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Ressort: Wirtschaft und Finanzen

Sustainable solutions for the existing food systems

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Urbanization is among the key drivers of social change and has a considerable impact on food consumption. It also involves the correlation between rural and urban communities, leading usually to a separation between food producers and consumers.

A transformative approach and a shift towards more sustainable solutions are necessary for the existing food systems. Actually, in current urban culture, food may be the only

remaining connection to nature.

Global demand for food is expected to rise between 59% to 98% by 2050,

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/agec.12089> but at the same time, factors such as over-nutrition versus famine, unsustainable animal protein consumption, globalization, and urbanization, four capital sins of our epoch, have created an discrepancy in food systems where increasing production alone is not sufficient.

Considering the above, there is a vital need for a transformation to set free the enormous potential that improved food systems on land and sea can contribute as a key factor towards a sustainable future.

<http://www.fao.org/3/ap106e/ap106e.pdf>

Sustainability of food systems is a food system that supports food security, makes optimal use of natural and human resources, and respects biodiversity and ecosystems for present and future generations, and which is culturally acceptable and accessible, environmentally sound and economically fair and viable, and provides the consumer with nutritionally adequate, safe, healthy and affordable food. The sustainability of food systems is based on principles of organic agriculture: ecology, care, health, and fairness.

https://www.crcresearch.org/sites/default/files/u641/definition_of_a_sustainable_food_system.pdf

Sustainability means eco-functional intensification that is the use of natural resources and processes well-organized, improved nutrient recycling techniques and innovative agro-ecological methods for enhancing the diversity and the health of soils, crops and livestock. Moreover, cooperation and synergy between different components of eco-systems and food systems, with the aim of improving productivity and stability of agro-systems is emphasized.

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Food security and high quality nutrition standards for food in the future will require a transition from current linear food production systems, to sustainable, cyclical oriented systems that also respond to consumers demand for a diverse, healthy, safe and attractive diet. A substantial progress in the organization and management of food systems has to be supported by the development of new technologies.

Innovation will consequently be key to support food systems transformation and for this to operate within natural resource boundaries and diminish climate change impact.

By the way, system approaches based on agro-ecological principles are gaining appreciation as a trajectory to enable sustainable intensification of food production and consumption, not only for organic food production, but also in the conventional sector.

Food systems include activities for food production, processing and packaging, distribution and retail, as well as consumption. Various factors, like environmental and socio-economic drivers, influence the system and therefore, different approaches can increase the sustainability of a multifaceted problem.

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