

INNOVATION PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABILITY

Distinguished Lecturers Series

Prof. JESSICA FANZO

“SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS IN THE ERA OF THE ANTHROPOCENE AND PANDEMICS: CAN WE HAVE IT ALL?”

August 17, 2020, 14 h CEST, Zoom

Abstract

In the last five years, we have seen many exhortations for food systems to provide not only nutritious foods, but to ensure those systems are sustainable from economic, environmental and social justice perspectives. With climate disruption, worsening food insecurity and malnutrition, systemic inequities, and now, the COVID-19 pandemic, the question remains: Can the world expect so much from food systems?

Future modeling and some scenarios show that we should call on food systems to do much more – that is, promote optimal human health, ensure future sustainable planetary health, and provide equitable and fair livelihoods of food system actors. However, this will depend on political will, science, technology, and behaviors and decisions of the unpredictable variable in the equation – humans.

This seminar will present some of the latest data on how food systems are coping in the context of the Anthropocene and the COVID-19 pandemic, and demonstrate how research and science, technological innovation and government action are imperative to ensure food systems are resilient.

At a time when facts and evidence are under ever greater scrutiny, and even openly disregarded as suspect by some political and business leaders, the rigors of science and evidence must be maintained. Research has a vital role in charting a positive and sustainable direction for global food security, nutrition, and health. Research can and does bring about wholesale changes in attitudes, political thought, and action. There has never been a time in history as there is now when progress can be made towards a better world in the context of communication, technologies, innovation, big data and global cooperation. Yet no technical recommendations to fix food systems will stand on two legs with the current fractured and sclerotic global political enabling environment. In order for food systems to function effectively, equitably and sufficiently during the pandemic and long after, the political environment must be one that embraces global cooperation and inclusion and minimizes

political polarization and geopolitical competition. Behavior change incentives and nudges of various food system actors and consumers must complement the research and politics.

Inevitably, there will be trade-offs. The question is, how to deal with those trade-offs while doing the least amount of damage. The seminar will conclude with potential food system pathways to resiliency, equity and sustainability for better diets, better human and planetary health, and a better world.

About the speaker

Jessica Fanzo, PhD is the Bloomberg Distinguished Professor of Global Food Policy and Ethics at the Berman Institute of Bioethics, the Bloomberg School of Public Health, and the Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) at the Johns Hopkins University in the USA. She also serves as the Director of Hopkins' Global Food Policy and Ethics Program, and as Director of Food & Nutrition Security at the JHU Alliance for a Healthier World. She is the Editor-in-Chief for the Global Food Security Journal and leads on the development, in collaboration with GAIN, of the Food Systems Dashboard.

From 2017 to 2019, Jessica served as the Co-Chair of the Global Nutrition Report, the UN High Level Panel of Experts on Food Systems and Nutrition, and the EAT Lancet Commission. Before coming to Hopkins, she has also held positions at Columbia University, the Earth Institute, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Food Programme, Bioversity International, and the Millennium Development Goal Centre at the World Agroforestry Center in Kenya. Jessica has a PhD in nutrition from the University of Arizona.

Registration for the event: <https://www.uni-bonn.de/forschung/forschungsprofil/innovation-und-technologie-fuer-eine-nachhaltige-zukunft/registration>

The lecture is held via Zoom and will be recorded and published afterwards.

The Zoom access data will be sent to those registered a few days prior to the lecture.

About the Lecture Series

The lecture series on Innovation Pathways to Sustainability is a forum for high profile and internationally visible scientists who are active in academia or at the science-policy interface. The lectures address an interdisciplinary audience of experts from natural, social, and engineering sciences as well as representatives from international and implementation-oriented organizations.

Save the date for the next lectures:

- 03.09.2020, 14 h CEST, Prof. Noelle E. Selin (MIT)
- 23.09.2020, 14 h CEST, Prof. Matin Qaim (University of Göttingen)

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