



OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

There was broad agreement that we must pursue and embrace changes in our food system by learning from where we have been and where we are now; collaborating to rebuild together; and using research, technology, and a people-centered approach to do so.

Learn: Examine systems within the food system to align sector- and organization-specific actions, with the overarching goal of a healthy food ecosystem. Use crisis-response simulation models to harness lessons learned from the pandemic. Study existing coalitions, movements, and other industries. Balance serving the interests of organizations and those of people thereby redefining profitability.

Collaborate: Build and continually cultivate trust. Elevate nutrition security and a healthy food ecosystem as national priorities. Reframe the approach to food systems change to focus on well-being across social, emotional, economic, physical, and planetary factors for those who are fed by and work in the system. Create a common agenda and action plan by breaking down silos between sectors and between efforts to address separate but related issues. Build inclusive collaborations.

Transform communities: Build a platform for sharing best practices. Build community-centered partnerships and use them to inform interventions around the country. Remove food and healthcare access issues at points of purchase and points of care. Invest in education and in building skills.

Advance research: Coordinate across sectors. Conduct implementation and translation research to inform efforts to influence consumer behavior. Leverage existing research. Develop models for collaboration. Collect best practices systematically to facilitate analysis, research and evidence-based efforts.

Transform communication with people: Focus on people. Leverage current momentum to develop common messaging among stakeholders. Embrace cultural and personal relevance and offer

The annual **American Heart Association Foodscape Innovation Summit** serves as an opportunity to convene multi-sector food system voices and delve into innovative, forward-thinking, and evidence-based opportunities for collective action to transform the food system toward nutrition security for all. **The Fifth Annual Foodscape Innovation Summit**, held on June 18, 2020, focused on nutrition security, related disparities and inequities, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as innovation aimed towards a healthier food ecosystem. Award-winning singer/songwriter, Jewel, shared her personal journey from homelessness to well-being through song and meditation. Participants returned on July 9, 2020 to participate in breakout groups that explored the potential to harness knowledge gained from the current public health crisis to strengthen the health focus of the food ecosystem equitably. Jewel

It is clear that the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the related economic crisis, and the illumination of systemic racism marked the beginning of a defining experience for the U.S. and the world. The pandemic revealed weaknesses in the food system, business models, the balance of equity and access, and diet quality. As the Foodscape Innovation Summit was underway, individuals and institutions were signaling a shift from seeing the pandemic as a short-term challenge toward a longer-term view of life with COVID-19. Because the effects of COVID-19 were so enormous and universally felt, attendees noted that it may be a powerful catalyst to create real and lasting change. This moment in time offered an opportunity to work collectively to focus on mutual benefits, move from ideation to action, and overcome disparities in nutrition security and diet-related health conditions.

DISCUSSION THEMES

COVID-19 is a food system stressor.

The pandemic demands agility from a food system that was built for supply chain efficiency. COVID-19 creates new and unique safety concerns at the individual and system levels. Food system workers are in greater jeopardy of contracting the virus because of their front-line role in systems that were not designed for social distancing. These and other factors have resulted in widespread food system disruption. As noted by Krystal Register of FMI, "Food retail is adapting minute to minute, day to day, and they will continue to flex. Necessity really is the mother of invention."

The economic impact of COVID-19-related business disruptions, including but not limited to food system businesses, has expanded the depth and breadth of nutrition insecurity. Individuals and families newly affected by these challenges are often unaware of the resources available to them. Significantly, the long-term impact of these issues is unknown. It is increasingly clear, however, that widespread and durable nutrition security requires a food system that reaches all people with healthy and affordable food and is agile, responsive, and effective in times of crisis.

There is a need for technology solutions on multiple levels.

It is important to connect with people in simple and accessible ways to empower them to apply knowledge at the point of choice and build food-related skills. Dr. Marc Watkins remarked, "I believe that some of the health disparities that exist in this country are because we don't make it simple enough. We don't connect on an emotional and personal level with our patients, let alone the ones who need it the most." Technology also plays a role in removing barriers to access for those most vulnerable, such as Electronic Benefit Transfer access for both in-store and online grocery shopping, and supply chain logistics to bring healthy food to historically underserved communities.

Need for a people-centered approach.

Expanding nutrition security for all will depend on the food system stakeholders' collective ability to educate, empower and motivate individuals and communities based on the needs that those individuals and communities identify and prioritize for themselves. Cooking and food preparation at home have been in a state of decline for decades for a variety of reasons, including the sometimes generational experience of

Panel on Nutrition Security.

poverty leading to inconsistent and inadequate access to a wide variety of foods, inadequate cooking appliances and tools, and/or limited time and energy for meal preparation due to heightened time demands related to work and other life necessities. There is a need for skills-based education, tools and resources to overcome barriers, as well as policies that will address access to food and other essentials.

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Perhaps the most consistent and universal theme in summit discussions was that we are at a crossroads—we must learn from where we are now and collaboratively build a better, more effective and more equitable food system. Attendees discussed the following as opportunities and next steps.

Learn

- Examine systems within the food system (such as supply chains and distribution channels) to identify and prioritize sector- and organization-specific actions that will ladder up to the overarching goal of a healthy food ecosystem.
- Use crisis response simulation models to harness lessons from the pandemic.
- Learn from and with other coalitions, movements, and industries (such as healthcare).
- Balance serving the interests of organizations and those of people, thereby seeking mutual profitability versus market share.

Collaborate

- Build and continually cultivate trust between sectors and stakeholders.
- Elevate nutrition security and a healthy food ecosystem as a national priority.
- Reframe how we approach food systems change to create equitable health impact, focusing on well-being across social, emotional, economic, physical, and planetary factors for the people who are fed by and work in the system.

- Create a common agenda and action plan for forward movement by breaking down silos between sectors and between efforts to address separate, but related, issues such as food system agility, hunger and nutrition science.
- Think beyond the usual partners. Build inclusive collaborations that incorporate more diverse sectors, organizations and perspectives.

Transform communities

- Build a platform through which it is possible to share community-level work nationally in order to identify best practices.
- Build community-centered partnerships and use them to inform interventions around the country.
- Integrate food and healthcare access at points of purchase and points of care, such as through food security and nutritional risk screening, referral to registered dietitian services and food assistance benefits, and healthy food prescription.
- Invest in education and building skills, starting at young ages. Consider ways to do this in conjunction with school meal and charitable food aid programs.

Advance research

- Coordinate research across sectors to address critical questions that are broadly relevant to nutrition and/or the food system, such as those generated by the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee.
- Conduct implementation and translation research to inform efforts to influence healthy eating behaviors among the public.
- Leverage existing research and create models for collaboration.
- Collect best practices in systematic ways to facilitate analysis, research, and evidence-based efforts.

Transform communication with people

- Focus on people. Shift thinking and language from “consumers” to “people” in order to transform communication.
- Leverage current momentum to develop common messaging among various stakeholders.
- Embrace cultural and personal relevance and offer bite-sized, actionable tips.
- Reframe health — emphasize that you don’t have to be “sick” to get “healthy.”
- Correct misinformation.
- Empower health professional ambassadors such as physicians and dietitians.
- Expand the use of technology platforms to support healthy food choices and increase access to food and nutrition assistance and benefits.

CONCLUSION

Society is experiencing unprecedented global shared experiences around a number of foundational issues, including systemic racism and nutrition insecurity. Questions remain on the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, is it possible to sustain improvements in health behaviors motivated by the temporary circumstances? Will related changes in demand affect the food system going forward?

Despite unanswered questions, there are several certainties. It will not be a matter of “returning to normal” because normal was not working. The future foodscape must be new and better, and the time to act is now. Individual leadership and collective action will be integral in successfully creating a healthier food ecosystem.

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FIFTH ANNUAL FOODSCAPE INNOVATION™ SUMMIT

JUNE 18, 2020

Agenda

9:00 AM **Welcome**
Eduardo Sanchez, MD, MPH, FAAFP

BREAKOUT GROUPS SESSION: MAPPING A MULTI-SECTOR, COLLABORATIVE PATH TOWARDS NUTRITION SECURITY FOR ALL

JULY 9, 2020

Agenda

10:00 AM Welcome and Refresh on Key Summit Themes
Eduar