in the field of nutrition, since this activity opens up new avenues for improving health in various populations. For this reason, we actively support the Danone Institutes, one of whose goals is to promote research, and consider the *Danone International Nutrition Prize*, awarded for particularly innovative studies, to be a key initiative.

Other prizes exist for innovative research in the field of nutrition. What sets the *Danone International Prize for Nutrition* apart?

The selection procedure, under the responsibility of renowned scientists, is based on the model of the Nobel Prize, thereby ensuring complete independence, objectivity and transparency. Today, we are proud that through the sizeable cash award, the *Danone International Prize for Nutrition* contributes to the development of novel research among the most innovative teams in the field of nutrition, and that it will help to highlight the central importance of nutrition, and thus of diet, to health.