

CountrySide

European Landowners' Organization

N° 204

MARCH-APRIL 2023 - BIMONTHLY - EN



**Forum for the
Future of Agriculture®**

Where agriculture & environment
meet for an open dialogue

Forum for the Future of Agriculture 2023: Fixing tomorrow, today

Jane GOODALL,
UN Messenger of Peace, Founder of the Jane GOODALL Institute

Contents

- 3 Closing speech of the month of March pronounced during the wrap-up session on March 28
- 6 In discussion with Dr. Jane GOODALL, DBE
- 7 Integrating climate mitigation and biodiversity regeneration in food system transformation
Can we afford not to pay the price of change in today's geo-political and economic reality?
- 8 How to build a more resilient & sustainable food and agriculture system: what have we learnt from the energy crisis that enables us to overcome the challenges and exploit the opportunities?
- 9 How can Nature Based Solutions drive resilience and sustainability in the AGRI-food system and how do we better align incentives to accelerate change?
- 10 How we can use technology to better serve biodiversity
- 11 How can we help better: food, migration, climate change?
- 12 How to set credits for ecosystem services on the international market?
- 14 Forum announces Call to Action in response to worsening climate and eco-system forecast
- 15 Winners of the Land and Soil Management Award edition 2022/2023



Editorial

Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, Secretary General

Listening at the Forum to the various speakers it came obvious to me that efficiency of the private manager should not be obliterated by the aspirations of the Green Deal.

When making the case of Private Landmanagers we identify that they are offering the framework for a prosperous countryside with a balanced approach to social, environmental, and economic considerations. It is not one at the expense of the others; it is a global approach which allows the countryside to develop its own richness and to be a unique asset for society. The livelihood of the countryside is only possible because public actions and expectations are implemented by numerous private managers delivering this service. It is our belief that the future of Europe's countryside is largely dependent on the individual management decisions of its millions of entrepreneurs and landowners. Burdensome regulations make little sense.

As a matter of fact, the discussions about halting the loss of biodiversity or mitigating climate change are leading reasonable people to understand that without the voluntary contribution of millions of landowners and rural users worldwide it will be impossible to make a success of these crucial challenges.

As a landowner, on the one hand it is relevant for my production's ability to keep my freedom of action as flexible as possible, on the other hand, due to my commitment to my corporate social responsibility, I like to see my management being recognised, as far as it will not set my activities in aspic and as a consequence destroy the nature the public authority was hoping to protect.

We recognise that without land management, society and nature are in trouble. This works in both directions: land management and society need nature; and in crowded areas such as ours, nature needs the care of land management, farming, and society. We are seeking to jolt the already outdated philosophy that the best way to tackle environmental problems is through more and more regulation. We suggest it isn't, and that a far more effective way is to engage all the good volunteers from the private sector.



ForumforAg 2023 Team



Janez POTOČNIK, Opening speech of the Annual conference on March 28

Closing speech of the month of March pronounced during the wrap-up session on March 28

Janez POTOČNIK, Chair ForumforAg 2023 and Chairman RISE Foundation

Janez POTOČNIK brought the day's proceedings to a close by urging the next Common Agricultural Policy to be designed around a vision for transition to the needed system change. In addition, *"environmental and social transition, leading the way to a more equal world, must go hand in hand, or we will fail"*.

The strongest and most resilient survive till the end. Thank you for being among them.

I will not be long. The day was already long enough, and there was no shortage of important messages shared in this room today. We basically all agree where we should land, but we do not always see eye to eye how to get there.

Also, many interesting, concrete case examples were shared. There is no doubt ... Most important and convincing way to come closer to citizens, and make the transitional efforts concrete, tangible and understandable, are exactly the concrete case examples, which could be replicated and scaled. My only warning would be, that those cases should not become soft-landing pillow to make us feel better and be used as an excuse to avoid the necessary system change. System change is unavoidable, not easy, not comfortable, but needed.

Janez POTOČNIK welcomed participants to the 2023 Annual Conference with its overarching theme of *'Fixing tomorrow, today'*. He identified the central challenge: *"How do we meet human needs and maximise our wellbeing in the most energy and resource efficient way?"*

The answer lies in a real system change. This involves moving from the current emphasis on economic growth and GDP to an economy acknowledging humans are not superior to nature, but embedded with it. Extraction-based production must be replaced with one that is circular creation-based. Leadership and governance require a paradigm shift to improve collective resilience.

Mr POTOČNIK outlined the significant expansion in the Forum's partnerships and international collaboration and presented its new 'Call to Action'. This sets out seven key commitments, ranging from support for regenerative agriculture to integrating sustainability into supply chains and the global agri-food system.

These will be used to monitor collective progress and drive change.

He concluded by warning: *"The future will be green, or there will be no future for us at all."*

And when it comes to needed system change, food sector is currently rather lagging, than leading. No need to hide that. But one could hardly find any economic activity, which is so dependent on healthy environment and already facing climate change consequences so clearly as agriculture. Many of you working on the fields know that much better than I do.

And one does not need to be a genius, using common sense would be more than

enough, to conclude, that interest of farmers and environmentalists should be to a large extent the same. Why they are many times on the different side of the argument, is the question, we were obviously not yet been able to successfully unpack ... but we should.

I dare to say that there is nobody in the room, or outside it, who would believe that the necessary change could be achieved without farmers, and there is nobody here,

and also out there, who would not believe that farmers deserve a decent life and award for their hard and noble work. We have heard from farmers that they need predictability and freedom to make the things right. And indeed, we need to set that predictability and the conditions right - on the market and when it comes to main funding instruments, which should provide support for the necessary transition, and not the just the opposite. Currently the main strategic document Farm to Fork in EU and main funding instrument, CAP, are all, but well aligned. Next CAP must be designed around transition vision. Failing to provide this consistency again would be missing the last train for an organised and manageable food sector transition. We have heard a very encouraging statement coming from the farmer's side: "We are ready, able, and willing." Let us use this readiness, ability, and willingness to make the things better ... to make them right.

Dear friends, one could not overstate the importance of market signals. You are not hearing me saying that for the first time. As long as markets will be the core distributional mechanism, market signals we receive as producers and consumers, matter most. They are still telling us that it makes more economic sense to destroy, rather than protect nature. This is incredibly difficult to reverse since we are all so used to not value nature, so used to existing prices and relative relations among them. Lack of fairness and income differences in our societies, even if one could be proud on what we have achieved in Europe in this context, are not making transition easier ei-

ther. Globally even less in particular in low-income countries. Many can simply not afford healthy and nutrient food. Therefore, environmental, and social transition, leading the way to a more equal world, must go hand in hand, or we will fail, and our sincere efforts will be in vain. Changes which are not acceptable are simply not acceptable, even if well designed and well-intended.

But science, and also reality happening around us, are telling us, that the time is running out. Fixing tomorrow, today - is not a simple slogan, it is a necessity. Let me repeat, time is running out!

I guess we can all agree that there was no shortage of ambition shared among us today at the Forum. My wish, as well as the urgency call, so clearly shared among us based on science and reality around, is that all these words should be mirrored in our behaviour in practice, our actions, and our reactions. The policy and public space are transparent, and sincerity is the base for necessary trust, and the voices outside the room remained us on that also. And our Call for action has been done exactly with this intention.

Finally, it is part of my role, and an important part, to thank all who have contributed to the success of the Forum. Our Strategic Partners: IUCN, TNC, WWF, ELO, Cargill and Syngenta and of course also to all other partners' here with us today and also supporting us during the whole year. Growing in number, as I can happily conclude.

I would also like to thank the Forum secretariat members led by Emmanuelle. Whenever I pass their rooms, they are very much

in their papers and computers. But despite that, they always raise their heads and share a smile. There is no bigger reward in our life then seeing people working hard but remaining in the first-place people. People who know what matters, valuing everything we are working for and trying to achieve wholeheartedly.

And I would of course also like to thank Mark, Forum's strategic right hand and mind, traveling around, investing his time in making Forum broader and deeper, substantially, and geographically.

To the technical crew ... for keeping us in safe hands.

Special thanks this year goes also to our tireless Illustrator outside the room, who has translated our words to something more meaningful: all in all, we understand messages easier if they are translated into a truly universal language.

Special thank you again goes to our fantastic couple of moderators, to Stephen and Rose. In their hard way talk approach, but with professional and respectful manner, they lead us to the soft conference landing.

And we have indeed landed. So, my final thank you goes to all of you, participants here in the room, as well as those following us from remote places. Without you and your attention, all our efforts would be meaningless.

Thank you for joining us also this year and I hope you will be with us also in the year to come. Safe way back home for those who need to travel and to everybody ... take care.





JOHN DEERE

NOTHING RUNS LIKE A DEERE

FARM SMART, PROFIT MORE

CONNECT TO YOUR DEALER TO GET THE MOST
OUT OF YOUR FARMING BUSINESS



Take control of your yields with smart farming technology from John Deere and access the full potential of your fields. Send yield and applications maps wirelessly to and from the John Deere Operations Center™ for a seamless precision farming experience. Let us help lower your input costs and boost your yield potential while maintaining effortless regulation compliance.



**GET JOHN DEERE
OPERATIONS CENTER™
NOW, FOR FREE**



Apple



Google Play

In discussion with Dr. Jane GOODALL, DBE

Exclusive interview

Dr Jane GOODALL, DBE, is a world-renowned ethologist and activist inspiring greater understanding and action on behalf of the natural world. The founder of the Jane GOODALL Institute and UN Messenger of Peace led ground-breaking studies of wild chimpanzees in Gombe Stream National Park, Tanzania. Her work forever changed our relationship to the rest of the animal kingdom. The Jane GOODALL Institute advances community-led conservation, animal welfare, science and youth empowerment through its Roots & Shoots programme. In 2021, Dr GOODALL received the Templeton Prize and published 'The Book of Hope: A Survival Guide for Trying Times'. She produces a regular podcast: 'The Jane GOODALL Hopecast'.

We had the opportunity to interview her for the 2023 Annual Conference and below is a summary of the conversation.

You regularly point out we have lost touch with nature. Why has that happened and what are the consequences for our planet?

We've moved into a very materialistic society. Schools used to spend more time in nature study. Now they're so busy preparing young people to find a place in this rat race, to make them prepared to find their way to make money, to achieve success. Success today is based on more power and more wealth accumulation.

It's really sad we have become so disconnected from nature, partly because it is damaging nature and partly because it's been proven we need time in nature for our physical and mental health.

How do we restore our connection to nature?

It's about raising awareness. It's terribly important people understand we depend on the natural world for food, air, water, everything. We depend on a healthy ecosystem which is made up of a complex mix of animals and plants and each one has a role to play. I like to see it as a living tapestry. Every time a species becomes extinct in that tapestry, it's like pulling out a thread. If we pull out enough threads, the tapestry hangs in tatters and the ecosystem will collapse.

That's what's happening around the world. Ecosystems are collapsing. Perhaps with more education, more examples, we can start to change things.

Do you think the European Union has shown leadership with its Green Deal and is there more it needs to do?

If all the ambitious targets set out in the Green Deal were actually brought into law and implemented, the EU would be showing tremendous leadership. I also love the bill that means the EU cannot import products based on the destruction of forests – one of the great lungs of the world absorbing CO2 and giving out oxygen. This is a tremendous step forward.

What more can be done? Enforcing the



legislation as it's passed is one thing and following up on commitments made. I think a good deal could be done in the EU about improving the regulation of welfare of farmed animals. There's now proof that animals are sentient beings. Every single farmed animal has a personality, is capable of feeling depression, fear and, of course, pain.

Could you please tell us about your Roots & Shoots programme?

It's one of the main focuses of the rest of my life. It all began with 12 high school children in Tanzania. They were concerned about things happening in the environment. We got together and decided the main message for this programme, that came to be called Roots & Shoots, would be every individual matters, makes a difference, has a role to play every single day.

Because nature and societies have such interconnection, we would have every group doing three projects: one to help people, one to help animals, one to help the environment. They choose their projects. One thing they are doing is planting literally millions of trees around the world.

We now have members from kindergarten all the way through university. It's in

67 countries and growing, hundreds and thousands of young people, all working to make the world a better place. Some of the early ones, back in the 1990s, are already in decision-making positions and truly making an impact on the world.

As they grow up, they seem to hang on to the main values that they acquire in Roots & Shoots, which basically is respect and compassion for each other, for animals and for the environment.

If we carry on with a growing population and have this crazy idea that there can be unlimited economic development on a planet with finite resources, we are doomed.

What are the most urgent items that need to be worked on and what action can the Forum's stakeholder audience take?

One way is to move towards a plant-based diet. Another is to buy produce from farmers moving into more sustainable agriculture.

As individuals, what we choose to buy, who we are supporting, whether it's food, other goods or politicians, in every one of these ways, individuals can make a difference, unless they are living in abject poverty.

You can watch the whole interview on our videos page.



Frans TIMMERMANS

Integrating climate mitigation and biodiversity regeneration in food system transformation

Can we afford not to pay the price of change in today's geo-political and economic reality?

In his keynote speech, Frans TIMMERMANS, Executive Vice President, European Commission emphasised the transition to sustainability was imperative, not to save the planet, but to save humanity, which *"is our collective responsibility"*. He pinpointed four key tasks: reduce greenhouse gas emissions from food production and consumption; halt biodiversity loss where one million species are at risk of extinction; inform consumers to make better food choices; and reduce food waste.

The pandemic with the development of revolutionary vaccines based on totally new science showed what can be achieved through human ingenuity, dedication and sufficient sense of urgency. Nothing prevents similar progress in food systems and climate policies.

He called for the use of science, facts and

rational thinking to challenge fear mongering and financial and political interests which argue for the status quo and ever more intensive farming. *"The science is clear. If we want lasting food security, we need to address all the problems in the food system and we need to start now."*

He concluded on a positive note: *"You have to point to the seriousness of the situation and then you have to give people an indication of how we get out of trouble,"* he said, adding: *"If we embrace the change, we can be successful."*

The session ended with Dr Martin FRICK, Director, World Food Programme (WFP) Global Office in Berlin and Sean de CLEENE, International Food Systems Partnership Expert, giving their outside perspective on how the EU is delivering on its Green Deal and farm to fork strategy.

Dr FRICK commended the EU for providing *"thought leadership, the recognition that our food systems have got to work within planetary boundaries"*. If those boundaries are ignored, an organisation like the WFP *"is coming in to pick up the pieces"*. In 2019, the WFP looked after 135 million people. Today, the figure is 350 million.

He explained sufficient food is being produced, but much is wasted in both the developed and developing world and the majority of grains are destined, not for humans, but animals and bioenergy.

Mr de CLEENE agreed the EU is showing global leadership, with *"some brilliant initiatives coming to the fore"*. His concern was whether the shift in speed and scale that are essential for the transformation would now take place. The prize is to produce more food in a way *"that nurtures the planet, is healthier for people and brings society with it"*, not more food as cheaply as possible.

"Radical at scale coalitions" involving large companies, the financial, insurance and public sectors, accompanied by demand side measures, innovation and informed data could drive the necessary transformation.



Sean de CLEENE, Stephen SACKUR, Martin FRICK (on the screen)



Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE, Eva WEIJBER, Tim BENTON, Shari ROGGE-FIDLER, Rose O'DONOVAN

How to build a more resilient & sustainable food and agriculture system: what have we learnt from the energy crisis that enables us to overcome the challenges and exploit the opportunities?

Opening the discussion, Catherine GESLAIN-LANÉELLE, Director Strategy and policy analysis, DG AGRI, European Commission, pointed out that the EU had been very good at delivering food security for its citizens, but at the expense of the environment and climate. Remedial action was now necessary.

Policy makers have a role to play by setting a clear direction, supporting key stakeholders to invest in that direction, incentivising farmers to develop more environmentally friendly practices, helping to enhance and scale these up and encouraging production of different foods and crops. This requires collective effort. Millions of farmers and key actors in the food chain are already implementing change, but “we should accelerate the transformation”.

She and her colleagues are examining how

the Common Agricultural Policy could play a bigger role in supporting farmers on their journey to sustainability. This involves assessing the wider policy mix and considering services such as vocational training and advice and tools to de-risk the transition.

The pandemic and the war in Ukraine had highlighted the importance of food security and confirmed the resilience of Europe's food chain, but exposed some weaknesses, including dependency on imports ranging from fertilisers to fossil fuels.

Shari ROGGE-FIDLER, President and CEO, Farm Foundation, called for “*radical domestic and global collaboration*” involving multi-stakeholders. She identified three essential ingredients, with farmers at the core: a policy environment that encourages rather than inhibits progress; robust markets that enable change; and empowerment of farmers “*to continue to innovate, to feed and clothe the world*”.

That collaboration, she pointed out, would be needed in the US between public institutions and the private sector to use constructively the “*tsunami of money*” the Administration is investing. The volume of funding requires extra staff to handle the complexity of implementing the new initiatives, highlighting the problem of labour shortages at both farm and government level.

Professor Tim BENTON, Research Director, Emerging Risks; Director, Environment and Society Programme, Chatham House, focused on market incentives. “*They do not reward sufficiently either sustainability or resilience*.” Many of the properties of a resilient food system are discarded “*because they are not economically incentivised within the system*”. To remedy this market failure, requires different forms of regulation and a

systemic response covering trade, production and repurposed subsidies, with taxes and incentives in the right place.

This calls for a “*whole of society approach*” and alignment of thinking and policy on health, sustainability, climate, farmers' livelihoods and consumption for a nutritious diet – a difficult challenge since most government structures are not designed in such a way. However, just as events in 2022 had forced open a political window stimulating the EU to intervene in restructuring energy markets from the perspective of public good, he suggested, the same could apply to food.

Eva WEIJBER, a farmer and landowner from Sweden, explained that creating good farming conditions for the next generation was in her and her two sisters' veins. “*My view is that we don't inherit the land from our parents. We manage it for our children*.” Working with photosynthesis, their plants bind tonnes of carbon dioxide and produce food, energy and oxygen. Farmers can contribute even more to a sustainable world with the right tools and financial incentives to shape profitable and healthy businesses, she insisted.

Instead, farmers face “*too many rules and legislation that affect us negatively*” by taking up time and money that could be used more productively. She urged policy makers to provide “*long-term commitment and less legislation*”. That could include rewards to farmers for storing carbon or developing energy production using grassland and other energy crops to make bioenergy.

A speaker from the floor endorsed Ms WEIJBER's view, assuring the panel farmers are “*ready, able and willing*” to change, but needed incentives to do so.

How can Nature Based Solutions drive resilience and sustainability in the AGRI-food system and how do we better align incentives to accelerate change?

In the final session of the morning, Dr. Jurgen TACK, Scientific Director, European Landowners' Organization, got up from his seat to walk the audience through the last 3.3 million years of human history to explain the development of agriculture. He pointed out that as European cities have grown, they have taken over the best agricultural land, pushing farmers into less productive areas. Humans taking the place of nature has caused problems requiring nature based solutions, of which there are many. He listed 15 and urged policy makers not to favour just one. *"We will need all of them to solve the problem,"* he said, emphasising the importance of diversity, not just in plants and animals, but also in solutions, agriculture and ideas.

To bring the public along with these agricultural changes, he later recommended *"storytelling"* to reconnect consumers with the land. *"We absolutely have to bring farming activities back to the people."*

Dr. Angelika HILBECK, Institute for Integrative Biology in the Department of Environmental Systems Science, ETH Zurich, joining the conference online, described the present as a convergence of connected ecological, social and political crises caused by similar reasons and processes which had been predicted decades ago.

All nine of the planet's life support systems are in decline. For six of these, the key driver is industrialised agriculture with its uniformity, not other forms of agriculture, such as ecological farming, which work with, not against, nature. Like Dr TACK, she emphasised the importance of diversity in all its forms and called for a reconfiguration of *"agriculture from the bottom up"*. This would replace standardised monocultures with variability, niches, habitats and support systems *"for life to reflower"* and use new indicators to measure productivity, instead of traditional tonnes per hectare.

Boris ERG, Director, IUCN Europe, noted that discussion of nature based solutions began some 15 years ago, but a global standard was not launched until 2020. His organisation is providing *"more and more evidence"*, but the change must start now and at scale. That requires a fundamental policy framework *"to allow all those who operate within to feel safe, to feel resilient"* and for subsidies to be turned into incentives.

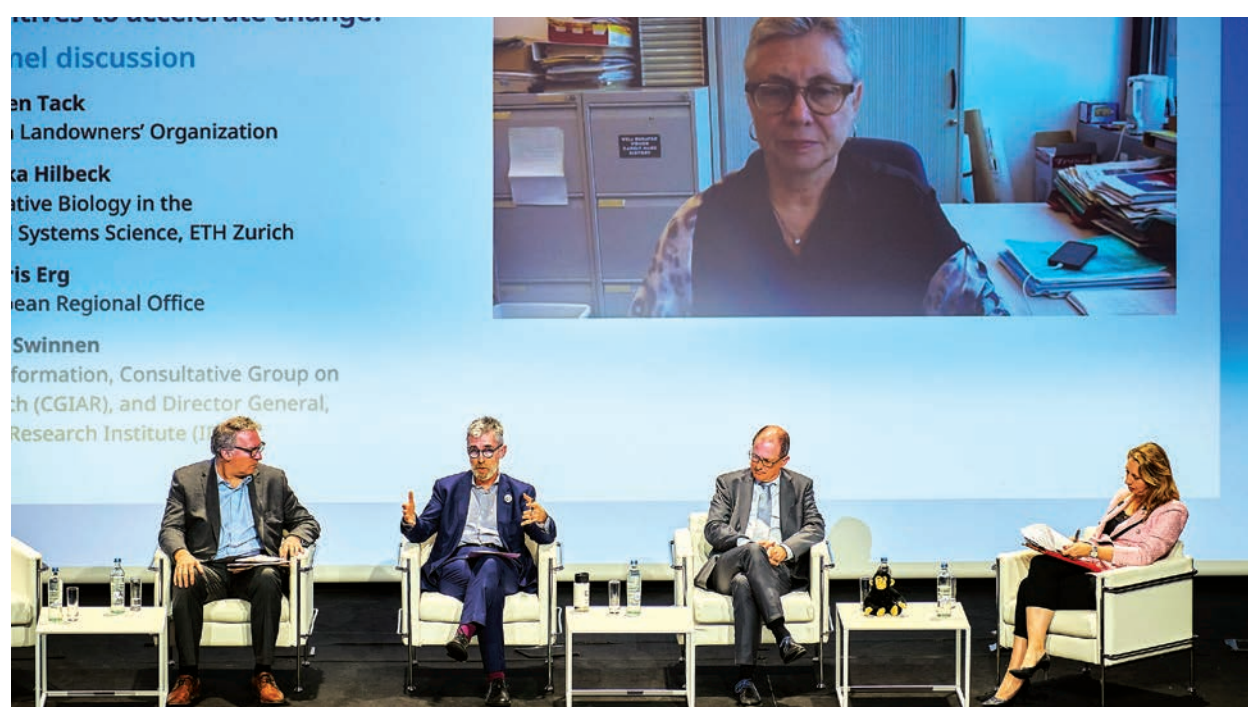
Developing his theme, he explained many examples exist of nature based solutions and sustainable agriculture initiatives backed by technology and science, but conceded: *"We are not yet there to have this nice meal that is made of those ingredients."* Changing human behaviour and mindsets will help bring the dish towards completion. The first, he believed, is already happening,

while the second will be increasingly triggered as awareness grows of the danger of imbalances in nature's support systems.

Dr. Johan SWINNEN, Managing Director, Systems Transformation, Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), and Director General, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), identified two factors – internalising externalities and need for coordination – making solutions and impact at scale difficult. Solutions require the involvement of everyone in the food system; new technologies or use of the many existing ones that remain underutilised; management, innovation and policy changes; clarity on whether the aim is to influence human behaviour or change outcomes; and understanding of the heterogeneity between regions and countries. *"We have global problems, but we require local solutions."*

One novelty in his two organisations' research is a broad focus on food systems with specific attention on nutrition and value chains from consumption to production. He identified a *"massive change in consumption behaviour"* over the past 15 years, both among the young and in restaurants with more care being paid to the externalities of food production.

Responding to a plea from the floor for the EU target of 25% for organic farming to be increased, Dr TACK counselled caution. To do so, he warned could destroy the market if only 5-15% of consumers are prepared to buy organic food. In contrast, Dr HILBECK described 25% as *"too little, too late"*. But what was important, she stressed, was not the particular form of ecological farming *"as long as it is ecological farming"*.



Johan SWINNEN, Boris ERG, Jurgen TACK, Rose O'DONOVAN, Angelika HILBECK (on the screen)



Ranveer CHANDRA, Stephen SACKUR

How we can use technology to better serve biodiversity

Ranveer CHANDRA, Managing Director for Research and Industry and CTO of Agri-Food, Microsoft, explained that the company's mission "*is to empower every person and organisation on the planet to achieve more*". Its aim "*is not to replace a farmer, but to augment the farmer's knowledge*", by replacing guesswork in agricultural decisions with data, software and artificial intelligence.

The technology is not targeted directly at farmers, but at agriculture companies, startups and others wishing to build their own solutions. The current tools work for farms of ten acres or more. The company is now looking to develop these for smallholders. A show of hands of farmers in the audience revealed a majority already use various forms of technology and believe artificial intelligence could materially improve their operations.

How can we act better: the case for improving biodiversity, soil health and water resilience?

Virginijus SINKEVIČIUS, Commissioner for Environment, European Commission, whose keynote speech was briefly interrupted by alarms going off and a disturbance by protesters, said bluntly: "*We have made our land sick*." He focused on three main areas – biodiversity, soil and water – where the EU is taking measures to restore their health.

Alongside its biodiversity strategy, the Commission has published a revised EU pollinators initiative and a draft nature restoration law, which sets binding targets to restore degraded ecosystems. The EU Deforestation Regulation – expected to enter into

force at the end of 2024 – will help tackle deforestation and forest degradation, biodiversity loss and climate change.

With soil degradation costing over €50 billion a year, the Commission is relying on its forthcoming draft soil health law to ensure sustainable soil use becomes the norm. As Europe potentially faces its worst drought for 500 years, the EU water reuse regulation takes effect in June, setting out minimum requirements for water quality and monitoring, ensuring safe water use for agricultural irrigation.

The second keynote speaker, Tasso AZEVEDO, Coordinator MapBiomass & SEEG initiatives, forester and former Chief of Brazilian Forest Service, described Brazil as "*a powerhouse of agriculture and nature*". It also has the largest annual deforestation, two thirds of its pastureland have moderate or severe soil degradation, its water surface is shrinking and land use change is responsible for 75% of its greenhouse gas emissions.

After recent "*dark days for environmental protection*", the new government has made

fighting deforestation, cutting greenhouse gas emissions, developing the bioeconomy and increasing food production among its priorities. Its goal is zero deforestation and halving emissions by 2030. He welcomed the EU's deforestation legislation, but warned it should not be used as a barrier to trade in other products. He also called on the EU to help compensate the peoples whose activities protect the forests for the planet's benefit.

Andrea ERICKSON-QUIROZ, Global Director for Water Security, Deputy Managing Director for the Food and Water Systems Priority, The Nature Conservancy, opened the panel discussion warning "*the global water cycle is changing*". She stressed the importance of seeing problems in a wide context and finding mutually beneficial relationships. She gave the example of New York City's investment in the Catskills. Working closely with farmers and changing practices, the city has ensured the quality of the water it receives at a far lower cost than the construction of a new filtration plant downstream.

Truke SMOOR, Global Water Lead, Cargill, spoke of the need to move from crisis mode to build water resiliency. The company uses its role as "*a connector in the food chain*" helping farmers work with its downstream customers to share any risk involved. In Mexico, it is creating financing solutions for more efficient drip irrigation technology, saving 50% of water use.

Mark HALL, Head of Sustainable Farming EAME, Syngenta, explained the company is trying "*to get farmers to be able to produce productive crops sustainably*". It is developing new genetic and chemical technologies more tailored to sustainable farming and soil health, investing heavily in bio stimulants and committed \$2 billion in sustainable farming technologies. As a regenerative farmer himself, he underlined the "*need to give growers advice and confidence*".



Virginijus SINKEVIČIUS, Tasso AZEVEDO, Truke SMOOR, Mark HALL, Andrea ERICKSON-QUIROZ

How can we help better: food, migration, climate change?

Stefanie BECK, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), joining the Forum online for her opening speech in the final session, shared Canada's experience in improving sustainable agriculture and food systems across the planet. She noted the country has nearly doubled the value of its agricultural production with almost no increase in greenhouse gas emissions.



Stefanie BACK (on the screen), Rose O'DONOVAN

Sustainability is at the heart of the new federal, provincial, territorial partnership which will drive over \$3.5 billion dollars of investment in the next five years. The government is helping farmers adopt clean technologies and benefit from the latest research into best management practices. More widely, the deputy minister emphasised the need for an open, rules-based global trading regime, consultation and collaboration and *"regulatory systems based on science, risk and international standards"*.

Opening the panel discussion, Dr. Claudia SADOFF, Executive Managing Director, CGIAR, pointed out *"war and conflict have become the most important drivers for food insecurity and migration"*. Evidence suggests this will only continue, and hunger and malnutrition continue to rise. The challenges are overwhelming, but not insurmountable. She called for real investment in research and innovation and help to create thriving livelihoods for farmers. With that investment, urgency and partnership, *"we can actually achieve an end to world hunger,"* she predicted.

Katharina STENHOLM, Senior Vice President and Chief Sustainability Officer, PepsiCo Europe, whose presentation was briefly interrupted by a demonstrator, said the company emphasises positive choices. It is aiming to have half a billion healthier snacks on the market by 2025, to inspire people to make the right choices and is working with farmers to transition to regenerative agriculture. She called for collaboration across generations. *"If we want to fix tomorrow, today, I really think we need to give the people who are going to live tomorrow a voice today."*

Richard HEATH, Executive Director, Australian Farm Institute, underlined that virtually everything Australia grows provides food security for others. The impact of climate change means international trade is vital to respond to short term food shortages. The country focuses on outcomes instead of being prescriptive and *"attaching labels to what we should do"*. What is needed is reward and incentives for those out-

comes, *"however they are produced"*. He stressed the importance of *"the social and governance side of sustainability"* to nurture resilient communities and strong regional economies.

Žiga VAVPOTIČ, Director of Partnerships LoginEko, spoke of the efforts two mobile game developers are making to develop a sustainable farm in Serbia. They are using a large team to develop the appropriate software and hope to make this available *"to any farming company or farmers around the world for free"* in about a year. Alongside their philanthropy, they are consolidating their organic farm and looking to provide solutions for policy makers.

Ted BILYEA, Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (CAPI) Distinguished Fellow, spoke of Maple Leaf Foods, which in 2019 became the world's first major carbon neutral food company by working with farmers and buying high value credits to achieve its goal. Canada's ability to double food production without increasing emissions was generated by no till farming practices, leading to better water and carbon retention and higher yields. He called for an end to harmful subsidies and urged thinking *"about the practical things that need to be done"*.

After the panel discussion, Mark TITTERINGTON, Senior Advisor, Strategy & Partnerships, Forum for the Future of Agriculture, discussed the Forum's Call to Action, that had been announced earlier in the day by Janez POTOČNIK during his opening speech. From a live video link to the foyer, Mark talked participants through the large visual summary that had been created throughout the day by the graphics team to capture the essence of each session. He also highlighted some of the comments received on post-its from delegates on the seven commitments detailed in the Call to Action (see page 14).



Ted BILYEA, Žiga VAVPOTIČ, Richard HEATH, Katharina STENHOLM, Claudia SADOFF, Rose O'DONOVAN



Giulio VOLPI, Jurgen TACK, Meredith REISFIELD, Hilde EGGERMONT, Cristi GHERGHICEANU, Georg KOENIG

How to set credits for ecosystem services on the international market?

"Can we put a price on nature? Maybe not. Can we say that nature is for free? I don't think so. And losing nature that is for sure expensive." Dr. Jurgen TACK, Scientific Director, ELO.

The international market for ecosystem services is gaining momentum. As global warming and biodiversity loss become more visible, governments, companies, and individuals become more interested in financially contributing to the protection and restoration of our nature. This demand creates an opportunity for a private biodiversity credits market, which can contribute to fill the finance gap for voluntary

nature conservation initiatives. But can we put a price on nature?

Before voluntary carbon and biodiversity markets can become mainstream, questions need to be answered to convince potential providers and give them greater confidence. The ENPLC organized therefore the event "How to set credits for ecosystem services on the international market", with the support of the ELO and the Forum for the Future of Agriculture. 80 Participants from all over Europe joined the discussion in the prestigious Palais des Academies in Brussels on Monday 27th March. Between them also our project partners ADEPT, FPG, ANB and EUROSITE. For partners who could not physically attend an online pre-discussion was organized and questions were passed along to the moderator of the discussion.

DG Agriculture took the first steps towards establishing this payment system by developing a carbon certification system and evaluation through carbon farming. But the services that ecosystems provide go beyond carbon sequestration, as biodiversity, fresh air, and fresh water are all crucial services that should be rewarded. Setting these credits still requires discussion on a various range of topics, including valuing and monitoring biodiversity and the role of each

stakeholder on the short and long term.

Meredith REISFIELD, Director for Sustainability Policy & Strategic Partnerships at Indigo emphasized that to ensure the durability of these payment schemes, three critical aspects must be considered: integrity, durability, and credibility. Quantification of the impact of ecosystem services is necessary to ensure credibility, and satellite data, biochemical models, and data collection are useful tools for measuring ecosystem services. Indigo's carbon program focuses on supporting regenerative agriculture practices at scale, and conservative programs for farmers, and conservatively measured greenhouse gas reductions. However, inevitable and avoidable reversals must be considered, as they can impact the sustainability of such programs.

Georg KOENIG stressed that businesses have a role to play in protecting the environment and land, as marketing pressure from consumers, financial institutions' push, and regulatory pressure put pressure on agriculture and forestry value chains. He talked as a representative of the start-up Kiebitz, a German organization that supports companies to invest in natural capital and create high quality nature-based solutions that build biodiversity, sequester carbon and regenerate the ecosystem. The switch



to regenerative practices can lead to a monetary yield improvement of up to 60%. Digital infrastructure that caters to both agriculture and companies is essential to create credits, and easy transactions, limited bureaucracy, and pilot projects can help facilitate the process.

Certification using tailored methodologies, third-party verification, and a certificate of compliance are needed to ensure the reliability and public registration of such programs. Giulio VOLPI from DG CLIMA made therefore the link with the EU regulation on carbon removals certification to learn from.

From the users perspective Cristi GHERGHICEANU from Fundatia ADEPT Transilvania discussed the challenges faced by small NGOs working with farming communities in the middle of Romania. The use of increasing large machinery reduces the mosaic management of the landscape, and more grassland conversion into arable land is occurring. Agro-environmental payments are not high enough to incentivize farmers to maintain grassland landscapes. The NGO has implemented a biodiversity carbon credit scheme that involves 25-year annual payments and accreditation by Plan Vivo (www.planvivo.org). Metrics such as landscape scale, avoidance of loss, and biodiversity are used to quantify the benefits of the program.

Luc GROOT from the Dutch Federation of Private Landowners emphasized that the focus should be on creating a robust voluntary market for carbon removals and providing ecosystem services rather than obliging landowners to participate. Communication with landowners should ensure that they can feel part of the solution rather than being burdened with more rules.

Proper monitoring systems that take into account the geography and specificity of the

area and accurately measure the progress and impact of the land restoration efforts will be essential to establish and maintain a reliable market for ecosystem credits. Furthermore, customized programs tailored to the needs of individual landowners will encourage long-term commitment to restoration efforts, especially for those just starting.

While ecosystem credits can be an effective tool to incentivize restoration efforts, they should not be viewed as a standalone solution. There is a need for a very comprehensive approach integrating with other conservation strategies and for customised approaches, long term thinking, incentive creation and a strong engagement of the private sector. Some services, such as soil carbon storage, may be less visible to people than other. Therefore, a comprehensive approach with respect for the interconnectedness of ecosystem services is necessary to achieve long-term success in restoration efforts. Setting credits for ecosystem services on the international market will require the quantification of these services, the use of digital infrastructure, and the

involvement of businesses, NGOs, governments, and landowners.

Ecosystem credits can provide mechanisms for conserving as well as protecting habitats. The credibility and durability of these schemes are vital for ensuring their sustainability and their positive impact on the environment. While challenges exist, the global push towards protecting and restoring nature provides a unique opportunity to create a robust voluntary market for ecosystem services, with shared efforts across regions and countries.

You can watch the video on the Forum's website.

Pre-Forum Event
#ForumforAg 2023

How to set credits for ecosystem services on the international market?

Monday, March 27, 2023
15:00-17:00 CET

More information and register at
www.forumforag.com

Event hosted by **ELO** (European Landowners' Organisation)

Forum for the Future of Agriculture

Let's increase our food supply without reducing theirs

the good growth plan

Syngenta Brussels Office
Avenue Louise, 489,
B-1050 Brussels
Tel: +32.2.642 27 27
www.syngenta.com
www.goodgrowthplan.com

syngenta

AGRILAND

Exploitant et/ou coordinateur d'exploitations agricoles

Belgique
support@agriland.farm
☎ +32 (0)10 23 29 00

France
support@agriland.farm
☎ +33 (0)6 30 14 23 45

www.agriland.be

Forum announces Call to Action in response to worsening climate and eco-system forecast

The food and agriculture system possesses the human know-how and ingenuity, innovation and technology, and natural capital, to increase its productivity, resilience, and sustainability, as well as reducing its own carbon footprint and removing billions of tonnes of carbon from the atmosphere and locking it up in soil, forests, peatland and wetlands.

Having just emerged from a global pandemic, where the food and agriculture system proved its flexibility and resilience, conflicts, such as the one in Ukraine, and record-busting high temperatures again remind us of its potential fragility, which will only be exacerbated further by global warming and the loss of biodiversity.

A landmark report from IPBES found that nature is declining at an unprecedented rate in human history with the rate of species extinction accelerating. According to WWF, the world has lost nearly 70% of its wildlife species since 1970. This threatens the eco-systems upon which food and agriculture depend. At the same time, the latest warnings from the IPCC make clear that we have a final chance this decade to limit global warming to 1.5C after which we will be on an irreversible course that will make some parts of this planet uninhabitable and others increasingly inhospitable.



Mark TITTERTON

The Forum for the Future of Agriculture is committed to play its part in the building of a more resilient and sustainable food and agriculture system, which mitigates the effects of climate change and restores biodiversity and our eco-systems. Whilst progress is already being made toward achieving these goals, the Forum, along with our partners who are part of the agri-food system, recognise the need to go further and faster.

To do this, the Forum and our partners, will work individually and collectively, sharing learning, knowledge and best practices, with a long-term perspective, towards:

1. Developing and scaling regenerative agriculture, in conjunction with similar approaches, underpinned by common metrics driving enhanced outcomes for productive and environmentally sustainable farming.
2. Valuing and accounting for the use of natural capital, such as water, soil, air, and biodiversity, by the agri-food system
3. Contributing to the development and alignment of public funding market-based incentives for nature restoration and delivery of other eco-system services.
4. Sharing knowledge and pursue innovation in technology and practices that support both food and environmental security and move away from those which don't.
5. Integrating sustainability into supply chains and the global agri-food trade system, leaving no one behind.
6. Informing the development of more coherent agri-food policies at local, national, regional and global level and continue to build public and private partnerships for greater impact.
7. Enhancing consumer awareness of their role in building a more resilient and sustainable food and agriculture system.

In addition, the Forum will use its convening power in each of these areas, both in Europe and globally, to bring together the relevant stakeholders from government, academia, civil society, growers and land managers, and the agri-food industry. We will work with them to find and amplify new, innovative thinking, ideas, best practices, and solutions, that can work systemically, leading to a more resilient and sustainable food and agriculture system, and which provides climate solutions.

We do this with a renewed sense of urgency for greater action.

Without such action, the world will face catastrophic consequences including the irretrievable loss of precious and essential biodiversity, access to water, safe, healthy, affordable food, and safe living spaces. In places hardest hit by climate change, it will likely lead to unsustainable migration, increased poverty, and conflict. Even in places that escape the most chronic effects of global warming, it is likely that health, wellbeing, and prosperity will suffer.

The food and agriculture system is the foundation of our life and society... the people who work within it provide the food, fuel, and fibre upon which we all depend. We proclaim and celebrate the contribution they make every day. It is now time to unleash their potential and give them the tools they need to build a more resilient and sustainable food and agriculture system, which delivers food security for all and leads the fight for nature restoration and against climate change.

This is the mission and the goals of the Forum.

Winners of the Land and Soil Management Award edition 2022/2023



Thierry de l'ESCAILLE, Martin GERZABEK, Petra LAUX, Mellany KLOMPE, Jeroen KLOMPE, Annabelle WILLIAMS, Humberto DELGADO ROSA, Emmanuelle MIKOSZ

Since 2008, the Land and Soil Management Award recognizes and rewards outstanding projects in the areas of land use and soil management practices mitigating soil threats such as soil degradation, erosion, reduction of organic matter content, diffuse contamination, compaction, and the reduction of soil biodiversity and salinization, sealing, flooding and landslides. By showcasing winning projects as good practices at European level, the award also sheds light on outstanding achievements and promotes effective and sustainable land and soil management practices. Aiming to encourage new concepts of land and soil protection and their implementation in land management and enhance awareness of the importance of land and soil functions.

This year's award ceremony, chaired by prof Martin GERZABEK, President of the Jury, was held in person in Brussels on March 28, during the gala dinner of the Forum for the Future of Agriculture.

Humberto DELGADO ROSA, Director for Biodiversity, DG Environment, European Commission, awarded the winning prize to **"Improving Soil Health through experimental regenerative agriculture practices in the Netherlands"**, a project submitted by Mellany and Jeroen KLOMPE, owners of the Klompe Landbouw, Mijnsheerenland (the Netherlands) and by The Soil Heroes Foundation, represented by Annabelle WILLIAMS. Its

main aim is to make a strong business case based on improving soil whilst simultaneously improving biodiversity, water quality, air quality, reducing emissions and sequestering carbon. And – on the long run to continue to test and innovate new regenerative practices and regenerative income streams for the Klompe Farm and share the re-

sults of the trials openly with land managers to encourage and catalyse the transition for more farmers to improve soil health.

The jury rewarded also two additional proposals with a diploma of recognition to:

- **The Blaston regenerative farm (UK)** for improving soil health and weed control, diversifying cropping and farming with nature, creating a sustainable business and reducing the carbon footprint of the farm whilst producing healthy, nutritious food.

- **INNOLIVAR** submitted by the Interprofessional Spanish Olive Oil Organization for proposed actions to control erosion and restore gullies in olive groves. The project's objectives are: to develop a simple and reliable mapping method of the gully network and its catchment, and a hydrological model for the analysis of the landscape evolution, for a proper selection and dimension of the control and preventive practices.

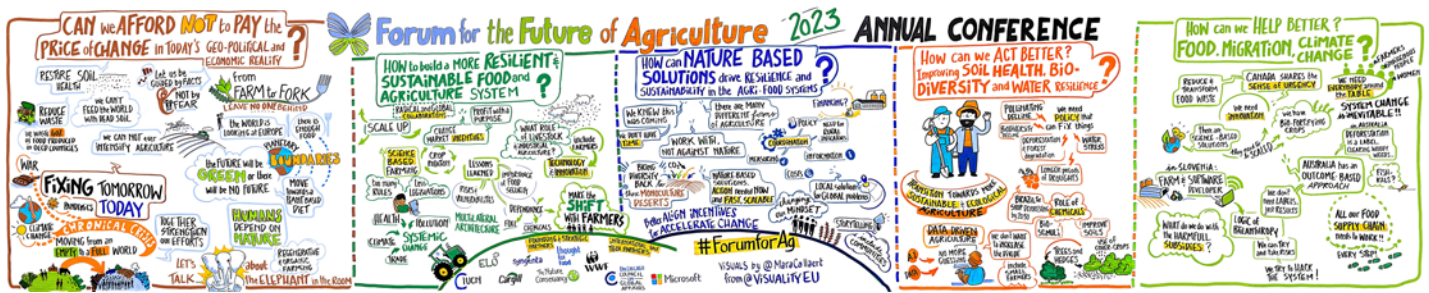
As part of its ongoing activities to promote sustainable agriculture, the Forum for the Future of Agriculture is proud to support the award and recognise the winners at the main Forum in March and also at our regional conferences.



Mark TITTERINGTON, Shari ROGGE-FIEDLER, Janez POTOČNIK, Richard HEATH, Tyler McCANN

The annual conference was also the opportunity to reiterate the collaborative initiative of four leading independent agricultural organizations from Australia, Canada, the European Union, and United States known as the "Global Forum on Farm Policy and Innovation (GFFPI)" to increase the sustainability of agriculture across the world.

More information is available on the Forum's website.



The Editorial team would like to convey special thanks to Rory WATSON and Ian COLLINS for their contribution to this special "CountrySide Magazine" edition.

The annual Forum for the Future of Agriculture was founded by the European Landowners' Organization (ELO) and Syngenta; they were joined by Cargill, IUCN, The Nature Conservancy, Thought for Food, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, WWF Europe as strategic partner, and Microsoft as first tech partner.

The ForumforAg 2023 brings together a wide and diverse range of stakeholders to inspire new thinking on how European and global agriculture needs to respond to the major challenges of delivering both food and environmental security.

Created in 2008 in response to the belief that many of Europe's

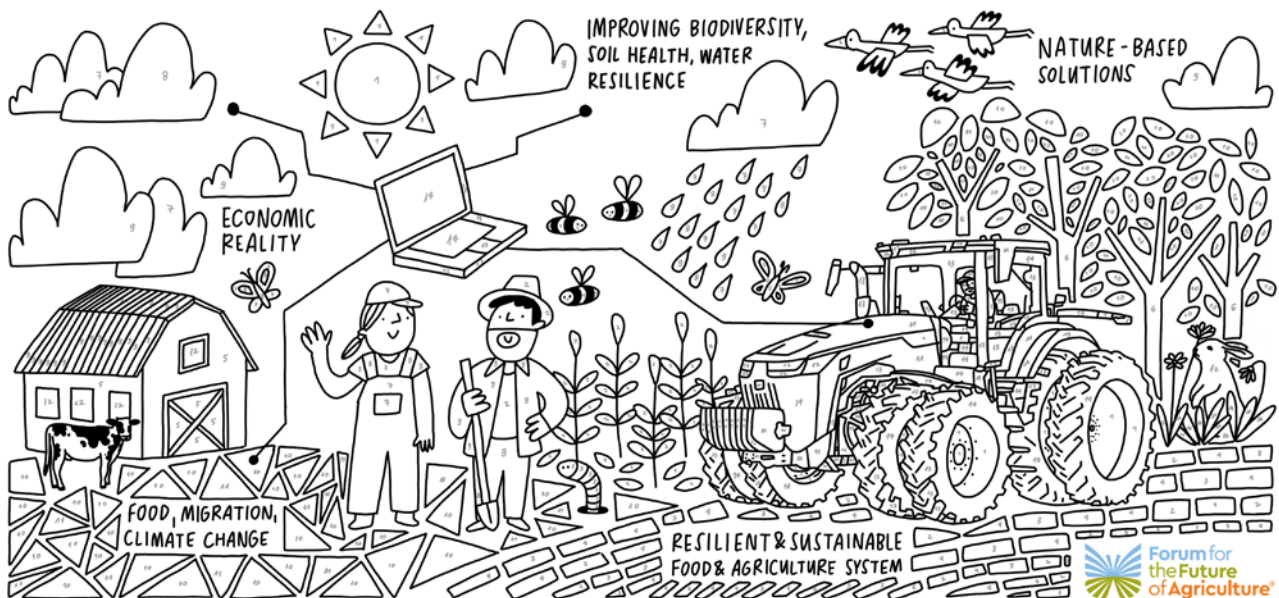
agricultural and environmental policies focused on solving yesterday's problems such as overproduction, the Forum instead deals with the challenges and market opportunities of the future.

The discussions in Brussels will continue during the ForumforAg 2023 regional events.

The ForumforAg 2023 Team

The ForumforAg 2023 Team would like to thank the Founding and Strategic partners of the Forum for the Future of Agriculture for their strong commitment. It enables the Forum to remain the premier meeting place for an open dialogue on global food systems.

Coloring sheet



How to: Color each part with the corresponding number. Have fun!



CountrySide

is a publication of the ELO
in English and French

5 Euros

Publisher :
Thierry de l'Escaille

Chief editor :
Emmanuelle Mikosz

Text editor :
The ForumforAg 2023 Team

Design & proof readers
Jehanne de Dorlodot - Verhaegen

Back office:
Adriana Escudero

Rue de Trèves, 67
B - 1040 Bruxelles
Tel. : 00 32 (0)2 234 30 00
Fax : 00 32 (0)2 234 30 09
countryside@elo.org
Internet Site : www.elo.org