

Towards Sufficient, Affordable, Farm-anchored, Ethical and Regenerative Diets and Food Production Systems

Agriculture¹ is a central pillar of human development and civilization. Our modern world has become possible only because the ever-rising productivity and rich diversity of farming practices have allowed farmers everywhere to grow more food to feed more people. Both animals and plants have played a foundational role in this development and will continue to do so. Farmers have known and respected that it is the symbiosis of fauna and flora, of tradition and innovation, of cooperation and competition, of intensification and diversification, which leads to sustainable, resilient and productive eco-systems. Our world today is challenged to preserve and nourish the inhabitants of our planet — to manage the planet’s resources in a beneficial manner to nature, while also providing the human population with sufficient and healthy nutrition.

As they have throughout history, farmers are providing solutions in the form of constantly improving farming methods and novel technologies. In a landmark policy paper, the World Farmers’ Organisation (WFO) committed itself “to anchor the global food systems and to take full responsibility for the farmers’ part” ([The Farmers Route to Sustainable Food Systems](#), WFO 2020 General Assembly).

An outcome of the world’s food systems is to produce the meals we eat. Our diet choices as well as the food production methods we employ, determine how well our food systems build on the 5 P’s (People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnerships) and deliver on the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda.

The Scientific Council of the WFO supports a variety of diets and food production systems that are **SAFER for a Sustainable World—Sufficient, Affordable, Farm-anchored, Ethical and Regenerative** — because they satisfy the following five requirements for the 2030 Sustainability Agenda.

1. **Human nutritional health and viability:** *SAFER Foods* will provide sufficient bio-available macro- and micronutrients to nourish all the world’s rural and urban populations in ways that are affordable for everyone and that protect and enhance human health and well-being. *SAFER Foods* will respect and enhance the emotional, spiritual and cultural dimensions of distinct food cultures. As almost every food product has its source in farming, farmers are essential in providing the quantity and quality of components needed to maintain such diets (SDG #2, #3, #11).
2. **Biodiversity, natural resources and climate sustainability:** In contrast to hunters and gatherers, farmers must work together with nature to produce a surplus to feed humanity. While farming must respect nature to be sustainable, it also modifies nature and at times competes with other natural resource uses. To preserve or restore the eco-systems upon which food production depends, *SAFER Foods* will both ‘share and spare’ natural flora and fauna in active regeneration practices so that these may co-exist with agriculture (SDG #14, #15). As farming is the largest user of the primary planetary materials of land, water and air and also impacts, and is impacted by the climate, *SAFER Foods* will seek to be resource-efficient, aiming to achieve ‘circularity’ where nothing is wasted in the recycling of nutrients and water, aim for low or even neutral carbon and nitrogen impacts on the climate, and aim for minimal pollution of lands and seas (SDG #6, #7, #12, #13).
3. **Economic sustainability:** Farming is a major source of livelihoods worldwide and often is also run as a commercial business. *SAFER Foods* will secure the economic viability of farming, so that farmers can make the investments in knowhow, machinery, land, inputs and infrastructure needed to raise their productivity. Without ensuring the economic sustainability of farming, we are unlikely to meet any of our sustainable development goals (#1, #8, #9).
4. **Ethical sustainability:** Farming is deeply dependent on human capital. *SAFER Foods* will not tolerate poor or dangerous labor conditions, child labor, illegal migrant labor, gender inequality and other human rights abuses. And *SAFER Foods* will apply One Health approaches, which unite medical, veterinary and environmental expertise, and ensure that farmers take responsibility for the welfare of the animals in their care (SDG #4, #5, #10, #16).
5. **Partnership strategy:** Agriculture will help transform the global food system only through mutually respected partnerships with all stakeholders in the world’s food value systems, the foremost being the consumers of food, for whom 20 billion meals are now produced daily (#17).

SAFER Foods in diets and production systems will engage stakeholders and promote discussions about how farmers can help deliver on the 2030 Agenda and goals beyond. This is a principal means by which the WFO will fulfil its “Farmers’ Route to Sustainable Food Systems” promise.

¹ In its broad definition, agriculture includes: crops, livestock breeding, dairy, forestry, fishery, aqua-culture and horticulture.