

Global Conference on Sustainability in Agriculture & Food Systems

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Abstract of the intervention:

Sustainable Agriculture & Food Systems in the United States

Competing definitions of agricultural sustainability have economic, environmental, and social dimensions. USDA focuses on a) satisfying human needs, b) enhancing environmental quality, the resource base, and ecosystem services, and c) sustaining the economic viability of agriculture. Taken together, the intent is to enhance the quality of life for farmers, ranchers, forest managers, workers, and society as a whole.

The food environment concept provides a comprehensive framing to assess how the food system, intersects with the dimensions of sustainability. This includes the complex networks of inputs and outputs of agricultural and food production and consumption. The focus on sustainability and the food systems environment entails bringing together food environment research that acknowledges the interdependence of the food chain with the ecological/ environmental system, the health system, and social forces that reflect evolving societal norms and preferences. Additionally, the relationships of rural communities and their prosperity within the food environment must be considered. Embracing these interdependencies and better informing policymakers with data and evidence is the challenge for the future.