

# OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

<b>DIALOGUE DATE</b>	Thursday, 18 February 2021 17:00 GMT -05:00
<b>DIALOGUE TITLE</b>	Youth Voices in Sustainable U.S. Food Systems
<b>CONVENED BY</b>	USDA
<b>DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE</b>	<a href="https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/25665/">https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/25665/</a>
<b>DIALOGUE TYPE</b>	Member State
<b>GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS</b>	United States of America

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

41

## 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 recognition of the urgency of organizing the Food Systems Dialogues as contributions to the Food Systems Summit, the United States hosted a Dialogue entitled “Youth Voices in Sustainable U.S. Food Systems” at the 2021 Agricultural Outlook Forum on February 18, 2021. The event embraced the Summit principles of engagement: Act with Urgency, Commit to the Summit, Be Respectful, Recognize Complexity, Embrace Multi-Stakeholder Inclusivity, Complement the Work of Others, and Build Trust.

### HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The U.S. National Food Systems Dialogues seek to empower U.S. domestic stakeholders to participate in the preparation of the UN Food Systems Summit. This Youth Dialogue, which was held virtually, focused on elevating the diverse voices of youth in agriculture to generate solutions for building more economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable food systems in the United States. The event embraced multi-stakeholder inclusivity and USDA invited all youth that were participating in USDA’s 2021 Agricultural Outlook Forum to participate in the youth dialogue. Forty-one students participated in the “Youth Voices in Sustainable U.S. Food Systems” Dialogue representing institutions from across the United States. Through multi-stakeholder inclusivity, the Dialogue provided a forum in which participants could share diverse perspectives, learn from each other, and collaborate to identify challenges and impactful solutions. Small group discussions at the Dialogue emphasized respect and building trust through facilitation guided by neutral U.S. government experts and researchers. The Chatham House Rule of non-attribution encouraged participants to engage in frank discussion and a collaborative approach. Dialogue discussion topics highlighted the complex challenges and tradeoffs top solutions related to food systems solutions. Neutral USDA experts were trained to facilitate small group discussions during the Dialogue and emphasized respect and building trust. The Chatham House Rule of non-attribution (whereby comments are not attributed to any individual speaker or their affiliation) encouraged participants to engage in frank and collaborative discussion. Student volunteers were trained as notetakers prior to the Dialogue and sent anonymized notes from the small group discussions to facilitators for validation. This high-level summary is based on the individual summaries of the small group discussions, and a complementary report highlighting high level outcomes will be posted on the USDA Food Systems website.

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

The Chatham House Rule of non-attribution encouraged participants to engage in frank discussion with a collaborative approach. Only dialogue participants, facilitators, expert researchers for consultation, and note-takers were permitted in each dialogue breakout session.

# 3. METHOD

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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

This report represents the views of U.S. stakeholders, it does not represent the official views of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) or United States Government.

In following with the guidelines of the UN Dialogues Toolkit and ensure a systemic, comprehensive approach to assessing food systems, this Youth Dialogue focused on identifying solutions to building more socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable food systems in the United States. USDA invited all youth that were participating in USDA's 2021 Agricultural Outlook Forum to participate in the youth dialogue. This included youth that were enrolled in a U.S. college or university including 1862 Land-grant institutions, 1890 Historically Black Land-grant institutions, Hispanic Serving Institutions, and other colleges and universities.

The event agenda consisted of opening remarks, followed by one hour-long breakout session led by USDA and U.S. Federal Government researchers and program leaders, and concluding with a read-out of the breakout session discussions by facilitators. The participants noted in Section 1. Participation of this report are only those who participated in breakout rooms, not including U.S. government facilitators and notetakers.

This Dialogue focused on identifying solutions for building more economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable food systems in the United States. The discussions centered on five main challenge areas aligned with the UN Food Systems Summit's five "action tracks":

1. Safe and nutritious food for all: What are potential solutions for ending hunger and all forms of malnutrition and reducing the incidence of non-communicable disease, enabling all people to be nourished and healthy?
  2. Increased consumer demand for healthy diets that are sustainably produced: What are potential solutions for increasing consumer demand for healthy diets and foods that are sustainably produced? What are potential solutions for reducing consumer food waste?
  3. Sustainable environmental production: What are potential solutions in optimizing environmental resource use in food production, processing and distribution, to reduce biodiversity loss, pollution, water use, soil degradation and greenhouse gas emissions?
  4. Equitable livelihoods across the food system: What are potential solutions for promoting full and productive employment and decent work for all actors along the food value chain and enabling entrepreneurship and addressing the inequitable access to resources and distribution of value?
  5. Resilient food systems: What are potential solutions for ensuring the continued functionality of sustainable food systems in case of natural disasters, pandemics, economic shocks, conflict, and other sources of instability?
- To encourage a systematic assessment of challenges, each breakout discussion considered four general questions:
1. What are some potential solutions? What challenge does this solution respond to?
  2. What is the evidence that supports the implementation of this solution? Does the evidence exist or are there knowledge and evidence gaps?
  3. What are the tradeoffs among economic, social, and environmental sustainability objectives for this solution? What are the distributional characteristics if the solution were to be implemented? If the group discusses potential solutions that target one dimension of sustainability (for example, social sustainability), what are the potential impacts on the other dimensions of sustainability?
  4. What are points of consensus or disagreement amongst stakeholder groups about the solution?

### 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

Participants explored opportunities for creating more sustainable food systems in the United States. The goal of the Dialogue was to enable a diverse set of youth in food and agriculture to work together – examining their food systems, exploring options for change, and identifying pathways for these systems to become more sustainable to meet evolving needs and challenges.

The focus of the “Youth Voices in Sustainable U.S. Food Systems” Dialogue was to identify solutions and pathways to improving the sustainability of U.S. food systems. While the discussion topics were organized around the five UN Food Systems Summit Action Tracks outlined above, the discussions did not fall neatly into these silos. Instead, participants broadened the discussions to holistically consider opportunities and tradeoffs across food systems and goals related to sustainability and resilience.

Some participants shared that their personal backgrounds with food and agriculture informed the solutions they proposed, for instance growing up on a farm or participating in an agriculture science curriculum in an urban school. Four overarching solutions emerged: 1) school-based nutrition and agricultural education, 2) a web-based label scanning tool to provide clear and transparent information on the economic, social, and environmental impacts of food systems, 3) innovative policies and programs, and 4) improved prediction of agricultural supply chains through Artificial Intelligence (AI). See below discussion for further detail on solutions.

In all the discussion groups, participants discussed where they thought more research or scientific evidence is needed. Discussions highlighted the lack of good cost benefit analyses of existing food assistance programs, lack of information sharing regarding information on food sustainability, and a data gap on the health of farmers and agricultural supply chain workers. Additionally, some participants noted information gaps on the downstream effects of gene editing in livestock and a lack of data analyzing the types of subsidies needed to transition to more sustainable production systems. Some participants also raised challenges relating to the existence of inaccurate and difficult-to-understand information.

Dialogue participants also discussed barriers to implementation of the proposed solutions. All groups noted that the lack of financial resources can prevent the adoption of food systems solutions. Some participants noted that differing food preferences could prevent adoption of healthy diets, that difficulties with voluntary disclosure of information could prevent success of digital consumer-oriented tools, and that systemic barriers in education such as the inflexibility of standardized school curriculums could prevent growth of agricultural and nutritional education. Some participants identified barriers to implementation of urban agriculture including competing interests from retailers. Some participants hypothesized that barriers to improving the conditions of farmworkers included immigration status of workers and the outsized influence of certain industries and corporations. Some participants noted that financial and size limitations of farms could be barriers to implementation of new technologies.

Discussion group participants discussed the tradeoffs that might arise in building more sustainable food systems. Some participants noted that certain groups benefit more than others from food assistance, that digital tools like a web-based label scanning app could impact food prices, and that some urban agriculture systems can be energy intensive and have expensive startup costs. Additionally, some participants noted that sustainable agriculture practices may be costly and time-consuming to implement to achieve comparable productivity to conventional agriculture. Some participants raised the concern that automation of agriculture could displace labor. Finally, some participants discussed the potential for unforeseen environmental consequences of innovation as ecosystems are not one-size-fits-all.

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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/4

### Solution #1: School-based nutrition and agricultural education

Dialogue participants emphasized the need for increased early childhood nutrition education and agricultural education. Some participants emphasized that nutrition education should be multicultural in nature to reflect the cultures we have in the United States. Other participants agreed that agricultural education could unite rural, urban, and suburban communities. Participants also noted the opportunity to support education across different platforms including schools, existing nutrition education programs, and digital and social media platforms. Some participants hypothesized that agricultural education in public schools could increase awareness of environmental and food production challenges and opportunities to enable individuals to develop solutions. Some participants noted the lack of a cost benefit analysis to substantiate long-term financial investment in nutrition and agricultural education programs. Finally, participants stressed that barriers to implementation included lack of funding, and that tradeoffs could include the need to reallocate public funding towards nutrition education.

#### ACTION TRACKS

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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/4

### Solution #2: Web-based label scanning tool

Dialogue participants championed the creation of a web-based application (app) to provide transparent sustainability information to consumers. Some participants posited that upon scanning the food label, this app could provide economic (i.e., wages), social (i.e., farm labor, fair trade certification), and environmental (i.e., carbon footprint) information related to the product. According to some participants, this app might encourage consumers to choose value-based foods that are produced without damaging the environment and that respect the dignity of the workers who produce the foods. Some participants speculated that such foods might also positively impact local communities where they are produced. Some participants noted that it could be a challenge to compel food producers to share information about their food's effect on human health, the environment, and society. Some participants noted that tradeoffs could include the effect of the app on food prices, and barriers to implementation could include costs of development and collecting the necessary information.

### ACTION TRACKS

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

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|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/4

### Solution #3: Innovative policies and programs

Dialogue participants stressed the importance of policy to achieve food equity for all, with programs implemented by a diverse group of government agencies that reflect the communities they serve. Some participants noted that programs could support soil health and urban agriculture, as well as work to enforce existing regulations like antitrust laws or develop new legislation to address systemic discrimination like the Justice for Black Farmers Act. Some participants emphasized that good soil health practices could help capture and store carbon in soil and benefit plant and animal production and health. Some participants discussed how urban agriculture could mitigate greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the need to transport food and could also address urban food deserts. Some participants thought that USDA subsidy programs could be revamped to promote the production of healthier foods. Some participants noted that government outreach programs could build bridges between rural and urban communities and shape sustainable consumption behaviors. Some participants also noted evidence gaps including on the productivity of urban farming and data on the health outcomes for consumers of different diets.

#### ACTION TRACKS

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## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/4

### Solution #4: Predictive food supply chain analytics

Dialogue participants identified improving prediction through Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a solution. Some participants noted that an opportunity exists for U.S. food systems to better harness and share data to improve food distribution, reduce food loss and waste, and enhance precision agriculture. Some participants noted that improved use of data could allow stakeholders to learn from experiences such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Some participants noted a need for further evidence and research on the impacts of increased uptake of AI technology, and noted concerns that tradeoffs could include job loss, unintended consequences as ecosystems are not one size fits all, and social issues related to agricultural extension and education.

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## AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Points of consensus or disagreement included discussion on the value of increased education for sustainable and healthy diets and making healthy choices easier for consumers. Some participants agreed that strengthening the ability to deliver food in emergency situations is important for the food security of low-income families. While some participants agreed that the government could play a greater role in outreach on nutrition and agriculture programs, other participants speculated that government interventions could lead to community push back due to a lack of trust. Some participants noted that local food systems could be a solution to food waste, while other participants noted that access to global markets is key to ensuring food security and combatting economic shocks. Participants also noted that raising awareness of innovative technology can increase adoption of potentially beneficial technology for those initially skeptical.

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