

Science-Policy-Business

Feeding the World Without Killing the Planet

Thank you Chair.

I am Janice Cox from World Animal Net, speaking on behalf of the Woman's Major Group.

We have some different perspectives and solutions to share with you.

We agree that the question of how to feed the world without killing the planet is indeed vital and urgent. Food systems are at the heart of the 2030 development agenda¹ and SDG 2 specifically covers hunger, food security and sustainable agriculture.

Yet, our current food systems are clearly broken.

Industrial agriculture and monocultures are damaging our soil, water, air, climate, biodiversity, and animal and human health, on an unprecedented scale. Agriculture is a leading cause of pollution in many countries, particularly industrial animal agriculture and the crops grown to feed the industry.

The UN Committee on World Food Security report, [*Sustainable agricultural development for food security and nutrition: what roles for livestock?*](#) has already recognized that intensive livestock production contributes to negative impacts on the environment (through land and water use; and water, soil and air pollution), human health (through antimicrobial resistance and emerging diseases), social structure (through rural abandonment, poor working conditions and low wages) and animal welfare. It also puts local traditional small-scale producers out of work – and many these are women, who provide safe and nutritious food to vulnerable local communities. There is also well-documented research on non-communicable diseases associated with excessive consumption of animal products.

¹ UNEP International Resource Panel, Food Systems and Natural Resources.

It is neither sustainable nor desirable to allow our current agricultural paradigm to continue as an “extractive industry,” with a short-term/high-yield approach that is based on monocultures and heavy chemical applications, polluting and degrading land, air and water.

Furthermore, there is a startling lack of equity in our food systems. In many cases, we are paying for our food three times:

Once for the agricultural subsidies that support it.

Once for the many detrimental impacts, which are externalized.

And then finally when we buy this food.

Whilst local producers struggle to survive against the onslaught.

However, there are already known solutions to this problem, which should be supported and developed; as well as some environmentally and socially acceptable technologies.

We support these where they work with nature, and do not try to dominate or control nature purely for corporate profit - as we know from bitter experience that this all too often has severe consequences for our planet.

So, let us not forget other solutions such as:

- *Moving to agro-ecological production methods.

- *Cutting down on food waste. With a third of global food production lost or wasted.

To this should be added the wasted calories in feeding edible crops through livestock, with 100 calories of crops only producing 17-30 calories when fed through animals.

- *Changing consumption patterns towards the “predominantly plant-based diets, which the WHO supports for healthy nutrition. Cutting out overconsumption in wealthier populations.

There has also been some excellent work on plant-based alternatives and “clean meat” – cellular meat (grown in the lab) which replicates meat, without the massive environmental footprint. Developed by

innovative companies such as Memphis Meats, backed by billionaires such as Bill Gates and Richard Branson, and supported by the Good Food Institute.

Now these are the sort of solutions that should be supported and promoted, with political support, financial investment and roll-out of best practices.

Finally, let us not forget that we do not actually have a shortage of food. What we have is an unjust and inequitable food system, which is inherently unsustainable - and unbearably cruel!

This is what we need to tackle.

With urgency, because our future and our planet depend on it.