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Date: January 22, 2024

Comments on “Strengthening urban and peri-urban food systems to achieve food security and nutrition in the context of urbanization and rural transformation.”

V0 draft of the HLPE-FSN report #19

Posted to: <https://www.fao.org/fsnforum/consultation/strengthening-urban-and-peri-urban-food-systems>

Dear HLPE-FSN,

The Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) appreciates the opportunity to provide input to the V0 draft of the HLPE-FSN report on “Strengthening urban and peri-urban food systems to achieve food security and nutrition in the context of urbanization and rural transformation.” IFT is a global organization of approximately 12,000 individual members, in 95 countries, who are committed to advancing the science of food. We believe that science is essential to ensuring that our global food system is sustainable, safe, nutritious, and accessible to all. For this reason, we are encouraged to see this report addressing food and nutrition security in urban and peri-urban areas.

In reviewing the V0 draft, IFT is encouraged to see the emphasis on food safety, as well as affordability and accessibility to nutritious foods. We further recommend a deeper look at how food science & technology can be part of the solution in achieving food and nutrition security in urban and peri-urban settings. As an example, food science and technology has made significant contributions in increasing the availability of food around the world through packaging and processing technologies that allow foods to be safe and stable for longer periods of time. The report acknowledges food processing can improve food safety, and consumers recognize this, but this is primarily positioned as a disadvantage for healthy diets as it is assumed all processed foods are of poorer nutritional quality than fresh foods. However, this is not always the case as there are many processed foods that provide important nutrition, particularly for urban and peri-urban populations who struggle with “time poverty” as noted in the report. IFT encourages the HLPE to take a more balanced view of the role of processed foods in enabling food and nutrition security and identify the strengths that should be built on while examining how to overcome identified weaknesses. Several recent publications (provided in the reference

section) provide additional information and case studies on how sustainable production of nutritious foods with processing technology can help improve food and nutrition security around the globe. We suggest a recommendation for more investments from the public and private sectors in research and development of technologies to make food safe with a focus on preserving nutrient content by minimizing the use of heat, chemicals, or water and reducing food components/nutrients to limit (e.g., saturated fat, added sugars, sodium). This would improve food safety, nutritional value, and sustainability.

Also, although fresh foods from informal markets are identified as the major source of foodborne disease, particularly in children, we agree that the responsibility for food safety extends beyond the vendors to all of the food system. For example, environmental contaminants, which are more frequently found in fresh foods in LMICs, are frequently a result of inadequate agricultural practices, such as the use of contaminated water. Thus, a multisector approach, including downstream and upstream players in the food system must be taken to ensure food safety.

We would also like to bring to the attention of the HLPE a case study from Chicago that is designed to bring affordable fresh produce to urban institutional settings, such as schools, health clinics, and community centers. The [Fresh Moves Mobile Market](#) is a win-win for urban farmers and low-income inner-city residents with limited access to fresh produce. The [Urban Grower's Collective](#) converted a bus into a mobile farmer's market that included fresh produce and some pantry staples, such as pasta, beans, coffee, and bread. The bus transports produce grown by urban farmers into areas of Chicago with limited access to fresh foods. The food is priced affordably and provides a fair price for the farmers. Examples such as this could help address the transportation issues noted throughout the report by bringing the foods to the areas of greatest need as well as provide a means of income for urban farmers.

IFT believes the science of food and application of technology are important for transforming the food system to ensure food and nutrition security for all. Food scientists and technologists share a commitment with the HLPE-FSN and the CFS to improve nutrition and food security globally. We hope the HLPE will consider our comments to continue to support investment and advances in food science & technology to improve food and nutrition security for all. Please contact Anna Rosales, Senior Director Government Affairs and Nutrition ([arosales@ift.org](mailto:arosales@ift.org)) if IFT may be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

Anna Rosales  
Senior Director Nutrition and Government Affairs  
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## References:

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