

In action



Joining forces to shape a resilient,
sustainable, safe & healthy food system!

May 2022

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In a foreword

Dear readers,

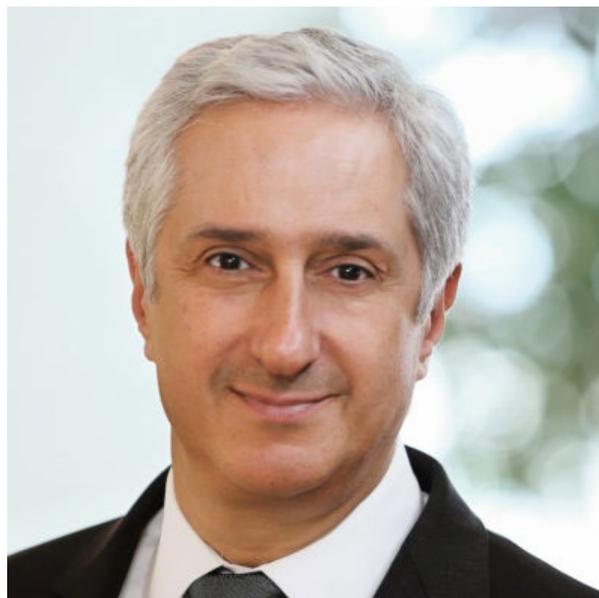
Since 2020, the world has been experiencing a period of extreme uncertainty, continuously exacerbated by health, climate and political emergencies. These disruptions have drastically affected food supply chains worldwide and revealed how fragile food systems really are. This challenging scenario requires a new way of thinking and acting in our sector. In the short term, we must be able to adapt much quicker to change and to develop mechanisms that enhance coordinated action and allow us to prevent food disruptions and food crisis. In the long run, it is imperative to develop sustainable ecosystems that ensure food security for everyone and address planetary health issues like zero emissions, soil health, and environmental preservation.

This means that we need to adopt new approaches that can bring concrete solutions to this complex goal. We will need to intertwine policies and projects including agricultural, urban planning, public health, territorial cohesion, transportation, and environment. This systemic approach will require multi-stakeholder partnerships that include every actor along the food value chain, both public and private. Farmers, wholesale markets, retailers, logisticians, governments, international organizations and other food stakeholders must join forces and act cooperatively.

WUWM works towards this goal in a consistent and concrete way, operating as a bridge that connects “farm to fork”. Today, around 50% of fresh produce worldwide passes through wholesale markets, getting fresh food from where it is grown in rural areas, to its urban destination.

This month’s newsletter is dedicated to the highly effective projects and partnerships that we have established to create momentum and enhance the transformation of our food systems.

As May is the month of our “Love your local market” (LYLM) campaign, we are focusing on the important topic of local, sustainable food environments. The ambition of LYLM is to attract and encourage as many people as possible to shop in fresh food street markets.



Municipal fresh food markets, also called “farmers markets” are the most effective food outlets that cities can foster to promote healthy diets and ensure available and affordable fresh produce for its citizens. This year the campaign will be launched in Lisbon, Portugal and celebrated in more than 3000 fresh food markets around the world.

Interviews with world known specialists of the food sector can be found in this edition of “In Action”. There, fresh food street markets are discussed, along with a summary of events that WUWM has either organized or attended with other major stakeholders to create new ways of doing and thinking within our sector.

Let’s find solutions to make a healthy diet the easiest one to choose for every citizen around the world!

I would personally like to thank all our members and partner organizations that cooperate with us and share in the same values and goals.

Hope to see you soon at one of the Love Your Local Market events!

Yours sincerely,

Stephane Layani,
WUWM Chairman





Involved:

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WUWM joins the new “Technical Network of Municipal Experts on Urban Food Markets” launched by the FAO

The “Technical Network of Municipal Experts on Urban Food Markets” is a sharing platform created by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) with support from the NGO’s RIKOLTO. The aim of the platform is to strengthen technical knowledge and support for local governments in the development of successful municipal food policies by sharing best practices and important case studies. Cities can play a significant role in the functioning and management of market systems, but they often lack expertise and initiative in promoting sustainable and healthy food policies.

This network exploits the potential of a cooperative city-market relationship, and reduces any knowledge gaps by sharing experiences and expertise.

WUWM was invited to join the network as a permanent member, and become a leading voice during the launch event of this innovative network. We are really looking forward to contributing more with our market expertise.

“The aim of the platform is to gather together representatives of municipalities and experts of urban and market management sectors to strengthen local governments technical knowledge in successful municipal food policies.”



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Could you share with our readers what is the “Technical Network of Municipal Experts on Urban Food Markets” about?

The Technical Network of Municipal Experts on Urban Food Markets was launched in April 2022 to create a space where municipal experts and other stakeholders can share their experiences and generate new ideas on how to improve urban food markets so they can contribute to more sustainable food systems. Several studies have shown that unhealthy dietary patterns can be linked to purchasing food from specific outlets. Urban markets are therefore an important entry point to support the adoption of healthy diets since they have the potential to improve the accessibility, availability, and affordability of diverse, locally produced, seasonal, healthy and nutritious food.

Cities have considerable influence on how markets are managed but due to a lack of data on territorial markets and their relevance for consumers’ diets, they are often left out of strategies to promote local economies and improve nutrition. At the same time, municipal experts are often eager to learn from other cities who are dealing with similar challenges and opportunities. This is why the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) launched this Network of Municipal Experts on Urban Food Markets, with Rikolto’s support, within the framework of FAO’s Urban Food Agenda. The network currently involves over 20 intermediary and metropolitan cities from Latin America and Africa, divided into three language groups.

The network also includes 3 guest cities: Montpellier (France), Valencia (Spain) and Leuven (Belgium) who will join in at various moments of the exchanges to bring in insights from their own experiences on the ground. We can think for example of the Marché d’Intérêt National (MIN) in Montpellier which is playing a key role in the promotion of short food chains and food sovereignty in the city, or La Tira de Contar in Valencia which enables local farmers to market their fresh produce directly to the city market.

Interview with Charlotte Flechet

4 Global Program Director — Food Smart Cities, Rikolto, about the launch of the “Technical Network of Municipal Experts on Urban Food Markets”

RIKOLTO is an international non-governmental organization that works hand in hand with farmer organizations and food chain stakeholders across the globe, in order to fight food insecurity, climate change, and economic inequality. RIKOLTO supported the FAO in the establishment of the “Technical Network of Municipal Experts on Urban Food Markets”. We had the pleasure to interview Charlotte Flechet, Global Program Director of Food Smart Cities at RIKOLTO, about the freshly launched Technical Network and its objectives.





Who are the technical experts that will participate in the network?

The experts are primarily staff from partner municipalities with a specific mandate to oversee or manage public markets. In some cases, there is only one representative per municipality and in other cases, there are several participants with different responsibilities related to market management in their city. Depending on the topic discussed, other stakeholders from academia or civil society are invited to contribute.

What are the main challenges that the network will engage with?

Sustainable and inclusive urban food markets can contribute to addressing a variety of critical economic, environmental and health challenges by encouraging the consumption of fresh, nutritious food and stimulating local, resilient economies when connecting directly with local producers. Seven exchanges are planned for this year: 2 in a plenary group with all the cities and 5 per language group with approximately 7 cities in each one. The exchanges will be structured along 3 pillars: wholesale markets, retail markets and governance mechanisms for successful markets. While the content of the discussions will vary depending on the interests of the participants in each group, we anticipate that the following questions will likely feature high on the agenda: Which mechanisms can be put in place to include smallholder food producers into neighborhood and wet markets? Which business models can help make food distribution and logistics more efficient to increase the affordability of fresh local foods? What mechanisms and models can encourage circular food initiatives to reduce food loss and waste in markets? And how can food strategies and food councils influence the way markets are managed and support the emergence of new initiatives? Ultimately, public markets are a system and need to be approached from a holistic perspective focusing on the improvement of relationships between the actors.

“Several studies have shown that unhealthy dietary patterns can be linked to purchasing food from specific outlets.”

What kind of urban policies and practices at municipal level could be implemented, for example?

Municipalities have a wide variety of tools and instruments to incentivize more efficient, sustainable and inclusive urban markets, either via policy incentives such as land-use zoning, regulations that govern the interactions between different market types and actors, investments in infrastructure (e.g. in cold chains and logistics platforms) or by strengthening the capacity of market operators (for example on food safety). A concrete example is local food distribution platforms and food hubs that can help improve the logistics of bringing local food to urban markets in an efficient way. We will also explore the role of multi-stakeholder platforms in designing initiatives that connect the dots and help make markets more sustainable and inclusive. The case of Arusha, one of our partners at Rikolto, is interesting in that regard. There is an active multi-stakeholder platform working towards a sustainable food system in the city with various working groups looking into logistics and city planning, youth employment and food safety, among other things. Members of the platform are now working on an interesting model involving the sanitation department of the municipality, 2 companies and a youth-led enterprise to collect food waste from markets

rikolto

and transform it into animal feeds and fertilizers using black soldier flies. They are also exploring the possibility of setting up a local participatory food safety guarantee mechanism (inspired by the organic PGS), coupled with a logistics platform to bring safe veggies to city markets. None of the actors would be able to do so alone but the platform enabled them to create together a new model where each actor contributes a piece to the puzzle.

What is - or could be - the role of WUWM and wholesale markets in this framework?

We are counting on WUWM colleagues to share their expertise on how to manage wholesale markets effectively, particularly looking at the specific managerial and operational modalities that can enable wholesale markets to be more inclusive of small-scale local producers. Drawing on WUWM's extensive global network and experts, we hope it can also share inspiring examples of successful inclusive business models in the field of local food distribution, as well as provide advice on how local authorities can collaborate with wholesale markets as part of their public procurement.

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What were the main outcomes of the launch?

The launch event served several purposes: to develop a mutual understanding of how urban markets can contribute to healthy and sustainable diets and the potential role of cities in tackling these challenges, to understand the needs and expectations of participants so that the content of the exchanges could be tailored to their needs, to map the experiences that each city is willing to share with the rest of the group, and to create ownership of the network and its objectives among participants. We are glad that these objectives have been achieved and are very thankful to all the participants and speakers, including WUWM, who helped create a solid foundation for the network.

“The exchanges will be structured along 3 pillars: wholesale markets, retail markets and governance mechanisms for successful markets.”



In the loop:

After the UNFSS, the UN gives new hints to reshape food systems policies by proposing “Territorial approaches for sustainable development”

The United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, António Guterres, convened the first UN “Food Systems Summit”(UNFSS) in 2021 in order to raise global awareness and shape global commitments to transform food systems and resolve hunger, reduce diet-related diseases and restore planetary health. The priority of the Summit was to debate and exchange ideas about how to realize the five main topics:

1. Grant access to safe and nutritious food.
2. Shift to sustainable consumption patterns.
3. Boost nature-positive production.
4. Advance equitable livelihoods.
5. Build resilience in the food sector.

The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) recently published a report called “Territorial Food Systems for Sustainable Development: Issue Brief for UN Food Systems Summit”, aiming to provide further inputs to the discussions raised during the UNFSS.



We wanted to share their main remarks with our readers as we believe that they could be of interest. In their report the UNCDF claims that to achieve the objectives of the UNFSS we need to develop “territorial food systems” approaches to facilitate implementation and grant long-term sustainability of actions undertaken.

What is a “territorial approach”? Tailor-made policies and strategies that consider the local realities, building solutions that are targeted to specific context. According to the UNCDF, place-centered and people-centered actions are more effective and promote multi-level participation. Policy-makers and private actors make better-informed decisions across different sectors by taking into account social, economic, geographical and political needs. In this way, their investments can be guided towards specific objectives. The territorial approach is transversal. It connects local, regional, national and international participants, resulting in efficient, multi-level decisions to act.

A full transition to sustainable and inclusive food systems must tackle hunger, food insecurity, malnutrition, diet-related diseases, poverty, biodiversity protection and climate change. In order to achieve these multi-layered complex goals, territorial approaches have proven to be the most effective compared to conventional interventions. According to UN research data, current food systems are incapable of making safe, affordable and healthy diets accessible. Before the outbreak

“Territorial approaches are tailor-made policies and strategies that take into account the local realities building solutions that are targeted to that context.”





of the pandemic, the world counted more than 750 million food insecure people, over 2 billion overweight or obese, and more than 3 billion people who could not afford a healthy diet. These numbers have gotten worse since Covid-19 emerged. This crisis revealed the importance of stable local economies and well-developed infrastructure lines, among cities and surrounding rural territories, to food stability for future compound crises. UNCDF identified three main game-changer strategies in the report that need to be adopted in order to transition to sustainable and inclusive food systems:

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1) Reorienting Natural Resources Management and Food Production

Natural resources and food production must be reoriented according to the social and economic activity they operate in, as well as the biophysical landscapes or environments in which they function. Human and ecological components need to be synergistically addressed. Specific attention should be directed towards site-adapted forms of land use and agricultural production, which contribute to healthy and sustainable diets, secure incomes, while also respecting environmental sustainability.

“A food territorial approach will connect local, regional, national and international scales, resulting in an efficient multi-level action.”

2) Reviving local economies in a connected world

A second pivotal point is to focus on urban-rural linkages: local economies must be revived, connections between rural, peri-urban and urban areas can more effectively link producers to markets and consumers and create opportunities for investments in food production, processing, storage, transport and markets that can support local economic development and improve the life quality of those communities. In this context, priority should be given to local markets and short food chains, in particular in small cities: this will not only benefit the local economy but also promote eco-friendly practices connected to transportation costs, seasonal and organic food products.

3) Ensuring Human Rights and Social Protection

Territorial food systems can concretely promote human rights and ensure social protection in several different spheres: by effectively addressing the needs of the context at stake, this approach can for instance improve health conditions, promote education, foster employment, address gender equality issues and ensure a sustainable management of resources.

In order to implement the transition to sustainable and resilient food systems, governments at every level (national, regional and local) must be directly involved in the process. A multilevel governance architecture based on the principle of subsidiarity should be the main element. Documenting and sharing these territorial strategies will also help other realities to improve their own policies.

In facts:

- Our global food system is the primary driver of biodiversity loss, with agriculture alone being the identified threat to 86 percent of the species at risk of extinction.
- Agriculture provides livelihoods for over a billion people, and there are approximately 500 million family farms worldwide, most of them operate at a small scale.
- Despite their role as primary contributors to food security, particularly in developing countries, small-scale producers are often very fragile.
- Small producers in less-developed areas often face barriers to accessing markets, as weak market infrastructure and local market concentration can hinder their participation in these markets.
- The key to food security is to improve public investment in infrastructure for markets, storage and other food system components to support deconcentrating of production and distribution networks and bring more diversity for resilience.
- In the food processing and retail sectors, corporate concentration can hinder food environments by influencing prices and increasing the proportion of highly processed foods, limiting food choices and agency for individual consumers.

“Our global food system is the primary driver of biodiversity loss, with agriculture alone being the identified threat to 86 percent of the species at risk of extinction.”

In Focus:

Get ready For Love Your Local Market Campaign 2022! During the month of May WUWM and thousands of partner fresh food markets will be celebrating this campaign under the theme “I support my local market = I support local production and short-circuits!”

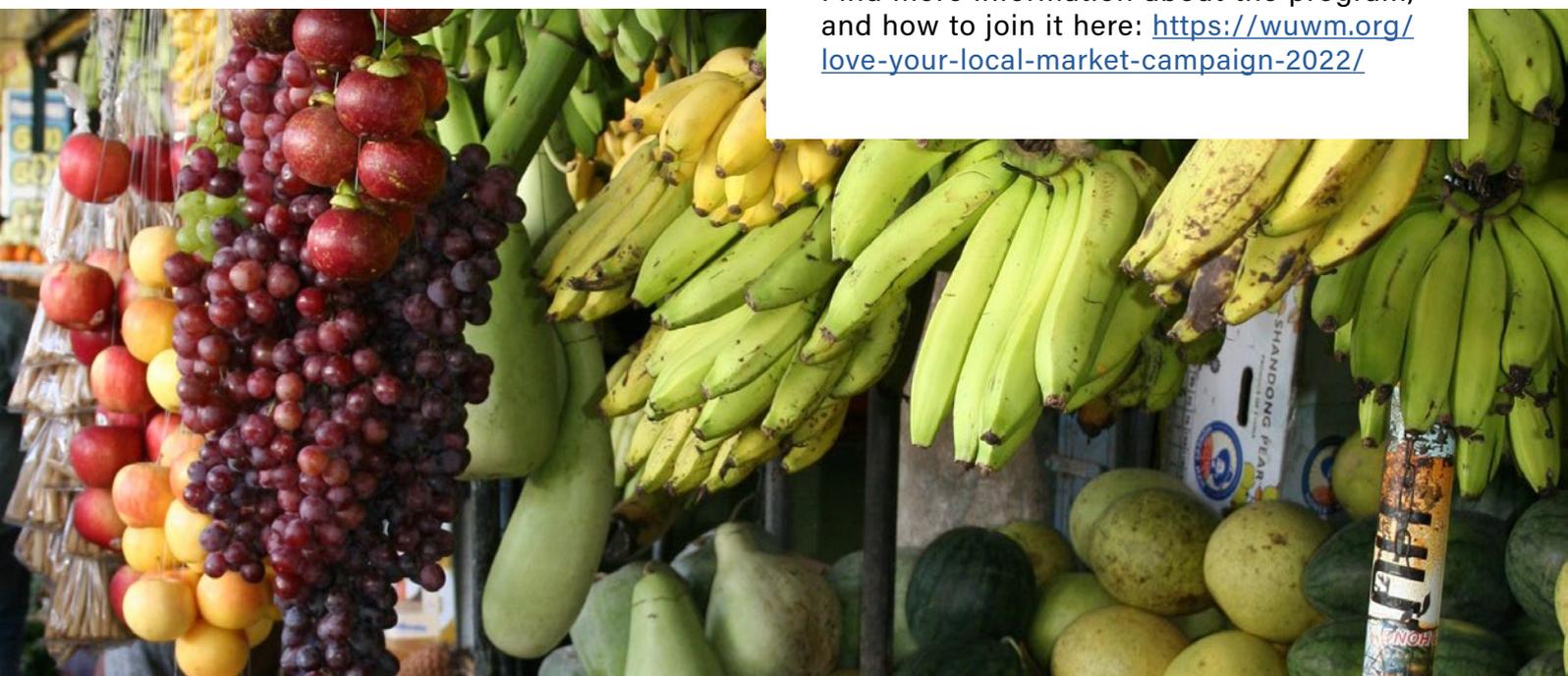
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your local
market

The month of May will be rich in celebrations of Love Your Local Market (LYLM), the annual campaign coordinated by WUWM aimed at empowering fresh food street markets and healthy eating habits. This year, LYLM campaign will be launched in Lisbon, Portugal, but around 3000 markets in the world will join the celebrations by organizing many activities (concerts, show cooking, kids activities...). Portugal has been engaging at different levels for the event under the coordination of SIMAB Group (Portuguese wholesale markets) together with ministries and municipalities. They will host events in every city that has a wholesale market to also bring awareness to the existing linkages between wholesale markets and street food markets – as 90% of the produce sold in fresh food retail markets comes from wholesale markets.

Find more information about the program, and how to join it here: <https://wuwmm.org/love-your-local-market-campaign-2022/>





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Interview

with David Preston, NABMA's Chief Executive

Today Love Your Local Market is a global campaign, coordinated by WUWM and celebrated by thousands of fresh food markets around the world. Nevertheless, the original campaign started in the United Kingdom 11 years ago, in occasion of the launch of LYLM 2022, we made an interview with David Preston, Chief Executive of NABMA, in order to share the history of Love Your Local Market with you.

The LYLM campaign is in its 11th year and is now celebrated in more than 24 countries in the world! NABMA created this campaign. Could you tell our readers the history of LYLM?

NABMA is proud that this world-wide event, enjoyed each year by millions of people, started out as a result of discussions between NABMA and the UK government.

In 2011 the UK Prime Minister set up a review into the future of UK high streets and appointed Mary Portas, a well-known UK retail consultant and broadcaster to lead it. The government at the time was concerned at the contraction of retail and was seeking to deliver real change in communities and make towns multi-functional places to live, work and visit.

It is widely recognised that NABMA was responsible for Portas putting an emphasis on the importance of markets in her final report to government that had many recommendations about what could be done to improve high streets and town and city centres. Markets figured prominently in the report that was unequivocal in its support for the markets industry, emphasising a belief that "Markets can serve as fundamental traffic drivers back to our High Streets".

The report also highlighted how important markets can be as an opportunity for a new start business and encouraged the establishment of a National Market Day. The idea of holding a National Market Day was enthusiastically embraced by the UK markets industry. To capture both daily and weekly markets then a celebration over two weeks was agreed and LYLM was launched in the UK to great acclaim during the period 23rd June – 8th July 2012.

NABMA was the lead organisation to coordinate the celebrations designing the brand and logo that is still used today across the world. In the early years the UK government provided significant funding with a parliamentary reception to launch the event.

NABMA
the voice of markets

LYLM is now a worldwide brand and celebration - what has been the journey?

NABMA has worked closely for many years with Jean-Paul Auguste and his company Groupe Geraud recognising their interest and support for markets in both France and England. At the time of the launch of LYLM in the UK, discussions with Jean-Paul Auguste led to the recognition of similar issues around high streets and communities in both of our respective countries. As a result, consideration began about how LYLM and its concept could be extended beyond national boundaries to create an international campaign. By bringing together other countries then a critical mass could be formed to generate media interest.

The aims were to provide a collective approach for promoting, celebrating and demonstrating to individual governments both retail and wholesale markets and their many values, that of course include supporting economies, tourism and community life.

For centuries, markets have been enlivening and adding vibrancy to the public spaces in our town and city centres. Although a primary aim of the campaign has been to build affection for markets, the essence of LYLM is about encouraging start-up businesses and supporting food policies, healthy diets and being at the heart of local communities.

NABMA is grateful to John Paul Auguste as a Director of the WUWM Retail Group for his unstinting support and promotion of LYLM over the last 12 years and his bringing together of many international partners to promote this worldwide promotion and celebration of markets around the globe

What do you think the success of LYLM is due to?

The answer will probably vary in each country that supports LYLM but the constant factors will be around local leadership, determination and commitment.

Without doubt in the UK then huge credit must be given to Graham Wilson OBE, the Chief Executive of NABMA at the time of the UK government review of high streets and the lobbying that he, and NABMA itself, undertook with Mary Portas, government ministers and officials to ensure that markets both featured, and were recognised in the recommendations of the report. Similar credit must also be recorded for the support, generosity and lobbying within WUWM of Jean-Paul Auguste.

“Internationally, the success of LYLM must relate back to the value and pride that communities have placed in their local market.”

Internationally, the success of LYLM must relate back to the value and pride that communities have placed in their local market and its local businesses. LYLM helps profile the vibrancy, history and individuality of a high street and its market with the added offers of affordable fresh food, low entry business start-up opportunities and many environmental gains with less packaging, local food and less miles traveled. Success therefore is dependent on market operators buying into the campaign and recognising the potential rewards. Year on year in the UK, pre Covid, the number of markets participating has increased and sustainable new businesses have been created.





Pre Covid it is recognised that some 11,000 prospective new businesses trialed market trading during LYLM and some 1,000 plus sustainable businesses were established. The support of market operators to provide free or subsidised stall costs has therefore been a backbone of the LYLM success.

What are your expectations for this year's campaign?

That is an interesting question. NABMA is obviously delighted to welcome back LYLM in the UK for 2022 but there has to be a realism about what can be achieved as the pandemic continues. Each of the twenty-five participating countries in 2019 will have their own ever-changing health regulations to follow, but the overriding positive is that the markets can generally welcome back a campaign that is the most significant celebration of the importance of markets in our generation.

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In the UK we have to balance for some a renewed public interest and trust in markets coming out of the pandemic but with the appreciation that for others some markets face a more uncertain future. As some markets will benefit from investment and government regeneration funding then we must appreciate that others have budgetary issues, the loss of many long serving traders and an urgent need for investment.

NABMA is actively promoting LYLM from a strong social media platform. Throughout the years of LYLM the UK has benefited from

“In the UK markets are recognised as being in the top influencing factors to create vibrant and vital high streets and the pandemic has highlighted their community value.”

generous sponsorship. This has enabled a dedicated social media presence that has a potential reach of 63 million. Last year with a limited number of participating markets, and many Covid restrictions in place a social media following of some 30,000 was registered

The most important aspect for 2022 is to welcome back LYLM and the opportunity to see it at back at the heart of local communities. Rebuilding is necessary after the loss of two years of the campaign but markets and market people are resilient and we must enjoy and celebrate 2022, and at the same time plan and look forward to LYLM 2023.

This year LYLM is going to be extended extraordinarily in your country - from Friday 13th May to Sunday 5th June 2022 - in occasion of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, what are the extra celebrations and events planned to merge these two events?

In June 2022, the United Kingdom will be in the spotlight around the world in celebration of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's seventy years of service. Our traditional May Bank Holiday has been moved and extended to Thursday 2nd June 2022 and with an extra Bank Holiday on Friday the 3rd of June the UK will enjoy a nationwide 4-day celebration.

Our Royal Jubilee events are historically synonymous with street parties and gatherings up and down the country as communities, friends and neighbours get together to enjoy and celebrate. In years gone by markets have often been a feature of these celebrations.

It seemed sensible therefore to extend LYLM into the Jubilee celebrations to take advantage of social media, merchandising etc and to ensure that markets can be included as a feature of local programmes of events and their publicity.

How have COVID 19 impacted on your markets and local authorities and how have you reacted?

Without doubt the last two years have been the most difficult in memory for markets, communities and society in general. Covid has had a huge impact on markets in the UK but throughout the pandemic our markets, where possible, have stayed open to support communities, the elderly and vulnerable with essential supplies. As a result, they have attracted a renewed interest, trust and support.

In the UK, markets generally have received little or no government funding but the majority of operators have supported their traders by waiving rentals.

NABMA itself has provided a 24/7 service to its members with up-to-date information, guidance and general support. It produced a five-point survival plan that underpinned its discussions with government and continues to deliver advice and guidance for government and high street partners.

NABMA itself was moved to virtual platforms and through these it successfully delivered its professional development, various services and conferences and events. New events were delivered included a successful fortnightly series of 'Meet the Manager' discussions that were focused to support wellbeing and provide a network for informal discussion and mutual support.

And more in general, what are your views on the future of markets in the forthcoming years?

Without doubt markets will continue to be at the heart of local communities in years to come. Covid however will drive change and in some instances a change in history and tradition has already started as some markets have successfully moved location, changed days of operation and opening hours due to the pandemic and improving safety.

In the UK then markets are recognised as being in the top influencing factors to create vibrant and vital high streets and the pandemic has highlighted their community value and, in many communities, generated both new and returning customers.

For some operators the recovery from the pandemic will be difficult and may not be possible but for others markets can be firmly placed at the heart of fast changing community hubs. As well as supporting their struggling high street then markets can provide vital social and cultural interaction.

Markets, into the future, with vision, partners and a plan can help deliver environmental benefits supporting climate change; they can support and partner local business cases for investment; they can be the incubator to provide low cost and accessible start up business opportunities and still continue to be the heartbeat of town and city centres playing a pivotal role in providing affordable and fresh quality produce and generating economic value and increasing footfall for wider benefit.

NABMA is proud of markets, market customers, market managers and market teams for what they have delivered during the pandemic. New challenges now apply and NABMA will continue to support our membership as individually and collectively we strive to deliver professional markets and management.

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Innovation

Get to know the main findings of the research-project “Moving Market Places” (MMP), the European-based study on street fresh food markets

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Moving Market Places (MMP) is a European-based research project that has been working for three years now in four European countries. The research-project focuses on the dynamics that arise from and around traders' mobility and marketplaces, investigating market regulations and accessibility across different territories. The time period of the research corresponds with the outbreak Covid-19 pandemic, a major contributing factor to the outcomes of the investigation. We had the pleasure to interview the MMP research team to discuss the Moving Market Places project in detail, their objectives and findings.

Could you explain to our readers what the research project Moving Market Places” (MMP), is about?

Moving Market Places (MMP) is a research project between four European countries. It has been funded by the HERA network which, on this occasion, funded projects that study public space from different angles. In our case, we have been investigating street markets from the perspective of traders for the past three years now and we will finish the research later this year. During our study, we have been asking how traders' mobility creates public space and connects marketplaces across different geographies. We have also taken a closer look at the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in marketplaces, asking how market regulations affect traders' accessibility to markets as workspaces and what kind of dynamics of in/exclusion exist among traders themselves.

Where has Moving Market Places geographically focused on their research?

The research has taken place in Spain, Switzerland, The UK and the Netherlands. In each country our researchers have worked on one urban and one not-so-urban market. The markets differ quite importantly in terms of their size, product offering and the socio-economic profile of both traders and customers. These differences are representative of the myriad types of markets that exist around Europe, but they have also provided us with relevant information on how different markets are managed and the type of role traders can play in their everyday functioning.

The Moving MarketPlaces project is based on solid investigation and empirical data: what have you discovered so far about traders and markets?

Regarding the traders, perhaps one of the first observations is that there is no homogeneous group of traders as such. As elsewhere in the society, traders too tend to form their in-groups, and not always is there a lot of interaction between professionals that have different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds or those who trade with completely different products. At times, conflicts arise because of issues of space or noise, but in general there is a lot of solidarity among traders who often keep an eye on the neighbours' stalls, help each other out with change money or with the construction of the stall.

“The conviviality between traders, customers and other business owners is important for the municipalities where markets take place since it increases their tax revenues and can revitalise the local economy.”

Another thing we have observed is that it takes hard work and skills to be a good and professional trader. Many of them work six or seven days a week, and it often requires waking up early to prepare the products and to drive to the different marketplaces. In addition, setting up and dismantling the stall often requires hard physical labor. Furthermore, at peak hours the speed of the sales is very accelerated, which means that traders must be able to simultaneously concentrate on calculating the prices, welcoming all clients, answering to their demands and sharing their knowledge of the products.

A third observation is that small towns and city districts seem to be increasingly interested in having temporary markets enlivening their streets and squares, because a market day not only attracts customers to buy from the traders, but it also invites people to consume in other establishments such as regular shops, bars and cafes. In some small towns, we have been told that without the market, businesses wouldn't make nearly as much as they do thanks to all the people that get out on the streets because of the market, but eventually enter other shops and businesses, thereby increasing the overall spending in the town. This is also why street markets are increasingly regulated by the local governing bodies – the conviviality between traders, customers and other business owners is important for the municipalities where markets take place since it increases their

tax revenues and can revitalise the local economy. Traders must pay several kinds of taxes and follow numerous regulations that constitute their rights and obligations to trade in public space. In this sense there is little spontaneity to the markets that pop up for a day and disappear at the end of it – traders' entry and exit hours are often regulated, as are the products that they can sell and the size of the stall where they display their goods. All in all, we have seen that there are very many organisational aspects behind a 'successful' market.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the governmental measures to control it have had a detrimental impact on public spaces and markets. Could you share with us some of the major observations you have done during this period? For example, what was the impact for households to have their markets closed?

Our research includes also direct observations of the impacts of Covid-19 on traders, markets and public space in general, which have been documented through articles and videos. One of the first and most clear impacts of Covid-19 across the four countries was that outdoor markets were closed in order to prevent people from being 'tempted' to go outside, to socialise and do their groceries in the marketplace. Seemingly, it was precisely markets' tendency to trigger interactions among people that made them seem more dangerous from an epidemiological perspective. In Spain, when markets were suspended, traders who were duly registered in the fiscal accounts could apply for subsidies that were, however, not equivalent to their regular income. They therefore suffered major losses in their revenues; some Spanish traders reported losses as big as 90% of their regular sales. Two years into the pandemic, some have still not recovered their revenues and only sell about 50% of what they used to earn before March 2020. Initially, there were also problems with food being wasted, especially among farmer traders who could suddenly no longer sell their seasonal goods.





On the other hand, something that we also noticed is that new forms of collaboration and sales arose amidst these difficulties. In Switzerland, we observed how traders started with home delivery services to distribute their goods. Besides the economic outcome, the traders also stressed how important it was for them to keep in contact with their customers. Although they tended to deliver vegetable boxes in front of the door, many also tried to squeeze in a chat with their customers. These kinds of brief interactions allowed the relations of care that would normally take place on the market to be preserved through their spatial transformation to new, domestic spaces. We observed the continuation of such social relations despite the closing of the markets across all four countries.

17 **“Accessibility to healthy diets [...] didn’t apply to the wider population because oftentimes the prices of local and/or organic products are inaccessible to middle- and lower-income customers.”**

And could you notice a negative impact on nutrition or accessibility to healthy diets?

In terms of nutrition and accessibility to healthy diets, some of our farmer traders declared that they initially experienced an increase in their sales, seemingly because suddenly people had more time to cook and to take care of themselves. This, however, didn’t apply to the wider population because oftentimes the prices of local and/or organic products are inaccessible to middle- and lower-income customers.

Could you share with our readers the main findings of the Moving Market Places study?

Apart from the findings we already mentioned, in one of the countries we are also witnessing a considerable change in the so-called market tradition. Many professionals who are third, fourth or even fifth generation traders have told us that their children will no longer continue the family business. In some cases, it is simply because the younger generation has had the opportunity to get a university degree and hope to find a more stable job, but the more common reason is that traders’ revenues have been decreasing ever since the 2007 economic crisis and many traders have seen their income reduce quite substantially. Some of them admit that while taxes and other expenses increase, the sales keep descending, making it harder for them to make ends meet. Increasingly, when a trader gets retired, his or her stall is more likely to be taken over by newcomers who accept the low-income expectations, rather than by family members. While the globalised system of supermarket chains had already decreased markets’ role in food provision, the sudden increase in online sales that was introduced by the outbreak of Covid-19 has had a further negative impact on many traders who now seek ways of diversifying their sales or plan to close the business. While this reality is not representative of all markets across the four countries, it does speak of a potential need for the local governing bodies to think of better policies of ensuring the viability of trading as a livelihood, since markets have proven to be important for so many reasons, be it for improving local tax revenues, providing income for small business owners and a space for the conviviality of different cultures and habits.

In Action:

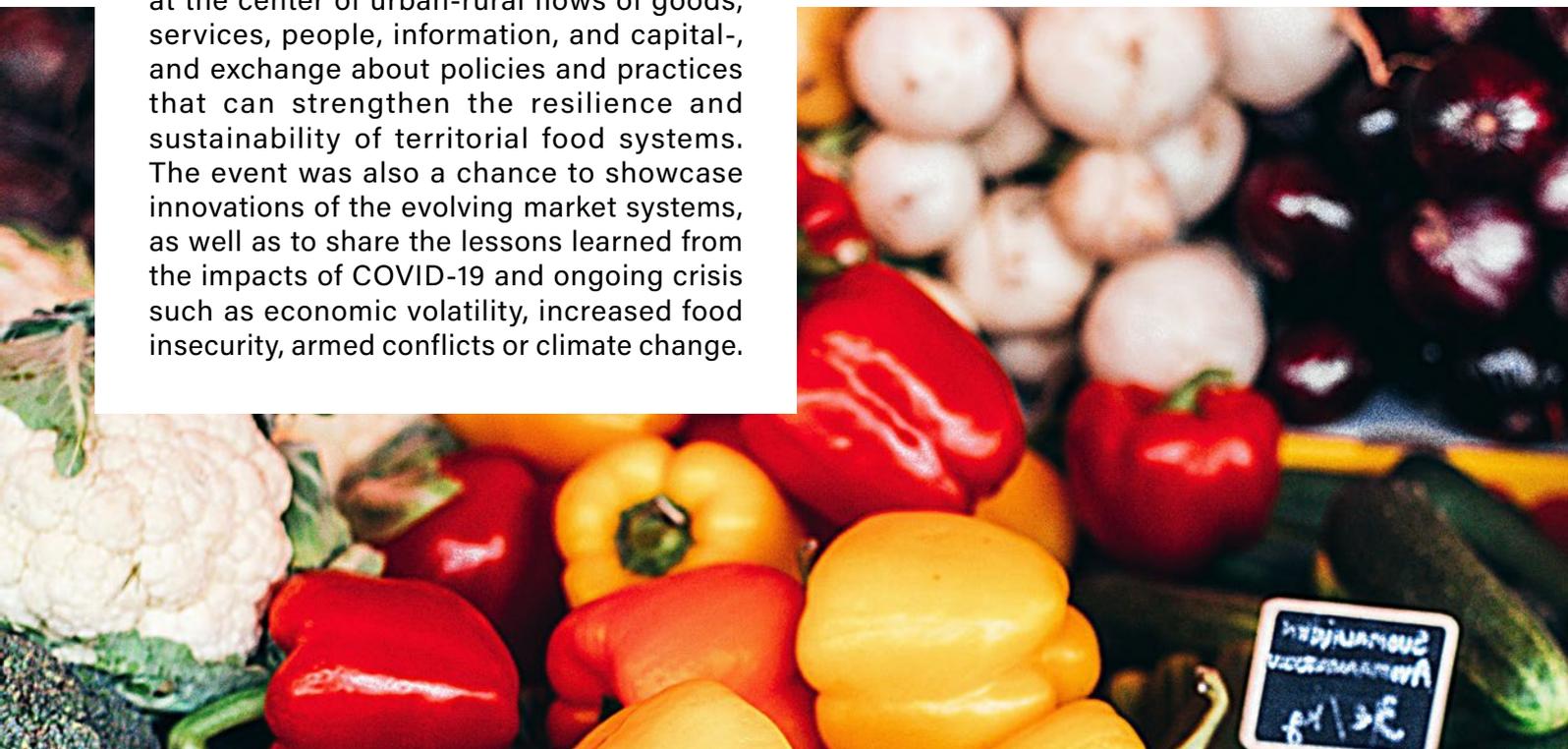
WUWM co-organized with major actors of the fresh food sector the webinar “Building sustainable and resilient food systems: Integrating Market Systems at the Centre of Urban-Rural Linkages”

On the 21st of April, WUWM co-organized with the World Farmers Market Coalition (WFMC), Market Cities Initiative (MCI), UN-Habitat, Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and Regions4 the webinar “Building sustainable and resilient food systems: Integrating Market Systems at the Centre of Urban-Rural Linkages. Other United Nations agencies supported the webinar, such as the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), the UN Environment Program (UNEP) and the UN Development Program (UNDP). More than 120 participants attended the webinar. We are glad to share with our readers a summary of the major outcomes here!

The aim of the webinar was to examine the role that market systems have – as they are at the center of urban-rural flows of goods, services, people, information, and capital, and exchange about policies and practices that can strengthen the resilience and sustainability of territorial food systems. The event was also a chance to showcase innovations of the evolving market systems, as well as to share the lessons learned from the impacts of COVID-19 and ongoing crisis such as economic volatility, increased food insecurity, armed conflicts or climate change.

Fresh food markets have always been a central element to world societies, being them social public spaces and engines of local economies. Markets are the spatial and functional intersection of rural and urban communities, of farmers and consumers, of nature and culture. Functional territories depend on functional markets. Nowadays, traditional local markets have evolved in many different forms: retail and wholesale, private and public, virtual and physical. Despite this continuous evolution, in the last two years markets and food supply chains have been facing a state of crisis. After the outbreak of Covid-19 markets came to the center of global attention: food producers and workers of the sector had to adapt and recover from the early stages of the pandemic, by placing more attention to social protections, healthy food supply and sustainability. This renewed caution is still important in 2022.

“Markets are the spatial and functional intersection of rural and urban communities, of farmers and consumers, of nature and culture. Functional territories depend on functional markets.”





“This jointly organized technical webinar focused on markets and food systems, building on lessons learned from the impacts of COVID-19 and ongoing crisis such as economic volatility, increased food insecurity, armed conflicts or climate change.”

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The wide theme of the webinar was tackled from different perspectives, which allowed a fruitful debate around a set of topics such as rapid urbanization, infrastructural development, urban and rural planning, logistical strategies, or data collection. International organizations and associations expressed their points of view and presented their own projects. FAO, for instance, developed a methodology to map territorial market systems, a set of data that is fundamental to show the importance of the market environment and crucial to work towards a successful food distribution. Representatives of local and regional realities presented to the public the situation faced by their market systems during the pandemic, and explained how they reacted, providing valuable experiences for the other participants. What emerged from these concrete examples is the need for an integrated and coordinated response in terms of governance, policy making and urban planning, in order to build solid connections that allow food accessibility and availability to even the poorest households.

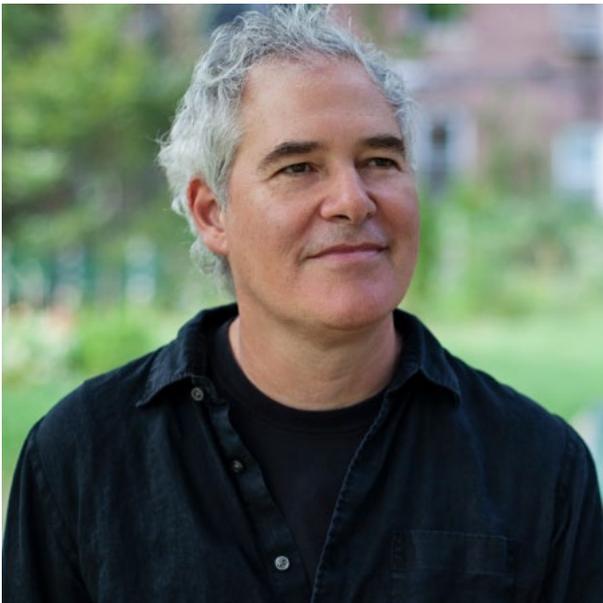
WUWM Secretary General Eugenia Carrara discussed the role of wholesale markets in the context of market systems, as linking infrastructures between rural producers and urban consumers. Empirical data from FAO

and GAIN studies proved how well-developed territorial market systems were better able to ensure food security to their communities and to reduce food chain disruptions and price volatility. As Secretary General Eugenia Carrara stated, “the ‘crisis world’ in which we are living requires urgent coordination and multi-stakeholder approaches in order to succeed in developing quick answers in front of crisis, innovative strategies and policies at local level”.

The work on the field, research, strategies and experiences advanced during the webinar represent crucial elements to prove the importance that market systems play in terms of food security and sustainability. For this reason, policy makers will cooperate with farmers’ associations and stakeholders of the food and market sector to implement successful policies ensuring availability of long term strategies for cities.

All the participants shared the same urge and commitments towards a solid collaboration and agreed in considering the webinar a first concrete step towards a stable space of exchange, where singular efforts done by every actor and association can help reinforce markets food system by strengthening rural-urban linkages and to aid local governments and other major food actors.

“What emerged from the webinar is the need for an integrated and coordinated response in terms of governance, policy making and urban planning.”



Interview

with Richard McCarthy

President of World Farmers Markets Coalition

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This year SIMAB proposed to organize LYLM in your country. Could you briefly explain us why? What is the situation regarding fresh food consumption in Portugal?

We had the pleasure to interview Richard McCarthy, President of the World Farmers Market Coalition (WFMC), one of the organizations that co-organized the webinar “Building sustainable and resilient food systems: Integrating Market Systems at the Centre of Urban-Rural Linkages” with WUWM. In our interview, we talked about his organization and the themes of sustainable food systems and urban-rural linkages addressed in the webinar, but we also shared the numerous objectives that WUWM and the World Farmers Market Coalition have in common.

Could you please introduce your organization to our members? What are your main values and current objectives?

The World Farmers Market Coalition (WFMC) is a new international organization, devoted to the purposeful reinvention of the ancient institution of farmers markets (where commerce and community flourish). The exciting news is that markets ARE flourishing all over the world. From Anchorage to Zhytomyr, civil society leaders are stepping up to build bridges between growers and eaters — and in many cases, in very challenging situations.

When independent farmers assemble — a great many of whom are women — to sell the fruits of their labour directly to consumers in a public setting, they join hands with urban dwellers to begin to repair lost relationships between urban and rural. As WUWM members can certainly attest, these relationships do not just ... happen. They are managed, but importantly, not from above. Rather, they are agreements that bind supply with demand, place with products, and of course, the people who thrive in these public spaces.





The WFMC values markets that balance the interests of farmers, consumers, and the communities who host them. We believe this is when farmers markets fulfill a public good — the same public good that wholesale markets serve (as public markets). In this regard, wholesale markets and farmers markets are like first cousins. During these early stages of assembling the worldwide community of farmers markets, we are mapping the markets that exist, facilitating peer-to-peer learning, and cultivating leadership in existing and new markets in order to contribute to the economic, human and ecological health of regions. Or to frame within the context of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, our current objectives align with SDG 1) no poverty 2) zero hunger 3) good health and well being 5) Gender equality 8) decent work and economic growth 11) sustainable cities and communities 12) responsible consumption and production 13) climate action 15) Life on land 16) peace, justice and strong institutions 17) partnerships for the goals.

Are there any initiatives carried out by the World Farmers Markets Coalition that you would like to disclose with our readers?

In 2021, we published a First World Report on Farmers Markets, spanning six continents. It reveals just how similar and widespread this movement is. While we may be a new NGO, many of our markets and market networks are mature and established. As a result, they have considerable programmatic knowledge to share. For instance, one founding member – Campagna Amica – leverages its remarkable nationwide market network for social solidarity programs and agritourism. How do they do this?

Or, consider the Farmers Market Coalition members in the USA who have managed to leverage a small innovative health incentive program into a \$100m USDA program that is transforming consumer behavior among those who rely on the social safety net for food security.

In each of these, there are lessons for wholesale markets. How? Well, farmers who engage in direct marketing use farmers markets to diversify their individual enterprises — many for wholesale distribution. Additionally, markets as a whole field test new ideas. They educate consumers, distributors, chefs, canteens, and the wider decision-makers about changing consumer patterns. This season's hot new crop in the farmers market may be next year's staple in the wholesale market. What's important for biodiversity is that what's hot may be as old as the hills. This is the opportunity.

Importantly, this is not to suggest that the innovation only occurs in the global North. On the contrary, we are learning about innovation in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Kenya, Vietnam, and beyond.

This is why when the FAO selected us for its Food Coalition program, we were so excited. We are only beginning to learn how the innovation and agility exhibited by farmers market managers all over the world provides clues as to how we best approach the future. As economies locked down, many discovered the need to influence competent authorities to be deemed essential services during the pandemic. This set in motion incredible innovations: From home-delivery to drive-through markets, just to give a glimpse. This new support allows us to dive in deep in a place with a promising network of farmers markets — Ghana — and also to reach widely with a new Farmers Market Academy, as well as conduct new research for the next report.

“What if we begin to rekindle the connection between place, people and products? Together, we can reconfigure purchasing priorities to cultivate the ecology of local economies.”

Could you share with us your perspective on how to foster sustainable and resilient food systems?

As instruments of commerce, market success is usually thought of in terms of gross receipts and volume. If instead, what if we were to evaluate a market's efficacy to change consumer behavior, educate agricultural enterprises, and reduce soil erosion or water consumption? The more we consider public markets as places for learning, the sooner we recognize and invest in their power to foster resilience and sustainability. While farmers markets may represent a small piece of the market ecosystem in terms of volume of sales, they are also hugely influential.

For instance...

- Bangladesh: The COVID-19 lockdown disrupted fresh vegetable supply routes. This did not add value to a sector that struggles with post-harvest handling in a hot climate. Desperate for food with healthy antioxidants, consumers were able to turn to direct purchases from farmers who transported products to town. This direct contact improves the profit margins of farmers and provides consumers with opportunities to question farmers about growing techniques, chemicals, etc. Transparency rewards both farmers and consumers.

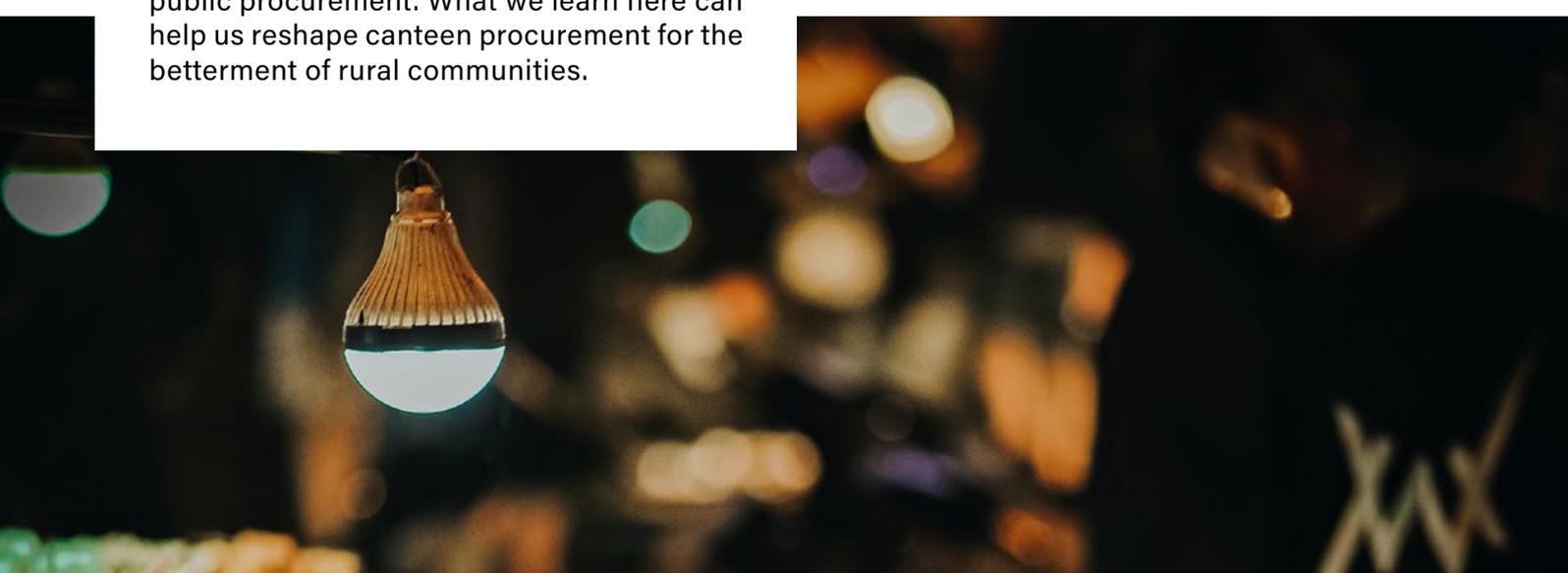
- North America: Conditional cash transfer programs, like GusNIP and FMNP (links to additional information below), may furnish vulnerable consumers with only modest resources to purchase local fruits and vegetables; however, findings indicate that participating consumers purchase more fruit and vegetables than the average shopper. These individual procurement programs are the thin edge of the wedge for wholesale public procurement. What we learn here can help us reshape canteen procurement for the betterment of rural communities.

- Worldwide: Trauma and disasters that beset communities all over the world reduce life to basic survival. Since farmers markets are able to move swiftly and creatively during war, in the aftermath of fires and floods, they help consumers to migrate from victim to protagonist. This process is often difficult to achieve; and yet, it is critical to restore normalcy to civic life. Even as fires are smoldering, tents and umbrellas can be erected to facilitate commerce. Farmers resume earning cash, while consumers recalibrate decision-making around choices. Here, resilience knowledge can be transferred to/from work with refugees and disaster relief. Importantly, when a territory's foodshed is decimated by disaster, opportunities to join forces with outside allies and infrastructure are valuable.

The World Farmers Markets Coalition, was one of the co-organizers of the webinar «Building sustainable and resilient food systems: integrating market systems at the centre of urban-rural linkages»: what are your thoughts on the event and the future actions that could be implemented?

The level of interest is deeply encouraging. Public markets have long been absent from discussions about resilience. Why? Is it because they are so pervasive that they are deemed part of the landscape, and therefore almost invisible? Or is it that decision-makers have confused efficiency for sufficiency?

What I learned from the webinar is that within the ecosystem of public markets, we are more similar than dissimilar. When we outsource key decisions about how food will be grown, distributed and sold to private and consolidated markets, then we externalize all of the costs that are, quite frankly, costing us the Earth.





The sooner we map key assets, like market gardens and the knowledge they behold, then the sooner we can reconfigure the flow of capital, food, and other natural resources to result in more equitable distribution. The magic of public markets is that — when managed with transparency — they bring hundreds of thousands of daily decisions out into the open. Only then do we provide consumers and key actors — from field to fork — adequate information to make decisions about how the market serves everyone (and not the other way around).

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What is in your opinion the importance held by urban-rural linkages? In which way do you think that markets could sustain the urban-rural continuum?

Our lives have become terribly segmented. Once, we marveled at finding products on sale that would have been customarily deemed out of season. News spectacular enough to trigger intense debate, today, we think nothing of it. Even more troubling is that we think even less about the fate of the farming communities who reside outside of towns. Why think about them? After all, the global supply routes bypass them? What if instead, we begin to rekindle the connection between place, people and products? Together, we can reconfigure purchasing priorities to cultivate the ecology of local economies. The purchase and consumption of food is everyday. These everyday patterns have the power to recalculate the costs of bypassing the territories for the majority of our nourishment. Of course, there are places on the planet where territorial food systems have remained the norm. We can learn from these places, and we can observe the health of a territory's food in the markets. It's all on display to tell a story of urban-rural linkages or urban-rural divide. In this regard, the markets are both mirror and hammer.

“The more we consider public markets as places for learning, the sooner we recognize and invest in their power to foster resilience and sustainability.”

World Farmers Markets Coalition and WUWM share many objectives. How do you think that our organizations could work together/ foster their activities together?

We do share so many objectives. In principle, we both care to balance dignity with efficiency, eater with farmer, and community with commerce. Were we to begin to endorse concepts together, like the one visionary agronomist John Ikerd promotes, “food as a public utility,” then we elevate the public aspects of the market as central. Investments in food should be made to serve the public good, but they should not be made without input from the public. From our shared vantage point, this begins on the market floor, where competition is managed out in the open. This inspires trust.

Where do we begin? What if our two organizations began to map where different kinds of public markets exist in municipal territories (as the Market Cities program promotes)? What if we share best practices in managing food safety, competition, and the curation of public spaces? What if we identify vulnerable markets and advocate for their defense? We both believe strongly in the public benefits to our related institutions. Let's hoist the canopies of commerce together. We have more that unites us, than divides us.



Insightful: Luke Tay, Singapore-based Founder of Cornucopia FutureScapes and co-organizer of a recent “Future of Food Symposium” gives us his insights about the most pressing challenges and opportunities for global food security and to ensure sustainability in our sector.”

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We had the pleasure to interview Luke Tay, who recently ran the “Future of Food Symposium: Emerging Issues, Challenges, & Opportunities for Global Food Security” webinar, co-organised with the Nanyang Technological University, to address emerging issues, and most pressing challenges and opportunities for global food security. In our interview, we deepened these topics by exploring the characteristics of sustainable food systems, the strategies that are needed for their development, the impacts of Covid-19 pandemic on food environments, but also the role played by governments and the wholesale sector. Mr. Tay, who is also an Executive Education Singapore Futures Fellow at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, also gave us a regional perspective regarding the situation experienced by Asia.

Could you explain briefly to our readers, how, in your opinion, we can evaluate the sustainability of a food system?

Evaluating sustainability is not about ticking off a list of good things but designing and fostering a link between mutually supporting good outcomes. It means delivering:

- food security and nutrition for all people regardless of their socio-economic situation, as the basis for a healthy society and a vibrant food culture;
- an ample return to the enterprises, workers, smallholders, communities, and investors who keep the system going;
- coexistence as far as possible in harmony and balance with the natural environment – including through limiting emissions, loss, waste and the food system’s overall environmental footprint, and maximising regenerative benefits and outcomes wherever possible.

Sustainability means thinking systematically, including across space – ultimately globally – and time – to cross-generational, and second- and third-order ripple effects – about the holistic implications, scale and impact of each new intervention or change. For people, producers, and planet.





Do you think that COVID-19 is a wake-up call to strengthen our food supply chain? If so, why?

COVID-19 came on top of earlier alarm bells on the Climate Emergency and related crop failures and migrant crises, other interlinked threats to human and animal health including antimicrobial resistance, and the dearth of international cooperation to address these. COVID-19 itself served as a lethal “alarm clock” that is still going off worldwide leaving millions dead, but many times more still “asleep” in inaction, denial, distraction, or half-measures. The explosive, kinetic, alarm of the ongoing conflict in Europe, and its manifest and manifold consequences for global food security may well be the crisis the world needs in tandem with COVID-19 to jointly tip the balance in favour of serious action to strengthen food security.

To me, the key wake-up calls for the global food system are to:

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- 1) make supply more resilient at all levels, including by assessing and harnessing the potential of national and sub-national food production value chains, where agronomically feasible. This is as a complement to rather than a replacement for wider cross-border and international food flows;
- 2) renovate the habits, values and outlook of the global eating public, to enact a demand shift towards a greener, healthier plate, and to increase direct participation in the food system, for instance through more home and community farming; and
- 3) to harness technology, policy, and cross-stakeholder and international collaboration to effect “1)” and “2)”.

“Evaluating sustainability is not about ticking off a list of good things but designing and fostering a link between mutually supporting good outcomes.”

In the Food Symposium that you organized you stated that there are technological innovations that can make our food systems more efficient and climate-resilient at every level of the chain. Could you share some examples?

There are a growing variety of tech, operational, and social innovations that can realise a more sustainable food system. Various “precision agriculture” technologies are being developed and scaled that lessen the amount of energy, water, and chemicals needed to grow crops, for better resource productivity, and a more limited land and environmental footprint. Sensors monitor site and crop conditions in real time and cue the right types and amounts of inputs in the right place, exactly as needed. Beyond frugal input usage, one exiting innovation being trialled including in the EU is agrivoltaics – growing food and harnessing solar energy together in an integrated setup. One solution currently being trialled in Saudi Arabia even aims to condense water on the reverse side of the solar surface – hence producing food, energy and water in one unified setup.¹

Secondly, as an alternative to land animal farming, hi-tech aquaculture is increasingly promising, with feed conversion efficiency of about 5x that of beef, with much lower emissions. More sustainable than capture fisheries, scaled-up aquaculture and more elaborate fish-plant aquaponic growing systems in a closed nutrient loop hold great potential.

Thirdly, cutting food losses both before and after the farm gate is key. This involves a range of technologies including for early detection of animal and plant diseases and impending severe weather so farmers can take measures to limit damage, to blockchain solutions being developed to safeguard the integrity of food flows. The upcycling of by-products that were previously discarded also holds great value, for instance the use of fruit peels, used bread, and discarded rice to make beer, or okara by-product of soy processing into highly nutritious snacks.

Though they have attracted some concern and controversy, genome editing techniques have transformative potential to develop more “climate-smart” heat, drought and pest-resistant strains. With science- and risk-based regulation in dialogue with both industry and civil society, the safety case as well as the “social license” for such solutions may significantly enhance plant and animal agriculture.

Lastly and perhaps most decisively, people as food citizens are the decisive factor – in their consumer choices, participation in food production, and their advocacy in the community and policy realms. A key “technology” and social innovation would be to empower urban and suburban dwellers to act positively and powerfully across all these roles: through solutions that help people make informed food and nutrition choices; that nudge them towards greener plates that channel both their food cultures and lifestyle aspirations; and that help them realise highly circular household and community food economies, limiting waste and producing more of their own food – as the last or rather the first mile of layered food security. Several technologies already help do this, not least information technologies like the internet and the growing array of informative agrifood apps for both professional farmers and others.

What are in your opinion the main challenges to achieve sustainable food systems in Asia?

From the survey on which the Symposium was based, and my broader research and engagement, a key theme is the pressure of the global climate emergency, as experienced by Asia given its particular geography and demography. Much of Asia is littoral, with rising sea levels, spiking flood threats, and increased salinity affecting production particularly of staples. Much of inland Asia may in tandem be affected by water crises also such as due to melting Himalayan glaciers that had sustained major river systems.

The challenge is all the more acute as Asia accounts for 60% of the world’s population but only 30% of its land mass. Yet this challenge is also the impetus for ingenuity. Agrifood innovation has arisen as an industry focus and a policy priority across the region. While the pressures of COVID-19 as well as geopolitical shocks and fissures have put a premium on greater self-sufficiency, a challenge is to look beyond such insular paradigms to foster greater multilateral food system cooperation at a regional level and beyond – wider food webs to complement greater resilience measures on the home front.

A key opportunity here is how we may harness Asia’s seas and oceans sustainably for greater food security for the region and the world. Everything from coastal mangroves that are powerful carbon sinks and flood barriers, as well as potential food sources, to coastal and deep sea aquaculture and mariculture – sea grass and seaweed, again both edible and with potential climate mitigation benefits. To realise this, the challenge of mobilising technology, capital, and multilateral cooperation will need to be engaged with, and overcome.

Ensuring sustainable food systems may imply also shifting to better dietary practices around the world. What is, in your opinion the role, that governments could play to foster this evolution?

Amidst the seeming global permacrisis, governments worldwide are becoming acutely sensitised to food insecurity as a threat to wellbeing and socioeconomic stability, and as a key vulnerability in an era of rising geopolitical contestation. We cannot produce our way out of these dilemmas: while supply side measures are key, demand shaping will ultimately be decisive, particularly given the pressures of the climate emergency.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)’s Working Group 3 report released in early-April 2022 pointed to the importance of food-related decisionmaking at every level to reducing global emissions. Social, cultural, and behavioural change among other “demand side” measures could result in a mid-century food system with 40-70% less emissions than baseline scenarios.





And governments have a great range of powers and capabilities to shape demand – ranging from educational and informational levers, to taxes, subsidies and incentives to encourage greener choices and curb food wastage, and even, ultimately, curbs or outright bans on the most emissive forms of consumption – framing beef for instance as the “new tobacco”. “Smart nations” with “social credit” systems may for instance sense, reward and punish environmentally (ir)responsible lifestyles, with a heavy emphasis on food choices, consumption and waste. Imagine yourself being publicly shamed on a virtual billboard in the town square for eating one stake too many, or enjoying health insurance premium credits for consuming odd-shaped greens.

Certainly, there are important questions surrounding the businesses and livelihoods of implicated sectors, around questions of liberty, and around ensuring that desired new food lifestyles are affordable, and that preferred foods are amply available, appealing, and nutritious. Here again the state has a key role, in convening and supporting the technologies, production, and cross-border supply chains for such foods, and perhaps even more crucially in articulating and mediating consensus on the desired way forward among different public and industry stakeholders and interests.

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What about the distribution sector? And particularly what is in your opinion the role that wholesale fresh food markets can have?

In a future where world-spanning supply chains are complemented by broader and deeper food production closer to demand, the distribution sector has a key role to play in adapting and facilitating the transition. Long-haul carriage of food, feed and inputs will need to get greener, and proportionately less relied on. Cold chains will need to be robust amidst global heating, yet far more energy efficient. In a world troubled by a range of upheavals, transport and logistics networks will need to become far more anticipatory and adaptive, aided by AI, and government regulations and enterprise cultures that prefer “just-in-case” to “just-in-time”.

Rural-urban, urban-periurban, and inner city supply chains and logistics will increasingly

be the backbone for efficient food flows across more ecological and more localised foodsheds. Here, the rise of e-commerce catalysed by COVID-19 has pushed technological, logistical, and business model boundaries in advantageous directions for the future of food.

Wholesale fresh food markets will be key nodes in this greener, more localised food future, serving as a vital bridge between producers including smallholders from across city-region food systems and more rural localities on the one hand, and small-scaled food retailers and neighbourhood market vendors on the other.

“Rural-urban, urban-periurban, and inner city supply chains and logistics will increasingly be the backbone for efficient food flows across more ecological and more localised foodsheds.”

In a world of rising e-commerce, wholesale markets will thrive if they are trusted aggregators and intermediaries between known producers of good repute and e-businesses that pick and dispatch bespoke baskets of fresh and nutritious produce in drone swarms to a million households. This will be a partnership between established traditions and the latest information, assurance, and logistics technologies.

While primarily B2B sites, hybrid wholesale markets will also be places where “food citizens” may directly connect with their produce, leading to enhanced business opportunities, be it from consumer bulk-buying, food events and “county fair” spectacles, or co-located F&B and “pick your own” produce farms. As societies skew more towards reductarian, “plant-forward” foodstyles (which certainly does not equate to just plant-based meat!), we may see a flowering of fresh food markets as one-stop destinations for the food needs of both households and businesses.

In Events:

WUWM participated in the first meeting of the OECD-FAO Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group on Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains.

We are happy to announce that WUWM was selected by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) to join the Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group on Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains.

WUWM participated in the in the first meeting of the Multi-Stakeholder Group on April 28th. This unique and innovative platform reunited important actors of the sector and aimed to create a new space that can act as a leverage to develop successful sustainable and responsible food value chains. The platform will also serve to follow up the implementation of the internationally agreed standards of Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) and to share experiences to prevent adverse impacts of agricultural value chain activities as to contribute to sustainable development.

The Advisory Group (AG) meetings will take place three times a year. The first half of each meeting will be technical in scope and advance learning on global challenges in responsible sourcing in agriculture, allowing members to share knowledge and experience in addressing those challenges. The second meeting will be held in June or July.

WUWM is committed to promote and implement the OECD-FAO Guidance and its recommendations and will work constructively with all stakeholders to attain this goal.

Stay tuned for more information about the work of the Advisory Group!

In WUWM's World

April 5-7th – WUWM Europe participated in the Fruit Logistica fresh produce trade show in Berlin, Germany

April 7th – WUWM Asia met with the Global Food Banking Network to explore collaborations in Asia

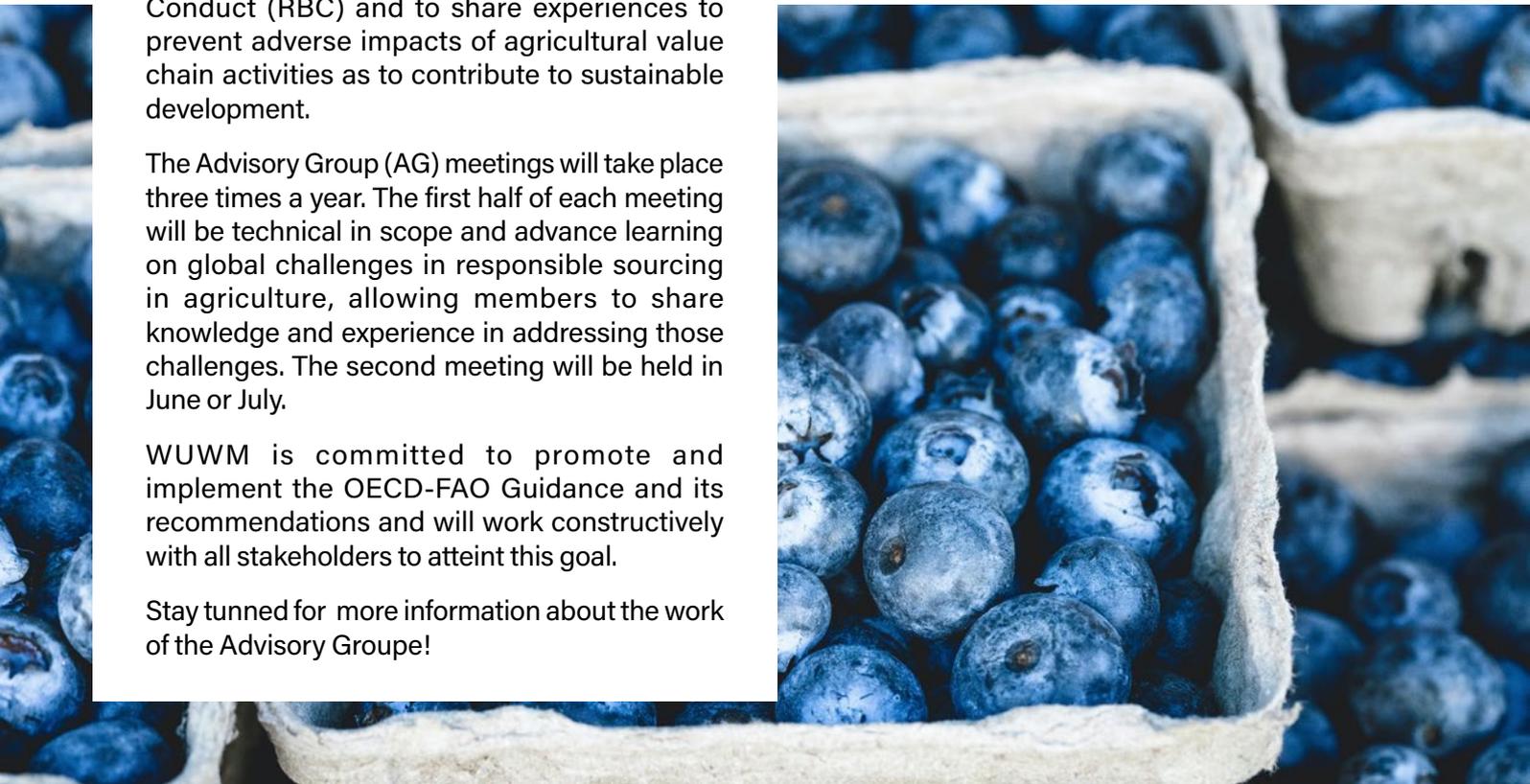
April 19th – WUWM participated in the Technical Network of Municipal Experts on Urban Food Markets of the FAO

April 21st – WUWM co-organized the “Building sustainable and resilient food systems: Integrating Market Systems at the Centre of Urban-Rural Linkages” webinar

April 26-28th – WUWM Europe participated in the Seafood Expo Global 2022 (SEG) in Barcelona, Spain

April 28th – WUWM participated in the first meeting of the OECD-FAO Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group on Responsible Agricultural Supply Chains

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About WUWM:

We aim to facilitate access to healthy diets for everyone in the world by delivering more sustainable, inclusive, and high-quality fresh food supply systems. We exchange ideas, share best practices and cooperate with our partners in international organizations, governments, businesses, and the public.

