

75. CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE AND EFFICIENT USE OF WATER RESOURCES IN BELGIUM

ACTION AREA	CLIMATE RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT PATHWAYS
SOLUTION CLUSTER	CLIMATE ADAPTATION, MITIGATION & RESILIENCE
THEMATIC AREA	INNOVATION ON CLIMATE MITIGATION
SUBMITTED BY	FLEMISH YOUNG FARMERS ASSOCIATION

WHAT ARE THE KEY THEMES THAT NEED TO BE CONSIDERED TO ADDRESS FOOD INSECURITY AND ENHANCE FOOD SYSTEMS RESILIENCY?

Inclusiveness: Food systems differ based on geography. Therefore, there cannot be a one-size-fits-for-all approach because circumstances and production realities differ from continent to continent and region to region. The approach should be based on common ground and inclusiveness, where no one will be left behind. All farmers, including women and young farmers deserve to be empowered and provided with the same resources in terms of i.e. access to land, inputs, finance, education, to maximize their contribution towards more resilient food systems, as well as to prepare the future farmers' leadership.

Transparency: Transparency of information is required at all levels from global to grassroots, as well as in feeding the international discussion with the farm level experiences and best practices that are ready for scaling up and replication in other countries. The flow of information must be timely and effective to allow all actors to make proper decisions and take robust actions for the benefit of the world farmers and the whole population. The digitalization has to be improved as an instrument of knowledge and transparency of the chain and at the same time the property of data has to be considered a priority for farmers. Transparent and trustful relationships between farmers and consumers (the first and final stage of the food value chain, where open traceability is available) must be promoted. The farmers' share of value added in the whole approach must be not only valorised but also restored.

Farmers' driven: Farmers are at the centre of food systems. Therefore, any policy-making process that has an impact on the farming sector at local, national, and international levels should involve them, through their organized structures. Representatives of farmers' organisations and cooperatives must therefore also be partners in the discussion and decisions on sustainable food systems and the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. This approach applies to decision-making processes and its implementation, monitoring and evaluation actions

Reference: WFO-Policy-Paper-on-Sustainable-Food-Systems_approved-by-the-WFO-2020-GA_EN.pdf (wfo-oma.org)

WHAT DO YOU THINK CONSTITUTES SOCIAL RESILIENCE, ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE AND ECONOMIC RESILIENCE IN FOOD SYSTEMS? WHAT ARE THE CROSS-CUTTING SOLUTIONS BETWEEN ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE?

Ensuring social, environmental and economic resilience in food systems means recognizing the multidimensional nature of the farming activity replacing the old vision of agriculture as a simple "provider of raw material". Farmers ensure food security providing quality food; they are at the forefront of combating climate change; they preserve and promote biodiversity; they are committed to nurture

farmer-driven research and innovation. This translates into social resilience, environmental resilience and economic resilience in food systems.

Therefore, if we aim to align and lay the foundations for the necessary shift towards Sustainable Food Systems, this role has to be emphasised and mostly valorised, putting farmers at the centre of the transition towards sustainability.

Within the World Farmers' Organisation, awareness of the centrality of agriculture and the responsibility this entails for sustainable food systems is clear and has been formalised with the adoption, in June 2020, of a policy document marking The Farmers' Route to Sustainable Food Systems" https://www.wfo-oma.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/WFO-Policy-Paper-on-Sustainable-Food-Systems_approved-by-the-WFO-2020-GA_EN.pdf

A route based on three guiding principles: inclusiveness, transparency and the centrality of farmers in every strategic process.

WFO proposes to focus future commitments on the following cross-cutting actions, with the central role of farmers in each of these actions:

- Involving the whole value chain
- Fighting climate change
- Structuring disaster risk management
- Attaining global nutrition security
- Enhancing Research and Innovation
- Protecting biodiversity
- Deploying investments and incentives
- Valuing the livestock sector's role
- Achieving food security
- Boosting the role of farmers' organisations and cooperatives
- Promoting inclusiveness: youth and women are key to succeed.

WHAT SOLUTIONS CAN WE PROPOSE TO ADDRESS FOOD INSECURITY AND PREVENT FUTURE SOURCES OF CONFLICT, MANAGE TENSIONS AND OTHER STRESSES IN FOOD SYSTEMS ?

One example can be found in Flanders. Drought in Flanders has become a major challenge for the agricultural sector.

Among the solutions identified and adopted stand out the reuse of water and precision irrigation. Both are considered to be climate smart agriculture practices and make it possible to make efficient use of water resources and suffer less from the effects of drought.

More specifically, the first solution involves the reuse of water of a vegetable processing plant for the irrigation of the vegetables nearby through a smart tubing network. Another technique is precision irrigation that is used in the fruit sector and makes sure only the necessary water is being added to the tree, immediately at the roots.

Consequently, farmers' yields have become more stable, while using water efficiently.

WHAT IS THE POTENTIAL ACTION THAT COULD BE TAKEN?

Smart and efficient use of water resources.

WHO ARE THE MAIN ACTORS THAT WOULD PUT THIS ACTION INTO PLACE?

Policymakers (government), Private (businesses, etc.), Farmers, Farmers' Organization / Cooperatives, Scientists

WHERE ARE MAIN AREAS IN WHICH THIS SOLUTION WOULD MAKE CHANGES

- Food supply chains - Inputs
- Food supply chains - Production
- Food supply chains - Processing & Packaging
- Food environments - availability

WITHIN WHICH CATEGORY DOES THIS INTERVENTION MOST EASILY FALL?

- Food supply chains - Inputs
- Food supply chains - Production
- Food supply chains - Processing & Packaging
- Food environments - availability

IS THIS IDEA APPLICABLE TO A PARTICULAR GEOGRAPHY OR TYPE OF SETTING (E.G., SEMI-ARID AREAS, HIGHER- OR LOWER-INCOME COUNTRIES)?

The solutions described above were firstly implemented in Belgium by Groene Kring - The Flemish Young Farmers Association with the potential to be replicated in other contexts.

WHERE IS THIS IDEA COMING FROM?

The best practice was first shared in the context of the initiative "The Climakers", the Farmers Driven Climate Change Agenda conceived by the World Farmers' Organisation and carried out with different partners, with the aim to be assessed by science against climate smartness criteria and be scaled up and replicated in other Countries.

Reference: https://www.theclimakers.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/THE-CLIMAKERS_Stories-from-the-Field_COVID-19-Special-Edition-1.pdf

ANY OTHER COMMENTS, INCLUDING EVIDENCE OR ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT OR AGAINST.

The best practice was assessed against Climate smartness criteria by CCAFS, with the following results: "The practices presented in this experience are framed within the concept of Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA), since they meet two of its three pillars (adaptation and productivity increase). The practices related to the efficient use of water, such as the use of water recycling systems, high- efficiency irrigation systems, and localized irrigation, help increasing climate adaptation and productivity. On the other hand, the practice related to new forms of marketing enable farmers to increase their income.

Given that prolonged droughts are the most recurring climatic problem in Flanders, all those practices related to the capture, storage, and efficient use of water are relevant. Because of this, it is recommended to take into account the practices mentioned, as well as the use of improved, drought-resistant genetic materials."