

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Monday, 12 July 2021 09:00 GMT +02:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	EU Citizens Dialogue on Food Systems
CONVENED BY	Mr Ladislav Miko, EU dialogue Convenor for the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/29779/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Member State
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	European Union

The outcomes from a Food Systems Summit Dialogue will be of use in developing the pathway to sustainable food systems within the locality in which they take place. They will be a valuable contribution to the national pathways and also of interest to the different workstreams preparing for the Summit: the Action Tracks, Scientific Groups and Champions as well as for other Dialogues.

1. PARTICIPATION

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

67

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

1 0-18 17 19-30 32 31-50 16 51-65 1 66-80 80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

27 Male 39 Female 1 Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

17	Agriculture/crops	9	Education	9	Health care
12	Fish and aquaculture	9	Communication	10	Nutrition
21	Livestock	8	Food processing	4	National or local government
	Agro-forestry	6	Food retail, markets		Utilities
14	Environment and ecology	13	Food industry	2	Industrial
3	Trade and commerce		Financial Services		Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

1	Small/medium enterprise/artisan	1	Workers and trade union
5	Large national business		Member of Parliament
3	Multi-national corporation	2	Local authority
3	Small-scale farmer	2	Government and national institution
	Medium-scale farmer		Regional economic community
1	Large-scale farmer		United Nations
19	Local Non-Governmental Organization		International financial institution
7	International Non-Governmental Organization	2	Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
	Indigenous People	1	Consumer group
17	Science and academia	3	Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

HOW DID YOU ORGANIZE THE DIALOGUE SO THAT THE PRINCIPLES WERE INCORPORATED, REINFORCED AND ENHANCED?

DG SANTE organised the online citizen dialogue on 12-13 July 2021. The event was first advertised in June 2021, giving interested parties enough time to prepare their contributions. It was advertised via different social medial channels, predominantly Twitter, ensuring that a wide audience of potential participants was reached. A total of 67 citizens out of 297 registered citizens took part. They represented a broad spectrum of 14 sectors (see tables above), including: Agriculture/Crops, Fish and aquaculture, Food industry, Communication, Health care and Nutrition. They came from 14 categories of stakeholder groups including: Local non-governmental organisations, science and academia, large national businesses and multinational corporations. All participants attended the opening plenary session on 12 July. The EU Convenor framed the focus for the dialogue with an overview of the structure, purpose and content of EU citizens dialogues on food systems. The Convenor and other speakers touched on the challenges of aligning different food systems with the full range of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This was an opportunity to raise awareness of the EU's Farm to Fork strategy, as well. Participants were divided into 6 thematic groups based on their stated interests on the registration form they filled in to participate. There were 10-15 participants per thematic session. Four discussion groups were held on 12 July and the remaining two on 13 July. Each breakout room session dealt with one topic, important for the Summit. Each discussion group was led by a facilitator and had an opening introduction and summary of the discussion at the end. The closing plenary was held on 13 July after the thematic sessions. Facilitators reported back on each thematic group and summarised the discussion, including points of agreement and disagreement and actions expressed in their discussion group.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

All the Principles of Engagement of the Food Systems Summit were followed. In particular, the principles of recognising complexity, embracing multi-stakeholder inclusivity, and complementing the work of others were reflected in the dialogue. Each of the 6 breakout sessions began with a presentation from a relevant civil society case study and an address by invited speakers. Participants were encouraged to speak openly and discuss the theme of the session based on their personal and professional experience. They had the opportunity to ask questions and make comments by raising their hands or in the chat function. The facilitator ensured that each participant contributed and invited replies from other participants to include a variety of perspectives on the points made. The facilitator read out most of the comments on the chat function, especially those made by people who were unable to speak after raising their hand, and where appropriate questions were referred to the speakers. Each breakout session also used the Zoom Polls function to consolidate participants' opinions on the following questions as grouped by the relevant theme.

DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER DIALOGUE CONVENORS ABOUT APPRECIATING THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT?

I would invite other convenors to make sure to guarantee that the principle of inclusivity and multi-stakeholders engagement is promoted during these dialogues. Interesting and alternative ideas came out by simply giving the opportunity to people that are not normally involved in these processes to speak.

3. METHOD

The outcomes of a Dialogue are influenced by the method that is used.

DID YOU USE THE SAME METHOD AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CONVENORS REFERENCE MANUAL?

Yes

No

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

The facilitators invited participants to propose and discuss ideas on the topics prompted by questions prepared in advance. Green claims and sustainable food labelling:
The discussion was predominantly focused on Europe's food systems. The facilitator invited participants to propose and discuss ideas on the topic of sustainable food labelling, prompted by eight questions relating to the difficulty for consumers to make sense of environmental labels and initiatives; how 'greenwashing' can be better policed; the worst misleading terms to clamp down on to avoid confusion; empowering consumers to make sustainable food choices; making sustainable food labelling better; the next steps in terms of educating consumers; promoting the EU's Farm to Fork to be more transparent on the sources of food.

The views of young people on sustainable consumption:
Participants proposed and discussed ideas around sustainable production, distribution and consumption. Prompts included questions on a vision of sustainable food consumption; key elements that need to be addressed; overcoming obstacles; policymakers' actions to encourage that shift; the role of the private sector; actions to shift consumer behaviour; solutions for the most vulnerable and poor; reducing the potential trade-offs; and solutions to offset costs for farmers, food businesses and workers; mobilising young people to participate more fully in providing solutions.

Sustainable production:
The dialogue broadly covered: pricing, restrictive regulation, changing food consumption patterns, producer organisations, international trade and new business models. Prompts included questions on the main obstacles and challenges; shortcomings in current initiatives; the reasons for a continuous lack of understanding on sustainable food production; incentives that are needed to bring about a transformation; closing the barrier between rich and poorer countries; and involving farmers, food processors, retailers and consumers in sustainable food production in practice and in policy.

Sustainable and healthy diets
The facilitator asked questions on the availability to all of sustainable, healthy food to all and how to change this situation; the sufficiency of enough information to choose a sustainable and healthy diet; changing how people buy or access food; changes to farming or farming policy; trade agreements; empowering individuals and communities to produce more of their own fresh food; and support for food innovation and entrepreneurship.

Prevention and reduction of food waste:
The facilitator asked questions on the causes for food waste across the food supply chain and solutions to address these issues; causes of food waste at household level/at home and solutions to address these causes; barriers consumers face in reducing/preventing food waste; creating a wider societal movement to reduce food waste; actions food producers can take to improve consumers' understanding of the dates to which their products can still be eaten safely; and the types of information need to help consumers decide whether to keep or throw away a product past its 'best before' date.

Antimicrobial resistance:
The dialogue touched on multiple action tracks, and topics broadly covered awareness of antimicrobial resistance, support to change farming practice, animal welfare, aquaculture, antimicrobials in the environment and international trade. Prompts included questions on public awareness of the issues and solutions for change; the roles of public policy and sharing information with farmers; the roles of farming organisations and other stakeholders; reducing the presence of antimicrobials in the environment and who should pay for it; and limits on antimicrobial in trade agreements and how could these be enforced.

ACTION TRACKS

- ✓ Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
- ✓ Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
- ✓ Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
- ✓ Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
- Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

- Finance
- ✓ Innovation
- Human rights
- ✓ Women & Youth Empowerment
- ✓ Policy
- Data & Evidence
- ✓ Governance
- ✓ Trade-offs
- ✓ Environment and Climate

MAIN FINDINGS

Green claims and sustainable food labelling

A number of participants agreed that most food labels are confusing and that consumers overall are ill-informed about the science behind green claims. Many agreed that they wanted more transparency. Overall, participants agreed on many points and there appeared to be only a few areas of divergence. Some citizens felt healthy eating should be merged with sustainability matters.

It was agreed that there are many different dimensions and trade-offs within sustainability, which should be considered and clearly communicated on. Citizens generally thought one single labelling method was best, such as sustainability scores using colours. In conclusion, transparency, trust and education were the three main big issues for the group and how they would welcome an EU label, to help consumers differ between an official label and a commercial label.

The views of young people on sustainable consumption

There was wide support for actions to encourage more young people to enter farming, for youth-led innovation, and for more opportunities for young people to engage in shaping food systems. Young people also require more opportunities to have their voices heard in policymaking.

There is a need for reduction and valorisation of waste in a more circular economy. Education is necessary to increase understanding, and research is needed to provide a scientific basis for the complex trade-offs.

Pricing and tax systems should aim to ensure that the price of foods reflects their real value and also ensure fair prices. Clear labelling based on objective, independent standards would help. Misleading claims and gaps in consumer information need to be addressed.

Sustainable production

Participants felt that competitive markets put a downward pressure on farmer prices, which has led to income problems, overspecialisation, and a lack of incentives for sustainable production. There is a need to internalise in food prices the negative environmental and social externalities of the food production model. The concept of an environmental tax was discussed.

Cooperatives have a role as promoters of agricultural development, allowing farmers to develop their own technical assistance and get involved in new technologies. The COVID-19 pandemic showed the importance of keeping trade flowing and has produced new business models. Waste and food poverty, however, remain severe problems.

Some participants argued that trade supports balanced diets and brings improvements to the agri-food sectors in developing countries. What is needed is better international trade, including regulation and sustainability standards, which are sensitive at a local level.

Sustainable and healthy diets

Participants agreed that it is important to provide education and to disseminate reliable information. More needs to be done to promote the availability and affordability of sustainable and healthy food.

The group felt it was important that approaches have some nuance – there cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach to diet or sustainability. There was a consensus that diets need to be rebalanced in favour of eating more plant-based products while reducing meat consumption. However, as consumption patterns change, farmers should receive support.

EU trade policies with other parts of the world should support the transition to more sustainable and healthy diets. Policies relating to pricing, fiscal incentives and subsidies could all be rolled out to encourage sustainable food production and healthier consumption habits.

Prevention and reduction of food waste

Participants agreed that there are weaknesses throughout, from producer to consumer, with no single answer. The primary issues were agreed to be a lack of connection between consumers and the origins of their food; a lack of clearly communicated fiscal or moral incentives; a loss of skills in reusing food and an understanding how much is wasted at household level; the issue of food pricing not reflecting the true environmental cost; and the need for education and information campaigns for children and adults.

The group agreed that digital tools can help to address some of these challenges. There needs to be better preservation of food from the time of harvesting and processing.

Antimicrobial resistance

The group agreed that everyone involved in the food system should be provided with reliable information about antimicrobial resistance in food production. Creating a network of intermediaries, advisory services and government bodies could support farmers as they try to reduce the use of antimicrobials. There was a strong focus on better animal welfare.

The creation of multi-stakeholder platforms could provide guidance, knowledge and investment. Trustworthy food labelling schemes should also be supported.

Steps should be taken to improve the sustainability of the EU's aquaculture sector, not least as a way of reducing reliance on imports that might have longer supply chains and production that is more difficult to monitor than EU production.

The EU's trade policies should be used to drive up standards across the world. Efforts could be made to develop and promote global standards for the use of antimicrobials in the food chain.

ACTION TRACKS

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- Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

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| <input type="checkbox"/> | Finance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Policy |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Innovation | <input type="checkbox"/> | Data & Evidence |
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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/6

Green claims and sustainable food labelling

The large number of sustainable food labels and certifications was a discussion topic. Some participants asked for fewer sustainability labels on packaging but also stressed that labels had to be more informative. Governance on measuring sustainability would be useful and minimise greenwashing. Participants agreed that an 'official' label without commercial interests that is backed up by science would enhance consumer trust. It should be controlled by an independent body that ensures consistency. One citizen believed that greenwashing can be avoided by having a 'certification of certification schemes'.

Another discussion topic was how food producers can prove their sustainability claims. One citizen said that for transparency purposes, consumers should have access to the point of production. Farmers for instance, could allow consumers to visit farms. Another participant pointed out that organic farmers may want consumers to visit but larger producers do not. It was also pointed out that agri-food producers may be able to invite people onto site but that it is much more difficult for those in the fishing industry. Several participants agreed that alternative ways are needed to demonstrate how clean or ethical factories, farms and fisheries are in relation to the standards. Control authorities should be responsible. Cameras could be used in certain situations.

There was much discussion on what elements should be taken into account within sustainable food labelling. Land-use footprints, micro-toxins and water-use were proposed by one citizen. Another cited the carbon footprint of transporting a product, working conditions and animal welfare as areas that need to be considered. Several participants also wanted pesticides use to be included. They argued this can be tracked using data collection in a similar way to animal welfare data, though there was a question about how to ensure data is used ethically once it has left a farm. Farmers may feel like they are being monitored by state as a result. Some participants suggested taking a systems approach to measure sustainability, which would be focused on outcomes rather than the tools or methods used for production.

The design and format of sustainable food labelling was also a topic discussion. A simple sustainability label with a colour code system, similar to Nutri-Score, was proposed. It could come from the EU and should be based on scientific knowledge, evidence and data collection. It should be mandatory and not just voluntarily.

Education as a means to support food labelling was a major discussion topic. One citizen thought that educating people should include the side effects of sustainable products, such as better pay for farmers via fair product initiatives. It was pointed out that education is also needed in professional sectors, such as small shop staff who are not aware of the issue. One participant said that people trust small shop staff and gave the example of a survey in the Netherlands. There, fishmongers were not aware of sustainability issues when asked by customers. The same participant went on to say that many people buy their groceries in big supermarkets so a different approach is needed to help answer consumer's questions. Multi-channel campaigns are needed to inform consumers. Marketing strategies and social media advertising can also help to raise awareness of the issues.

ACTION TRACKS

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KEYWORDS

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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Data & Evidence
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Women & Youth Empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade-offs
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/6

The views of young people on sustainable consumption

Participants stated the need for engagement between young people and policymakers, and the importance of taking opportunities to make their voices heard when possible. This could be facilitated through setting up discussion platforms to exchange ideas and launch grassroots initiatives, as well as advocacy via social media. Young people have grown up with climate change as a reality and have a valuable contribution to make.

Dialogues such as this are important but young people need to see how far their outcomes are put into practice. Pressure on governments from citizens needs to continue, to ensure sustainability remains a priority. Where young people are not engaged in the debate, education and information services should demonstrate the link between food system sustainability and topics that interest young people, such as jobs.

All actors in the food system should be included in shaping policy for a more sustainable food system, including young people. The food industry has important role here, according to some participants, as it has expertise and the financial resources to shift food systems to more sustainable models and healthier products. Consumers also need to be shown how policy in Europe works and what impact their own choices have on the environment.

More directly, young people must be able to look critically at information about food and understand that their food choices are a political act. This should come via training and education about food and food systems from an early age, including lessons teaching cooking skills and education from farmers.

People will not accept price increases if they don't understand the reasons behind them, so evidence-based dialogue with consumers is essential. One solution proposed was that pricing should include a premium for food produced in an unsustainable way, with more sustainable products being more affordable.

The issue is too complex to be the responsibility of consumers alone, but consumer demand can drive change, as can industry peer pressure. An independently verified labelling system could help, although it would be more complex to structure than e.g. existing labels for nutritional values. Industry needs to be incentivised and impartial regulators need oversight to prevent greenwashing, to ensure sustainability principles are adhered to along the food chain, and to provide guidelines on what claims producers can make about their products.

Participants discussed farming practices, and some agreed that raising certain animals for food can add to biodiversity, e.g. in pastures. Where crops are grown, farmers should avoid monocultures, which are more susceptible to pests, with increased pesticide use as a result. However, there is a trade-off to be made between growing sufficient food and biodiversity.

Household waste is another area of concern, and there is a need for new methods to limit and reuse organic waste throughout the food supply chain, including applications in non-food industries.

While local food production was a focus of discussion, eating local/seasonal food is not always the most sustainable practice, some argued. One participant said that food miles are not a significant contributor to sustainability and another that it is better that food is sourced from countries with the most robust systems that have the least adverse effect on the environment. Technology such as hydroponics and aquaculture can be useful in responding to nutrient needs, e.g. providing wider access to fresh food year-round in countries where seasonal weather restricts local availability.

The Zoom Poll showed broad agreement among participants that lobbying to change laws has more impact on making food systems sustainable than private or community action (82%), and that businesses rather than consumers should ultimately meet the costs of making food systems more sustainable (83%).

ACTION TRACKS

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KEYWORDS

✓	Finance	✓	Policy
✓	Innovation	✓	Data & Evidence
	Human rights	✓	Governance
✓	Women & Youth Empowerment	✓	Trade-offs
		✓	Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/6

Sustainable production

Participants discussed the pressure on production from supermarkets, with prices unchanged in many years. It was pointed out that techniques have been developed to produce more food at a lower price, but that higher production often comes at the expense of quality and flavour. One participant suggested that local animal breeds and plant varieties are being lost and that, while some actions are being carried out in this sphere, more protection is needed.

Participants agreed that lots of food is wasted in fields, processing warehouses and at other points in the supply chain as minor cosmetic defects are considered a reason to throw produce away.

Changing policies dictate how farmers work, but there is a lack of reward for nature-positive production. While there is a need for diversification, including urban farming solutions, some participants pointed out that it can be difficult for farmers to take steps into different methods of production. They often have large debts and need financial and technical support to transition.

Participants agreed that eating patterns have changed in recent decades, with meat consumption increasing and a lack of connection between people and the food they eat. In addition, the loss of knowledge within certain demographic groups of how to store and use leftover food safely is resulting in unnecessary waste. It was felt that these are areas where information campaigns and education can play an important role.

One participant suggested that reform of conventional agriculture is not sufficient to meet the demands of projected increases in meat consumption. Cell culture and plant-based alternatives were cited as possible solution but the technology hasn't been widely embraced and private start-ups working in this area face regulatory hurdles.

There was broad consensus on the need for a fairer food environment, with wages that enable people to afford good-quality, healthy, sustainable food. Particularly in the current climate, consumers will generally choose the cheapest option.

Sustainability is not a priority for everyone, and not everyone has the information they need. While price is the primary driver, a lack of clear information is a problem. Participants largely agreed that a government mandate for universal, clear, trustworthy labelling with a product's environmental footprint and other sustainability aspects, as well as information campaigns about what makes a sustainable diet, would allow people to make better-informed decisions. Taxes on less sustainable products could help to change habits.

One participant raised the need to address the amount of revenue that goes to producers of, for example, coffee, which is consumed around the world. Solutions need to be global and systemic and make full use of available technologies.

Participants discussed the need for citizens to be involved and organised to bring about change. Two participants highlighted the potential of cooperatives to help farmers to organise, obtain funds and public procurement and tackle the necessary administration.

Technological intervention needs to be done quickly and collaboratively, with science and policymakers working alongside farmers and citizens for the benefit of everyone. Small farmers should be incorporated in decisions and policy, and the media has a responsibility to show different approaches to food production.

On shortcomings in previous sustainability initiatives, participants said authorities have so far taken a short-term view, and that it is necessary to look at what will benefit citizens on the long-term, and accept that there will be a cost.

The aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic requires a new business model, some group members said, with a need for research into changing consumer behaviour and attitudes to pricing, waste and other issues.

In the polls, participants felt that management (50%) and restoration (42%) were the most important of the UN's three approaches for nature-positive production, followed by protection (8%). They highlighted reducing food waste (75%) and reducing pesticide use (58%) as the Farm to Fork initiatives most able to transform the EU's food system.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/6

Sustainable and healthy diets

The debate on the availability of sustainable, healthy food focused on the price of food and how that issue influences access. There was no universal agreement, with some participants feeling that healthy, sustainable food was sufficiently cheap and accessible while others felt it was too expensive for the poorest sections of society. Some believed it was about making the right choices, with many people still eating too many goods high in sugar, salt and fat.

One idea proposed to make sustainable food more available was to lower taxes on healthy foods while increasing them on unhealthy options. Another idea was for the EU's Common Agricultural Policy to become a food and health policy rather than an economic policy. According to one participant, the diversity of health needs of individual consumers and the cultural importance of specific foods, including meat, in regional cuisines should not be ignored.

There was general agreement that many people need better-quality information about a healthy diet. Efforts to improve knowledge should start early with better food and nutrition education in schools. Group members reported good work already being carried out in this area through local projects, workshops and some TV shows. However, participants agreed that more could be done by governments to spread the message about eating the right foods for a healthier lifestyle.

The group examined the role retailers, particularly supermarkets, play in driving access to healthy food choices. Debate focused on what retailers stock, with some feeling that too much junk food was available. Participants also noted that even institutions like hospitals do not always provide enough healthy snack choices for visitors.

Bringing citizens closer to food production could help to change their buying habits, some participants suggested. This could be achieved by creating direct links between farmers and consumers through tools like ecommerce. Citizens also need to see how food is produced so they can make better-informed choices. Learning how to cook also teaches people (especially children) about ingredients and nutrition as well as sustainability issues like reducing and managing food waste. A comment in the chat noted that Sweden has developed public procurement criteria that includes economic, social and environmental aspects.

When discussing the role of trade agreements, the group explored a range of issues. Is imported food clearly sustainable and can we be sure of the health and environmental standards of production methods for food grown outside the EU? One participant gave an example of imported goji berries labelled as organic, which turned out to have more pesticide residue than European non-organic alternatives. This sparked a debate about the value of accurate labelling and the role authorities should play in checking standards of imported goods, which should match EU standards.

Debate turned to what role individuals and communities could play in producing their own food. The feeling was that community growing schemes can educate people about food and connect them to the food production process. However, this approach is limited as not everyone can "grow their own" and for practical reasons, general food production needs to be on a bigger scale.

The group was very keen to see innovation and entrepreneurship play a greater role in food production and sustainability. Plant breeding, development of novel foods (like synthetic meats) and insects as a foodstuff were all mentioned in this context as a way of keeping the world's population fed in an efficient and sustainable manner.

In the first Zoom poll, respondents favoured incentives to make food more sustainable over stricter limits by 70% to 30%. In the second poll, 64% of respondents said that action should be international and only 36% preferred national or regional action.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 5/6

Prevention and reduction of food waste

Unpredictability and uncertainty are a problem, one participant pointed out, and this was especially true during the pandemic, when restaurants weren't ordering food. It takes a relatively long time for producers to react to changes in consumer habits. It was largely agreed that digital tools can help but need to be easier and more useful, and that technology could be better used, particularly to improve packaging and labelling.

Retailers often over-order, and consumers frequently buy more than they need. It was suggested that legislation obliging stores to give away surplus to charities, for example, could address the former issue. The group agreed that there is also a lack of connection between people, particularly those who live in cities, and what goes into producing the food they eat. At consumer level, information campaigns would help people relearn sustainable habits, such as eating only when hungry, using leftovers, planning meals and sharing food. Supermarket bulk buys are a problem, the group agreed, with smaller households having to pay more for smaller quantities or waste food they are unable to eat. There is no incentive to buy less food. Consumers are also used to products looking a certain way and rejecting edible food if it doesn't meet those standards. Participants agreed that food is often too cheap, not taking into account the environmental or ethical cost. For consumers, it's easy to throw away food that wasn't expensive to buy. Information campaigns would help people value food from something other than a financial perspective. The media has an important role to play, some participants said, showing people the consequences of their choices and inspiring them to do better.

Participants agreed that in their own lives, avoiding food waste comes naturally through habit. Their methods include using leftovers to create something new, tasting food before throwing it away, not strictly following best-before dates, sorting any waste into compost, using unusual ingredients to start conversations about food, and using food-sharing apps. These are all habits that can be taught in childhood. Better measurements at household level to see what we throw away would be valuable, they agreed.

For a media campaign to work, it must be practical, something people can share easily with friends and family, avoid moralising and avoid information overload. Participants agreed that people know they shouldn't waste food but that not many appreciate the true impact; high-profile ambassadors could be employed to raise awareness. Companies should also play a role, and it could be part of political manifestos during elections.

Food waste platforms are a good way to spread knowledge, one participant noted. Children need to be in contact with unpackaged food and learn how food is produced, for example during farm open days. The connection between farmer and consumer is not very direct and there are limited possibilities to communicate directly.

Participants thought people would be willing to pay a little more for more sustainable food but not enough to make a difference. As many foods are widely available year-round, there is less appreciation of food and seasons. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, emptier shelves prompted some people to stop taking food for granted.

In the polls, 50% of the 10 participants said they would use food past its best-before date if the food looks OK, 30% of the 10 participants said it would depend on the type of food and 20% say they never look at dates. None would throw the food away. 45% said education and training on food waste would help reduce the amount thrown away, 36% thought incentivising consumers through taxation would be the best solution, and 18% wanted to see advice given through campaigns.

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		✓	Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 6/6

Antimicrobial resistance

The absence of reliable information on AMR was a focus, with some worried that there was too much “fake news”. The point was also made that sick animals do not feature in food marketing campaigns so the problem can be out of sight for the public. It was noted that the public is better informed about resistance in humans, but do not engage with this issue when it comes to livestock or even their pets.

While the group was keen to see better information for consumers – including labelling schemes – it was accepted that it is not an easy subject for lay people to understand. Sweden was cited as model for change, where society as a whole is engaged in transforming the entire animal welfare system to minimise the use of antibiotics. Some participants felt that if people were more aware of AMR, consumers might be prepared to pay more for antimicrobial-free food. Another pointed out that all farms – intensive or not – should have good animal welfare as “microbes don’t discriminate between the farming system.”

Because antimicrobials are part of their work, farmers understand the topic, participants agreed. Some farmers fear that reducing use will involve extra costs, although one participant’s experience was that these were not as great as anticipated. The group discussed measures and technologies available to reduce the use of antimicrobials. These include vaccines, which need to be made more affordable, and improvements in animal nutrition, biosecurity, disease monitoring and breeding programmes that can help animals stay healthy. It was suggested that an incentive-based approach could help farmers switch to healthier husbandry practices.

Debate moved on to who can support farmers to change practices, with agreement on a multi-stakeholder approach that could include farmers, retailers and government. EU-supported projects are also helping farmers to engage with AMR-related research. In addition, veterinarians have a key role to play in supporting and informing farmers.

The group examined what can be done to reduce the presence of antimicrobials in the environment and who should pay for it. Discussions began by focusing on aquaculture. Norway was offered as a success story because it ended routine use of antibiotics about ten years ago. Vaccination could also help drive further improvements in this industry, though this is a practical challenge as there are over 500 species of farmed fish worldwide. Even so, participants felt, European aquaculture should be prioritised for revival in the EU Member States. It was also noted that the EU has no plans to include invertebrates in animal welfare legislation.

There was agreement that requirements applied to EU farmers to reduce use of antimicrobials should feature in EU trade agreements as part of a worldwide approach to reduce antimicrobial use in farming. One participant suggested that tariffs could incentivise more sustainable production, while others suggested that in parallel, producers outside of the EU could be supported to access technologies and capacity building to reduce antimicrobial reliance. It was also suggested that various EU Directorates-General could work more closely on this issue. More broadly, AMR was seen as a global challenge. The suggestion was made that the FAO could develop guidelines as key references for global trade. The potential value of harmonising labelling worldwide was also mentioned by one participant.

The first Zoom poll supported views that the public need more information on AMR, as 75% of respondents said that people are not sufficiently aware of the problem. The second supported calls for more government intervention in practices, with 92% of respondents saying that more laws or policies are needed to reduce the amount of antimicrobials in food.

ACTION TRACKS

	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
✓	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
✓	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

	Finance	✓	Policy
✓	Innovation	✓	Data & Evidence
	Human rights	✓	Governance
	Women & Youth Empowerment	✓	Trade-offs
			Environment and Climate

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Green claims and sustainable food labelling

One citizen stated that industrial farming and sustainable farming are conflicting approaches and that a breakthrough is needed for agri-food production. He felt big companies try to improve their image by promoting themselves with green initiatives. Another participant disagreed that industrial farming cannot be sustainable. Transparency can combat greenwashing even at a large scale of food production, though solutions must make sense for individual farmers. On the topic of pricing, both of sustainable products as a whole and the added costs of labelling food with more information, there was minor disagreement. Other participants felt that avoiding costs is unavoidable; some that the cost should not impact consumers and others argued that sustainable products should not be more expensive at all. One citizen argued that sustainable products are less affordable today than other choices and this must change. Others felt that in a democracy, any member of society should be able to make sustainable decisions.

The views of young people on sustainable consumption

The primary areas of divergence were on large-scale monoculture vs small-scale farming, and the issue of meat vs plant-based diets. Some participants said that organic farming may not always be the most sustainable option as it is less productive and results in more expensive food for low-income consumers. Others felt that it reduced negative environmental impacts and increased biodiversity. Some participants maintained that the future of sustainable food needs to be plant-based and that a reduction in meat consumption would free up land for other uses. Others said there is much land that can only be used for animal farming. Most participants felt that animal protein cannot be entirely replaced by plant-based food, although they had varying views on how far the replacement should go. Small-scale farming can be part of the solution according to some, while others felt that intensive systems can be more sustainable through more efficient use of resources.

Sustainable production

The primary area of divergence was on the issue of international trade. Some participants called for less trade, with more regional, sustainable production. Others called for more international trade and a rejection of protectionism, taking a global view and considering how producers in developing countries can add value to local produce through access to international trade.

There was also divergence on the extent to which animal protein is an essential part of a balanced diet and on policy and public support for meat alternatives.

There was no consensus on a proposal for seasonal taxes on fruit and vegetable products. It was pointed out that there is a risk that countries would react by imposing trade measures, and it is difficult to predict the result. While some participants called for a more regional and seasonal supply chain, with reduction in transport, this view was not widely shared as a driver of a more sustainable production system.

Sustainable and healthy diets

There was some disagreement on approaches that should be taken within the food. Some felt more investments should be made in organic production as way to improve the nutritional benefits of food. Other participants disagreed, noting that good food does not necessarily need to be organically produced.

One person stated that food is too cheap now and that organic prices compared to conventional foods are not that different. Another participant claimed food is still too expensive, particularly for poorer members of society.

Some felt they retailers, particularly supermarkets, could do more to stock healthier foods. However, another group believed that retail is making changes and that healthier choices are available.

While many were very keen to see meat consumption dramatically reduced, some argued that livestock farming has a role to play in maintaining biodiversity. Countering this in the chat facility, one participant said that meat will never be sustainable.

Prevention and reduction of food waste

Some participants wanted to see a significant reduction in packaging of food items. However, it was pointed out that there is a trade-off to be made between reducing plastic use and ensuring food is packaged in the safest and most appropriate way, to protect it during transit and in store.

Antimicrobial resistance

Some in the group believed that public awareness of AMR in animals is higher than others suggested.

One participant suggested that while additional bodies can support farmers on this issue, there are already a lot of organisations happy to work with farmers on improving animal welfare standards. They would also be willing to help with any transition away from use of antimicrobials.

During the debate on trade, a participant pointed out that individual countries are very different and trying to homogenise their standards would be a big challenge.

ACTION TRACKS

- Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
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KEYWORDS

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| <input type="checkbox"/> | Finance | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Policy |
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