

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Wednesday, 14 April 2021 17:00 GMT +10:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Gender Equality in the Meat Sector as a Sustainability Solution
CONVENED BY	Meat Business Women
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/8888/
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

55

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

3

19-30

50

31-50

2

51-65

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

1 Male

54 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

29	Agriculture/crops	1	Education	5	Health care
	Fish and aquaculture		Communication		Nutrition
	Livestock		Food processing		National or local government
	Agro-forestry	2	Food retail, markets		Utilities
	Environment and ecology	15	Food industry		Industrial
3	Trade and commerce		Financial Services		Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

	Small/medium enterprise/artisan		Workers and trade union
10	Large national business		Member of Parliament
12	Multi-national corporation		Local authority
1	Small-scale farmer	7	Government and national institution
5	Medium-scale farmer		Regional economic community
2	Large-scale farmer		United Nations
7	Local Non-Governmental Organization		International financial institution
	International Non-Governmental Organization	8	Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
3	Indigenous People		Consumer group
	Science and academia		Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

The Dialogue was convened by Meat Business Women (MBW), the global professional networking group for women working across the meat industry. MBW assures the sustainability of the sector by attracting and retaining the best possible talent. MBW operates internationally with over 6,000 members. In 2019, MBW was recognised by the United Nations as a solution to Sustainable Development Goal five – Gender Equality. The Dialogue was open to all of the MBW community and other stakeholders were encouraged to participate in the session which was heavily promoted across social media. The Dialogue theme was chosen with a specific goal of encouraging MBW participants to discuss a path forward for women leading the sustainability agenda for the meat industry. These open discussions not only flagged areas of synergy but also divergence. Each of the five breakout sessions was facilitated by a MBW member, and the session was curated by the Global Chair of MBW, Laura Ryan.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The Dialogue fully reflected the Principles, building on the fact that MBW speaks with one shared voice to highlight the importance of attracting and retaining female talent into the meat sector, as well as the important contribution that women can make to the food system in areas such as food security, nutrition, climate change, and biodiversity. It also aims to build synergies among its supporters in promoting MBW's mission. Our Dialogue embraced multi-stakeholder inclusivity in that it involved the full breadth of the MBW community. The breakout sessions were held under the Chatham House rules, which helped to build openness and trust, and enabled participants to reflect on their own lived experience.

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

Food systems affect us all, and it is important to create a fully accessible virtual space where all actors across the agri-food value chain feel comfortable sharing their priorities, aspirations and challenges in an open manner.

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 theme of the MBW Independent Dialogue was 'AN INCREASED REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN WORKING IN THE GLOBAL MEAT INDUSTRY PROMOTES A MORE SUSTAINABLE SECTOR, WITH IMPROVED FOOD SECURITY, NUTRITION AND PRODUCTION.'

The dialogue brought together a diverse group of stakeholders in terms of experience, job roles and organisation type from across the global meat industry to explore gender as a lever of change to deliver a more sustainable meat industry. The group were challenged to identify game-changing solutions to deliver progress across the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) action tracks, with a particular focus on:

- Action track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
- Action track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods

The dialogue was structured through breakout sessions to address the following questions:

- Who needs to be involved and what actions need to be taken to ensure the involvement and empowerment of women working in the meat sector?
- What are the missing links in the diversity and success of the meat sector and how will better gender equality address this?
- What impact could gender equality have on producing more sustainable food consumption patterns?
- What impact could gender equality have on the productivity of the meat sector?
- How can the meat sector drive gender equality and drive change?

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

MAIN FINDINGS

The opening and closing sessions found broad consensus across the group around several key areas:

- There exists a clear link between increased gender equality and a more sustainable meat industry. Businesses with diverse workforces:
 - o More accurately represent their customer and employee base, meaning they have better access to vital insights and perspectives
 - o Have more diversity of thought, which drives innovation and better risk management
 - o Have access to a wider range of leadership styles, which drives engagement and productivity
 - o Are more profitable and have better share prices.
- The perception of the meat sector needs to evolve to reflect the role women play
- Diversity and inclusion needs to be moved up the agenda
- Strengthening networks and creating visible role models is critical
- Disruption caused by COVID-19 presents the opportunity to rethink working practices which may previously have acted as a barrier to gender equality
- There is a distinct lack of ethnic diversity within the meat sector. People of colour and indigenous people are under-represented at middle and senior levels. More work needs to be done in this area to understand the specific barriers and enablers to creating a more ethnically diverse workforce
- A global representative body such as MBW is required in order to accelerate change.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/5

1. Who needs to be involved and what actions need to be taken to ensure the involvement and empowerment of women working in the meat sector?

The participants noted:

- There's a need to invite women in: The meat industry workforce is made up of 36% women. Women are heavily represented in the most junior roles in the sector and under-represented at every level above junior level, with women holding just 14% of board-level director roles and 5% of chief executive roles (MBW Research 2020). Access to external networking groups such as MBW can provide the support, contacts and encouragement that women in more gender-balanced sectors might normally find within their workplace.

Mentoring, and particularly formal mentoring schemes, can play an important role in helping women making key decisions and supporting them in their careers, the MBW mentoring scheme launched in 2021.

- The whole supply chain needs to work together in order to attract and retain female talent.
- There's a clear link between increased gender equality and a more sustainable meat industry: Businesses with diverse workforces:
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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/5

2. What are the missing links in the diversity and success of the meat sector and how will better gender equality address this?

The participants noted:

- The meat industry needs to improve its image: Despite the existence of a wide variety of jobs in a range of environments, many people outside the sector are only aware of a narrow selection of roles, usually limited to farming and butchery. These preconceptions are compounded by an increasingly negative dialogue around the environmental and health impacts of meat production. Examples of best practice within businesses include engaging with local communities, creating internships and job placements, showcasing female role models on literature and advertising and using gender-neutral language during recruitment. Initiatives such as MBW's One to Watch prize help showcase female talent in the sector and make role models more visible.

- There's a need to profile female role models: The meat industry has an opportunity to transform public perceptions and increase the diversity of its workforce by crafting, curating and communicating its story and making people aware of the roles and opportunities that exist.

- There's a clear link between increased gender equality and a more sustainable meat industry: Businesses with diverse workforces:

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/5

3. What impact could gender equality have on producing more sustainable food consumption patterns?

The participants noted:

- Educating consumers should be a priority: Improving consumer education around healthy, sustainable diets could be a genuine game-changer in terms of the shift to sustainable consumption patterns.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how disconnected consumers in many parts of the world have become from the food they eat. However, the lifestyle changes that have resulted from the pandemic also present an opportunity to address this disconnect as people are spending longer at home and may have more time to devote to cooking and eating.

- Influencing women is essential if progress is to be made in this area, as women are predominantly responsible for making decisions regarding feeding their family. In order to have the maximum impact this education needs to begin in the classroom. Initiatives which link consumers to their food, for example LEAF's Open Farm Sunday in the UK, also have a role to play in achieving this outcome.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/5

4. What impact could gender equality have on the productivity of the meat sector?

The participants noted:

- There's a need to break down divisions within organisations: Within food production businesses in general, and the meat industry in particular, there tends to exist a division between the workforce who are office-based and those employed in operational areas. This can be compounded by divisions along other lines such as gender and language.

Better socialisation of these groups and blending different areas to remove the perceived divisions can help improve communication, ultimately increasing people's sense of belonging within the workplace and making it a more attractive proposition to new entrants.

- MBW's global mentoring platform, which launched in 2021, will help achieve this within the meat sector by forging strong links between women in different business areas.
- Those who attribute importance to physical and financial productivity targets (everyone from industry leaders and financiers to small farm owners) need to be engaged in order to appreciate that what might seem like "losses" to output (such as time invested in training and social activities) will, in the longer term, improve gender diversity and softer productivity measures in parallel. Ultimately this will lead to improved physical and financial performance.
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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 5/5

5. How can the meat sector drive gender equality and drive change?

Participants suggested the following solutions:

- **Enable flexible working:** Flexible workplaces are an essential enabler for creating an inclusive working environment. Women are still more likely than men to care for children or elderly parents and therefore more likely to look for workplace flexibility when considering employment opportunities.

- **Create working models that support those with family responsibilities:** This is one of the most important actions that businesses can take to enable women to progress into leadership roles.

- **Map out clear career pathways:** In order for the meat industry to be considered an appealing career option and ultimately attract and retain a diverse workforce, it's vital to create visible pathways for progression across a range of career options.

Stronger graduate programmes, for both university and school leavers, that give a rounded experience of various business functions, are a key part of this, as are clear pathways for internal progression.

- **Know the data:** Understanding how many women are working at all levels within the meat sector and what the enablers and barriers are, using the MBW annual gender representation report, is essential if there is to be genuine change.

- **There's a clear link between increased gender equality and a more sustainable meat industry:** Businesses with diverse workforces:

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Participants in this Dialogue were very diverse in terms of their experience, job roles and geographical location, however there was very little opposition in their views. Many had encountered similar challenges during their careers and very similar solutions were identified by the different breakout groups.

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ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

ATTACHMENTS

- **Dialogue social media tile**
<https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/un.jpg>
- **Women in the meat industry, global report**
<https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/MBW-GENDER-REPORT-2020.pdf>