

# CountrySide

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## FFA2021: Food System Renewal

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# Editorial

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, *Secretary General*

*The Forum for the Future of Agriculture 2021 has reinvented itself and welcomed more than 6500 participants in 3 weeks during the events of « Solutions Week » and « Policy Week », and the Annual Conference of FFA2021 on the 23rd of March.*

*This impressive success has showcased that dialogue on European policy such as the « CAP reform » and « Green Deal » can attract more than just an EU-based audience, with our friends and partners from the UK and the Americas joining the discussions. With representatives from 91 countries connecting online from around the world to watch the events, the global reach and importance of the FFA2021 Month of March cannot be understated.*

*The Forum affirms yet again its ambition to allow an open and fair debate on a wide range of topics from challenges such as climate change to solutions such as the circular economy. It allows for the analysis of different viewpoints and practices with stakeholders from across the agro-food system, to measure the opportunities and challenges that face us in a fast-paced and ever evolving world.*

*We can elevate the role and spirit of land managers within the food, agriculture and forestry sector by sharing ideas, knowledge and best practices. In return, participants are provided with the opportunity to enrich their vision for the world where harmony and balance with our ecospheres places sustainable land management and a circular economy at the heart of our society.*

*The Forum will continue striving as a driving force for an open dialogue on sustainable development, circular economy and food system renewal. It is up to us to take advantage and learn from these lessons and promote the best options for our network and ultimately, we must always keep in mind, that only cost-effective solutions are sustainable for our rural communities, economies and friends of the countryside.*

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FFA2021 behind the scenes





Janez POTOČNIK

## INTRODUCTION TO FFA2021 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

### We must talk about the weather

**Janez POTOČNIK, Chair FFA2021  
and Chairman RISE Foundation**

While the whole of Europe will be affected by climate change, the Mediterranean shores are in many ways the front line. If we do not drastically change direction, the current water shortages in Portugal, Spain and other places will become common place and more dire. Will we choose to water our crops and eat, or will we need those litters to drink and bathe? Such choices are becoming increasingly real, and the food system cannot be exempt from making a real contribution. Irrigated agriculture represents around 75% of groundwater use in the region, making it by far the biggest user.

We must ensure that the water we must, and do use, to grow the needed crops is used as efficiently as possible. The times when we were taught in schools that water is a free commodity are long gone. Like many other natural resources, also water is undervalued, and incentives received by us market players are sending us in the wrong direction. But other solutions also could play an important role. Precision irrigation, re-engineering existing water systems to reduce or eliminate leaks, detailed data and soil analyses; all these technical solutions and more are also available to farmers in Portugal and beyond. However, we cannot just tell

farmers they must, we have to give them the means and the opportunity to act. This means increasing independent farm advisory services, making reams of data available and understandable, but most of all it means ensuring that field practices change as fast as possible. There has rarely been a more eloquent case for public support than effective, efficient water use by farmers for both crops and to protect our biodiversity.

However, we cannot simply leave our need for better water management at the farm gate. True water sustainability will only be achieved if we do not act locally, but at every level. This means large-scale construction plans to re-engineer and future-proof existing aqueducts, canals, water treatment facilities, and much more. If you consider how far and how fast a raindrop can flow from where it lands all the way down to the oceans, you will begin to see the scope of what is necessary and how integrated our approach must be. It will also cost money.

Rarely has there been a more positive case to build back better from the pandemic. Though Europe is still struggling, understanding that implementing European Green Deal and post-COVID recovery are two sides of the same coin, is already understood by many. Can there be a better case than using our combined resources to help some of the most severely hit economic sectors by providing them a clear transitional path to the future we want? To create, for example, new opportunities for data analysis and application and spread such applied technologies deep into the countryside? We are presented with rare opportunity where our immediate goals can be combined with our long-term sustainability –

we cannot lose this moment and need to ensure that we maximize its possibilities.

Furthermore, we must ensure that our own quest for sustainability and a better, more diverse countryside does not simply export our footprint to other countries. We are part of a truly connected world now and can no longer afford to throw the problems we create over the fence and ignore the consequences. You need only look at the still-ongoing deforestation and biodiversity declines in the Amazon basin – the lungs of the world – to see what could happen when we do that. As the largest integrated trade bloc in the world, the EU has a moral duty to ensure that we do not just take responsibility for the consequences of our own consumption, but to work with farmers and producers in third countries to protect our global heritage. Their rainforests, after all, are the very air we breathe today.

As we approach the UN Food System Summit and the COP26 in Glasgow, it is critical that the whole food system accepts responsibility for its actions at every level and acts accordingly. Where necessary, help, also financial, should be given to ensure that real changes happen. And most important, the transition must be managed in a way to address the existing social problems as well. This is a core enabler and also a precondition for success. There has rarely been a better or more crucial moment to do so.

**The FFA2021 Regional Portugal event will be held on Wednesday, May 26, 2021 and will be fully streamed online. Check [www.forumforagriculture.com](http://www.forumforagriculture.com) for details.**

# RESULTS FFA2021 MONTH OF MARCH



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To view on demand videos from all the events visit [www.forumforagriculture.com/ffa2021-videos](http://www.forumforagriculture.com/ffa2021-videos)

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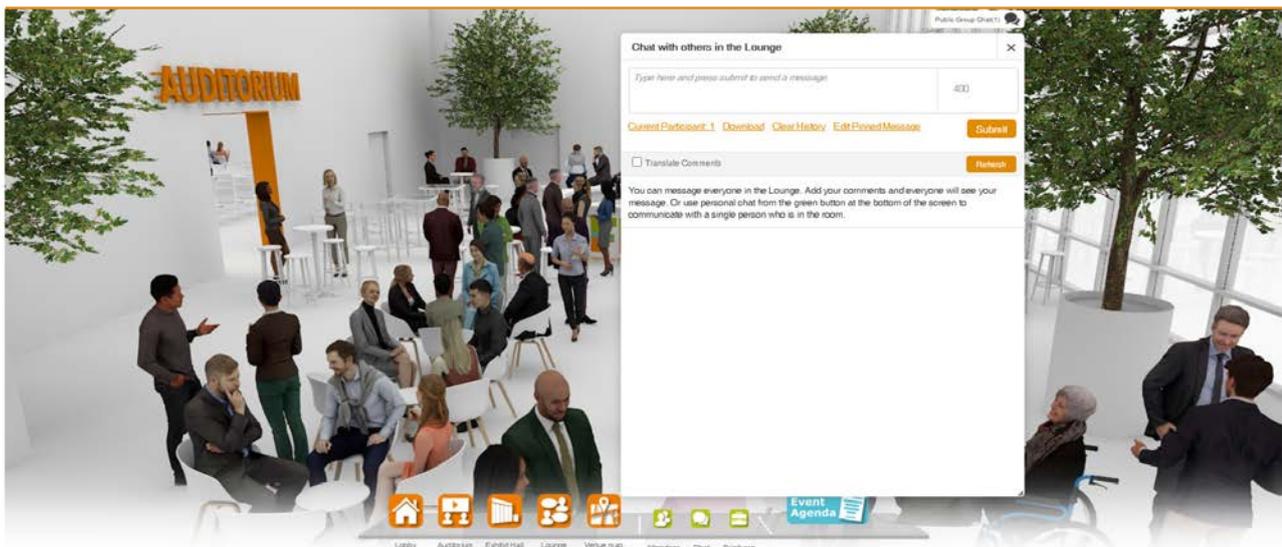


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The FFA2021 Month of March was organised under the auspices of the Portuguese Presidency at the Council of the European Union.

# THE FFA2021 VIRTUAL VENUE





UN Secretary-General Antonio GUTERRES, Mark TITTERINGTON, Stephen SACKUR



QU Dongyu, Stephen SACKUR

**SESSION 1**

**Renewing leadership within the food system**

The first session of the FFA2021 Annual Conference featured an opening speech from Janez POTOČNIK, Chair FFA2021 and Chairman RISE Foundation; and an intervention by QU Dongyu, Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). It focused on leadership in the food system, but also touched upon climate resilience, producing healthy food for all at scale; lessons from the pandemic; and set out the role and intentions of the UN Food Systems Summit in September 2021.

TERRES, stressing the urgency to transform food systems but not leave anyone behind in doing so. He welcomed the many contributions as valuable inputs into September's Food Systems Summit, and said that the EU's Green Deal and Farm to Fork Strategy are important parts of the picture.

The letter was followed by a keynote address from QU Dongyu, who spelled out the scale of global hunger and malnutrition. Over three billion people cannot afford the cheapest healthy diet. The number of hungry people increased by ten million in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic is estimated to have already added another 132 million.

The Director-General shared China's own experience in eradicating hunger and starvation, which in 1960 affected 80% of the population. It relied on an enabling policy to support food production and agricultural development; strong political commitment to provide practical help for small farmers; innovation to improve

land use; investment for the necessary infrastructure; and training for farmers to use technology and market information.

QU Dongyu stated that our current consumption patterns and agri-food systems are generating a severe human, economic and environmental cost stating, "we urgently need to do things differently and act holistically." He went on to say that innovation is necessary; and in clarifying this, noted, "innovation is not only technological innovation. We need policy innovation, behavioural change, and business model change" outlining the need for renewing all aspects of our food system from farm to fork and everything between.

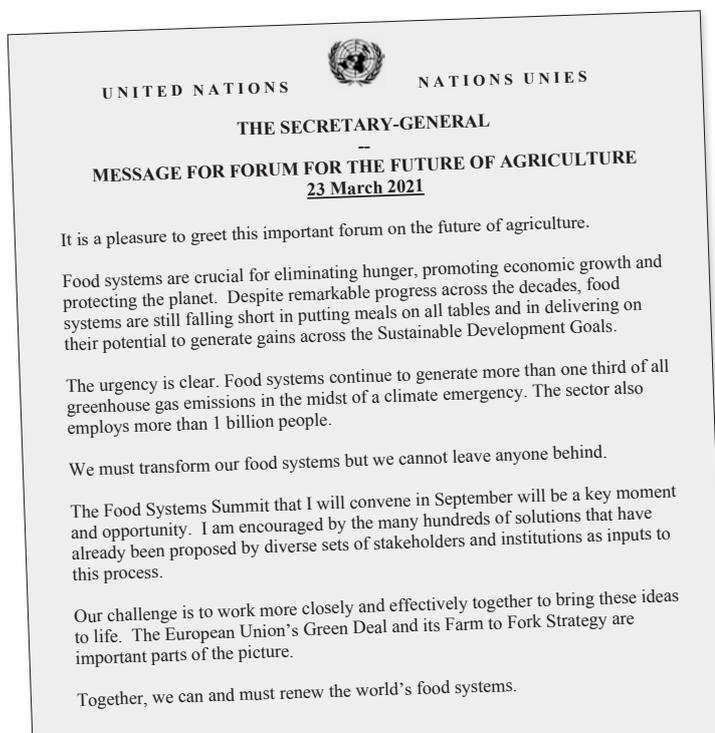
The Director General explained that the FAO uses four "accelerators" to advance its agenda for better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life; where no one is left behind. While QU Dongyu acknowledged that our global agro-food systems have vulnerabilities and weak points, which are failing to provide food for all, he added: "it also provides us the opportunity to reevaluate how we address the root causes of hunger", and build a more resilient food system.

The discussion with FFA2021 Moderator, Stephen SACKUR, was both insightful and inspirational with the conversation concluding on a serious, yet poetic note: "without the food, without the human" underscoring the importance of nutrition and agro-food systems as a human right and a building block for society.

The Director General left a clear takeaway message about transforming our food system: "Let's be a dreamer and a doer at the same time. Let's walk the talk."

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Before the first speaker connected, the conference organisers shared a letter from UN Secretary-General António GU-



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Marion JANSEN, Erik FYRWALD, Benedikt BÖSEL, Carina MILLSTONE, Stephen SACKUR

## SESSION 2

### Making the food system climate resilient

The second session of the FFA2021 Annual Conference featured speeches from Catherine BERTINI, World Food Prize Laureate & Distinguished Fellow, Chicago Council on Global Affairs; and the young and inspirational climate justice activist, Vanessa NAKATE, alongside an energetic moderated panel discussion.

In her keynote address, Catherine BERTINI warned that new techniques or technology were not sufficient to create sustainable food systems. "Leadership, and effective leadership, is critical."

The World Food Prize Laureate stressed that leadership must be at every level: family, community, region, country, and global. It requires an ability to "juggle a complicated morass of interlocking ecosystems with competing priorities". We must move beyond an agricultural system "designed for maximum output of a few high profit crops" to one that addresses the sustainability, availability, equity, nutrition, and health benefits of the food grown and consumed. By empowering, and listening to people, particularly women, a global effort can bring system change and turn current problems "into achievable opportunities within our lifetime".

In the panel discussion, Benedikt BÖSEL, CEO & Founder, Gut&Bösel, emphasised that only farmers can make the changes to create sustainable food systems. "The question is not what farmers can do for us

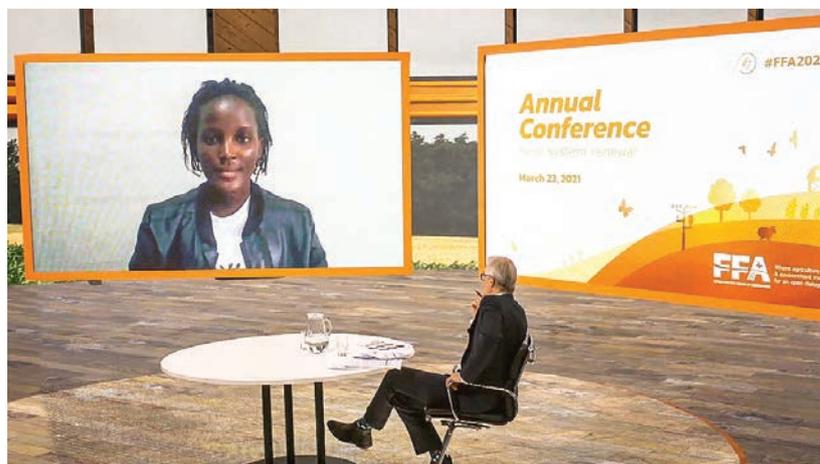
in terms of health, biodiversity and climate change, but what can we do for farmers?" He was critical of large corporations shaping agriculture to maximise profits, calling for "a step back to look at our values". He identified the need for true cost accounting to monetise the impact of production on ecosystems, health, and rural communities, and research and education to help farmers work with nature.

Marion JANSEN, Director of the Trade and Agriculture Directorate, OECD, set out three challenges: guaranteeing income to farmers; making agriculture environmentally sustainable; and, providing sufficient quality nutrition to a growing population. This requires a complex policy mix with the right incentives for producers, distributors, and consumers. The billions of dollars of subsidies given to agriculture are "a lose/lose situation". They distort competition and do not raise farmers' incomes or support the environment. The Director stressed that making food systems climate resilient is not a North/South issue. "This is a global and inter-generational problem. We have to tackle it now".

Carina MILLSTONE, Executive Director, Feedback Global, argued that a few multinational corporations, with profit as their guiding principle, are the root cause of unsustainable food systems. "That precludes food systems being geared towards other goals: better nutrition, ecological renewal, and a stable climate". She called for transition "to a post-capitalist, post-corporate economic system", with an end to industrial meat production, describing this "as incompatible with a sustainable world as coal extraction". She questioned the emphasis on innovation, pointing out major climate gains could be made by reducing meat consumption and halving food waste.

Erik FYRWALD, Chief Executive Officer, Syngenta Group, stressed that it requires massive innovation to solve the major challenges facing the world. He believes private enterprise, together with NGOs and governments, all need to work together to help farmers be the solution to climate change. He highlighted how Syngenta believes in regenerative agriculture and the development of farming practices to help solve climate change whilst feeding the world. He suggested the company, farmers, and critics of big corporations had much in common. All want sustainable farming, lower greenhouse emissions, carbon neutral agriculture, protection for forests and biodiversity, and reduced use of pesticides.

In a powerful special address, Vanessa NAKATE, a young climate justice activist in Uganda, spoke of the realities of climate change in Africa, where extreme weather patterns are wrecking people's livelihoods. She insisted "the climate crisis is a food crisis and the food crisis is a humanitarian crisis. There is no climate justice without ensuring there is food justice". Calling for an end to investment in fossil fuels, she told participants: "We cannot eat coal and we cannot drink oil."



Vanessa NAKATE, Stephen SACKUR



Brent LOKEN, Lawrence HADDAD, Berry MARTTIN, Dr. Shenggen FAN, Mai THIN YU MON

## SESSION 3

## Healthy food for all at scale

The afternoon opened with a video summary of the Food4Future Hackathon organised by Rabobank in conjunction with the FFA2021, the United Nations, and the Young Friends of the Countryside. It showed a group of next generation leaders discussing how to renew the food system to benefit society and the health of our planet.

Before the panel discussion opened, moderator Stephen SACKUR announced that Mai THIN YU MON, Indigenous Peoples Rights Activist, would unfortunately not be able to join the panel due to the ongoing military situation in Myanmar.

During the discussion, Brent LOKEN, Global Food Lead Scientist, WWF, pointed to the need to tackle health and environmental concerns in a joint effort. Addressing one at a time, as may appear to be the case now, could aggravate problems in the other. Similarly, he supported the need for local, national and globalised food systems. *“Every single type of system is needed. We shouldn’t say industrial agriculture is automatically bad and local is good. It is not that simple.”* It was also remarked that currently marketing campaigns are targeting youths in their promotion of junk food; however, Brent LOKEN likewise noted that *“it’s really*

*good to see the youth push back and say enough is enough...We want healthy food choices”.*

Berry MARTTIN, Member of the Managing Board, Rabobank Group, called for *“robust value chains, responsible people coming together, and looking at what is the right solution for each region”*. The bank is reassessing its investment portfolio as it discusses with clients the moves they are making towards a sustainable food system. Berry MARTTIN is looking to the UN Food Systems Summit to agree on an overall framework for future food production. This must include the true costs involved, especially carbon sequestration and water quality, which account for some 80% of the environmental impact, and the social consequences, particularly in certain parts of the world.

Lawrence HADDAD, Executive Director, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), called on businesses, governments and consumers to be more active and more blatant in their actions for genuine change. *“Where is the Extinction Rebellion around healthy and unhealthy food?”* he asked. Governments must lead since *“government action is not a cure all, but government inaction is a kill all”*. He challenged governments to *“be much more courageous and much more accountable for their actions”*. Using carrots and sticks, they should be tougher on businesses that behave badly and use incentives to encourage good practices.

Dr. Shenggen FAN, Chair Professor and Dean, Academy of Global Food Economics and Policy, China Agricultural Univer-

sity, presented some of China’s ambitious goals: carbon neutrality by 2060 and Healthy China 2030 with ten individual strategies to move from vision to action. New 2021 nutrition guidelines will advise people on healthy and sustainable diets for themselves and society. Alongside government direction, he suggested society as a whole *“will make sure big private companies will be responsible for what they are doing in terms of citizens’ health and nutrition”*.

There was strong recognition on the panel of the commitment of young people in this debate and of their ability, as future voters and consumers, to affect change. There was also consensus for greater attention to be paid to the interests and experience of indigenous peoples.

Asked for one concrete policy to deliver healthy food at scale, the panellists identified the following: reform agricultural subsidies to support production of nutritious, healthy, sustainable food (S.FAN); make carbon tradeable at the Chicago Board of Trade so it has a price (B.MARTTIN); change diets to focus on less meat (B.LOKEN); and create an investment fund to help food sector SMEs, particularly in Africa (L.HADDAD).

Singer, songwriter and climate activist Eva KERETIC ended the session. She explained in word and song the personal journey from her comfort zone to being a passionate advocate for sustainable food reform, with her current vision for a vertical and biotech farming campus in Hamburg.

## SESSION 4

## Learnings from COVID to build the food system

During a session to discuss lessons from the pandemic, David NABARRO, Strategic Director, 4SD and Special Envoy on COVID-19 for the World Health Organization, explained how the global COVID-19 pandemic had exposed three vulnerabilities in food systems.

Restrictions on movement had increased poverty as the poor, in particular, found it harder to earn money. This meant many could not buy food and school closures deprived children of essential midday meals. Farmers have been unable to sell their produce as traditional outlets are closed. Supply chains, particularly long ones, have been severely disrupted.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues and preparations advance for the UN Food Systems Summit, Dr Nabarro admitted he had been concerned about a potential clash between a focus on food

and focus on health. However, listening to government ministers had convinced him *“they see the challenges posed by COVID-19 and the issues around functioning of food systems to be densely inter-related”*. In each case it is the poor who suffer the most and should be the priority target for help. The world had not applied this lesson to the pandemic; thus failing to take a global approach and sharing the limited amount of vaccines according to those most in need. The result has been *“a huge race to try and get vaccines by a small number of countries and large inequity”*.

With food systems, the Special Envoy believes there is greater understanding of the interconnectedness that *“we are all part of one big family and the impact of food production systems, particularly negative impacts, aren’t just local, they can expand to be global”*. The climate change impact of food affects the whole world. He rejected the suggestion that food production must increase to eradicate the hunger which up to 800 million people suffer daily. More than enough food is already being produced, with one third disappearing in waste. *“Simply putting more food into the system will not necessarily increase their ability to eat.”*

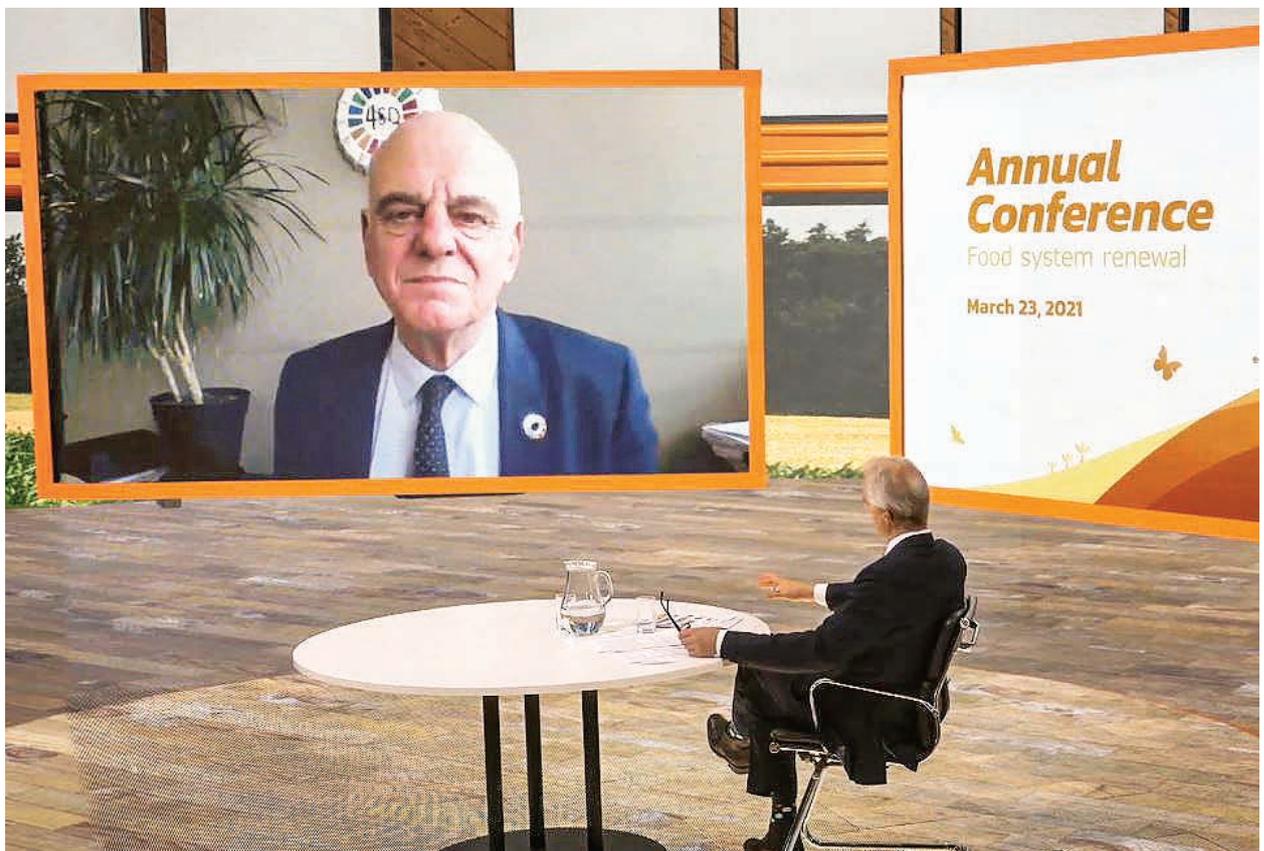
Analysis of hunger shows that often it is the result of conflict or climate change

and requires locally specific action to tackle the underlying causes. In contrast, the broader question of food production systems and their impact on the planet, the environment and the atmosphere, should *“be looked at as a challenge in its own right and factored into all decisions about the future of food systems”*.

He called for ‘laser light’ focus on this system’s challenge to identify the reasons so many people go hungry and malnourished although there is plenty of food to go round. *“Let’s get the reasons out into the open. Let’s deal with them place by place rigorously,”* he urged, suggesting the results of today’s work would only become clear by 2030.

In this process, two lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic should be borne in mind. Equity is key and all the major issues for the future are interconnected. Failure to approach COVID-19 or global food security from a ‘one world perspective’ will perpetuate the huge differences in opportunities and wellbeing of people in different parts of the world.

*“You cannot deal with big threats like climate change or the destruction of nature in a world where access to precious resources is so unevenly distributed between different groups of people,”* he warned.



David NABARRO, Stephen SACKUR



Tom VILSACK, Mark TITTERINGTON

## SESSION 5

## Towards global food system renewal

The final session of the FFA2021 Annual Conference focused on the actions planned and foreseen by the US, EU, and UN in the movement towards renewal of the global food systems.

The session started with the US perspective as Tom VILSACK, United States Secretary of Agriculture, set out the BIDEN Administration's stance on renewing the global food system and five "doable" domestic farming priorities in a pre-recorded video. These include producing sufficient quantities of quality, safe, and accessible food; using economically and environmentally sustainable methods; ensuring open, transparent, rules-based and competitive markets; developing more resilient and equitable food systems; and working towards the BIDEN Administration's target of zero net emissions from agriculture by 2050.

Agriculture is an essential player in tackling climate change and stands to benefit from emerging opportunities such as new income streams through diversification; as well great leaps forward in improving soil and water quality on a global scale.

Secretary VILSACK identified a common vision heading into the UN Food Systems Summit. "We may have different ways to get to that goal, but I think it is a shared vision." This must be accompanied by an open, transparent, competitive, rules and science-based market.

The final 'Connecting EU-UN closing interview', brought together Frans TIMMER-

MANS, Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal, European Commission, and Agnes KALIBATA, UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for the 2021 Food Systems Summit & President of AGRA.

Special Envoy Agnes KALIBATA pointed out that "fixing the food system is part of fixing climate change". COVID-19 has "put some wind in our sails" by highlighting many of the vulnerabilities in existing food systems and nurturing understanding of global interdependence. The UN Food Systems Summit provides an opportunity for all players to come together and recognise existing failures. She called on the EU to use its experience and policies, such as the European Green Deal, to help the rest of the world and "to step forward and step up".

In reply, Executive Vice-President Frans TIMMERMANS urged the developed world to make available the climate mitigation and climate adaptation funding it has promised to developing countries, and to share with them its technological breakthroughs. This also requires a safe climate for incoming investment. He argued that any price increases from sustainable food production would be considerably lower than "the cost of non-action which is completely underestimated".

International trade and fiscal policy can help offset price rises. The biggest problem facing agriculture is not its carbon footprint, but the loss of biodiversity and the threat to one million species.

Agnes KALIBATA underlined the cultural importance of food and the need to educate consumers to appreciate the cost to the environment "every time you take a meal". The food summit is looking to reach billions of people to raise awareness as it places engagement and education at its heart.

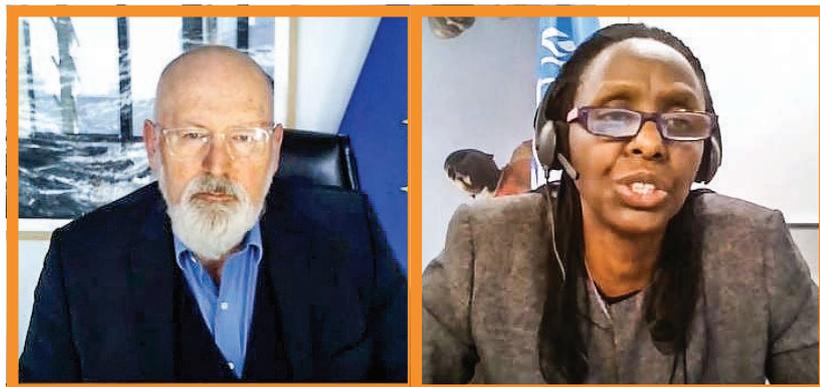
Both participants issued a clarion call for urgent reform of current food systems. In a stark warning, Frans TIMMERMANS said: "Let me be clear. If we don't change, our children will be fighting wars over water and food."

In his closing statement, Janez POTOČNIK, Chair FFA2021 and Chairman RISE Foundation, called for a moment of silence, before his concluding remarks, in memory of the 32 people who died and 300 injured in Brussels bombings on the day of the Forum for the Future of Agriculture 2016.

He identified some of the recurring themes from the discussions: the need for solidarity and inclusivity, recognition that it is people who change things; the young are strongly committed to more sustainable food, and a "one world perspective" is essential to ensure equity.

Four principles, he noted, apply equally to biodiversity and food system management: knowing the true impact of any decision; planning together to produce innovative policies; growing with nature; and valuing natural capital.

Looking back over the FFA2021 Month of March, which occurred in a novel and adaptive online format broadcast in 91 countries, the FFA2021 Chair said some of the novelties might be revisited in the future, and he looked forward to welcoming participants next year in person.



Frans TIMMERMANS, Agnes KALIBATA



Claire BURY, Jeroen CANDEL, Florence JEANTET, Samuel MASSE, Marco PIERANI, Charlotte SMITH

## Farm to Fork Strategy: building a sustainable EU Food system framework and sharing responsibility equally

The Farm to Fork Strategy aims to shape the way farming in Europe is performed to respond to the societal and environmental expectations of how our food should be produced into the future. But the question remains, is the current Farm to Fork Strategy proposal going to succeed to bridge the gap between consumers and farmers, in order to achieve genuine change? This was just one of many questions addressed at the first event of the FFA2021 Policy Week.

After an introduction by FFA2021 Chair and RISE Foundation Chairman, Janez POTOČNIK; and FFA2021 Senior Advisor, Mark TITTERINGTON; opened the session by stressing that food system transformation is an essential part of the European Green Deal; with the future economic development of the EU and the



Maria DO CÉU ANTUNES

global economy dependent on how we preserves our natural capital.

Former EU Commissioner for the Environment Janez POTOČNIK also noted how energy and climate interests had worked together to design an effective response to climate change and energy transition. Implementing the Farm to Fork Strategy will require an equally wide-ranging partnership and mutual trust across the food chain for a systemic transformation.

Claire BURY, Deputy Director-General, DG Health and Food Safety, European Commission, presented the aims, content and economic dimension of the Farm to Fork Strategy. The COVID-19 pandemic has made this even more urgent, showing the fragility of European food systems and the clear cracks in delivering food security.

Roman LESHCHENKO, Ukraine's Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food, told FFA2021 that his country's government strongly supports the European Green Deal and environmentally friendly production. The minister was pleased to share that Ukraine's food strategy and food safety legislation are already largely in line with European requirements.

Jeroen CANDEL, Assistant Professor at Wageningen University, identified the key challenge to creating a sustainable food system as "translating this global notion of food system sustainability into concrete targets". He pointed to the need to move from production volume goals to high quality, nutritious food production; and to change pricing structures so the healthy sustainable choice is the most affordable for all in society.

Florence JEANTET, Managing Director, One Planet Business for Biodiversity (OP2B), explained that many companies are already reinventing their food supply chains and factoring in biodiversity and

new specifications. She emphasised the need for "transparency of communication on where a product comes from and its environmental impact" to ensure trust throughout the food chain.

Samuel MASSE, organic winegrower, President of the European young farmers' organisation, CEJA, confirmed that members "totally welcome the ambition of the Green Deal". However, he called for clearer measures saying the public and policymakers "must understand what our farmers are doing before we force them to change their ways or insist they do more", reflecting on the voluntary and mandatory compliances embedded in the Farm to Fork Strategy. He highlighted the importance of encouraging a new generation of farmers for a new generation of consumers by ensuring they secure sustainable income streams and access to the tools of production.

Marco PIERANI, Director of Public Affairs and Media Relations at Euroconsumers, acknowledged that consumers favour moves to a more sustainable food system stating "we must democratise the sustainable choices". But they need a clear signal on the price of sustainable food and reliable information to make informed choices.

Maria DO CÉU ANTUNES, Portugal's Minister of Agriculture, brought the session to a conclusion by spelling out her country's main agricultural priorities during its current six-month EU presidency. She confirmed her government is looking to secure agreement on the new CAP reforms by the Spring, so the new policy can be rolled out in 2023. "Now is the time to deliver a fairer, greener, and digital Europe" she concluded.

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Janusz WOJCIECHOWSKI, Frédéric LAMBERT, Allan BUCKWELL, Elsi KATAINEN, Monika NEBESKÁ, Jeremy WATES, Charlotte SMITH

## Will the European Common Agricultural Policy deliver for society?

The new CAP comes during a pandemic and with high expectations; promising greater flexibility for Member States; delivering integration with the Green Deal and Farm to Fork; and ensuring sustainability for the European countryside. The question posed during the FFA2021 Policy Week event was whether these high expectations for the new CAP reform can genuinely deliver change for European society.

Opening the session, Janusz WOJCIECHOWSKI, EU Commissioner for Agriculture, stressed that the CAP is delivering for society. He pointed to its role in food security by supplying high quality and high volume, affordable sustainably produced food. The CAP has an essential role in protecting the environment, climate, biodiversity, and animal welfare for the entire EU; and with the European Rural Development Programmes implemented across the 27 Member States, it actively counters depopulation by supporting jobs and economic development in the rural areas.

Frédéric LAMBERT, representing the French Ministry of Agriculture, described France's preparations for the reform. He insisted that "the new CAP gives flexibility to Member States to adapt to local specificities" underscoring the importance of being able to adapt programmes to suit geographical conditions, but overall European ambition, particularly for the eco-schemes, should not be watered down.

In the panel discussion, Professor Allan BUCKWELL, RISE Foundation Research

Director, was pessimistic about the CAP reforms. He described the policy as locked into a "structure set up over two decades ago", failing to "deliver the environmentally public goods only farmers can supply or help rural diversification". He argued that greening and eco-schemes should be moved from the annual Pillar One payment structure to the multiannual Rural Development Programme. He concluded: "More change is going to be required and we need to be ready for the 2027 reform". A clear message to the Commissioner for Agriculture and other participants of the panel that many changes still need to occur before CAP reforms can be successful.

Elsi KATAINEN, MEP and Vice-Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, was more positive; but pointed out that the details of national policies would only be clear once EU policymakers have adopted the basic legal texts. She noted that the Green Deal targets focus on 2030, while those for the CAP on 2027. She rightly pointed out that both "the economic, social and environmental dimensions must be in balance" to achieve their objectives.

Monika NEBESKÁ, Chairwoman of the Board, Agricultural Cooperative Vřestary expressed concern at the impact of the CAP reform with its high ambitions and the absence of an impact assessment on the Czech Republic's strategy. The targets, she believes, "will lead to a significant drop in agricultural production, exports and farmers' incomes". This is thus leaving the CAP reforms as dangerous changes that will hurt Czech farmers and leave them more vulnerable to economic shocks and climate change effects.

Jeremy WATES, Secretary General of the European Environmental Bureau, criticised the CAP proposals and the current negotiations citing the need for a "robust methodology to track the climate impact". These reflect a "disconnect with the sci-

ence for climate change, biodiversity and pollution". In the long term, "the farming sector will be in the front line of the losers," he predicted.

Wrapping up the discussion, Commissioner WOJCIECHOWSKI emphasised: "Farmers are not the problem. We need to see them as part of the solution". Looking back over the FFA2021 Month of March, which occurred in a novel and adaptive online format broadcast in 91 countries, the FFA2021 Chair said some of the novelties might be revisited in the future, and he looked forward to welcoming participants next year in person.

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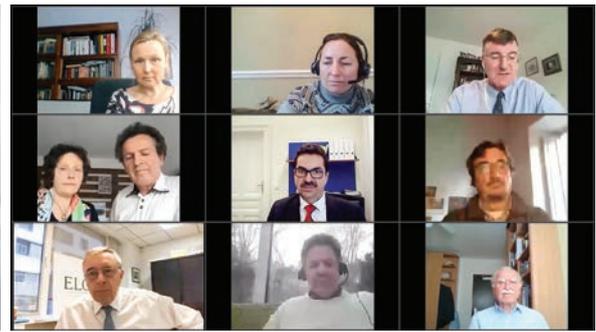
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Virginijus SINKEVIČIUS



Members of the jury, the winner and the recipient of the diploma of recognition

## Land and Soil Management Award 2021



The Land and Soil Management Award is annually granted to an outstanding project, which contributes to and acts as a role-model for soil protection from the viewpoint of agricultural practice. Soils are facing several threats, to which land management is at times a contributor. Resilience in food production and forestry is crucial for the future of humankind. This year, the jury received a large number of excellent proposals, amounting to a final total of 19 eligible proposals from nine European countries.

Virginijus SINKEVIČIUS, Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries announced this year's winner, Zvone ČERNELIČ, who was victorious for his outstanding proposal "Improving soil biodiversity and humus content for better soil fertility and climate change resilience of farms" - Biodynamic farm ČERNELIC, Slovenia. The achievements that convinced the jury were the combination of organic farming with technological innovations in the areas of irrigation, greenhouse culture, specialization, improvement of working conditions, improvement of soil fertility and soil functions, and biodiversity. A particular plus point of this application was that an area that had been severely affected by construction activities was successfully recultivated. More than 50 courses have been organized to teach other farmers the sustainable management

Pour plus d'informations : visitez le site web d'ELO [www.elo.org](http://www.elo.org) .

The FFA2021 Month of March also consisted of moderated panel discussions and dialogues during the "Policy Week". You can watch the replay of all 5 events on the Forum's website.



### Strengthening the transatlantic cooperation for research and innovation in the agri-food system

The Transatlantic Dialogue on the agri-food system was held in conjunction with the FFA's international partner, the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. It focused on existing and potential areas of collaboration on research and innovation between the European Union and the United States, particularly with respect to the digitalisation of food and agriculture, climate resilience, environmental protection, and healthy diets.

In addition to representatives from the E.U. and U.S. government/ legislative institutions, panelists also included stakeholders from industry agri-food and from civil society, who are already contributing to the transatlantic research and innovation agenda in this area.



### Forestry Management in Europe

There is a need for a new balanced and strengthened post-2020 EU Forest Strategy as it remains the main policy tool to integrate European forests and forestry into all other policy areas. Among the many questions considered over the course of the event dedicated to forestry management in Europe were the place that forestry and the forest-based sector in tackling climate change, as well as its place as a priority to the EU policymakers in this regard. It was considered that the role of forest managers and owners were in the continued transition to a greener and more sustainable economy must be of the highest priority in making genuine change from the bottom up.

# The FFA2021 Month of March consisted also of moderated panel discussions and dialogues during the “Solutions Week”.

From water use to plant-based proteins, from biodiversity to regenerative agriculture there is something for everyone and you can watch the sessions on demand at [www.forumforagriculture.com/ffa2021-videos](http://www.forumforagriculture.com/ffa2021-videos)

**SolutionsWeek** #FFA2021  
Virtual workshops

**Accounting for water: The present and future of nature-based approaches**  
Monday, March 8, 2021  
14:30 – 16:00 CET  
This event is hosted by **THE Coca-Cola COMPANY** and **The Nature Conservancy**

**SolutionsWeek** #FFA2021  
Virtual workshops

**New tools and instruments for private land conservation in Europe**  
Monday, March 8, 2021  
16:00 – 17:30 CET  
This event is hosted by **ELO** and **The Nature Conservancy**

**SolutionsWeek** #FFA2021  
Virtual workshops

**Striking the right chord to support nature-friendly farming**  
Tuesday, March 9, 2021  
10:30 – 12:00 CET  
This event is hosted by **WWF** with support from the **EUROPEAN UNION**

**SolutionsWeek** #FFA2021  
Virtual workshops

**Sustainable solutions from Syngenta**  
Tuesday, March 9, 2021  
14:00 – 15:30 CET  
This event is hosted by **syngenta**

**SolutionsWeek** #FFA2021  
Virtual workshops

**Racing to scale regenerative farming**  
Wednesday, March 10, 2021  
10:30 – 12:00 CET  
This event is hosted by **SYSTEMIQ**

**SolutionsWeek** #FFA2021  
Virtual workshops

**Fostering a sustainable environment for EU plant-based proteins**  
Wednesday, March 10, 2021  
14:00 – 15:30 CET  
This event is hosted by **Cargill**

**SolutionsWeek** #FFA2021  
Virtual workshops

**RISE: A conversation on the future of European soil**  
Thursday, March 11, 2021  
10:30–12:00 CET  
This event is hosted by **RISE**

**SolutionsWeek** #FFA2021  
Virtual workshops

**Carbon Farming: linking agriculture with climate and biodiversity goals**  
Thursday, March 11, 2021  
15:00 – 16:30 CET  
This event is hosted by **indigo** and **ELO**



# FFA2021: Food System Renewal

*The Editorial team would like to convey special thanks to Niall CURLEY, Robert de GRAEFF, Matthew HENRY, Alberto HERMOSEL, Caroline MAHR and Rory WATSON for their contribution to this special "CountrySide Magazine" edition.*

The annual Forum for the Future of Agriculture was founded by the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) and Syngenta; they were joined by Cargill, WWF Europe, The Nature Conservancy, Thought for Food as strategic partners, and has the support of the Portuguese Presidency at the Council of the European Union.

The FFA2021 brings together a wide and diverse range of stakeholders to inspire new thinking on how European and global agriculture needs to respond to the major challenges of delivering both food and environmental security.

Created in 2008 in response to the belief that many of Europe's agricultural and environmental policies focused on solving yesterday's problems such as over-production, FFA2021 instead deals with the challenges and market opportunities of the future.

These include: feeding a growing world population, demands for a higher quality diet, developing renewable sources of energy and changing weather patterns. With limited arable land available globally, there is a need to maximize production on existing cultivated land, but to do so in a sustainable manner while protecting and expanding biodiversity and the climate.

The theme of the Forum for the Future of Agriculture's Month of March events was 'Food System Renewal' and included open discussions on topics ranging from water management to the Farm to Fork policy, climate change resilience, and nature positive farming.

The discussions in Brussels will continue during the FFA2021 regional events, taking place in Lisbon and online on Wednesday May 26 and in France in December.

The FFA2021 Team

The FFA2021 Team would like to thank the Founding and Strategic partners of the *Forum for the Future of Agriculture* for their strong commitment. It enables the Forum to remain the premier meeting place for an open dialogue on global food systems.

**Founding partners**



**Strategic partners**



**Supported by**



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