

2-Day Conference on

Sustainability in Agriculture & Food Systems – Innovation, Indicators & Implementation

to be held on the **23rd - 24th May 2023**

at the [Stanhope Hotel Brussels](#), Rue due Commerce 9, 1000 Brussels

hosted by [Re-Imagine Europa](#).

Sponsored by OECD's Co-operative Research Programme: Sustainable Agricultural and Food Systems (CRP).

Synopsis

This Conference will compare established sustainability concepts, as well as **innovations** pertaining to new approaches to reach sustainability in agriculture across a range of countries and regions with a view to identifying **indicators** that can demonstrate the sustainability of a specific system or innovative application. This discussion takes place against a background of considerable uncertainty, in which the conflict in Ukraine has contributed to a crisis already driven by climate change and extreme weather conditions leading to a global food crisis. The **implementation** of any concept of sustainability must take such uncertainties into account. Against this background, the Conference will be a two-day event which will bring together policy-makers, academia, civil society organisations and industrial decision-makers to engage in a balanced discussion of these issues, and ultimately arrive at a set of outcomes and recommendations to be taken forward by the decision makers.

The first day of the Conference will focus on sustainability in agriculture in general. The main objective will be to identify indicators for sustainability thereby ensuring that, as far as possible, there can be a common understanding to the meaning of sustainability; such agreement on the most high-level indicators will be a requisite step for moving forward on the implementation of sustainable agricultural systems. At the same time, it is well recognised, that agricultural systems highly diverse in terms of (a) approaches to arable *versus* livestock farming, (b) selections of the range of crops that are planted, (c) the type of farming be it large-scale commercial enterprises or family farms, and (d) the underlying production standards and protocols, to name but a few of those diversity pointers that complexify the challenge to agree on a single, appropriate and acceptable concept of **Sustainability in Agriculture & Food Systems**. The assumption here is that diversity is the typical state of affairs; no one system of farming is superior to any other. The challenge, therefore, is to be able to consider sustainability across a diverse variety of agricultural systems. In terms of appropriate indicators for sustainability, both **environmental sustainability**, **economic sustainability** and **societal sustainability** are all themes that could and should be taken into account in balanced discussions on this topic. In the case of environmental sustainability, a reduction in the use of inputs such as pesticides can be important as well as improved carbon fixation and judicious land use. In the case of economic sustainability, the benefits to farmers such as higher yields and quality of a crop, economic benefits and ease of cultivation are important factors. Wider societal benefits would take into account the impact on rural communities. Social sustainability also includes people's eating habits, how they deal with food waste, and the level of meat consumption, while sustainable nutrition is strongly linked to sustainable production.

The Conference will consider these general indicators and determine the extent to which they can be elaborated in more detail, in order to implement sustainability systems in practice.

The second day of the conference will focus on **innovation in agriculture** and those **indicators suitable to assess whether a given innovation can be considered sustainable**; the specific example to be considered in detail will be that of **genome editing and the products obtained with this technology**. The reason for selecting this particular innovation is threefold: first, this it is a rapidly evolving technology which has been increasingly demonstrated to be of importance in developing new varieties and preserving the local varieties of agricultural crops and; second, many different countries and regions have begun to implement new regulatory approaches to genome editing or are considering doing so; and third, it seems likely that certain countries and regions have or will consider indicators for sustainability when considering applications of genome editing. Certainly, the EU seems set to follow such an approach. The aim of this second day, therefore, will be to take into account the experience of a number of countries and regions, as well as different opinion groups, in considering issues of sustainability and potential indicators.

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Day 1 - Tuesday, 23rd May 2023

Sustainability in Agriculture & Food Systems - Concepts & Indicators	
08:30 – 09:30	Registration
Welcome & Setting the Scene	
09:30 – 09:45	Welcome & Introduction by the Conference Chair <i>Dr Francois Pythoud,</i> <i>Former Ambassador of Switzerland to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</i>
09:45 – 10:00	Keynote Remarks <i>Mr Luis Planas,</i> <i>Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Spain</i>
10:00 – 10:15	Global & European Drivers for Sustainability in Agriculture <i>Mr Janusz Wojciechowski,</i> <i>Commissioner for Agriculture & Rural Development, European Commission</i>
10:15 – 10:30	Welcome and Presentation of the OECD's Co-operative Research Programme: Sustainable Agricultural and Food Systems (CRP). <i>Dr. Maria Santos</i> <i>Associate Professor of Earth System Science, University of Zürich, Switzerland</i>
10:30 – 11:00	The Roles of Resilience & Sustainability in Food Systems <i>Dr John Ingram,</i> <i>Associate Professor, Environmental Change Institute, University of Oxford, United Kingdom</i>
11:00-11:30	Coffee Break
Sustainability in Agriculture & Food Systems – The international Context	
11:30 – 11:45	Welcome & Introduction by the Session Chair <i>Mr Garlich von Essen</i> <i>Secretary General, Euroseeds, Belgium</i>
11:45 – 12:15	SDGs, Innovation and Agrifood Systems <i>Dr Stefanos Fotiou</i> <i>Director, Office of Sustainable Development Goals, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</i>
12:15 – 12:45	Global Initiatives in sustainable Agriculture & Food Systems <i>Mr Koen Deconinck,</i> <i>Policy Analyst, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</i>
12:45 – 13:15	The future of Europe's Agriculture & Food Systems <i>[TBC]</i> <i>Institute for European Environmental Policy, Belgium</i>
13:15 – 14:15	Lunch Break

<i>... Session continues:</i>	
Sustainability in Agriculture & Food Systems – The international Context	
14:15 – 14:45	Organic Farming & Agroecology in Food System Management <i>Professor Urs Niggli, Institute for Agroecology, Switzerland</i>
14:45 – 15:15	Sustainable Agriculture & Food Systems in Japan <i>[TBC]</i>
15:15 – 15:45	Sustainable Agriculture & Food Systems in the United States <i>[TBC]</i>
15:45 – 16:15	Concepts & Indicators to balance Environmental Sustainability and Nutritional Value <i>Professor Annemie Geeraerd Ameryckx, Faculty of Bioscience Engineering Department of Biosystems (BIOSYST), University of Leuven, Belgium</i>
16:15 – 16:45	Coffee Break
Discussion & Wrap-Up of the Day	
16:45 – 17:45	Panel Discussion with previous Speakers, chaired by the Session-Chair Panellists: <i>Professor John Ingram, Dr Stefanos Fotiou, Mr Koen Deconinck, [IEEP-TBC], Professor Urs Niggli, [rep. Japan - TBC], [rep. USA - TBC], Professor Annemie Geeraerd Ameryckx</i> Chair: <i>Mr Garlich von Essen</i>
17:45 – 18:00	Closing of Day 1 <i>Ms Erika Staël von Holstein, Chief Executive Officer, Re-Imagine Europa, Belgium</i>
18:00 – 18:30	Walk to the European Parliament
18:30 – 22:00	Cocktail Reception & Dinner at the European Parliament <i>Mr Norbert Lins, Chair of Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, Member of the European Parliament</i>

Day 2 - Wednesday, 24th May 2023

Sustainability in Agriculture & Food Systems – Innovation & Implementation	
Welcome & Introduction to Day 2	
09:00 – 09:05	Welcome & Introduction by the Host Re-Imagine Europa <i>Ms Erika Staël von Holstein, Chief Executive Officer, Re-Imagine Europa (RIE), Belgium</i>
Sustainability & Genome Editing in Agriculture & Food Systems – Focus on Policy Considerations	
09:05 – 09:20	Welcome & Introduction by the Session Chair <i>Ms Irène Tolleret, Founder of the European Food Forum, Member of the European Parliament</i>
09:20 – 09:50	The European Commission Policy Proposal pertaining to Genome Editing (tbc) <i>Ms Irene Sacristán Sánchez, Head of Unit, DG SANTE, European Commission</i>
09:50 – 10:20	Genome Editing Rulemaking in Australia <i>Dr Peter Thygesen, Office of the Gene Technology Regulator, Australian Government, Australia</i>
10:20 – 10:50	Genome Editing in Agriculture and Food Systems in the United Kingdom <i>[TBC]</i>
10:50 – 11:20	Coffee Break

<i>... Session continues:</i>	
Sustainability & Genome Editing in Agriculture & Food Systems – Focus on Policy Considerations	
11:20 – 11:50	Innovations and Novel Food Systems in Ukraine & Europe Prof. Dr. Yuri Gleba <i>Honorary Director, Institute of Cell Biology & Genetic Engineering, Ukrainian Academy of Science</i>
Sustainability & Genome Editing in Agriculture & Food Systems – Focus on Ecological Considerations	
11:50 – 12:20	Genome Editing in Agriculture and Food Systems in the Netherlands Dr Gijs Kleter, <i>Senior Researcher, Wageningen Food Safety Research, The Netherlands</i>
12:20 – 12:50	The Role of Genome Editing in Agriculture & Food Systems in South and Southeast Asia Dr Andrew Roberts, <i>Agriculture & Food Systems Institute, USA</i>
12:50 – 13:20	Global Initiatives in Sustainable Agriculture & Food Systems Dr Sheila Ochugboju, <i>Executive Director, Alliance for Science</i>
13:20 – 14:20	Lunch Break
Sustainability & Genome Editing in Agriculture & Food Systems – Focus on Economic Considerations	
14:20 – 14:50	Economic Effects of Genome Editing - The Case of SMEs in Argentina Dr Martin Lema, <i>Adjunct Professor at the National University of Quilmes' School of Biotechnology, Argentina</i>
14:50 – 15:05	Genome Editing as a Tool of Sustainability in Agriculture & Food Systems Dr Oana Dima, <i>European Sustainable Agriculture Through Genome Editing (EU-SAGE), Belgium</i>
15:05 – 16:00	Panel Discussion with previous Speakers, chaired by the Session-Chair Panellists: Ms Irene Sacristán Sánchez, Dr Peter Thygesen, Professor Joyce Tait, Dr Yuri Gleba, Dr Gijs Kleter, Dr Andrew Roberts, Dr Sheila Ochugboju, Dr Martin Lema, Dr Oana Dima Chair: Ms Irène Tolleret
16:00 – 16:30	Coffee Break
Genome Editing Innovations in Agriculture & Food Systems in the wider socio-political Context	
16:30 – 16:45	Global interactive Map on Genome Editing Policies Dr Steffi Friedrichs, <i>Director, AcumenIST, Belgium, & Special Advisor on RIE's Planet Task Force, Belgium</i>
16:45 – 17:00	Narratives Approach to Societal Sentiments Professor Andrzej Nowak, <i>Professor of Psychology, University of Warsaw, Poland, & Chief Narrative Scientist at RIE, Belgium</i>
Wrap-Up of the Day & the Conference	
17:00 – 17:30	Conference Wrap-Up by the Conference Chair Dr Francois Pythoud
17:30 – 17:40	Conference Closing Remarks by the Host Ms Erika Staël von Holstein