

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Monday, 18 October 2021 14:00 GMT +01:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Regenerative Agriculture: Scaling agroecological production for better human, animal and planetary health.
CONVENED BY	Philip Lymbery, CEO, Compassion in World Farming and UN Food Systems Champion
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/41917/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	No borders

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

123

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

1 0-18 21 19-30 46 31-50 38 51-65 16 66-80 0 80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

45 Male 73 Female 5 Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

16	Agriculture/crops	8	Education	5	Health care
0	Fish and aquaculture	10	Communication	0	Nutrition
13	Livestock	2	Food processing	0	National or local government
1	Agro-forestry	13	Food retail, markets	0	Utilities
18	Environment and ecology	8	Food industry	1	Industrial
0	Trade and commerce	0	Financial Services	29	Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

0	Small/medium enterprise/artisan	0	Workers and trade union
8	Large national business	0	Member of Parliament
10	Multi-national corporation	0	Local authority
11	Small-scale farmer	6	Government and national institution
11	Medium-scale farmer	0	Regional economic community
1	Large-scale farmer	1	United Nations
10	Local Non-Governmental Organization	0	International financial institution
30	International Non-Governmental Organization	2	Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
0	Indigenous People	1	Consumer group
8	Science and academia	25	Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

We followed the recommendations of the UNFSS for both design and hosting, with multiple facilitators in breakout groups who were trained in inclusive dialogue methods before the event, ensuring that everyone in each breakout group had the opportunity to contribute and speak. Our Dialogue was organised with a careful focus on generating as wide as possible inclusion of the many different stakeholders who are involved in developing different approaches, specifically agroecology and regenerative agriculture, to food systems. We sought to include perspectives from corporate representatives, farmers from the developed and developing nations, academics, activists and scientists. We ensured that these diverse groups were represented in our speaker panel also. Diversity was the cornerstone of our approach to upholding the Principles of Engagement, since in this way we could ensure respect for multiple perspectives, and embrace the complexity of the global food system. We had a range of experts from both the global north and south, developed and developing nations including the regions of EU, USA, and Africa (not wider due to time constraints).

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

We reviewed the Principles to ensure they were addressed in the agenda design and participant engagement process. The Curator also emphasised the importance of listening to and understanding the viewpoints of all participants. We designed an interactive session giving everyone the opportunity to participate in plenary, via the chat and via the discussion groups. On specific aspects of the Principles: 'Be respectful' and 'Build trust': We asked participants who were not designated speakers and panellists to share their insights and questions online via the chat functions, through breakout group discussions and through the use of Slido as an online platform. We asked participants to engage with each other and with the speakers in a respectful and constructive way. 'Embrace multi-stakeholder inclusivity': We explicitly sought to engage the participants from a wide variety of sectors. We also sought presenters and participants from a wide variety of geographies. .

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

The use on online polling is recommended as a way of ensuring participants are engaged through the dialogue. It is a great visual tool which provides real time results to questions posed to the participants. We found this particularly useful to glean participants feedback following the break-out group discussions. Rather than a report back from each group, which can take a lot of time with many groups, every participant has the opportunity for anonymised feedback and results can be collated quickly and efficiently. We used Slido. Additionally education and preparation of facilitators in inclusive dialogue is an essential part of upholding the Principles of Engagement Working with any speakers or provocateurs to help them understand the level of language and detail that would be most advantageous for a diverse stakeholder audience is helpful.

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

We spent a considerable amount of time to ensure we designed the dialogue so it was as interactive as possible, giving every participant an opportunity to engage. The event started with an introduction by the Curator, Jenny Andersson from Really Regenerative CIC. The use of the chat function was encouraged with all participants given the opportunity to introduce themselves at the start of the session. We used Chatham House rules as the basis for discussion. Slido was used as an interactive real time web-based platform to pose questions. Our introductory question used to engage participants was: What does regenerative agriculture mean to you? The first part of the dialogues involved four quick fire presentations from representatives covering various perspectives of regenerative agriculture as some initial 'food for thought' followed by an audience Q&A. Another four quick fire presentations were followed with another audience Q&A. These quickfire introductions were a way of stimulating discussions in the breakout groups. To encourage active participation each breakout group had between 8-10 participants and a dedicated facilitator. Each facilitator introduced themselves and then got each participant to introduce themselves too. The break out discussion then focussed on 4 questions: 1. How can regenerative agriculture scale? What needs to happen to enable regenerative agriculture to become a key pillar of a sustainable food system? 2. What currently restricts or hinders that ability to scale? 3. What more needs to be done to define and monitor the benefits and outcomes of regenerative agriculture? How does your work contribute? 4. What technologies would aid or hinder us in scaling agro-ecology and regenerative agriculture? A training session had been held in advance with facilitators in order to brief them on the importance of ensuring that all group participants had an opportunity to speak and to share their opinions. Additionally several of the facilitators attended the excellent training courses organised by the UN FSS dialogue team. Once all the breakout groups came back into plenary, instead of getting a report back from each group we used Slido, combined with the Chat function for those who could not access Slido, to give everyone an opportunity to report back. This method created a rich array of information and feedback and was well received by participants.

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

Our Dialogue focused on how the world could approach scaling regenerative agriculture and agro-ecology for the benefit of human, planetary and animal health and welfare, with a wide global audience that included a range of interests in agro-ecology and regenerative agriculture.

During the Dialogue we aimed to:-

- Highlight the perspectives of those already engaged in regenerative agriculture approaches including regenerative farmers and global food businesses.
- Discuss the key constraints holding back the wide adoption of regenerative agricultural practices.
- Explore how to create increased global support for an integrated, holistic approach to policy reform across the food system value chain in support of regenerative agriculture.
- Discuss recommendations for accelerating the emergence of regenerative agriculture as a key pillar of a sustainable food system.

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

Overall the whole group highlighted the complexity of addressing this subject, with an inter-disciplinary and interconnected approach across multiple systems required to make progress.

The key findings included:

A Systemic Approach: the opportunity to scale regenerative agriculture and agro-ecology requires an inter-connected and inter-disciplinary approach across global organisations, businesses and national institutions, land management, livestock management, international trade and tariffs, support institutions such as finance/insurance/banking, and government policy.

Policy: international and national policy is insufficient in most countries to support a transition to regenerative agriculture and agro-ecology. Significant changes in agricultural subsidies from industrial to organic/regenerative/agro-ecology, transparent supply chain tracking, consistent and clear labelling, education of industry, farming and consumer communities to create demand, innovative trade agreement policy to promote food produced in this way were all cited as high value approaches.

Best Practice vs Uniqueness: there is recognition that improved sharing of data and best practices would be helpful to farmers worldwide. That is tempered by the recognition by almost all participants that regenerative agriculture and agro-ecology are philosophies that require different implementation dependent on the kind of land system being worked, and the culture in which it is operating. There is urgent need for further discussion on how to approach best practice and simplification to encourage adoption and the need to recognise ecological and cultural uniqueness in different parts of the world. The issue of integration of livestock into land regeneration schemes is also a geographic/ecology / cultural issue which requires further discussion and definition. In some parts of the world, livestock integration is essential for soil health; in other parts driven by the cultural practice of always including meat in human diets.

Land: urgent discussion and agreement on global land use would be helpful. Global and national agreements on geospatial mapping and protecting some landscapes from agriculture entirely in the future would be helpful. Greater access to land ownership and management for young people and indigenous peoples with deep knowledge of these kind of agricultural practices is a common thread, as well as including the latter in educational systems worldwide.

Definitions: there is a sense that there is still too much ambiguity between what is agro-ecology and what is regenerative agriculture which is confusing for grassroots farmers around the world. There is also a perceived gap between the global south and global north as to whether these approaches incorporate social justice as well as ecological and business transformation which is reflected in the definitions. Greater clarity is required from the UN, in the food system in general on what is common on the approach, in simple language, and further clarity on which organisations support what approaches.

Finance/Banking/Insurance: there are not sufficient policies or products in place on a global or national level to support the transition to regenerative agriculture and agro-ecology. There is a requirement to educate the finance, banking and insurance community about the approach, the timeframe and challenges of transformation, so that the appropriate products and services that support farmers and food businesses can be developed.

Research/Data/Metrics: there is insufficient research published and available outside the USA to validate the outcomes of the transition to regenerative agriculture. The research and data that is available has insufficient visibility. A global coalition between academic and agricultural research organisations to gather and publish data in different continents, respecting the different challenges of land and culture, is considered valuable. The need for a true cost accounting approach to food production as global and national policy was mentioned frequently.

Support for Farmers: support for farmers to make a transition from industrial farming is inadequate on a worldwide basis.

Key needs that must be addressed include:

- educating farmers on the economic, ecological and social benefits of regenerative agriculture and agro-ecology
- developing business models that work in different land systems and cultures that demonstrate how farmers can successfully make a viable transition from one system to another
- more cost-effective access to consulting support - ideally free and highly regular - to consistently build farmer knowledge and confidence
- support to break the industrial cycle and to combat the narratives of existing supplier networks to which farmers are tied that support industrial agriculture, such as feed suppliers, nutritionists, veterinary suppliers

A Culture of Trust; Transparency

The lack of a culture of trust between farmers and global businesses and institutions was frequently remarked upon. Creating an atmosphere of collective respect, mutuality and trust is considered essential to moving this agenda forwards. Establishing common language, common goals, common metrics and designing opportunities that reflect collaborative advantage over competitive advantage were all proposed as approaches. Developing more open food networks, common and open-source opportunities to share narratives and outcomes in the field, a global and national way to access information that can be trusted, are all needed.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/4

1. How can regenerative agriculture and agro-ecology scale to become a key pillar of sustainable food systems?

The approach to scale requires a complex, multi-step process across a wide range of different stakeholders to bring the approach to mainstream acceptance. The following pathways are considered critical: -

- reconciliation of the perceptions that a) regenerative agriculture is western-centric and does not consider the socio-economic component of agriculture in the global south and b) regenerative agriculture and agro-ecology cannot on its own produce enough food for global needs and can only ever be a niche player
- research and data to support the efficacy of the approach in delivering volume food production
- research and data, more widely shared, to support the efficacy of the approaches in soil restoration and health
- science-based evidence to influence policy and investment
- an international and national education programme which covers not only farmers and agriculture, but politicians, the finance and investment system, and the insurance system, as key structural support
- consumer education to drive demand for regeneratively produced produce, which would also have to include better tracking and tracing of produce, and a global/national system of clear labelling
- platforms which share current best practice and success both internationally and nationally but which also recognise that the application of these practices has no perfect blueprint and must reflect the uniqueness of the landscape in which it is being practiced, the local culture and the 'state of readiness' of the local market/industry
- a globally agreed approach to true cost accounting
- appropriate business models for farmers to make a viable transition for their country/terrain which must include long term financial support, appropriate incentives, training and outcome measurement
- large scale demonstration farms that are easily accessible on different continents/in different regions
- global agreement to hold certain lands in perpetuity for non-agricultural conservation of nature

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/4

What constraints are holding back the scaling of agro-ecology and regenerative agriculture?

- Lack of globally agreed definitions that can support farmers in different geographic locations
- Conversely lack of flexibility in mindsets which mean we seek tight definitions, best practice and are uncomfortable with ambiguity of complex systems
- Perception that regenerative agriculture is western-centric and does not consider the socio-economic component of agriculture in the global south
- Perception that regenerative agriculture and agro-ecology cannot on its own produce enough food for global needs and can only ever be a niche player
- The supply chain structure that has eroded smaller farms in favour of large-scale production and monocultures
- Knowledge gaps regarding the potential of regenerative agriculture and agro-ecology to provide a viable business model in farming communities
- Economic affordability of transition for farmers in many parts of the world
- Lack of viable financial support for farmers, either through banking/finance/loans, insurance products, long term investment for change
- Affordability and demand for regeneratively farmed produce in developed nations
- Widely different labelling, production and slaughter systems for livestock
- Lack of widely available or agreed impact measurement systems to prove viability and measure carbon sequestration, footprint

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/4

- . What more needs to be done to define and monitor the benefits and outcomes of regenerative agriculture?
 - Set up farmer networks in different geographies and contexts for peer-to-peer learning and sharing of best practices and outcomes. No cookie cutter approaches are possible, all processes for defining and monitoring benefits and outcomes need to be contextual.
 - Define several different social and ecological contexts worldwide in which regenerative agriculture and agro-ecology produce economic benefits for farmers, community and ecology. Profile and share best practices across these. What does successful regenerative agriculture look like in South Africa vs Far Northern Queensland vs Argentina vs Spain; can we create bioregional models of regenerative agro-ecology?
 - Increase transparency initiatives across the board. Organisations need to share data about the improvements made through using regenerative agriculture practices transparently and widely
 - Wider discussion and agreement of what should be measured in each system: what should be measured for soil, what for water, what for nutrient levels in food, what for productivity, what for financial viability of farms, what for biodiversity? Is a simple set of metrics possible in such a complex system?
 - Can partnerships with national landowners in different countries be developed through collaborations and policy - for example the National Trust in the UK, the USA government in terms of National Parks or such as the government of Tanzania's investment in agro-ecology projects - where large-scale land-based projects could be created?
 - Develop a clearer global narrative to which the UN, food organisations and governments can sign up so that the approach is not captured by the existing food system.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/4

What technologies would aid or hinder us in scaling agro-ecology and regenerative agriculture?

- Geospatial monitoring can help to determine how well/poorly landscapes are doing in terms of soil health, biodiversity and reforestation.
- Satellite, drone and other digital approaches can be used to monitor soil health, biodiversity and reforestation and drive funding towards farmers improving land management
- Collaborative land management is made possible by satellite monitoring technology - whether that is through large scale herd management across vast landscapes, or reforestation. What is needed to maximise the potential of emergent technology is collaboration across landowners, governments and global food stakeholders.
- Labelling technology to track and trace source and provenance is not maximised in the food system.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Simplification vs Complexity: there is considerable demand for simplicity in this field, whether that is simplifying terminology and language, simplifying measurement systems, labelling systems, or simplifying complex supply chains. The demand for simplification has an alter ego called recognition of complexity. As much as there is demand for simplicity, there is also recognition that scaling regenerative agro-ecology can not be made simple due to the wide variety of approaches it includes, the vast differences in its application depending on landscape, culture and market. Valuable next steps would be a UN-led exploration on what it is possible to simplify to engage with broader audiences and stakeholder groups, and where the need is education in complexity to enable people to cope with the ambiguity (no cookie cutter approaches or simple best practice models) that is inherent in complex system change. Organisations with greater capacity to manage complexity are much more easily able to absorb ambiguity than small scale farmers.

Standardisation and Best Practice vs Localised Uniqueness This is a further reflection of the above issue. Global economies are built on standardisation and best practice because these approaches are what makes it possible to generate a certain kind of scale which is built on homogenisation. The kind of scale that is possible for regenerative agri-ecology is not this kind of scale. It is finding processes that enable scale from a different approach. It will be scaling on an ecosystem level rather than a global level. Therefore it will be critical to define how these approaches can work most effectively in specific ecosystems, cultures and markets and follow this approach to scale rather than global certification and standards. This might mean approaches for vast grasslands, arid steppes, coastal wetlands, temperate forests etc and also by socio-economic regions.

During the presentations and discussions the restoration of the link between animals and the land emerged as a core principle of regenerative agriculture for many. Good grassland systems for raising animals were advocated by many in view of the environmental and animal welfare benefits. However, there was disagreement from others. Several participants argued that there is an enormous difference between regenerative animal agriculture and 'regenerative veganic agriculture'. One stated, for example, that "veganic agriculture is good for the planet and the climate whereas regenerative animal agriculture is used as a public relations point to give cover to the animal foods industry".

There were differing viewpoints on future food systems. Some argued that we should move to predominantly plant-based food systems with less and better animal-source foods from grazing animals that benefit the environment, livelihoods and animal welfare. Others argued for transition to 100% plant-based diets freeing up land currently used for animal agriculture for rewilding.

With respect to health, some argued that meat from grazing animals is healthier than meat from industrially reared animals, whereas others argued for a vegan diet on health grounds.

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ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

RELEVANT LINKS

- **Move to Nature Friendly Farming Vital**
<https://www.ciwf.org/news/2021/10/move-to-nature-friendly-farming-vital>
- **Film of the Dialogue featuring speakers from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), The Rodale Institute, Danone, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania, reNature, White Oaks Pasture, McDonald's, and WWF International.**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9XWgQBOrSZk>
- **Global Solutions: Regenerative Farming**
<https://www.ciwf.org/global-solutions/regenerative-farming/>