

## **Summary of the discussions during the Swedish national dialogue 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2021**

There was a great interest in participating and contributing to the discussions. Many of the participants had concrete suggestions and proposals. Several examples of how to tackle matters of importance in the food system were shared. Around 100 suggestions, comments and proposals were put forward and are currently being analysed by the organisers of the event. The conclusions will be taken forward and further explored by regional dialogues as well as thematic dialogues. A number of trade offs were also identified for further consideration.

The participants considered:

### **1) The knowledge- and innovation system contributes to increased productivity, innovation and circularity in the food chain as well as to sustainable\* production, transport and consumption of food.**

- Further need to highlight the social dimension in the context of food systems.
- Increase the knowledge about the needs and wants of the consumers
- Strengthen the link between the needs of businesses and research, particularly in the step after primary production
- Increase profitability based on sustainability in primary production
- Rules and regulations – including the tax system - need to be reconsidered to limit hinders for sustainability
- Need for life long learning
- Need for cross-policy information sharing at municipal level on food systems

### **2) Consumers have high confidence for foods that are offered and can easily make well informed, sustainable and healthy choices at a reasonable price**

- Not primarily the responsibility of consumers to increase sustainability – it is the responsibility at policy level (rules/regulations)
- profitability is important for the production of “good” food.
- The retail business needs the right prerequisites to take responsibility (certifications for instance)
- how goods are exposed is important
- nudging rather than rules
- inequalities need to be tackled

### **3) The rules and conditions contribute to a competitive and sustainable food chain.**

- Rules and regulations differ nationally/globally. A redistribution of resources is necessary

- Sustainability needs investment – who pays? Does the farmer get paid?
- A longer perspective than 2030 is needed,
- Transports need to be changed to reach sustainable systems

#### **4) Food producers are reasonably paid and have good conditions, including working conditions, to produce sustainable and healthy food.**

- Farmers need to get paid for their eco-system services
- How does one guarantee that production is sustainable, including imports?
- There are weak incentives for sustainable production. Must be strengthened (for instance through role models, knowledge transfers, support systems, new technology etc)
- The business side of agriculture needs more attention
- Youth need to be attracted to agriculture – innovations can contribute to this
- Cross-policy and cross-sectorial collaboration needs more attention, including through supporting groups like journalists, communicators, civil society and researchers

#### **5) Private and public financial- and support systems, as well as rules and regulations, encourage that food is produced sustainably and is healthy.**

- The demands on knowing the effects of subsidies, for instance on the planetary boundaries, should increase
- Primary production carries a heavy burden and should be further supported (farmer needs to get paid)
- Equalities and equity need to be considered when developing supporting systems/subsidies
- Contacts between producers and consumers is important
- Public procurement matters
- Fossil fuels need to be phased out in agriculture
- Swedish production potential should be highlighted

#### **6) Trade agreements contribute to sustainable production, transport and consumption.**

- Profitability and social sustainability in primary production needs further strengthening in trade agreements
- Conflicts of interest in trade need to be dealt with (examples were given from Swedish agriculture and forestry)
- If there is an increase in demand for sustainable production/products, trade agreements need to be followed up in this regard
- A rights perspective needs to be applied so that not only big businesses can put their interests forward

- Consumer power is important
- Public procurement is a tool for sustainability

**7) The food system is constructed so that socio-economic prerequisites do not hinder good dietary choices.**

- Information and other prerequisites are important factors to make sure that it is not the content of the wallet that determines people's health
- The systems need to focus on guaranteeing the right to food
- Social security systems need to be introduced if not in place
- School meals are a transformative power
- Subsidies and taxes are important tools
- It must be profitable to supply sustainable solutions

**8) The food system can handle challenges regarding food security and nutrition for the entire population, the profitability of producers as well as environment and climate change**

- A longer time frame, the role of big global companies on the world market and the knowledge and experience of indigenous people must be considered if this vision is to be fulfilled
- Social sustainability must be highlighted, not only profitability
- Closer ties between policy and academia should be promoted
- Data sharing and open access is needed
- Every municipality should have a food security strategy
- Public meals and schools are important instruments
- A definition of what is a sustainable consumption should be considered
- Standards of quality and price as an instrument to tackle food losses and waste should be introduced.
- Higher demands on the retail business – not on the consumer

**9) Collaboration and organisation of actors in the food system contributes to healthy food that is easily available and sustainable.**

- Collaboration throughout the value chain is necessary
- Retail is now the most important actor (no longer producer or consumer)
- Trade should be adapted
- More local collaborations
- Risks need to be shared
- Media plays an important role for the knowledge on public health

- It is beneficial for Swedish producers if producers in low income countries are well paid
- There needs to be space for experiments and innovations
- Youth needs to be involved

**10) The majority of food sold to consumers at stores, markets and restaurants is sustainable and healthy and food loss and waste is reduced or recycled through circular methods**

- The vision should be stronger in the part on food loss and waste
- Circular systems are hindered due to unclear logistics – who owns the system for recycling?
- Non-profit organisations must be supported so that they can collaborate
- Policy and rules/regulations need to take equality into account to provide a level playing field. Economic dimensions of the retail business need to be considered
- There is a democratic aspect to the consumer/retail relationship – should the retail business dictate what the consumer can buy.
- The price needs to mirror the true cost of food
- Consumer power is important, the youth needs to be mobilised
- Rules and regulations should be reviewed, particularly in terms of circular work
- There is a need to develop governmental tools beyond policy and regulation – for instance knowledge, trade etc. Retail business craves more tools for measuring sustainability on an equal level
- More deals within industry in order to keep competition fair
- Labelling needs more exploration
- School meals play an important part for change – all groups can be reached which increases equality
- Educating staff in the retail business – for instance on how to handle packaging
- A white guide for sustainability?

## **Discussion on trade offs**

The discussion highlighted the following trade offs.

- Working conditions vs delivery of produce in time
- Contradictions in the instructions of government authorities regarding food system-matters.
- Over generalisation vs too much regulation
- Demand for rules and regulations vs rules and regulations hampering competitiveness
- Geopolitics
- Price and consequences for equality vs paying for eco-system services
- Healthy food is not always sustainable
- Increased self-sufficiency vs global trade
- Demands for sustainability can be both an advantage and a disadvantage for competitiveness
- Exports to low income countries vs simultaneously aiding low income countries
- Short value chains vs global trade
- Demands for sustainability in trade agreements vs no trade agreements at all
- Trade agreements as a tool - trade agreements take time, when finished they are obsolete
- Access to data vs competitiveness
- Rights vs obligations (food of one's choice vs obligation to choose according to sustainability)
- Affordable food vs food loss and waste
- Policy vs market
- Sustainability vs costs
- Technology development vs inequalities in access to technology