

Science Policy Updates for All – Webinar Series

FROM CRISIS TO RESILIENCE: FARMER-LED INNOVATION AND GOVERNMENT READINESS TO PREVENT FUTURE FOOD CRISES

6 August 2026 – 13:30 CEST | Virtual

Food systems are increasingly destabilised by climate, economic and conflict shocks that interact and reinforce one another. The 2026 conflict in the Middle East and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz have disrupted the fossil-fuel, fertilizer and feedstock flows on which input-intensive agriculture depends, constraining fertilizer availability and threatening the inputs farmers need for the 2026 planting season. If the crisis persists beyond mid-2026, up to 45 million more people could face acute hunger, with the fullest effects on food prices and food insecurity likely to materialise in 2027 and beyond. The dominant policy response treats fertilizers as strategic food-security infrastructure that should be buffered, decarbonised where possible, and managed tightly.

Building on recent work involving leading academics in the field of food system science and the UN Food Systems Scientific Advisory Committee, a complementary and farmer-centred strategy is currently missing from the global discussion: **how can farmer-led adoption of diversified systems (e.g., legume rotations, agroforestry, biofertilizers and precision nutrient use) help to reduce dependency on synthetic inputs and lock in that structural change through simultaneous government action and funding?** Ideally then, both strategies advance in parallel, whereby securing and decarbonising fertilizer supply can buffer the shock and reducing input dependence lowers long-term exposure to the next one.

As pressing crises change farmers' cost-benefit calculus, it also opens a rare window of action in which lower-input and diversified practices become economically and politically attractive. However, without fast and sustained public-private financing and enabling policies, adoption stalls once input markets normalise, and any food system resilience gains fall back to pre-crisis levels. The long-term evidence for diversification of crop and farming system benefits is strong and suggests gains of up to 189% across profitability, biodiversity, pollination, soil quality and carbon sequestration, with win-win outcomes sustained for at least 25 years. The binding constraint is, therefore, not a shortage of solutions, but whether financial and policy support can convert farmer-led responses into structural change before the adoption window closes.

The webinar will examine three pathways for fast and simultaneous action: (1) **seed funding** to overcome the upfront cost barrier: rapid subsidy channels and risk-sharing, translational public-private partnerships, and farmer-led innovation financing, including by redirecting existing fertilizer subsidies; (2) **technology readiness**: low-cost environmental monitoring for precision input use, subsidies for bundled diversified systems rather than single inputs, and AI-driven decision support co-designed with farmers; and (3) **innovation policy that moves**

fast: leveraging UN Food Systems Summit national pathways, mission-oriented integrated frameworks, and innovation governance and policy labs.

Bringing together the authors of a recent expert opinion and invited experts, the discussion will connect this evidence to national food systems pathways and science-policy interfaces, and debate how governments can plan ahead of shocks, converting disruption into lasting structural resilience rather than treating each crisis as an unscheduled emergency.

Agenda

Time	Item
5 min	Opening remarks: Prof Jean-François Soussana , Vice-President for International Policy, INRAE (France) – SAC Chair
15 min	Presentation: Prof Thomas Cherico Wanger , Agroscope (Switzerland) & Academy of Global Food Economics and Policy, China Agricultural University
25 min	Impact panel • Dr Shakuntala Haraksingh Thilsted, Director, Nutrition, Health and Food Security Impact Area Platform, CGIAR – SAC Chair • Dr Mohamed Ait Kadi, Resident Member of Hassan II Academy of Sciences and Technology Morocco; Chair of the Scientific Committee of the Adaptation of Africa's Agriculture Initiative - SAC Member Prof Shenggen Fan, Dean, Academy of Global Food Economics and Policy, China Agricultural University; former Director General of IFPRI — SAC Co-chair
15 min	Q&A and closing

Zoom link: [Zoom link - From Crisis to Resilience: Farmer Led Innovation and Government Readiness to Prevent Future Food Crises](#)