



## Food Systems for New Realities

Call for Abstracts – Agri4D 2021 Sept 28-30

*location:* online / virtual

*organised by:* the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU)  
and the Swedish International Agriculture Network Initiative (SIANI)

### *purpose of the conference*

To progress towards sustainable and just food systems, Agri4D will bring together researchers, policy makers and practitioners to engage actively with the challenges of food systems. The conference aims to be a platform to take stock of the current knowledge frontier, connect science to policymaking and practice, and spark new collaborations.

The purpose of the conference Agri4D is to provide a creative space for researchers, practitioners and policy makers to touch-base on the state of food systems in the world – to identify what is working and where the gaps are.

### *background*

More than 800 million people in the world are undernourished, despite the growing scientific knowledge and decades of international aid. Natural resource conflicts, climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic rapidly push more people into poverty and hunger. At the same time, obesity is an increasing health problem in almost all countries in the world. While the majority of existing food systems are drivers of biodiversity loss, greenhouse gas emissions and water insecurity, they also provide livelihoods to a majority of people.

Just and resilient food systems can contribute to all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). At this year's Agri4D conference, we ask the participants to specifically address the core question: **'How can we shape sustainable and just food systems resilient to the new realities of changing climates, ongoing transformations in food production, supply and demand, health threats and pandemics?'**

### *the Agri4D platform*

The objective of the conference is to present and integrate knowledge about potential solutions and outcomes, while identifying how those solutions might be incentivised and how, together, they can enable the social and economic transformations necessary to advance and achieve the goal of food and nutrition security for all.

With the ongoing pandemic, we will hold the conference online enabling a wide international participation creating a great potential for open and dynamic conversations. We divide the three days conference into 6 topics.

The conference is a learning opportunity for all involved to raise awareness based on scientific knowledge.

## **Conference topics**

### **Topic 1 – Justice in Food Governance**

This topic calls for work on social and environmental justice in food systems with special attention to questions of gender, social marginalization and intersectionality. Through a discussion of justice within food systems, we aim at exploring approaches for the elimination of poverty. We discuss the challenges of justice in regard to full and productive employment, socio-economic equality and decent work for all actors. We invite thinking on emerging questions, case studies and solutions related to challenges along the food value chain, to reduce risks for the world's poorest, enable entrepreneurship and address inequalities in distribution and access to water, land and other resources. With the overarching aim of re-conceptualizing development to ensure justice in food systems, we ask :

- How can we close the gap between research, policy and (development) practice on just food systems, e.g. in production, irrigation, market access, access to resources?
- What development approaches can promote more just policies, programs and practices for more sustainable agrarian livelihoods?
- How can we address ethical food production for improved livelihoods with close attention to class, gender, caste, age and other crosscutting dimensions of power and in light of increasing outmigration from agricultural communities?
- How can agricultural and environmental organisations and government agencies become more socially inclusive and gender-transformative?

### **Topic 2 – Towards Improved Food and Nutrition Security from Smallholder-inclusive Food Systems**

This topic focuses on the role for smallholders within inclusive food systems that will enable rural and urban, both producers and consumers, food and nutrition security. The track relates to a number of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, not least Goal 12 on responsible consumption and production, and Goal 2 on how to achieve food and nutrition security, and sustainable agricultural systems. Realisation of these goals would mean that all people at all times have access to sufficient quantities of affordable, safe and nutritious food products. Achieving this thus entails working to make safe and healthy nutritious food more affordable and available as part of a socially, environmentally and economically sustainable agriculture, and working to reduce unequal access to such food. As noted by the UN, between 40–85% of all food producers in developing regions is produced by small-scale farmers (UN 2021).

There is tremendous potential for smallholders to benefit from the current changes occurring within rural-urban food systems as greater proportions of developing country populations shift to being net purchasers of food, and as rural populations increasingly consolidate into new small towns, and as existing urban populations grow. There are also high risks and many barriers, particularly in the face of changing land markets, declining plot sizes, rising agribusiness-Big Food industry interactions and changing dietary needs and preferences, not to mention changing climatic and environmental conditions, or disruptive pandemic health threats.

Our core focus with this topic is to explore and showcase research, interventions and perspectives that indicate how smallholder-inclusive and sustainable food systems can contribute to urban and rural food and nutrition security?

We call for papers that can contribute one or more of the following:

- showcase examples of how smallholders have been successfully contributing to food and nutrition security in particular rural areas, or in specific urban contexts, of the Global South.
- outline success stories for smallholder farmer householders' own food security, dietary diversity or nutritional outcomes.
- provide an example(s) of where smallholder farmers have successfully contributed to nutritious and sustainable urban-rural interactions (perhaps for a specific nutritious, or high-value food product)
- outline failed initiatives by highlighting the barriers experienced to smallholder inclusion

We seek to balance perspectives from different stakeholders, including farmers and other agri-food system actors, researchers, local governments or policymaker perspectives.

The format will allow for a 10-min presentation, followed by 5-minutes for questions. Each presenter will be asked to end their presentation with one slide that highlights the key factors they note from their experience as necessary for smallholders to sustainably contribute to food and nutrition security. There will be 20-minutes for plenary debate among participants at the end of the session.

#### *reference*

UN (2021) Sustainable Development Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

Available: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal2> Accessed 22 March 2021.

### **Topic 3 – Agroecology**

As a scientific discipline, Agroecology applies a systems perspective on studies of ecology and sustainability of food systems. This topic focuses on economic, environmental and social sustainability of food production. The topic will cover resource use and ecological interactions in agriculture as well as interactions between different actors in the food system, notably consumers and producers.

### **Topic 4 – Closing the loop – making food systems circular**

Today, we only consume about two thirds of the produced food. The remaining food is wasted on its way to the consumer, mainly in low income countries. By changes in management the generation of waste can be decreased, still waste will always be generated and require management. This topic is open for contributions looking closer into management for decreasing the waste generation and into technologies utilizing the resources in the waste for new products, like insect protein or fertilizers, including the drivers for change in the management from linear to circular systems.

## **Topic 5 – Innovation & Innovative Approaches**

Technical, social and organisational innovations enable development towards the Agenda 2030 goals. How can innovative approaches optimise environmental resource use in food production, processing and distribution, thereby reducing biodiversity loss, pollution, water use, soil degradation and greenhouse gas emissions? How does research and evidence-based knowledge and innovation contribute to development of food systems, for the benefit of the most vulnerable? What is the role and responsibility of academics vis-à-vis other partners and actors? How harness local capacities and skills and create innovation systems?

## **Topic 6 – Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress**

We welcome abstracts dealing with research looking at making food systems more resilient and better prepared for future shocks and stressors. These stressors can be climate change, energy demand, building up the food system Post-pandemic, access and management of water. We also welcome abstracts dealing with financial issues and investment such as effects on agriculture and food production related to trade agreements, investments and streams of money, insurance strategies etc. How do we transform the food system to produce more by using less?

What parts of the food system can be changed? And how will these changes affect overall resiliency of these systems? How can local food production systems become less vulnerable? For example, by building capacity among small-scale farmers to use more resistant and robust methods to face future heat and water scarcity.

**Submission Deadline: 31 May, 2021**

### **Structure of Abstracts Submissions**

Abstracts will only be selected if they clearly address the theme of the announced topics and propose solutions.

Abstracts should:

- be less than 250 words in length
- not use abbreviations or cite references
- include the name, affiliation, title and email address of the author(s)

Abstracts should be submitted electronically at this address:

<https://agri4d2021.exordo.com/>

### **Abstract acceptance**

Email notification of acceptance/rejection will be sent to corresponding authors by **18 June, 2021**.

### **Publication**

Accepted abstracts will be incorporated into the Conference Programme and distributed to all registrants. They will also be available for download in a PDF document. Presentations will be available post-conference as downloads from the conference website.

Visit <https://www.slu.se/agri4d> or contact [agri4d@slu.se](mailto:agri4d@slu.se) for further details and updates.