

19th Networks and Optical Communications Conference - After Dinner Speech, 5 June 2014, Milan Italy

"Should we all be growing nuts?"

Since NOC last year I have been researching the linkages between **food, health and climate change**.

But before I talk about growing NUTS, I would like to share one of the funnier aspects of this subject with you!

This is a really topical subject in the UK.... Just look at this example on the front page of this newspaper.

(show newspaper clip)

'British Girls have become the fattest girls in Europe'.. But I don't think they meant the Queen!

This article says 'A study by the University of Graz says peer pressure, labour saving gadgets and a move away from classical foods leads girls to eat unhealthy food'.

Let's explore more deeply how food and health are linked.

(Hand out numbered one-liners to the respective reps from these countries)

(Use of gestures)

1. The Japanese eat **very little** fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the English.
2. The Canadians eat **a lot** of fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the English.
3. The Chinese drink **very little** red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the English.
4. The Italians drink **a lot of** red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the English.
5. The Germans drink a lot of beer **and** eat lots of sausages yet suffer fewer heart attacks than the English.

CONCLUSION: Eat and drink what you like. Speaking English is apparently what kills you.

OK, so you don't believe a word of this, **but we all know** there **are** lots of linkages between food and health. I have heard that a Mediterranean diet is especially good.

The Health Service at home in Britain actively encourages us to "make our diets more Mediterranean by eating more fruit and salad, including tomatoes and vegetables" but we really need to add a generous helping of olive oil.

We could therefore have justified bringing NOC to Milan for healthy eating alone.

Now, let us turn to explore how climate change and food linked.

Well, we all know that plants need rain and sunshine to grow. Too little rain causes crops to dry up and too much rain washes them away....

We want our climate to stay just right. Let's look at one way of doing this.

Did you know that what we **choose to eat** affects the climate?

As an example, let's look at the scenario in the UK. This could be similar to Italy and the rest of Europe.

(Use of gestures)

About 50% of the land is used to grow crops to feed animals. If we stopped eating **meat** we could grow enough fruit and vegetables to feed ourselves on just 20% of the land.

That means 80% of the land could be used for other things. For example we could grow enough trees to regenerate the forests which help to keep us cool. Power stations could use the trees as fuel to produce electricity... and with carbon capture and storage could become carbon negative.

So a change in diet could stop ...and even reverse climate change.

Before I try to convert you to becoming a vegetarian, ...or even a partial vegetarian, let's explore an alternative.

Have you ever found a fly in your wine or beer?....

(Fly in Wine joke)

Imagine you are at a banquet at a conference... **It is not NOC but a similar conference...**
However this time the waiter gives each guest a glass of wine, but ...everyone notices that their glass also contains a fly....

(Use of gestures)

The Englishman demanded to have new wine in a new glass...

The Finn picked out the fly out and drank the wine...

The Russian drank the wine, fly and all.

The Chinese ate the fly but left the wine.

The Israeli caught the fly and sold it to the Chinese.

The Norwegian took the fly and went off to fish.

The American sued the restaurant and claimed \$50 million compensation.

The Scotsman grabbed the fly and shouted, 'Now spit out all the wine you swallowed.'

Now is there anyone here who eats insects?

I have never done it –**well not deliberately but may have swallowed one when riding my bike at high speed and taken a gulp of air...**

My daughter gave me this bag of salted insects for Christmas...They come from Thailand *(show bag)*.

I have wondered how they catch the insects.
Could it be like this.

(holds up fly swatter)
(Fly swatter joke)
(Use of gestures)

A woman walked into the kitchen to find her husband stalking around with a fly swatter.

"What are you doing?" she asked.

"Hunting flies," He responded.

"Have you killed any?" She asked.

"Yes, three males, two females," he replied.

Intrigued, she asked, How can you tell?

He responded, "Three were on a beer can... and two were on the phone."

So far I have not had the appetite to try these... *(Holds up bag again)* I thought I would bring them here and share... my wonderful gift!

Is there anyone who would be willing to help me out by tasting one?...

Well it's clear that there is not an appetite for these in Europe!

Supposing I offered you some nuts instead *(holds bag up)* which would you choose?
(assume it is nuts)

We need to grow more of these so let's start to reforest our land by growing nut trees.

So the NOC 2014 challenge is this: When you go home, find a space and plant a nut tree - or thousands of them. *Here are a few pine nuts to get started with.*

And when we come back to NOC next year I'll ask "**Are you growing nuts**"?