

Prof. Dr. Gerhard Schiefer
University of Bonn

Discussion Session:

Fooddynamics and Innovation: the Challenge of Sustainability
IAMA conference 2009

Organizers:

Dr. Melanie Fritz, Prof. Dr. Gerhard Schiefer (corresponding author)
International Center for Food Chain and Network Research
University of Bonn, Meckenheimer Allee 174, D-53115 Bonn, Germany
Tel. +49-228-733500, Fax +49-228-733431
e-mails: m.fritz@uni-bonn.de; schiefer@uni-bonn.de

Outline:

This session evolved out of the 'International European Forum on System Dynamics and Innovation in Food Networks' in 2008 (organized by Melanie Fritz and Gerhard Schiefer) which had a main focus on sustainability in a broad sense. Research discussions were combined with major industry case studies presented by industry leaders. It is linked to the European Technology Platform 'Food for Life' which, as an industry driven platform, develops future main thrusts for cooperation between industry and research in development activities. One of the three main thrusts, phrased as 'Sustainable and Ethical Production' developed out of 2 European working groups of the platform on 'Sustainability' (headed by Prof. Ohlsson) and 'Food Chain Management' (headed by Prof. Schiefer).

The presentations in the session are intended to provide a framework for discussion. Sustainability in economic, social, and environmental terms is a pre-condition for the successful development of the food sector in a time of increasing instability, diminishing resources, increasing competition in the use of resources and increasing demand. Awareness of the problems and the 'sustainability view' is the basis from where innovations and development engagements will evolve.

Industry has been engaged in creating a number of discussion forums for sector support. Examples include the SAI (Sustainable Agriculture Initiative) presently chaired by Nestle or the GRI (Global Reporting Initiative) which intends to provide a common basis for documentation and communication.

To leave enough room for discussions, the session restricts itself to some few presentations which identify certain aspects of the sustainability challenge. The session will be moderated by Melanie Fritz.

Presentations (working titles):

1. Introduction: the focus of sustainability (G. Schiefer, Germany)
This presentation puts the case on the table and provides the broad picture on which the discussion will have to build.
2. The challenge of sustainability for the food sector and the food industry (Th. Ohlsson, Sweden)
This presentation provides insight into the state of the art in research, into actual developments and industry efforts, and formulates future challenges for industry and the sector, research will have to deal with.
3. Combining Lean Production with environmental assessment (K. Östergren, Sweden)
New developments in management like 'lean production' and others may have substantial environmental consequences. This study can present some interesting empirical results on the issue.
4. Case study on sustainability in coffee in cooperation with Nestle (F. Declerck, France)
This presentation provides a picture on how to approach analysis and to identify hot spots for improvements.
5. Can 'sustainability' be bought for market access? (M. Fritz, G. Schiefer, Germany)
Sustainability issues become more and more important in marketing activities. Retail chains are using 'food miles' and similar indicators for marketing, Indicators like 'carbon foot print' may become the base for taxation etc. Under these circumstances, the trading of 'sustainability' has become an issue. Approaches like 'book and claim' might offer solutions which might be embraced by international certification schemes.

Participants:

Prof. Dr. Thomas **Ohlsson** is past vice president of SIK, the Swedish Institute for Food and Biotechnology where he has established a working group on sustainability in food industry which has dominated the discussion in the food sector during the last 10-15 years. He is former president of the European Federation of Food Science and Technology and has chaired (and still does) the working group on sustainability of the European Technology Platform 'Food for Life' which is the foremost EU discussion and cooperation platform for industry and research.

Dr Karin **Östergren** is a senior researcher at SIK, the Swedish Institute for Food and Biotechnology where she is engaged in the working group on sustainability in the

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food industry (see above). Her presentation will complement the presentation by Prof. Ohlsson.

Prof. Dr. Francis **Declerck** is chair for 'Excellence in European Food Chains' in the International Agri-Food Management Institute at ESSEC Business School, Paris. His focus is on a variety of dimensions in food industry strategic developments as, e.g., mergers, finance, future markets. He is engaged in the board of IAMA.

Prof. Dr. Gerhard **Schiefer** is director of the International Center for Food Chain and Network Research at the University of Bonn. He has long-standing experience in food chain issues and has since the mid-90s organized European (EAAE) workshops on Quality and Environmental challenges the food sector is faced with. Since 2007 he organizes, together with Melanie Fritz, the annual 'International European Forum on System Dynamics and Innovation in Food Networks'.

Dr. Melanie **Fritz** is Associate Professor at the International Center for Food Chain and Network Research at the University of Bonn. She coordinates a European project on the role of trust in e-commerce-based business relationships in the food industry. Trust is focussing on the whole range of sustainability information covering economic, social and environmental issues. She has organized a European consortium for cooperation in sustainability projects and is co-organizer of the 'International European Forum on System Dynamics and Innovation in Food Networks'.