# From medicine to venture capital: Dr. Amy Godfrey's mission to improve food systems



Dr. Amy Godfrey, a former NHS doctor, has made a significant shift from practising medicine to working as an analyst for the London-based venture capital firm, The First Thirty. Her change in career direction stemmed from her experiences treating patients with chronic diseases that she believed were closely linked to poor dietary choices. Speaking to AgFunderNews, Godfrey articulated a profound realisation regarding the impact of the food system on health, especially after reading Chris van Tulleken's book, *Ultra Processed People*.

During her seven years as an anaesthetics and intensive care medicine doctor, Godfrey became increasingly aware of the dire health consequences of inadequate nutrition, stating, “I felt like I was failing as a doctor, because that is far too late for me to play a positive role in diabetes management.” Her revelation came as she frequently encountered patients suffering severe complications from type 2 diabetes, including amputations, which prompted her to reassess the healthcare landscape.

This concern led Godfrey to explore the concept of a regenerative food system—an approach she believes could address both public health crises and environmental degradation. Her discussions at Groundswell, an agricultural event, introduced her to Antony from The First Thirty, highlighting the venture firm’s commitment to health-oriented food innovations. Godfrey noted that incorporating a medical perspective into the firm’s portfolio could help drive transformative change within the food system.

The discourse around regenerative agriculture does not solely encompass agricultural practices but extends to how corporations influence the food landscape. Godfrey indicates that the behaviour of these large agrifood corporations often prioritises the production of ultra-processed foods over health-conscious options. She asserts that quantifying the healthcare costs associated with food-related diseases could serve as a critical lever to encourage corporate alignment with healthier food practices. She explained, “If you had a company generating the kind of profits that could offset food-related disease, it would be a unicorn tomorrow.”

Recent reports show the staggering financial implications of chronic diseases: in the UK, a single diabetes patient can cost the National Health Service roughly £25,000 annually, accounting for about 10% of the entire NHS budget. Godfrey suggests that as the economic burden of poor dietary choices becomes clearer, private companies may begin to value the health of their workforce as an important asset, further motivating a shift towards healthier food systems.

In terms of consumer education, Godfrey emphasises the importance of conveying the nutritional flow from healthy soils to food products. She expressed a need for transparency regarding food quality, questioning how many consumers would accept conventionally grown produce if they were aware of the chemicals used in its cultivation. “There’s a need to find the hidden information that we need to bring to the forefront for people to be able to make informed decisions,” she remarked.

The challenge of improving consumer awareness extends to the perception of taste. Godfrey noted that consumers often gravitate towards processed foods because of their engineered taste profiles, which are designed to be exceptionally appealing. She argues that taste should initially be seen as a reliable indicator of nutritional value but has since been compromised by the prevalence of ultra-processed items.

Godfrey stresses the urgent need for educational initiatives, particularly targeting young children, in order to mitigate long-term health consequences. The current statistics are alarming, with an increasing number of children in the UK being diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. She advocates for comprehensive education on nutrition and health in schools and homes, asserting, “Most people care about their health and the health of their loved ones.”

Through her role at The First Thirty and the insights she brings from her medical background, Dr. Amy Godfrey aims to contribute to the development of a better food system that prioritises both human health and environmental sustainability.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://agfundernews.com/why-one-doctor-turned-from-medicine-to-impact-investing-i-could-not-unsee-the-food-related-disease-in-my-patients> - This article discusses Dr. Amy Godfrey's transition from medicine to impact investing, emphasizing her realization of the health impacts caused by poor dietary choices, which aligns with her sentiments about failing as a doctor due to late-stage disease management.
2. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)32588-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736%2820%2932588-3/fulltext) - The Lancet article highlights the connection between nutrition and chronic diseases, supporting Dr. Godfrey's claims about the severe health consequences of inadequate nutrition and the rising incidents of type 2 diabetes.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/nov/21/cost-of-obesity-uk-nhs> - This report outlines the financial burden of chronic diseases, such as diabetes, on the NHS, corroborating Godfrey's statement about a single diabetes patient's annual cost to the NHS being approximately £25,000.
4. <https://www.foodpolitics.com/2023/10/food-companies-healthcare-costs-comments/> - This article discusses the influence of food companies on public health and how quantifying healthcare costs can drive corporate changes towards healthier options, reflecting Godfrey's views on leveraging economic incentives for healthier food systems.
5. <https://www.nutrition.org.uk/healthyliving/health-education-in-schools.html> - This resource emphasizes the importance of nutrition education in schools, backing Dr. Godfrey's advocacy for comprehensive nutritional education to mitigate long-term health issues among children.
6. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7851608/> - The article reviews the effects of ultra-processed foods on health, supporting Godfrey's assertion about the engineered taste profiles of processed foods and their impact on consumer choices regarding nutrition.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMi1AFBVV95cUxNMEI5NUEyalRGU0dkd1NOWWs3aFprX1A0SC1GOWh6ZUt1Q2RTZXpQYTU5ZzVOb2FfWWlEYlJESkZxZHVjSFBnZm5MbVV0bFhVaU5jRnhxazhqT3lzZU9kZ240M0FWcndPc2pvTzhuLUJ5MGYtek8tV093V01rU0IzSW9IN2NsXzhPU1lOeEs1V1lTSWZESUthak9wbUJuQTA1N2dCcnlIc2toTDhwYkVRd3pJWWlEVmVrdUR3dTMtSHF3NFhhRXo4bEJlblJKZTZxY1psTw?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data