

Session title:	Food Systems Transformation for Rural Prosperity
Session number:	17
Type of session:	Livestreamed
Day:	Monday, 6 September 2021
Time:	12:45-13:40 EAT
No. of participants:	
Session Organizers:	International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
Moderator:	Sara Savastano
Rapporteur:	Federica Petruccelli
Relevant outcomes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food systems refer to the whole system of food production, covering input supply, production, transportation, processing, sale, consumption and disposal; and considers all actors, processes, governance, and other influencing factors. • Adopting a food systems approach starting from the key objective of ensuring decent livelihoods, nutritious diets, and rural prosperity within planetary boundaries, is pivotal to catalysing inclusive rural transformation in Africa. Its holistic approach helps to identify where and when interventions can be made to improve key outcomes including farm productivity and income, food availability, and dietary diversity. • Between production and consumption there is a large area of untapped potential which can lead to the opportunities for change. Shifting towards circular systems and a more intensive use of technologies and digital option can also represent game-changing solutions to transform the way in which food systems operate.
Objectives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved understanding of how a food systems approach can inform policymaking in Africa to spur inclusive rural transformation • Practical ways are identified on how the private sector and Deal Room can strengthen food systems in ways that are beneficial for small-scale producers in Africa • Solutions for mitigating and navigating the impacts of COVID-19 on African food systems are identified
Speakers: (*Name, Title, Organization)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dr. Jim Woodhill, AgriFoodNexus Consultant, Oxford University Institute of Development Studies

2. Dr. Romina Cavatassi, Lead Economist, Research and Impact Assessment Division (Impact Assessment Cluster), IFAD
3. Dr. Leslie Lipper, Fellow, Cornell University, Technical Advisor, Ceres 2030 & Senior Advisor, IFAD
4. Dr. Sara Savastano, Director of Research and Impact Assessment Division, IFAD
5. Dr. Tomaso Ceccarelli, Senior Researcher, Wageningen University
6. Prof. Ruerd Ruben, Emeritus Professor, Wageningen University

Main highlights:

(*For Insights and newsletter. To be based on the theme of the day. Fill in in bullet form)

- The session highlighted the importance of adopting a food systems approach, along with the implications for the environment and the importance of not leaving anyone behind.
- It also emphasized the importance of focusing on the affordability as well as availability of healthy food and the need for an accessible digital-agriculture transformation.
- As part of a food systems approach, we must understand that rural people have diversified livelihoods both agricultural and non-agricultural.

KEY CHALLENGES

- Reducing undernutrition and ensuring food security but not at the expense of “overnutrition” and obesity.
- Reaching those most vulnerable with better livelihood, nutrition, and environmental protection for all.
- Increasing agricultural production by 20/30% by 2050 to meet growing demand.
- Producing healthy food in an environmentally sustainable way, which is also affordable.

INNOVATIONS PROPOSED

- Linking agricultural production with nutrition and health.
- Working on aspects of nutrition, both in terms of undernutrition and overweight.
- Promoting digital agriculture and designing simple digital solutions that are adapted to the needs of small-holder farmers.

RECOMMENDATIONS/ NEXT STEPS

- Promoting entrepreneurship for enhancing equitable rural livelihoods especially for more vulnerable people like women and indigenous people.
- Promote diversified rural livelihoods across the food system and at all levels of the value chain.
- Invest in more efficient supply chains, placed between production and consumption, to improve affordability of food.

Session Summary:

(*To go in final report. Max 300 words. Fill in prose)

The session was held in anticipation of the upcoming IFAD Rural Development Report, which this year will focus on food transformation for rural prosperity and will be launched in the coming weeks. In line with the report, this session discussed the challenges that food systems are facing and possible solutions and

drivers of change. One of the co-authors of the report, Romina Cavatassi, opened the session with an overview of how a food systems approach can support integrated investments in improving livelihoods, nutrition, and environmental conditions for rural prosperity. Another report co-author, Ruerd Ruben, highlighted the need to consider both under and over nutrition and the burden they place on rural society, explaining that, even if enough food is produced, food systems can fail to provide healthy food to the most vulnerable, with affordability being just as important as availability. Another short presentation by Jim Woodhill pointed out the need for promoting and supporting different livelihood strategies both on and off-farm, especially for women and young rural people. Food systems are a major source of environmental degradation. Finding a balance between food system transformations and environmental objectives was the main message stressed by another speaker, Leslie Lipper. Finally, Tomaso Ceccarelli gave a short talk explaining the importance of digital innovations in agriculture that are simple and tailored to meet farmers' needs, highlighting the role of Governments, policies, and regulations in supporting affordable solutions.

Tweetable quotes with timestamp:

(*For podcast and to go to AGRF Communication for social media. Minimum 3 per session)

- "Food systems are failing to provide decent livelihoods for many of those who work within them. Yield growth and falling food prices have been accompanied by unsustainable environmental degradation and a focus on calories rather than balanced nutrition has led to poor diets." - Sara Savastano.
- "A failure of food systems is a failure of governance." – Romina Cavatassi.
- Having a better diet has a great impact on several diseases like obesity and diabetes which are very expensive for the public health system, "If you invest a dollar in a better diet, you might save 17 dollars on health costs" – Ruerd Ruben.
- "A stronger coordination among international financial institutions is needed to maximize the output; bringing not only the digital infrastructure but also providing whatever is needed to foster the food system." – Sara Savastano.

How has the session contributed to the AGRF outcomes?

*(For end of AGRF communique/ Press release. List 3 - 5 top outcomes)

Discussed challenges and solutions for:

- balancing environmental objectives in the context of transforming food systems for rural prosperity,
- supporting diversified livelihoods both on and off-agricultural income,
- promoting a food system transformation based on the quality and affordability of healthy food.

COMMITMENTS

"We have a new agricultural sector, new challenges and strong work is requested by the research centre to produce evidence that feed the policy debate, and IFAD is determined to promote this type of work." – Sara Savastano.

