# UN Food Systems Summit National Dialogues

Webinar 4: Australian Food Systems - addressing shared challenges

2.00pm to 3.30pm Australian Eastern Standard Time

Wednesday 9 June 2021

## Transcript

**Andrew Bell:**

Good afternoon from Canberra, I'm Andrew Bell, and welcome to the fourth of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment’s National Food Systems Summit Dialogue. It's called Australian Food Systems - addressing shared challenges. We'll be sharing lots of thoughts and information and collating all of those as part of a global approach to not just this, but many, many other things as well.

**Andrew Bell:**

But before we get to what we're going to be doing today, let's do what we should do first always, and that is to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land that we're meeting upon, that's the Ngunnawal people of the Canberra region. We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they make to the life of this region. We also extend that recognition to the traditional custodians of the other lands on which webinar participants are gathered today, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples attending today's event. From Ngunnawal land, Yumalundi, welcome.

**Andrew Bell:**

Well, here we are. I'm from Content Group and I'll be moderating today's webinar discussion. And what is the discussion? Well, it's about the United Nation's Secretary General calling for a Food Systems Summit to highlight the critical role that agriculture and food systems play in achieving a sustainable future, and the importance to giving effect to all 17 UN sustainable development goals. They cover things like an end to poverty, clean water and sanitation, responsible consumption, gender equality, sustainable cities - you can find it on the UN's website, we'll have a web address for you a little bit later on.

**Andrew Bell:**

Well, during 2021 in the lead up to the Food Systems Summit, people are encouraged to come together and participate in a series of dialogues. This is the fourth of five to discuss how we can make our food systems here in Australia sustainable, healthy, and resilient.

**Andrew Bell:**

But without further ado, to explain a little bit more about our approach to our national dialogues -Fleur Downard, welcome from Australia's National Dialogue Convenor, one of 114 countries taking part in this, big number, and she's a director with the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment. Welcome to you Fleur, a little bit more about what we're doing today.

**Fleur Downard:**

Thank you, Andrew, and welcome everyone to today's webinar. The Australian Government is providing a platform for you to raise your views and think about solutions for issues facing our food systems. The aim is for these discussions to be open and transparent and most importantly, to represent your views. However, it is important to note that the views expressed today are independent to the views of the Australian Government. We will be summarising feedback from these webinars directly into the UN Food Systems Summit processes. The Food Systems Summit webinars are designed to start a conversation, so if after today you've got more to say and contribute, that's great. You can visit the department’s Have your Say page for Food Systems Summit. I'll talk more about that at the end of today's webinar.

**Andrew Bell:**

Thanks very much, Fleur. There are dialogues happening all around the world. Just this week, people have been talking as part of this UN process in places like Tajikistan and Vietnam and Benin in Africa, we are not alone and that's all part of this conversation.

**Andrew Bell:**

Today's conversation, Australian Food System - addressing shared challenges. We're going to be looking at food systems holistically and how we can meet the triple challenge of providing food security nutrition, delivering strong livelihoods throughout the supply chain, and ensuring environmental sustainability - big trifecta there.

**Andrew Bell:**

We're going to start with a scene setting presentation from the OECD, that's the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, then we'll have a short panel session and introduce our panellists, and then we get to the meat and potatoes; the extensive question and answer session - your questions to delve a little deeper into the issues being raised and which may already be on your mind.

**Andrew Bell:**

You see there is a line-up of speakers and participants today - Lee Ann Jackson, who is in Paris in the wee small hours, well, its breakfast time getting on for there over in Paris- and in Australia we'll have three panellists in the same time zone. It's not too bad, it's eight degrees here in Canberra. I think it's even a little warmer in Paris despite the fact it's just after 6:00 AM.

**Andrew Bell:**

It's Lee Ann Jackson we're going to be hearing from. She's the head of division, Agro-Food Trade Markets, of the OECD. She leads important work examining the links between policies and outcomes on food and agricultural markets. Those works include modelling medium term outlook for commodity markets, understanding policies from a food systems perspective, and enhancing the transparency and predictability of agricultural trade. She's going to be looking at how our food system policies might help address the complex and interrelated problems with food production and supply distribution and consumption.

**Andrew Bell:**

Don't forget, as Lee Ann presents, you're most welcome to begin typing questions about food systems policy into that Q&A box onto your screen, but without further ado, let's cross to Paris. Bonjour Paris and Lee Ann Jackson. Welcome and take it away with your opening presentation. Hello, Lee Ann.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

Hi, bonjour, good day. It's so nice to be here with you and thanks for that great introduction. Before I put my slides up, just to stress what you were mentioning Andrew, this is a really big year as we're heading into this Global United Nations Food Systems Summit. My team has been doing a lot of work participating in these dialogues, where we learn as much as we provide into the discussion, so it's really great to be here. I'm looking forward especially to the conversation after my presentation.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

The plan for my talk is really to run through this report, that we at the OECD launched in January. It represents really decades of work that the OECD has put into an area of agriculture and food. The main messages that come out of this report is that it's really important to think about coherent policies across the different silos of government, especially in the area of food systems, because there are so many interconnections and complexities. We know it's hard, but our report highlights some solutions for how to think about navigating these challenges.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

Let me just say a few words about the OECD, in case people are unfamiliar with the organisation. In the introduction it was mentioned we're based in Paris; we have 38 member States around the world representing about 80% of global trade. Sometimes we're referred to as a group of mostly rich countries, which is relatively accurate. We have 3000 employees many of whom are economists or analysts working on topics ranging from economic and environmental challenges, tax evasion, best practises for education, and of course we work on food and agriculture.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

Our mission is better policies for better lives, and the way we do that is three broad approaches. We inform and advise, so this work is developing data, providing analysis and insights around pressing topics that policy makers are facing. We also have a stream that's engaging and influencing, so this is really our convening power, where we bring together policymakers and also experts from around the world to exchange ideas and learning about how to navigate complex challenges. Then the third strand is that we do some work on standards setting and providing policy support. In my team, for example, we have some standards setting students around seeds, forests, and tractors.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

We've been working on food systems for a long time, although this is the first time, we've had a report that has food systems in the title. We have some flagship publications. For example, we have this medium-term outlook report called the OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook, which provides a 10-year projection of what we think global commodity markets will look like. This year's report will be launched in the beginning of July and it ends in the year 2030. We're really focusing on what can we say about the trends that we see and whether or not we're going to be able to achieve the sustainable development goals, since 2030 is the goal for achieving the sustainable development goals.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

We also do policy monitoring and we'll be launching in a couple of weeks our next annual report that monitors how countries are supporting their agriculture. I'll provide some data a little bit later on about what we know from our previous report. We have an annual report on fisheries as well.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

We also have work that covers thematic topics. Here you see a subset of examples, work on innovation and productivity, work looking at indicators for agro-environmental performance. We just launched an internet interface where you can look up these agro-environmental indicators. Then we launched yesterday this report on strengthening resilience.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

Finally, we have recently moved more into the area of food, so we have some reports looking at policies for encouraging healthier food choices, which may be a topic that comes up later in the discussion. We've done some work on how new innovative tools that provide opportunities for demand side policies.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

So now, if I can just turn now to our report - our report has three main questions. First, what is the performance of food systems not only in terms of the challenges, but also in terms of achievements and what has been the role of policies in getting us to where we are today? Second, given the complexity of these food systems, how can we develop coherent policies? This is the question of breaking down the silos in government and thinking about how, if you're developing a policy to address livelihoods for farmers, what are the potential implications on the environment and being able to think through those problems? Third, what are the obstacles we face when we're trying to achieve better policies and how can we overcome them?

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

Our report also pivots off looking at what's going on with the policies and tries to provide some insights into what approaches can help navigate policy stickiness - what gets in the way of making change when we can see that it's really important to make change.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

We include three case studies. We have a case study on seeds, one on ruminant livestock, and one on processed food. These were picked partly because they're quite challenging sectors, but also because they represent different parts of the food supply chain. We have an input case study, processing case study and primary agricultural case study.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

Let's turn first to the question of, what are the challenges and what are the accomplishments of the food systems? What we know about food systems is that they're facing a triple challenge. As was mentioned in the introduction, we expect food systems to provide food security and nutrition for a growing population, but we also want this food system to make sure that we have livelihoods for millions of farmers and fishermen, and others who are working along the supply chain. Finally, of course, we want to make sure that the systems are providing these benefits in an environmentally sustainable way. This year, especially in the middle of COVID, we've been thinking a lot about resilience as well. How do food systems bounce back from shocks? Are food systems able to transform and adapt in ways that make them more sustainable and resilient?

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

A key message from our first chapter is that the performance of the food system on all of these dimensions is in black and white, and many people do tend to think that either it's working or it's not working, but we know that it's actually complex and we've seen important achievements as well as serious shortcomings. I'll get to that in a minute.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

The second message is that better policies can make a difference. In fact, the OECD has been working for years, as I said, on these topics and the report highlights some approaches that can help transform policies to be able to make a difference.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

Let's turn first to the achievements. Since 1960, the world population has more than doubled, but what we've seen since 1960 is that food production has almost quadrupled over the same time period. This is really impressive - that's not what was expected in the 1960s. In fact, in the 1960s, people were worried about overpopulation and famine, and so the fact that the food systems were able to keep up with the strong population growth and even increase the amount of food available per person is great news.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

But of course, we know that we're far from achieving healthy diets for all. There are many remaining challenges for food security and nutrition. There is persistent under-nourishment, and actually in the past of years we've seen an uptick, a disturbing uptick, in these areas in providing enough food for everyone. We've seen new public health problems emerge. At the same time compared to the 1960s, we've seen a growth in overweight and obesity. You can see that in this chart showing trends, and the estimated share of adults who are overweight or obese, and you can see that the trends are just ticking up as we move from the 1970’s to 2016.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

Now, let's think about the environmental sustainability aspects. Food systems have important impacts on the environment. You can see here some statistics around land use, deforestation, biodiversity loss and water use, as well as greenhouse gas emissions. What's interesting is that the vast majority of this damage from food systems occurs at the agricultural production stage. I don't mean just farming, we're also talking about the step just before farming when land is cleared to make way for agriculture. In fact, historically, this was the main way in which agricultural production was expanded. But what we've seen again, since the 1960’s is a decoupling of agricultural production from expansion of land. Even though food production quadrupled, agricultural land use globally increased by about 10 or 15%. That's a much slower increase which highlights the fact that we're growing more per area of land. This may sound like a small amount of growth in land area, but in fact we should keep in mind that this represents an area twice the size of Greenland, so it's an enormous amount of environmental degradation.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

Still, it's really clear that food systems have managed to increase the output of food relative to the input of land and had this not happened, we would have had much more deforestation, much more environmental degradation, so this was a really important transition.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

There are two main ways in which you can increase food production per unit of land. The first thing you can do is use more inputs - that's using more fertiliser, using more irrigation water, more pesticides, more machinery. Of course, this in turn can create environmental problems. The second way is by using inputs more efficiently. What this chart shows is that we've seen a transition in the way that we've increased food production since the 1960s. In the first few decades after 1960 the growth in global agricultural production was mostly driven by a greater use of inputs, but this changed around 1990 and in fact, in recent years, efficiency gains have been the most important source of growth. This is really good news for the environment as it means we're reducing the pressure on land.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

These efficiency gains have contributed to lowering food prices, and this is really good news for consumers of course, but actually it puts pressure on farmers, especially those farmers who are not able to increase their productivity. Across the different dimensions of the triple challenge, across food security and nutrition environment and livelihoods, we can see that food systems have important achievements, but they're also facing serious challenges.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

Now, I just want to shift a little bit into some of the research that the OECD has actually done on how governments provide support for agriculture and food. Unfortunately, when we look at the policy landscape around the world, we see that many policies aren't effective at addressing the triple challenge, and in fact, they can be counterproductive. Maybe, for example, by creating stickiness in terms of farmers' ability or incentives to adapt to changing conditions.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

This slide is highlighting numbers from the OECD Agricultural Policy Monitoring and Evaluation report, which is a great source of data on agricultural policies around the world. The report covers 54 countries, essentially all of the OECD and then major agricultural producers around the world. Across these 54 countries we find that the agricultural sectors consume more than 700 billion US dollars of support each year. Just to be clear, this isn't subsidies, this is support including protectionist trade policies and also public investments in public goods like research and development, which of course we know is really essential in this world that's changing so quickly.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

The vast majority of that 700 billion US dollars doesn't go into public goods, instead it's used to support the incomes of individual producers and public goods, you can see from the second bar, only receive a small share of that total. We also can see when we break down the information in that report, that governments tend to use the most distorting instruments - those that are actually coupled to production, and this can stimulate overproduction and create negative environmental externalities. For example, by creating incentives for overuse of inputs like pesticides and fertilisers.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

In fact, in this particular case, the food systems, the policy implications, are pretty straight forward, but this isn't always the case. We know that in food systems, it's a very complex situation. There are many possible interactions and spill overs between agriculture and nutrition and the environment, and many possible drivers. Given this complexity, it's actually really normal that policy makers would potentially feel overwhelmed in terms of navigating these complexities. This is the topic of the second chapter of our work, which looks at how to develop coherent policies across this complexity. Our basic philosophy is, we should try to make things as simple as possible, but not any simpler. In that spirit, we've derived some principles which can hopefully help to improve policy coherence.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

First of all, and this may seem simplistic, it's really important to be aware that there are possible synergies and trade-offs within policy areas. We have a tendency in these kinds of complex situations to drill into one particular area and focus on that and try to solve that problem. But we need to be aware that by solving that problem, we can either be contributing to solving another problem, or we can be creating a trade-off and creating negative implications for what's going on in the other area. At the same time, just being aware isn't really enough. We also need to be able to evaluate these possible interactions to know what their sizes are, and to really think through what we think the evidence is around those synergies and trade-offs.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

The third principle is that these synergies and trade-offs depend on the policy instrument. They're not set in stone. For example, if you want to give income support to farmers, one approach could be to give them fertiliser subsidies. If you use this policy, you're likely to create incentives to use more fertilisers, which in turn can have negative environmental effects, but this is because of the policy instrument chosen. You could also, for example, decide that you want to support farmers who are providing ecosystem services, and that would totally change the set of synergies and trade-offs that come from the policy decision.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

A fourth principle is that even when there are synergies, sometimes people are too enthusiastic about what one instrument can achieve, and it will rarely be the case that we can solve this triple challenge only with one instrument. We need to look at baskets of instruments and think about how to put together a package that's going to be able to maximise some of these and adjust the trade-offs.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

Finally, when there are trade-offs and we cannot overcome them by a smarter choice of policy instruments, there has to be a choice made and society needs to make this choice. We need to base the decision on the best technical analysis, but sometimes the trades depend on values, and there are certain approaches that we highlight in our report for helping policy makers navigate these complex decisions. We have several examples including the use of regulatory impact assessments, and also some stakeholder engagement examples that highlight how policymakers are navigating this.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

This gets me to our third chapter, because it's not just that the complexity stands in the way of making better policies, we also know that achieving better policies can be made difficult by disagreements over facts, interests, and values. We already know quite a lot about food systems and about the policies that can improve the performance of food systems. Still, there are important data gaps and some of our current work is digging into the data gaps, not only on the extent of the problem, but also on the causal mechanism.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

We know also that interests come into play when we're thinking about policies and policy change. Whenever there's a policy change it's going to create winners and losers, and those interest groups may try to influence government. By itself, that's not necessarily a bad thing. It can actually be really useful for governments to find out what different groups are thinking about policy initiatives and how that this will affect them. Where things go wrong is when one group has more access than others, or where some groups are just excluded from the policy process. The OECD has some work in that area - about how to make sure that all stakeholders have an equal chance of being heard.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

The last area where disagreement can really affect policy transformation is in the area of values. We know that in food systems, values play a really important role. Think about the GMO debate. Extensively this is about health and environmental effects of technology, but really there's so much more going on. Consumers or people who are thinking about their food may resist GMO technologies because they don't like large corporations having so much control, or because they think that actually playing around with genetics is not the right way to advance in the food systems area. When you're thinking about values, it's much more complicated. We have to think about new ways of bringing people together, to having dialogue, to understanding these differences in values and to try to come to solutions collectively. That's why these dialogues can be so important so that everybody hears the different viewpoints in the area of values.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

You'll notice that we spend a lot of time talking about the 'how' of policies, not just the 'what' of making better policies for better lives. Because we believe that processes are really important, and if we want to get the policy environment for food systems in a better place, and to be able to achieve the SDGs, we know we have to really think about how we're doing it.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

Let me just finish by saying a few words about the Food Systems Summit. As you may know and as we heard in the introduction, the UN is organising this Food Systems Summit. It will be in September in 2021 and obviously this webinar that we're in right now is representative of the different kinds of dialogues that are going on building into the Food Systems Summit. We're contributing to these debates and we've been in touch with experts who are also involved and we're working with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) who are quite engaged in bringing OECD evidence and analysis up into the discussion.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

This is my last slide. Just to highlight, we have a lot of expertise on food systems on things like poverty and obesity, policy monitoring, and many other areas. Much of this research is synthesised in the report that I've been giving you the overview for. Our research can be found at this web link that I have up on this last slide. I'll wrap up here, but I'm really looking forward to our discussions and I appreciate having the chance to be moving today. Thank you.

**Andrew Bell:**

Thank you so much, Lee Ann Jackson in Paris, and thank you again for getting up well before breakfast time. It's still just half past six over in France but thank you for that. It's complex, but we need to keep things simple. There are no silver bullets. We need to be creative, and we need to keep talking, and that's what we're here to do on this Wednesday in Canberra, in Sydney, in Melbourne, on the Gold Coast, and in Paris.

**Andrew Bell:**

Thank you so much, Lee Ann. And keep your questions coming in. They're in the Zoom Q&A box. Write your questions and we'll get to those in the Q&A session, which will be up and coming after we hear from our individual panellists here in Australia.

We'll start by going to Melbourne and hearing from Dr Anne Astin, AM and PSM, a distinguished food scientist, renowned indeed. She has been honoured for her work in the dairy industry and food safety regulation, has a number of governance roles including a chair of the board of Food Agility CRC, Dairy Food Safety Australia, and a bit of a Melbourne icon, the William Angliss Institute of TAFE.

**Andrew Bell:**

Well Anne, you've had a long, varied career working on policy issues across a number of portfolios, including food regulation, public health agriculture, natural resources, and the environment - all part of this conversation we're having today. Love to hear what you thought about Lee Ann's presentation, in particular the challenges around developing coherent policies across the different, and some might say, competing sectors and managing those trade-offs. How do we get that balance right?

**Anne Astin:**

Thank you, Andrew. Good afternoon. Thank you for the invitation today to this really crucial topic of conversation. In reflecting on Lee Ann's presentation, I think it is encouraging to hear that the dialogue in relation to policy development is now really focusing on food and food systems, not simply the individual parts of what is an entire ecosystem. We are not just looking at economic impacts, we're looking at health and wellbeing, we're looking at social infrastructure, we're looking at almost eco-justice aspects as well, which are all linked to the sustainable development goals.

**Anne Astin:**

For a country like Australia, we have been very much, by our very nature, and for our economic wellbeing, have worked in this food space in a highly competitive environment. We have built our economics sustainability on our competition. Our food is admired the world over for both its quality and safety, and that has allowed us to leverage a premium price. What we're talking about here is a fundamental systemic change that we need to engage in a dialogue about, if in fact, we are going to look at what the new policy paradigms may be.

**Anne Astin:**

What are some of the challenges? The challenges are, we are information rich and almost knowledge poor. Managing information, collecting information, doing that in a collaborative way across all of the participants in the food system is difficult, it's a challenge. We need to look at each of those challenges and each of those components to say: what fundamentally are the problems that we're trying to solve, and I mean deep dive into problems, and having a diversity of people who are willing to come to the table to collaborate and share information in a transparent way, to actually fundamentally identify what is the source of problem that we're actually trying to solve here. We've certainly learned that through the Food Agility Cooperative Research Centre.

**Anne Astin:**

We also need to ensure that the policies, that I learned from Lee Ann's presentation, are based in the latest science and that we are informed by data. Given our level of knowledge at this point in time about our food systems and how they operate, how they will operate into the future to meet consumer demands are difficult. In some ways, we know less in the scientific regime than we actually think we know. Given what we've actually gathered over the centuries in terms of our scientific knowledge base, we actually are now trying to look at what some of the known unknowns are, and also even some of the known knowns we need more information about. How we acquire that knowledge, and the latest science, is really important.

**Anne Astin:**

A couple of other points from Lee Ann's presentation and the challenges - we know there will always be trade-offs, but being able to identify and quantify them wherever possible is important, so that the choices that we make and the policies that we develop are transparent and can be held accountable. For example, increasing productivity to meet rising population and change in our consumer demands can sometimes be in conflict with managing soil health and carbon, as well as increasing natural capital. Making sure that food is accessible, of high quality, and in line with what consumers are demanding and wanting to have choices about, versus minimising waste. We've heard that we can more than well feed the world at the moment, but the actual distribution channels and the percentage of waste that we see, is actually in conflict. We need to manage the delicate trade-offs, particularly in relation to financial resources, and water is one in particular that has a high level of debate in Australia, we've seen that through the Murray–Darling basin discussions.

**Anne Astin:**

Then Lee Ann talked about inputs. The use of pesticides, the resulting residues, and how they are perceived as impacting on food safety is also important. My final point at this stage in listening to Lee Ann's discussion and the challenges is, it's not just ensuring the policy frameworks that are coherent across the agricultural sectors. If I look at this information highway, and agri-digital that we're also talking about, in our emerging discussions, we need to think about investment in our sovereign space industry. That is really critical to the future of our agri-food industry, because increasingly we are relying on data that's transmitted by satellites. The security of that data, being able to provide assurance about the security of that data, needs to be there to be able to enhance trust. We hear a lot of misread of trust in all of the documents and the dialogue. More generally building trust in our value chains will be the absolute critical future of our agri-food industry.

**Andrew Bell:**

Thanks, Anne, I love that phrase you used, the delicacy of trade-offs. Trade-offs often carry with them a certain meaning which is somewhat harsh and of course. That “delicacy” means negotiation, means solving problems. Beautiful segue, because we're now going to go to Howard Parry-Husbands, who's the Chief Executive Officer of the research firm Pollinate, which has an overarching mantra of solving problems in a complex world, and has come up with four key principles - understand the system, build strategy on the evidence, co-create to innovate, and facilitate true change. I think Howard, you've come to the right place today because those are the things we're going to need. This proponent of systems thinking and the need for policy makers to recognise and understand this complexity we've already heard about, and also the “how we're all connected”, including when we think about the issues facing our food systems. Can you speak a little bit more about that systems thinking and how it might relate to some of the messages we've heard already in this discussion, both from Paris and also from Melbourne, from Lee Ann, and from Anne?

**Howard Parry-Husbands:**

Oh yes, certainly. Thank you very much for having me here today. I'm delighted, I'll just check, you can hear me though. All good?

**Andrew Bell:**

We can loud and clear.

**Howard Parry-Husbands:**

Delighted to hear Lee Ann Jackson from the OECD talk about how complexity has been embraced, and I think it's important just to make the point that complexity is very different to complicated. I think for too long, decisions overwhelm food systems and the bigger systems, based on the fact that things are very complicated, but perhaps predictable in their behaviours, and that we can actually solve some of the problems that arise.

**Howard Parry-Husbands:**

By moving from this complicated idea to the reality of complex systems, we recognise that there are no solutions. As it said in the presentation, there are no silver bullets. Also, the complex systems are characterised by chronic policy failure, and the reality is that because you cannot just change one part of it and in fact, if you do try and change one part of it, you actually create more manifestly different and novel problems, that unless you address the whole system, you simply can't change it or evolve it.

**Howard Parry-Husbands:**

The good news, of course, is complex systems are highly adaptable and evolve. So, instead of trying to solve a problem, what we need to do is steer or guide these tangled complicated and complex issues, and then you can tame the tangle even if you cannot untangle it. I think that wonderful point there from Dr. Anne Astin, makes a key point. It's about what we know and as long as we accept that our known set of knowledge is insufficient, then we can be open-minded, we can engage with dialogue, and we can learn from and engage with different ways of doing and of thinking.

**Howard Parry-Husbands:**

Obviously in Australia, engaging with indigenous wisdom and practise is something that we have ignored for too long. This allows us now to challenge some of those deeper structural issues. The reality is that the facts, the interests and the values that were talked about in the previous OECD slide, are a result of a constrained choice set that frankly, we're only able to eat the foods we eat, and the foods are produced the way they are produced, in the entire food system, because that is the knowledge system and the values system that dictates that. That values, rules and knowledge system are fundamental to determining the sets of foods we have.

**Howard Parry-Husbands:**

Once you address this complexity, accept that we don't know what we know and challenge the fundamental conventions, you get to ask some rather interesting questions. One of my favourites is an example in Australia - well, what if we doubled the amount of diversity in the species that provide our food, given that 75% of the world's food comes from just 12 plants and five animals? I ask a question here in Australia, for instance, where are our quandongs? They're not in our supermarkets, and yet this is a food that has grown for a very long time in Australia. Most of the food we eat in Australia is not from Australia, and perhaps it's about time to ask those questions - perhaps we're growing the wrong things.

**Howard Parry-Husbands:**

That's the sort of ways to address agricultural systems and transform them - ask the fundamental questions and accept that we don't know necessarily the best way forward.

**Andrew Bell:**

Thanks, Howard. I love that idea of a diversification of what's on our supermarket shelves. We might come back to that later on. In fact, that's perhaps another segue to our third and final Australian-based panellist, Krista Singleton-Cambage. Before we get to her, just a reminder, get those questions coming in there, we've got a pretty good slew already, but the more the merrier.

**Andrew Bell:**

But to Krista Singleton-Cambage on the Gold Coast, she's head of Climate and Food Security for the World Wildlife Fund in Australia, who work helps stabilise the climate system, finding ways to produce and consume food in more secure and planet friendly ways. In fact, Krista has said she's been passionate about the state of the world for as long as she can remember - ever since the day she was given a globe as a child - but we're very much thinking global today, Krista. I expect that you folk at WWF Australia are already very familiar with the notion of the triple challenge - food security and nutrition, livelihoods and economic sustainability, and also these days resilience, as we've had highlighted already, particularly as it relates to food systems and environmental sustainability. What takeaways have you got from the OECD work on food systems policies? Krista, share some thoughts.

**Krista Singleton-Cambage:**

Right. Many thanks, Andrew. Good afternoon, everyone. Just before I share those thoughts, just wanted to also acknowledge the Yugambeh people who are the traditional owners of the land where I am currently living and working and pay my respects to their elders - past, present, and emerging -and extend those respects to all indigenous peoples in joining us in the discussion this afternoon.

**Krista Singleton-Cambage:**

Thanks again to Lee Ann, Anne and Howard for those really interesting comments and reflections. Thinking through some of the main points that Lee Ann has highlighted that the OECD report has raised a couple of thoughts, really coming through clearly. One is around the complexities of the food system overall and therefore the need for a real mix of approaches. I think the report says a few times there's no single bullet approach - if there was, we wouldn't need to be in this discussion. As you've touched on before Andrew, this is one of hundreds of discussions going on around the world. So many people are grappling with very similar issues about how to deal with those complexities.

**Krista Singleton-Cambage:**

In that regard, I think a couple of things really come through. One is how on the production side of the food system - how we look at reducing the impacts of those foods that indeed have the highest impacts in an ecological and a social sense. At the same time, how do we increase demand from a consumption side for those foods, such as some traditional foods that Howard just touched on, which are lower impact in terms of ecological and social respects.

**Krista Singleton-Cambage:**

Those are certainly issues that our organisation, and I know others are grappling with and thinking through. We've touched on the need for making decisions based on data and the best available science in a very dynamic environment. How do we do that from both a production and consumption point of view? I think that that's come through really clearly. For example, production practises such as agro-biodiversity and regenerative agriculture, together with looking at how you provide consumers with choice. Really linking knowledge about the sourcing and the production of food to access for consumers and giving them those tools. And looking at what are some policy choices and changes that we can be making to facilitate that more effectively.

**Krista Singleton-Cambage:**

I think Anne has really touched on, as well an important point that Lee Ann has raised, around the trust issue in value chains, and really looking at the traceability and transparency of information in relation to commodities. We're seeing this particularly in regard to animal-based protein from ruminant animals, from fisheries, as a really important market mechanism. An doing forward, the plant-based protein sector is really increasing around the world, driven a lot at the moment really in OECD countries, but very much being picked up by many others as well. What's some of the information that we need, again, across the production and the consumption side of looking at the food system more holistically, in terms of transparency and traceability about where food is actually from?

**Krista Singleton-Cambage:**

I think really an incredibly important point around looking at food systems holistically is around the importance of the inclusion of all voices in global discussions such as this one. Taking advantage of the UN Food Systems Summit, as Lee Ann touched on, coming up in a few months’ time, is really an opportunity, as a catalyst for further thought commitments and discussion on these issues.

**Krista Singleton-Cambage:**

I think the need, again picked up in the report, for different types of policy approaches really comes forward in that regard.

For example, for us here in Australia, I think what we grapple with in terms of policy development for our own food systems here is very much tied to our near region. The work that we do in the Pacific and southeast Asia, for example, well beyond our shores and our economic exclusion zone (EEZ), as an OECD country, how we look at the development of our bilateral and multilateral work, and support our neighbours. And how we help them develop more cohesive and coherent policies in relation to the triple challenge that we're seeing respectively in other countries. How that links back to the triple challenge of our own country here, and how we look at policies to bridge the global international perspective and support, and domestic policy making we see here.

**Andrew Bell:**

Thanks Krista. What you talked about – diversity - we've had such a diversity of views and approaches to the challenges coming up. Thank you so much for your reactions to Lee Ann's presentation.

**Andrew Bell:**

Now, it's the chance for people attending this webinar to have their questions answered, reacted to, and also to spark more topics for discussion and thought. Let's go to the first question. Don't forget you can submit your questions in the Zoom Q&A box, but our first one here which segues nicely out of Krista's remarks, and it's from an attendee who asks, 'There seems to be increasing values-based preferences for natural food systems, that is those that use fewer inputs and less infrastructure and are less intensive, but in many ways as our questioner, these are less productive per hectare of land. How can policy accommodate and navigate that contradiction? Is it indeed a contradiction?'

**Andrew Bell:**

Now, it's a bit of a free-for-all answering here, but I just wonder, Lee Ann, could you kick us off there? This idea of food that use fewer inputs and less infrastructure and natural food systems, is that a particular challenge?

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

Well, challenge or opportunity, I guess. If consumers are now thinking about how they want to consume and making the links to what the outcomes might be along the production process and in terms of decisions about how land is used, then that is an opportunity if you can then link consumers. This is a theme that's come up across the comments on my presentation, that they can trust that they can see that their consumption choices are attached to outcomes, environmental outcomes, for example. I think what's interesting and what we've been observing is that there's new digital tools that are making these traceability options more possible, but there's tonnes of issues around making sure that there's an assurance that what consumers think that they're buying in terms of these environmental outcomes is actually what they are buying. You need to be able to have this real traceability with some assurance that what you're buying is leading to better outcomes.

**Andrew Bell:**

It's not just about what it says on the packet, we actually need to think through our actions as consumers and as society? Thanks very much for that. Another question now, and Oh, Anne wants to pop in - what have you got to say to these 'fewer resources, less infrastructure' products? What challenge do they throw up, Anne in Melbourne?

**Anne Astin:**

Thanks, Andrew. I just wanted to say, this is where the era of digital technology, the power of artificial intelligence and predictive modelling, is actually having a huge impact on the inputs that are occurring, particularly in our primary production systems, but also leading to the potential for less use of pesticides in food production without compromising productivity levels.

**Andrew Bell:**

Howard, I think has got a view on this question as well, Howard in Sydney.

**Howard Parry-Husbands:**

We're fortunate to do lots of research across different food groups, and the consumer parts of the supply or commodity chain pretty much operates by the shorthand that natural is good and unnatural is bad. That's really simple and that's how, as humans, we make sense of things that are complex, and make choices. The problem is that the consumer is recognising now that they are buying the illusion of natural. I run too many focus groups for instance, where they do not understand where skim milk comes from - there isn't a skim cow. Consumers now are actually disappointed because they've been told they shouldn't be eating too much ham or bacon or dairy or fruit juice or carbohydrates, red meat, soybeans, in fact, everything is now unnatural. What we've discovered is that there's a sense of guilt fatigue. The consumer is fed up with feeling guilty because everything they choose makes them feel bad, even their cucumbers wrapped in plastic.

**Howard Parry-Husbands:**

What this means is the consumer is now blaming the whole system, whether it's the producer, the process, the retailer, or the food itself, and they no longer trust the whole system. To come back to the point that's been made here with the OECD report, there is simply no point in trying to address one part of it. The consumer thinks that the entire system is effectively not to be trusted and they're looking for the most natural solution possible. I should say by the way, they generally do default to a farmer's market in Australia and buy the same apple that's covered in wax and a little plastic sticker, they can buy in Coles for twice as much money from someone who looks like a farmer, even though it's the same apple they can buy from Coles.

**Andrew Bell:**

Well, that leaves us, thanks Howard, very nicely on to local food policy, and I think I might start directing this to you, Lee Ann in Paris. A questioner asks, are the policies referred to in this work, the OECD work, relevant to local food policy, that is, at a local government level, rather than the state or federal government level. I guess it's talking about getting all government inside the tent for this discussion.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

That's such a good question. One of the things that our report highlights is the importance of using deliberative processes to overcome some of these frictions for policy transformation and those processes I think are applicable at any scale. Depending on which problem you're dealing with, you're going to want to think about having your decision-making at different levels. Again, it's a classic question when you start talking about systems, because you have to be able to think about the scale.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

Coming back to our deliberative processes approach, the OECD has done a tonne of work on looking at the use of these approaches because it's taken off over the past decade where governments at different levels of government bring together a representative group of the population, so it's not self-selected, you don't just get the foodie population, but you try to get a real representation across the full population that is dealing with the issue, and you have a discussion where all the people who are participating can ask for information and evidence and data and analysis to help them think through the problem, and then they collectively try to put forward consensus suggestions for policy makers to consider. Those approaches are applicable across all different layers of government.

**Andrew Bell:**

Another question has come through about where we get data from to find solutions, so I'd be interested what you think of this question. It's asked, 'with food systems across the globe being so different, should we be using local or national data rather than global data, as in the report to identify solutions?' I'm guessing it's a combination a bit like the triple challenge. Anne, have you got a view on that, about what data we use in these policy and societal discussions?

**Anne Astin:**

Yes. That's a really good question. I think that we would sell ourselves short if we weren't connected to information that is flowing along the information highway globally, but in terms of developing policies and policy frameworks, we absolutely do need to base that on what we know nationally and regionally. One of the challenges is, first of all, knowing what data we need to collect. What is the data that we will need to collect to address the policy issue that we are particularly focusing on, how we collect it, how that's analysed, and then who do we engage in this data analytics and this whole emerging area of developing data science and what capabilities we need to be able to do that in a way that is very informative and helps us improve our policy development? There is policy development at the global level, but it's how is that interpreted and brought back to what is happening regionally and nationally.

**Andrew Bell:**

I know Howard wants to jump in, but before we go to Howard, go to you Krista, you've got something to put into this response to this question about where we get our information on which we base our decisions upon.

**Krista Singleton-Cambage:**

Yeah, thanks very much, Andrew. I think it's an excellent question. I think for us the data is essential to then inform decision-making processes at a range of levels. An example that really springs to mind is in relation again, to the look across production and consumption and building that trust and how do you have data that is verifiable, so that consumers have that definite trust. For example, in regenerative agricultural practises for instance, looking at what particular practises in what particular contexts make differences to soil carbon, the grass and tree cover, water outputs and inputs in relation to practises in different types of commodity production. I think gathering that data is essential to then being able to provide that information down the supply chain in a way that is verifiable and trusted by consumers and then informs policy decisions together in terms of support for private sector and the development of market mechanisms as well. It's really essential, it underpins I think all of what we're trying to do in the sector.

**Andrew Bell:**

Thanks Krista. Howard, your views on this, you're always coming from a solutions point of view.

**Howard Parry-Husbands:**

Yes. Pollinate is ultimately a research company, so I'm just going to read out two points which I think are really clear. The first one is from Dr. Krista Singleton-Cambage, which is, gathering that data is essential, and prior to that Dr. Anne Astin, made the point about the data we will need to collect. What I'm trying to say is both of these excellent commentators have made the point, we don't have the data, we don't have the local data, we don't have the regional data, we don't have the national data, we don't have the international data. I'm extremely fortunate to have worked with data across the entire sector of agriculture internationally. Almost every country has shared their data with me for a particular project I did internationally. None of that data correlates, it is all collected on different scales, different questions, different assumptions, different samples, there were no meaningful conclusions that can be driven from the data.

**Howard Parry-Husbands:**

We managed to pull some insights out. At the local level in Australia, we don't even realistically know how many farms or farmers there are in Australia. We've got numbers on that and all the numbers are different, the numbers of farmers are different to number of farms, different from where the farms are. All of our data is, frankly, nowhere near good enough to inform good evidence-based decision-making.

**Howard Parry-Husbands:**

I just want to make the point as the two excellent doctors have made the point, this is something we need to collect and gathering that data is essential because we are not currently making evidence-based decisions to the level that we need to.

**Andrew Bell:**

This is clearly a big topic. Lee Ann, you've been nodding in agreement, for a global organisation when we're not comparing apples with apples, oranges with oranges, it's a difficult starting point when things aren't agreeing with each other, they even have a policy discussion.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

Yeah, exactly. Our current work, we did this report in January, now we're moving exactly into this question of evidence gaps and data gaps, and again, our framework is always “what do policy makers need in order to make better decisions?”. The framework that we're thinking about for data is “where do we need more detailed information?”. You need to think about, again, the scale of data that you need for the decision that you're thinking about, you need to think about the methodologies that are being used and whether, or not, you need to harmonise how data is collected so that then you can make comparisons.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

A big issue is where the data is collected so often in governments, it's siloed, so you have to think about how to connect to those silos of information - to be able to have a more systems way of thinking through the evidence. Finally, what's really clear, is that there hasn't really been enough investment in understanding the data you need to be able to evaluate if policies are effective.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

Often policies get implemented and then there's not a lot of data that you can use to then adapt the policy because you can tell that part of it is leading to an outcome or a trade opera synergy 1:02:46 that you hadn't intended. We're moving into that area now and we'll be digging into some deep dives around the triple challenge. Thanks.

**Andrew Bell:**

We're going to have to move on to some more questions. I know Anne just wants to jump in with one point.

**Anne Astin:**

Yeah, just an important point to back that up to say that is a gap that we have in Australia, picking up on Howard's and Krista's point - do we have the appropriate data policies in place to allow this to happen? Have we had a conversation, a discussion or a debate even about what data standards there should be? Then thinking ahead, the opportunities for trading in data and what might future data markets look like. I can see emerging the possibility of new enterprises actually trading in data. What will those data markets look like? While bearing in mind that I would like to suggest, the value proposition is not in the data itself, the value proposition is in the information and knowledge that that data collection and analysis will generate. I just wanted to make those points very quickly, Andrew.

**Andrew Bell:**

Thanks very much, Anne. Information is power, they do say. Let's move on to another question now, and it's directed initially to you, Lee Ann, our question says, 'it's great to hear about the need to consider a diverse range of stakeholders in policymaking on food systems and the need for trade-offs, but that can be easier said than done. Does the OECD have more detailed information on how policy makers can balance the feedback from a diverse range of stakeholders who may not even agree on the primary purpose for the food system?' Those are pretty treacherous waters, aren't they?

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

Yes, indeed. Just to direct people to this website where we've collected a lot of the OECD work in this area, which includes some work that our experts working on the area of governance have on exactly balancing these stakeholder interests and thinking about, again, the process of engaging. I mentioned a minute ago, these deliberative practises which are about getting together citizens to talk about issues. Usually in those practises, you would make sure that you included some stakeholder perspective to inform also how the citizens are thinking about the policy changes. But it's really a great question, I would propose if you wanted to dig into it, there's lots of resources that you can have access to through that web portal.

**Andrew Bell:**

Howard, this is a fundamental human problem, isn't it? To get people even sitting around the same table and talking to each other, not past each other.

**Howard Parry-Husbands:**

Yes. We've been conducting co-design, co-creation, deliberative processes for about 15 years. Actually, on the one hand, it's been opposed in Australia for small ”p” political reasons. I come back to the facts, interests, and values from that fabulous OECD presentation. There are a lot of interests who are disempowered by having a breadth of perspectives around the table, it's as simple as that. One thing we have to recognise is the minute we give Aboriginal Australian people inclusivity around the table, and it's incredibly important that we do, there are some people who feel their interests, or their power will be reduced. Frankly, that is possibly a very good thing.

**Howard Parry-Husbands:**

We need all voices around the table, all stakeholders and all values, but it's worth recognising that we, upfront, should identify who the people who feel they will be losers are, because unless everybody approaches the deliberative process with open-mindedness - I may not agree with another person's point of view, but I would accept they are entitled to hold that view to find that meaning, and I will entertain the fact that even if I don't think they're right, they're entitled to be right - this is the blind men and the elephant. We can all hold the elephant's as blind men, we're all absolutely correct in how we feel the elephant is, well, we all of us wrong unless we collectively accept there is a new meaning that only makes sense when we have all of our views together. The elephant is indeed invisible in the room unless we accept everybody else's points of view as being correct.

**Howard Parry-Husbands:**

I think deliberative processes are the way forward, but I think that that ability to engage people with open-minded dialogue is crucial, and recognising upfront that that process is the way to open the door to transform the system, but let's not underestimate the challenges involved in that.

**Howard Parry-Husbands:**

Australia, when it came to marriage equality, did not engage with a deliberative process model because some vested parties were challenged by just having that. Ireland, as a democracy, did employ deliberative process model and had a frankly much better journey towards a similar eventual outcome. I absolutely applaud the deliberative process, the way forward - open-mindedness and dialogue is key to inclusivity.

**Andrew Bell:**

Citizens assemblies in Ireland are not on just that issue, but on other issues as well. Krista, you want to come in on this - I'm imagining WWF comes to those conversations on a regular basis and is perhaps somewhat battle-hardened by them and has perhaps changed approaches. How difficult are these conversations do you think?

**Krista Singleton-Cambage:**

I think challenging but absolutely necessary. Just to reflect on the comments made earlier, I think that those deliberative processes that are truly inclusive are absolutely critical. They're not easy in many contexts, but absolutely critical.

**Krista Singleton-Cambage:**

I think there's some immediate and very short-term opportunities in front of us. Actually, 2021 offers opportunities for the types of dialogues around the food system that we are having now, as well as a unique opportunity on the calendar for two almost back-to-back conferences of the parties focused on biodiversity and the convention on biological diversity and focused on climate change in the UN framework convention on climate change. I think, going forward, looking in terms of that more holistic approach in terms of policy coherence, there are opportunities at national and global levels to marry some interesting silos together and look at how dietary guidelines, for example, which largely in many countries are focused on health and nutrition and not on other aspects of the triple challenge. But, really importantly, focused on health and nutrition in that context.

**Krista Singleton-Cambage:**

Looking at how that marries perhaps to nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement in the climate context. Again, those are different sectors who certainly, at the global level, don't interact with one another very often, and then at different national levels. I think that we sometimes have parallel policy processes in relation to biodiversity loss, climate change and food system approaches, overall from production to consumption. As we go forward, if we can marry those together, I think we will be the richer for it, here and elsewhere.

**Andrew Bell:**

We're really deep diving here, and I think the next question I'll just put you all, I think you might all want to answer this one.

The question is, how do we reframe the narrative around food and our food systems? Now, that we've got everyone's attention with COVID-driven empty shelves from time to time, it has urgency, but removes potential divisive messaging between city and rural communities, and provides, and here's an interesting word coming up, a sense of hope that we can deliver the solutions needed for improved food systems that deliver the triple challenges. 'Hope' is a word we've just introduced to our discussion here. It's a very simple one, but it's a difficult one to deliver on.

Can I start with you Lee Ann, on this topic? Is it a matter of reframing the narrative or of emphasising different parts of the pre-existing narrative in a different way?

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

It's such a good question and I'm happy that we have the word hope introduced because we do want to be thinking positively about what we can achieve. We need to have our eye on where the horizon is.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

I think it is reframing the narrative. That was part of the effort of this OECD report, which was to not just say food systems are failing, but to actually look at what the achievements and the challenges are, and then try to untangle what it takes to move in a better direction.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

Like I've said this afternoon, or this morning for me, our report really thinks about how to make policy change, because we do have quite a lot of evidence around what's not working, so the data that I put up around policies and how governments are often supporting their agriculture in quite distorting ways, those things we've known for decades, we've been collecting the evidence for more than 30 years, but it's this transformation.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

Again, we've heard lots of comments about these deliberative processes in this session and bringing people together. For me, that's where the hope comes from. You get people who are caring about the issue. You bring them together to have a dialogue, to raise up the positive values that they have for the system, and then to engage on finding solutions together. We know some of the things that need to change, and we just need to engage thoughtfully to try to make those changes happen.

**Andrew Bell:**

Howard, you want to talk about hope.

**Howard Parry-Husbands:**

Yes. That's a wonderful point from Lee Ann Jackson, thank you. First of all, hope is that people, all of us, find cold comfort in false dichotomies. It's easy to understand the world as goodies and baddies, and unfortunately, it's just rubbish. We think, for instance, in Australia, increasing forestry is bad, but we think that wood is good, and therefore forestry somehow, which produces wood, is good and that destroys our dichotomies. The need there was to reframe forestry, and we did a lot of work with the forestry sector around reframing forestry as the ultimate renewable. There's a lot of work that still needs to be done to make sure that forests are sustainably managed, and renewable. But if they are managed in a perpetually renewable resource, then we can replace a lot of our carbon intensive materials with a fibre that is renewable and natural.

**Howard Parry-Husbands:**

But I just want to come back to the point that to reframe the narrative around food systems as hope, we have to first accept that people seeing the food system and modern agriculture as part of the problem. Hope starts with the reframe - recognising that agriculture needs to be seen as part of the solution. We must stop talking about agriculture as purely the amount of money it makes us as an export industry, or how important it is for regional economies in Australia, because in fact it's about common values - respecting our food, not wasting our food, just perhaps all food is too cheap, for example. Well, that's enough for me.

**Andrew Bell:**

Krista, what would you like to say to this point about hope and the need to reframe the narrative?

**Krista Singleton-Cambage:**

I think it's an excellent question and great discussion. It's really pivotal. How we see food and the food systems, and how we talk about it in that narrative, underpins so much of what we do.

Our challenge, for those of us who work in food systems in different ways, is that it's often talked about, as Howard was just saying, in a negative light. The impacts of the food system, and which Lee Ann well highlighted in her presentation, the incredible impact on global greenhouse gas emissions, on water, on land clearing and deforestation, et cetera, and the urgency with which we need to address that.

**Krista Singleton-Cambage:**

But the reason that we're doing that in many ways, and I think what gives me incredible hope is the opportunities that food offers us. Food is not an abstract concept - it's something that every human being is an expert in. Again, for those of us who work in food systems, that gives us a wonderful entry point to make those connections as to why it's important to maintain healthy systems. We don't need to make a case to anyone about why nutritious, reliable, healthy, available food is important. We all inherently get that and understand that, and I think that gives me hope that system change will indeed happen - because it needs to.

**Andrew Bell:**

Thanks very much. Sometimes Q&A sessions on occasions like these wanders into the unknown and perhaps don't produce the stuff you really would like them to produce. Certainly, this afternoon is producing great discussion, great ideas, food for thought - pun intended. We've now only got about seven or eight minutes left of Q&A time, so I'm going to throw, particularly to our Australian panellists, the final question from one of our attendees today. It's simple on the one hand, but potentially troublesome on the other. 'Do we need to build a national voice/agency that can coordinate research and policy, develop a national food system strategy that can help level the playing field between public interests, health livelihoods environment, and also the interests of,' as framed in this question, 'the powerful, that is, those who obviously are invested in it?'

**Andrew Bell:**

Do we need not only this discussion, but something to emerge from it - a national voice, an agency, a permanent organisation. Ann, can I start with you? Do you think we need to have instead of 90 minutes on a Wednesday afternoon of discussions like these, we need ongoing discussions like these?

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

I absolutely think we need to have ongoing discussions about this really critical issue. The discussion whether we need a national agency - I don't necessarily think that structures are always part of the solution. I believe that leadership is the key to this. In some countries, food is specifically mentioned within the political frameworks. Do they work any better? I'm not an expert on this, but I think structure should follow strategy. What we actually need is a home, and leadership to identify the particular matters, challenges, but also opportunities that we have been discussing this afternoon. Finding those mechanisms, those conduits, that leadership to allow this ongoing dialogue to continue - that's where I see there is a need. A structure does not necessarily always lead to better policy or good policy. It's that collective voice and that collaborative framework. But having a point of leadership that can actually continue to develop this dialogue - that's what we need to continue.

**Andrew Bell:**

Krista, what would you like to say to this? Do we need somewhere else to talk about it or do we just need to do something about it?

**Krista Singleton-Cambage:**

I think I absolutely endorse all of Ann's comments. I've been really intrigued by the work in some of the other OECD countries on developing national food strategies at different levels, and I think that would be something really interesting for Australia to explore nationally and bringing in sub-national government expertise here - the states and territories. It would allow us to go a little deeper in our role, both as a food importer and as a food exporter, in terms of different commodities. Looking at future-proofing Australia and our near region going forward, and really planning for shocks. We saw the devastating bushfires not very long ago. Learning from that experience and building in resilience to the systems, both in terms of planning and policy here, and again, support for building capacity in our near region. Perhaps having a national strategy set of dialogues or discussion would allow us a forum to bring in other voices and explore that in more detail.

**Andrew Bell:**

I'm going to have to end the Q&A session now because the time has beaten us, as always. A number of big topics, interesting issues raised today. Food for thought, as I said already, and also hopefully things being seen in a slightly different way. That's the reason we talk to each other. I'd like to thank you sincerely on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, the people who've taken part today, Lee Ann Jackson in Paris, Anne Astin in Melbourne, Howard Parry-Husbands in Sydney, Krista Singleton-Cambage on the Gold Coast. In a moment I'm going to go round the reel and ask you for one sentence, perhaps even two, of your final thoughts after meeting here today.

**Andrew Bell:**

Thank you so much for giving of your time and your insights and your suggestions. Let's start with some takeaways, can I start with you Howard in Sydney? In a sentence or two, any takeouts some the last 90 minutes?

**Howard Parry-Husbands:**

My biggest takeout is what a splendid, amazing bunch of brilliant people you're managed together -apart from me - delightful to hear you all. But I think that the biggest takeaway I would have is I think there is an opportunity to create hope with some national evidence-based dialogue that creates a way for us to go on an adaptation pathway towards a more resilient Australian food sector. The key things we need to change, we need to adapt, and the only way I think that is, is by coming together and working towards positive goals. As an aside, I think the STG goals are rather good, why not start there? Put aside any of our contemporary political and potentially even selfish perspectives and be part of a global movement. In that sense, it could be a truly powerful engine for driving a positive hopeful narrative,

**Andrew Bell:**

Anne in Melbourne, any takeouts you'd like to share with us at the end of our session?

**Anne Astin:**

Yes. I have really enjoyed hearing the diversity of views at the table and the questions and what's happening at the OECD level. The takeaway message for me is, how do we build this systemic change that we're all talking about? Is it to develop a national food strategy that has engagement of all who work in food space, who are willing to take a shared responsibility, who are willing to accept awareness and education, and are willing to engage and adopt, whatever the outcomes of that strategy might be?

**Andrew Bell:**

Thanks Anne. To the Gold Coast, Krista Singleton-Cambage, what would you like to tell our participants today? What have you learned or been inspired to find out more about after today's discussion?

**Krista Singleton-Cambage:**

Thanks very much. Again, absolutely delighted to take part and very much look forward to keeping the dialogue and the discussions going here in Australia and elsewhere. WWF is very closely involved in the food summit, particularly in the third action tracks focusing on nature positive production. I'm really happy to bring some of these messages and takeaways back to my colleagues as well. Two things really have stuck out for me and those would be the words, innovation and inclusion. Thinking through system change and development in a very dynamic space domestically and globally using innovative thinking. and adapting and testing and learning as we go. It's absolutely critical and doing that in a way that's incredibly inclusive is absolutely essential and having every relevant voice at the table as we've started here today. Thanks again.

**Andrew Bell:**

Thanks Krista. We started hearing from you an hour and a half ago with your presentation, Lee Ann Jackson in Paris, your final thoughts.

**Lee Ann Jackson:**

Well, my final thoughts are, we know that better policies can really make a difference, but we also know that transforming policies can be very challenging. Paying attention to facts, interests, and values and this theme came up throughout the questions. It is really important, and these dialogues are a step towards creating the conditions for the change that we need to see in order to reach the sustainable development goals.

**Andrew Bell:**

Thank you so much to all four of you for your final thoughts. Well, this webinar, the fourth in the series is coming to a close, it doesn't mean to say that the Food Systems Summit Dialogues are over. Fleur Downard was here right at the beginning and she's back with me now to let you know other ways in which you can engage in the preparations for the summit here from Australia. Fleur, over to you.

**Fleur Downard:**

Thank you, Andrew. We encourage you to visit and upload your views and ideas for the Food Systems Summit, using the departments 'Have Your Say' page. The current survey closes on Thursday, 10th of June, to enable your input to be provided for the Food Systems Summit pre-summit, which will be held in July. We hope that you will also register for the final webinar in this series, webinar five, titled Agricultural Innovation, Building Better Food Systems. This webinar will be held Tuesday, 13th of July, at the same time of 2:00 to 3:30 pm, Australian Eastern Standard Time. Registration details are now available along with other information on the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment’s UN Food Systems Summit 2021 webpage.

**Andrew Bell:**

Thanks Fleur, and also thank you to the team from the Department of Agriculture, Water and the Environment, for helping create this webinar today. The dialogues are happening here, there, and everywhere. There are places to go, web pages to visit. You can see on your screen both the department's and the United Nations' places to go to see what is going on and to contribute. Don't forget that fifth dialogue coming up next month.

**Andrew Bell:**

Well, on a cold and very wintery day in Canberra, it's been a real pleasure to hear about this most important conversation. I'd like to thank my technical team, Ben and James, and I'd like to thank you all for joining us this day. I'm Andrew Bell, and until the next time, have a very good afternoon.