

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Thursday, 13 May 2021 14:00 GMT +10:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Growing Greener – food production and a healthy environment
CONVENED BY	Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Water and Environment
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/12922/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Member State
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Australia

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

81

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

19-30

31-50

51-65

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

Male

Female

Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

Agriculture/crops

Fish and aquaculture

Livestock

Agro-forestry

Environment and ecology

Trade and commerce

Education

Communication

Food processing

Food retail, markets

Food industry

Financial Services

Health care

Nutrition

National or local government

Utilities

Industrial

Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Small/medium enterprise/artisan

Large national business

Multi-national corporation

Small-scale farmer

Medium-scale farmer

Large-scale farmer

Local Non-Governmental Organization

International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

Science and academia

Workers and trade union

Member of Parliament

Local authority

Government and national institution

Regional economic community

United Nations

International financial institution

Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

Consumer group

Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

In its role as National Convenor for the Australian Food Systems Summit National Dialogues, the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment convened a series of thematic dialogues (in the form of publicly accessible virtual webinars) to facilitate open and independent discussions between a wide range of stakeholders on a variety of issues and challenges facing Australian food systems. These provided an opportunity for stakeholders to participate in meaningful discussions and promote Australian stakeholder engagement in broader UN Food Systems Summit processes. There were 81 unique webinar log-ins for the live webinar session – however we are unable to provide detailed participant metrics according to the above criteria. We can confirm that the webinar attendees reflected a broad base of stakeholder and representative groups in Australia including: not-for-profit and advocacy organisations; community groups; academia and the university sector; advertising, marketing and consultancy firms; research and development institutions; federal, state/territory and local government; private sector and industry peak body groups; farmers and farmers peak body organisations; natural resource management groups. Additionally, to promote greater outreach and accessibility for interested parties unable to attend the webinar on the day, recordings and transcripts of the session have been made available on the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment's website: <https://haveyoursay.awe.gov.au/food-systems-summit-2021>

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The dialogues provided an open and independent platform for Australian stakeholders to share their perspectives on a variety of issues and challenges facing Australian food systems. The dialogue sought to recognise the efforts of various Australian stakeholders (including government, industry, NGOs, think-tanks, consultants and academia) to tackle complex food systems challenges and issues through various initiatives and programs, operating at a range of scales. The dialogue brought diverse stakeholders together to discuss agri-food sector issues and encouraged the emergence of new and innovative thinking, collaborations and approaches. Furthermore, the open and publicly accessible webinar platform sought to encourage and facilitate multi-stakeholder engagement and raise awareness of UN Food Systems Summit processes amongst Australian stakeholders. There was no limits on attendees and the webinar was advertised publicly through social media platforms. The webinar was subsequently made available for both audio and video, by video recording and transcript. Discussions emerging during the dialogue reflected the need for sustained and meaningful action at all levels to give effect to the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.

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

The 'Principles of Engagement', as outlined by the Food Systems Summit, are useful for National Food Systems Summit Dialogue Convenors, and should be considered as a useful starting point. Dialogue Convenors are encouraged to consider modalities and processes which suit their national circumstances.

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

The series of thematic dialogue webinars convened by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment provided an open and independent platform for Australian stakeholders including experts, academics, industry representatives, farmers, the general public and others to share experiences, ideas, opportunities and solutions on a variety of issues and challenges facing food systems. Discussions between panellists were open and transparent, and as representative as possible. Introductions and panellist presentations covered less than 30% of the available time. Four to five panellists spoke for 5 to 8 minutes each, providing an overview of the work they are engaged with. Some used Powerpoint presentations, some provided pre-recorded video presentations. Importantly, the majority of the webinar focused on the panel answering questions posed by the stakeholder audience. During the webinar, questions on a range of topics reflecting diverse stakeholder views, were received from the audience and posed to the panel for response. There was an ongoing opportunity to provide more ideas and to “keep the conversation going” following each webinar, by submitting additional thoughts and views through the Department’s Have Your Say online consultation forum, open until 10 June 2021. The webinars were independent of Australian Government processes and views. In addition the feedback provided in this form is also independent of Australian Government processes and views.

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

As the first in the series of Australian National Food Systems Summit Dialogues hosted by the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, the major focus of this webinar Growing Greener – food production and a healthy environment was to explore:

- how sustainable food and fibre production can help meet the challenges of biodiversity loss, climate change, and an increasing population;
- the need to produce more food with less environmental and natural resource impact;
- investigate innovations and technology for environmental sustainability, including the role of market-based approaches for valuing environmental services and natural resources.

We were pleased to have the participation of the following panellists to lead discussion:

- Fiona Simson, President, National Farmers Federation, Farmer and Board Director
- Professor Richard Eckard, Professor of Sustainable Agriculture and Director of the Primary Industries Climate Challenges Centre, University of Melbourne
- Professor Andrew McIntosh, Associate Dean (Research) at the ANU College of Law; environmental law and policy scholar, Australian National University
- Melinee Leather, Owner/Manager, Leather Cattle Company

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

This report seeks to summarise views and perspectives of webinar participants and does not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Government.

Three expert panellists explored the webinar themes outlined previously by delivering short presentations to webinar participants. Key messages highlighted during these presentations included:

- The important role of industry frameworks, metrics and roadmaps for delivering sustainable agricultural industry growth in Australia out to 2030 – at the industry, commodity and individual farmer level.
- Australian farmers and other agricultural stakeholders are already employing practices and innovations to deliver good natural resource management and sustainability outcomes – including relating to emissions reduction and soils monitoring and management.
- It can be important to consider the relationship between affordable and environmentally sustainable food production and the structure and role of global food distribution networks when thinking about how to give effect to Sustainable Development Goal 2 – Zero Hunger.
- The importance of exploring and promoting “co-benefits” when incentivising more sustainable agricultural production practices (i.e soil carbon may offer benefits in terms of trading and market return, but also improves biodiversity and productivity).
- There have been many elements to historical and contemporary agri-enviro policy in Australia – which has sought to incentivise sustainable agriculture practices and protect the natural resource base. This includes the use of information instruments and extension services, direct regulation and use of grant-based schemes.
- While there is a continued need for all of these into the future, currently, there is an emerging focus on environmental markets and their potential for integrating conservation measures in a way that compliments agricultural production and provides new revenue streams for agricultural producers. This may include payment for ecosystem services such as carbon and biodiversity.

A special-feature webinar panellist gave a short presentation on practices they employ within their cattle farming business to deliver environmental sustainability outcomes including:

- innovative use of digital mapping technologies to measure land health;
- crop rotations and vegetation management;
- introduction of Leucaena and other legumes to increase water infiltration and and reduce GHG emissions;
- diverse tree plantings and revegetation to encourage biodiversity;
- carbon accounting systems;
- use of solar energy; and undertaking other biosecurity activities.

The question and answer session was wide-ranging reflecting strong stakeholder engagement and interest. Some key thematic elements of the discussion related to:

- the characteristics of a healthy and environmentally sustainable diet;
- state/federal government interactions and responsibilities in the agri-environmental sector;
- transaction costs involved in measuring ecosystem services;
- indigenous plant varieties and the role of traditional knowledges;
- consumer behaviour and the role of supermarkets;
- urban sprawl and the potential impact on agricultural land;
- diversified cropping and farming models and biodiversity conservation;
- innovations in fruit and vegetable production and incentivising their increased consumption;
- incentivising the uptake of national market-based sustainability schemes;
- land-clearing practices;
- potential for renewable energy generation on agricultural land.

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC

This report seeks to summarise views and perspectives of webinar participants and does not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Government.

In addition to the topics already highlighted – there were a number of additional high-level key messages emerging during the dialogue discussion, including:

- Given the diversity of agricultural business models and within the Australian natural environment, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to addressing challenges in Australian food systems, including those related to environmental sustainability. It was acknowledged that solutions should be appropriate for the local context and science-based.
- There is a need for farmers and producers to be provided with accurate and adequate data, information and technology to enable them to make informed decisions appropriate to their business and context. This can be complemented with a range of appropriate agri-environmental policy measures, including information services and extension, regulations, grant-based schemes and environmental markets.
- Australian producers and other stakeholders employ and are developing a wide range of policies, programs and initiatives to support and incentivise sustainable agriculture production, build biodiversity and improve climate resilience. This includes individual farmers and agricultural industries (including Beef and Dairy sectors) which promote uptake of practices to deliver positive environmental impacts and are working towards carbon neutrality.
- There is a need to ensure that innovations, solutions, and research are designed with the needs of end-users (i.e. farmers/producers and other stakeholders) in mind and that successful practices and implementations can be effectively and appropriately communicated to farmers/producers. A focus on collaboration across scales and levels (local, national, regional and global) will be important.
- It is important to emphasise and better communicate the “co-benefits” of sustainable farming practices to promote wider uptake and adoption. For example, measuring soil carbon can be used for carbon trading and offer potential additional revenue streams, but can also deliver improved biodiversity, greater water retention, greater nutrient recycling and greater nitrogen mineralisation.
- Environmental markets and payments for ecosystem services are an emerging feature of Australia’s environmental and agricultural policy landscape. They may offer an effective mechanism to promote improved conservation, biodiversity and sustainability outcomes and should be considered in conjunction with improved information, regulation, and grants-based mechanisms.
- There is significant value for producers and consumers in comprehensive and clear industry sustainability frameworks and targets.
- There may be opportunities for the agricultural sector to contribute towards environmental sustainability outcomes through renewable energy generation, including by integrating wind and solar on grazing lands.

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

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

This report seeks to summarise views and perspectives of webinar participants and does not necessarily represent the views of the Australian Government.

In addition to the key messages already detailed there were a number of issues discussed which may have signified a divergence of views, including:

- Consideration as to how externalities associated with food production (i.e. social and environmental) can be more accurately reflected in food pricing and via existing market mechanisms. It was suggested that “cheap food” may not be “better food” and that consumers can be empowered to factor factors beyond price (such as sustainable agriculture production) into their consumption decision-making.
- Exploration of animal-sourced and plant-sourced foods, particularly as it relates to the environmental impact of the livestock sector, dietary choices and the consumption of adequate protein for human nutrition. It was suggested that there is a need for a balanced, evidence-based and context-specific approach which recognises the complementarity of animal and plant production systems, opportunities for sustainable utilisation of rangelands and the role of animal and plant proteins in a balanced, nutritious diet. It was also highlighted that agricultural innovations and technologies will be important to further improve environmental sustainability (i.e. reducing methane in livestock) and helping to boost global food security.
- Decision-makers need to carefully consider and assess policy options in order to optimise the return from scarce resources that can be allocated for conservation while ensuring equity and appropriate incentivisation. Initiatives or programmes seeking to promote uptake of innovative or sustainable practices should not inadvertently penalise farmers already “doing the right thing” (i.e. through additional requirements).
- Rather than focusing on sustainably intensifying food production as a means to meet global food needs, global food distribution networks and food loss and waste issues also need to be considered.
- There may be high transaction costs for farmers to enter into and participate in environmental markets, and market complexity is currently a major barrier to their widespread uptake. There is a need to develop and use auditing/assessment procedures which provide integrity, but at a lower financial impost. Farmers will need to be provided with sufficient information to participate in these emerging markets, and there will be a need for adequate information and extension services.
- Consideration of the role of consumer choice and supply chains in encouraging consumption that can reward farmers and producers for their sustainable practices. Producers and other stakeholders in the supply-chain already aim to adapt and respond to consumer expectations and demand – but this can be further strengthened.
- There is a need for more systemic and holistic approaches to address issues such as land-clearing to ensure the appropriate balancing of social, economic and environmental considerations. This may include clarifying differences in between “regrowth” and “remnant” vegetation and ensuring that decisions are science-based, and achieve the desired natural resource management outcomes (i.e. biodiversity and habitat preservation, biosecurity pest concerns, soil degradation).

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

ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

RELEVANT LINKS

- **Growing greener webinar recording and transcript**
<https://haveyoursay.awe.gov.au/food-systems-summit-2021>
- **Australian Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment - UN Food Systems Summit 2021**
<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/market-access-trade/un-food-systems-summit-2021>