

PLANT-BASED PATHWAYS TO PROTEIN SECURITY



*Aligning Nutrition and Environmental
Sustainability*

A Report by



in partnership with



September 2026

Prepared by:

*Policy and Research Unit
(WAF)*



About This Report

This report is a synthesis of the policy dialogue on Plant-Based Pathways to Protein Security, co-convened on 5 June 2026 (World Environment Day) by the World Agriculture Forum (WAF) and the Plant Based Treaty. It distils opening remarks, panel presentations, a moderated cross-discussion, and audience question-and-answer exchanges into a single thematic narrative and an actionable set of recommendations.

The report is structured for three primary audiences: policymakers shaping national food, agriculture, climate, and public health strategies; investors, donors, and agro-industry leaders seeking evidence-based pathways into sustainable protein markets; and practitioners, including farmer organisations, institutional caterers, culinary educators, and civil society advocates translating food-systems science into ground-level change.

Scope and Method

The dialogue addressed a central question: how can plant-based food systems pathways advance protein security, human health, and climate stability simultaneously, and at the scale and speed demanded by converging planetary crises? Contributions spanned the planetary-boundaries framework, national policy innovation, ingredient-level industry transformation, institutional menu change, public procurement reform in emerging economies, and community-led agricultural development in least-developed countries. This report draws on the dialogue record and synthesises speakers' contributions into a single argument with structured recommendations.

A Note on Language

Throughout this report, “protein security” refers to reliable, affordable access to sufficient dietary protein that meets health requirements while respecting planetary boundaries. “Plant-based foods” denotes minimally and moderately processed foods derived primarily from plant sources, including legumes, grains, nuts, seeds, vegetables, and novel plant-derived ingredients. A glossary is provided in Annex C.



Foreword

The food on our plates is the most consequential daily decision humanity makes for the planet. Agriculture occupies half of the world's habitable land, consumes seventy percent of freshwater withdrawals, and generates one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions. Animal agriculture accounts for the overwhelming share. The communities bearing the heaviest consequences of climate change, biodiversity loss, and water insecurity are often those least responsible for the dietary patterns driving them

The World Agriculture Forum and the Plant Based Treaty convened this policy dialogue on World Environment Day in the conviction that the global food system's transformation is not merely desirable but technically achievable and economically rational. The science is unequivocal, and the policy instruments to act are already visible in countries from Denmark to India, and in communities from Bhutan to The Gambia. What is missing is the political will, the narrative coherence, and the investment architecture to scale what works.

This report is offered as a contribution to that architecture. It records the evidence and recommendations of distinguished practitioners, policymakers, industry innovators, and community leaders who gave their time on 5 June 2026. The World Agriculture Forum and the Plant Based Treaty together believe that a protein-secure, health-positive, and climate-resilient food system is achievable within this decade, and that the coalitions to deliver it are already forming.

The World Agriculture Forum | Plant Based Treaty
September 2026



Executive Summary

The WAF-Plant Based Treaty dialogue of 5 June 2026 produced a coherent set of conclusions across all presentations and discussions: the global food system's dependence on animal agriculture is the single largest driver of multiple planetary boundary breaches, and the scientific, technological, policy, and community-based instruments to redirect it already exist. What is missing is a coordinated architecture of national action plans, ingredient-level investment, institutional procurement reform, and farmer-centered delivery operating at the scale and speed the planetary emergency demands.

Key Messages

1. The food system is the primary driver of planetary boundary breaches, and this is accelerating. Animal agriculture accounts for a majority of a third of global greenhouse gas emissions, 83 percent of farmland, 70 percent of freshwater withdrawals, and is the principal cause of land-use-driven biodiversity decline. Seven of nine planetary boundaries have been breached, with animal agriculture the dominant pressure in five of the transgressions.

2. A shift to plant-based diets is the single most impactful dietary mitigation measure available. IPCC data indicate that a global shift to plant-based diets could reduce farmland use by 75 percent and save 8 gigatons of carbon dioxide equivalent per year. Methane from animal agriculture contributes approximately 0.5°C of observed warming.

3. Plant-based diets deliver powerful co-benefits for human health and food costs. Diet is the leading global risk factor for mortality, causing 15 million premature adult deaths annually. Plant-based diets manage and reverse several of the most prevalent non-communicable diseases. Sustainable plant-based diets could reduce food bills by approximately one-third in high-income countries.

4. National action plans with multi-stakeholder governance and dedicated public funding are the highest-leverage policy instrument. Denmark's Plant-Based Action Plan, supported by a €170 million permanent grant, demonstrates that a non-coercive, whole-value-chain approach can achieve measurable progress across 50 indicators. The model is already inspiring national strategies in Portugal, the Netherlands, Finland, Poland, and Hungary.

5. The critical investment opportunity lies at the ingredient layer, not the consumer brand layer. The alternative protein sector raised nearly USD 7 billion in 2021 chasing consumer brands; by 2025 investment had fallen below USD 1 billion. The durable opportunity is in functional, neutral-tasting, cost-competitive plant proteins, such as rubisco from alfalfa, that flow as B2B building blocks into thousands of mainstream products.

6. Institutional procurement and culinary education are proven, scalable levers for rapid consumption change. New York City public hospitals show 50 percent plant-based meal uptake when plant-based options are the default. Hands-on culinary training in Bhutan generated viral trainer-to-trainer diffusion within weeks.

7. Emerging economies with strong plant-based dietary traditions should institutionalise and scale what already exists. India's predominantly plant-based diet represents a structural advantage. Public procurement reform, millet promotion, and fiscal equalisation of plant-based foods are high-impact entry points. The 2026 reduction of India's GST on plant-based foods from 18 to 5 percent demonstrates political feasibility.

8. Africa must lead its own food-system transformation through community-based, farmer-centered models. 33 of the world's least-developed countries are in Africa and bear disproportionate climate burdens. School-garden programmes, women and youth smallholder linkages to institutional buyers, and embedding plant-based production in NDCs offer a path that enhances food security, resilience, and climate mitigation simultaneously.



1. The Environmental and Nutritional Imperative for Plant-Based Transformation

1.1 Planetary Boundaries and the Food System

The opening presentation, delivered by moderator Dr. Anita Krajnc (Executive Director, The Save Movement, and Global Campaign Coordinator, Plant Based Treaty), situated the dialogue within the planetary boundaries framework. The global food system is the single largest pressure on Earth's natural systems, driving the breach of five of the nine identified boundaries. Animal agriculture is a principal driver of climate change (a majority of the one-third of greenhouse gas emissions from the food sector), a main driver of biosphere integrity loss (the main cause of land-use-driven biodiversity decline), land-system change (occupying 50 percent of habitable land), freshwater overuse (70 percent of global water withdrawals), nitrogen and phosphorus pollution, and novel entities of synthetic pollution stemming from agricultural pesticides, veterinary antibiotics, and plastic food packaging. Climate change and biosphere integrity were identified as the two core boundaries, each capable of independently destabilising the Earth system.

1.2 Methane, Land Use, and the Urgency of Dietary Shift

Animal agriculture is responsible for approximately one-third of global methane emissions, a potent greenhouse gas with a 20-year global warming potential 84 times that of carbon dioxide. With methane contributing roughly 0.5°C of the 1.1°C observed warming since pre-industrial times, rapid cuts are essential to keep the 1.5°C target within reach. Current land use for food production spans approximately four billion hectares. A global shift to plant-based diets could reduce this by 75 percent to one billion hectares, freeing vast areas for reforestation, carbon storage, and ecosystem restoration. IPCC data demonstrate that a plant-based dietary shift could save 8 gigatons of carbon dioxide equivalent per year, the single most effective dietary mitigation measure available. This figure excludes added saving from preventing further land use changes and preserving carbon sinks.

1.3 Health, Nutrition, and Economic Co-Benefits

Beyond environmental metrics, the health case for plant-based diets is supported by substantial evidence. Diet is the leading risk factor for mortality worldwide, responsible for 15 million premature adult deaths annually, representing 19 to 24 percent of all adult deaths. Plant-based diets have demonstrated capacity to manage elevated cholesterol and hypertension, place type 2 diabetes into remission, arrest and sometimes reverse coronary heart disease, and help maintain healthy weight.

The economic argument is equally compelling. Research published in The Lancet Planetary Health found that sustainable, largely plant-based diets are cheaper than current diets and could cut food bills by approximately one-third in high-income countries. FAO true cost accounting reveals that the global food system imposes vast unpriced damages on health, environment, and society, with the heaviest relative costs falling on low-income countries, where they can exceed 27 percent of income.

“An urgent shift towards a safe and just plant-based food system is needed to alleviate the enormous pressure of the current food systems on the natural environment and humanitarian crises.” — Dr Anita Krajnc, Executive Director, The Save Movement

2. Policy Innovation: Denmark's National Action Plan for Plant-Based Foods

2.1 Dietary Guidelines and the Health Economics

Dr. Rune-Christoffer Dragsdahl (Executive Director, Danish Vegetarian Society) opened with Denmark's experience in institutionalizing plant-based food policy. In 2020, Denmark adopted new dietary guidelines that included, for the first time, an explicit quantitative recommendation for pulses: beans, chickpeas, and lentils. The guidelines prescribe two units of pulses for every unit of meat and poultry combined. A subsequent government analysis demonstrated that following these guidelines would generate substantial national health-economic benefits, a motivation that applies equally to countries where public health expenditures are rising rapidly.

2.2 The Plant-Based Action Plan: A Holistic, Systemic Approach

The Danish Action Plan for Plant-Based Foods, signed by the Minister of Food and Agriculture, is motivated by climate, economic resilience, food price stability, water security, nature conservation, biodiversity, nutrition, and public health. Its strength lies in covering the entire food value chain from farm to fork: primary production, processing, demand and consumption, export, and research and innovation. The government monitors 50 indicators, with the majority reported as achieved or on track. A critical lesson for other countries is the necessity of a broad, non-ideological framing that unites actors across political and sectoral boundaries.

2.3 The Plant-Based Food Grant and Multi-Stakeholder Governance

Central to implementation is a €170 million grant scheme, initially €90 million, which has been made permanent beyond 2030. Fifty percent of the funding is earmarked for organic plant-based projects, reflecting synergies between the two movements. The grant supports primary pulse production, chef education, healthy meat alternatives, and food-environment nudging in hospitals and sports clubs. Governance rests with an 11-member board comprising conventional and organic farmers, industry representatives, trade unions, climate and consumer organisations, and the chamber of commerce.

2.4 International Replication and Building Bridges

The Danish model has inspired action elsewhere. Portugal has committed to a national plant-based strategy; the Netherlands is investigating a similar grant scheme; and Finland, Poland, and Hungary have begun stakeholder consultations. Dr. Dragsdahl attributed Denmark's success to deliberately framing the conversation solely around building the plant-based sector, using positive messaging and avoiding criticism of the farmed animals. This approach allowed the main farmers' association to co-create the strategy and brought right-of-centre parties on board.

"I do believe a lot in bridge building. The more you disagree with people, the more gently you should speak to them. We have to honour that treasure throughout the world." — Dr. Rune-Christoffer Dragsdahl, Executive Director, Danish Vegetarian Society

3. Industry Innovation and Market Transformation

3.1 Barriers to Scaling Plant-Based Proteins

Udi Lazimy (Founder and CEO, FUDI Protein) reframed the mainstreaming challenge as one rooted in upstream ingredient supply rather than consumer preferences. Three primary barriers were identified: functionality and taste (many plant proteins carry poor solubility, off-flavours, or require heavy processing); supply constraints (many current proteins are by-products such as whey, which cannot scale independently); and misallocated capital (the sector raised nearly USD 7 billion in 2021, mostly chasing consumer brands rather than foundational ingredient infrastructure; investment had fallen below USD 1 billion by 2025, creating a much-needed market correction).

3.2 The Ingredient Layer as the Key Opportunity

The most significant opportunity lies at the building-block level. If plant proteins can be made fully functional, neutral-tasting, and cost-competitive, they can flow invisibly into thousands of mainstream products, including bakery, beverages, and dairy alternatives, and not solely standalone meat analogues. Mr. Lazimy's work on rubisco protein extracted from alfalfa illustrates this approach: rubisco is the most abundant protein on Earth, highly functional, with a digestibility score matching egg white, and cost-competitive with whey protein. A solved ingredient is one that manufacturers can adopt as a drop-in replacement without reformulating entire production lines.

3.3 Building on Existing Agricultural Foundations

Food technology should integrate with, rather than disrupt, existing agricultural economies. Alfalfa, the fourth-largest crop in the United States, contains twice the protein per acre as soy. Extracting that protein for human consumption creates new revenue streams for farmers and makes the transition politically durable. This farmer-forward model contrasts with narratives that pit plant-based innovation against rural livelihoods, offering instead a just transition in which farmers participate in the new protein economy.

3.4 From Premium to Mainstream

Moving plant-based proteins from niche to default requires making the sustainable option cheaper and better, not asking consumers to pay an ethics premium. This demands funding the unglamorous layers of ingredient processing and agronomy, embedding proteins business-to-business into mainstream products, and creating offtake certainty so that growers invest in expanded production. When price, taste, and nutrition reach parity or superiority, consumer adoption becomes structural rather than voluntary.

“Stop trying to win at the shelf with consumers, but really build the protein building blocks that beat less sustainable proteins on taste, cost, and nutrition, and make it farmer forward.” — Udi Lazimy, Founder and CEO, FUDI Protein

4. Institutional Menu Change and Consumer Acceptance

4.1 Education and Culinary Training

Chef Jaya Rai (Regional Liaison for Asia, Plant Based Treaty) presented a training project conducted in Bhutan, where she led hands-on sessions for school and monastery chefs. A lack of knowledge, not ingredients, was identified as the primary barrier to plant-based meal preparation. Through train-the-trainer workshops, chefs learned to incorporate vegetables into lentils and rice, creating colourful, appealing dishes that children accepted readily. Within one month, a trained chef had trained many others in his region, demonstrating the viral potential of culinary education as a dissemination model.

4.2 Accessibility, Adaptability, and Affordability

A common misconception is that plant-based eating is expensive or inaccessible. Chef Jaya cited the example of a remote mountain monastery where monks already prepared a traditional plant-based dish called bathtub from locally available vegetables, grains, and potatoes. Adapting iconic dishes is straightforward: the Bhutanese national dish ema datshi, traditionally made with chillies and cheese, was recreated using potatoes and tofu. Affordability was directly addressed by teaching institutions to produce tofu in-house and by connecting schools with local tofu producers supplying it at half the price of imported paneer.

4.3 Practical Lessons from Institutional Settings

The Bhutan project revealed that small interventions produce large results. Providing a vegetable chopper removed a labour bottleneck; cutting vegetables finely and presenting salads colourfully eliminated plate waste. Approximately 90 percent of audiences initially report never having eaten vegan food, yet almost everyone has consumed numerous plant-based meals without labelling them as such. Simplifying the message to eliminate just two things (meat and dairy) and beginning with one meal a day demystifies the transition.

4.4 Overcoming Psychological Barriers

Consumer resistance is less about taste than about decades of conditioning. Responses to educational sessions are overwhelmingly positive, with 90 to 95 percent of participants receptive. Institutional change is accelerated by framing plant-based adoption as a journey of reduction rather than elimination, and by respecting cultural foodways while creatively adapting them.

“I never underestimate the power of awareness. People are willing to change. We just need more people actively doing the work. If we teach people to respect our bodies, respect what we put into them, respect our planet and respect animals, we will have a wonderful planet on our hands.” — Chef Jaya Rai, Regional Liaison for Asia, Plant Based Treaty

5. Public Policy in Emerging Economies: The Indian Context

5.1 Leveraging India's Plant-Based Dietary Traditions

Ms. Gauri Maulekhi (Public Policy Expert and Trustee, People for Animals India) opened by highlighting a structural advantage often overlooked: India's predominant diet is already largely plant-based, driven by religious tradition and economic necessity. Per capita meat and dairy consumption remains relatively low, while pulses, grains, and vegetables form the backbone of mass nutrition. The opportunity is not to shift behaviour from a high-meat baseline, but to institutionalise and strengthen what already exists, preventing the westernisation of diets that would worsen health and environmental outcomes.

5.2 Public Procurement as a Systemic Lever

The Indian government purchases enormous volumes of food through school-meal schemes and the public distribution system. These procurement baskets are high-impact policy entry points: making public procurement predominantly plant-based would transform the diets of millions, rather than targeting only a niche urban market. The recent Year of Millets initiative, backed by the central government, demonstrates how traditional grains can be elevated and subsidised as healthy, climate-resilient staples.

5.3 Key Challenges: Regulatory Capture, Narrative Fragmentation, and Equity

Three major barriers were outlined. First, regulatory capture by powerful dairy and egg industry lobbies exerts disproportionate influence over policy, stalling reforms including a long-pending ban on battery cages. Second, the advocacy ecosystem remains fragmented, with animal welfare, environmental, and public health groups often undermining each other's credibility before the same regulators. Third, an equity trap emerges when plant-based alternatives are positioned as expensive, ultra-processed products targeting wealthy urban consumers, alienating the majority for whom sufficiency and affordability are paramount.

5.4 Repositioning the Narrative

Ms. Maulekhi urged a recalibration of the movement's framing in India. Arguments centred on animal welfare, while morally compelling, are easily deprioritised by policymakers facing food security pressures. Instead, the plant-based agenda should be anchored in public health (non-communicable diseases are rising rapidly), climate resilience (90 of the world's 100 hottest cities are in India), and nutrition security. This intersectional positioning makes the case politically salient and protects it from charges of elitism.

"We need to hold governments accountable for price parity, stop subsidising those industries and artificially lowering their prices. Chasing price parity with governments for plant-forward foods is our next goal."

Gauri Maulekhi, Public Policy Expert and Trustee, People for Animals India

6. Plant-Based Pathways for Food Security in Africa

6.1 The African Context: Vulnerability and Food Insecurity

Ms. Sira Secka (Founder, ENENNFOOF Excellence Foundation, The Gambia; lead UNFCCC negotiator for agriculture and Action for Climate Empowerment) contextualised the discussion within the realities of least-developed countries, 33 of which are in Africa. The continent faces a disproportionate burden of climate change impacts, high hunger rates, and health crises linked to industrial agriculture. Narratives of “feeding Africa” too often overlook the quality and healthfulness of the food being introduced, and a narrow focus on caloric sufficiency can entrench unsustainable animal and industrial agricultural models.

6.2 Community-Based Interventions and Education

The ENENNFOOF Excellence Foundation implements a bottom-up approach centred on early agricultural intervention. Children in partner schools cultivate school gardens where they grow plant-based proteins, fruits, and vegetables that directly supply school meals. This hands-on education builds lifelong habits of environmental stewardship and healthy eating. The programme emphasises that children learn to consume what they grow, rather than ultra-processed or industrially raised animal products with uncertain health implications.

6.3 Linking Farmers to Schools and Local Food Systems

A planned initiative for 2026 to 2027 will connect women and youth smallholder farmers to school feeding programmes, ensuring that locally produced, plant-rich foods supply institutional demand. A community farm of 7.5 hectares cultivates beans, corn, and vegetables for school porridge and meals. This model creates a holistic community food system that reduces reliance on imports, keeps economic value within the locality, and simultaneously addresses food security, nutrition, and climate mitigation.

6.4 Developing Countries as Leaders in Food Transformation

Developing countries must not be passive recipients of external food system models. By embedding plant-based production and consumption into nationally determined contributions and climate education, least-developed countries can lead in demonstrating how food system transformation enhances resilience. International support must respect local agricultural knowledge and empower smallholders, rather than imposing solutions.

“We want to make sure that we are producing enough, but it is also healthy. We would rather mitigate how we produce food, enhance our smallholder farmers, promote healthy eating, and reduce the high impact of animal agriculture.” —

Sira Secka, Founder, Enennfoof Excellence Foundation, The Gambia; Unfccc Agriculture Lead Negotiator

7. Cross-Cutting Discussions: Bridging Policy Gaps, Scaling Innovation, and Overcoming Barriers

7.1 Integrating Food Systems into Climate Governance

Dr. Dragsdahl observed that many policymakers still do not treat food systems as a core climate lever. Resistance to including food-systems language in COP decisions reflects a deeper political unease. However, the Danish experience shows that when pragmatic, non-coercive solutions are presented through education, menu design, and innovation support, policymakers become braver. Expanding the political imagination of what plant-based policy can be is a prerequisite for making dietary transition a mainstream component of nationally determined contributions.

7.2 Ensuring Affordability through Infrastructure Investment

Mr. Lazimy reiterated that price parity cannot be achieved without fixing the ingredient and processing foundation. Premium pricing is baked into manufacturing at subscale volumes, and incentives remain tilted toward incumbent animal agriculture through subsidies and infrastructure. He advocated for institutional offtake agreements that give producers the confidence to scale, and for a business-to-business strategy that embeds plant proteins invisibly into everyday foods, normalising them without consumer-facing price premiums.

7.3 Normalising Plant-Based Meals through Simple Nudges

Both Chef Jaya and Dr. Dragsdahl pointed to the power of plant-based-by-default strategies. The example of New York City's public hospitals, where 50 percent of patients choose fully plant-based options when they are the default or first two choices, demonstrates that consumer acceptance follows when delicious, well-named dishes are the easy choice. This approach respects individual freedom while dramatically shifting consumption patterns at institutional scale.

7.4 Overcoming Regulatory Capture and Building Unified Narratives

Ms. Maulekhi highlighted that regulatory capture remains a profound barrier, requiring a multi-pronged response that goes beyond winning court cases. She advocated for parallel work on the demand side with institutional consumers, producer training for alternative farming methods, and above all, stitching together fragmented advocacy communities into a single narrative coalition with measurable goals spanning health, environment, and animal welfare.

7.5 Addressing GMO Concerns and Upholding Local Sovereignty

A question from Uganda raised the frequently encountered concern about genetically modified organisms in plant-based foods. Dr. Dragsdahl responded that while debates on new genomic techniques are ongoing in Europe, he personally opposes the imposition of GMO technologies by the Global North on the South. A plant-based, organic, and agroecological approach can feed the world without such technologies, and local communities must retain decision-making power over their food systems.

"I believe that it is because of people's somehow limited imagination of what a plant-based policy could be, and that is what is holding them back." — Dr. Rune-Christoffer Dragsdahl, Executive Director, Danish Vegetarian Society

8. Recommendations

8.1 Develop National Plant-Based Action Plans

Governments should create holistic, multi-ministry strategies akin to Denmark's, encompassing production, processing, consumption, export, and research. Plans should include measurable targets, dedicated public investment funds, and multi-stakeholder governance boards that include farmers, industry, civil society, and health experts. A broad, non-ideological framing that avoids adversarial positioning toward the animal agriculture sector is critical for building the political coalitions needed for durable implementation.

8.2 Invest in Ingredient-Level Innovation and Infrastructure

Public and private capital must shift from consumer-brand speculation to foundational processing and agronomy. Support should target proteins that are functional, neutral-tasting, and scalable from existing crops such as pulses, alfalfa, and legumes, enabling business-to-business integration into mainstream products. Institutional offtake agreements, public co-investment in processing infrastructure, and farmer-forward business models are essential to de-risk the transition at scale.

8.3 Scale Institutional Plant-Based-by-Default Procurement

Cities, schools, hospitals, and government canteens should adopt nudging strategies where plant-based meals are the default or prominently positioned choice, while retaining individual freedom of selection. Culinary training for institutional chefs and equipment support can remove practical barriers at low cost. Public procurement in large institutions has the potential to normalise plant-based consumption for millions of people who would not otherwise make that choice independently. Meatless Mondays and Plant Powered Fridays were introduced in New York City Public Schools. Also subsidy and tax reform- switching to subsidizing fruits, vegetables, legumes and grains and eliminating taxes on plant-based foods (India reduced tax from 18 to 5 percent).

8.4 Reposition Plant-Based Foods in Emerging Economies as Health and Food Security Solutions

In countries with strong plant-rich dietary traditions, advocacy should leverage existing patterns through public procurement reform, pro-plant fiscal policy, and framing that foregrounds nutrition, climate resilience, and disease prevention. Arguments anchored in food security and non-communicable disease reduction are more politically durable than those centred on animal welfare alone. India's 2026 goods and services tax reduction on plant-based foods from 18 to 5 percent is a replicable model.

8.5 Foster Multi-Stakeholder Platforms and Bridge-Building

Deliberate, respectful engagement with actors across the political and agricultural spectrum, including animal farmers, is essential to de-polarise the debate and build broad coalitions. Platforms that unite health, environment, and food security advocates behind a common narrative will be more resilient against industry lobbying. Positive, solution-focused messaging that expands the political imagination of what plant-based policy can achieve is a precondition for systemic change.

8.6 Embed Food Systems Transformation in Climate Policy

Parties to the Paris Agreement should explicitly include dietary shifts and plant-based protein development in their nationally determined contributions and long-term low-emission development strategies. Policymakers need to be equipped with concrete, non-coercive policy options, including education, menu design, procurement reform, tax and subsidy reform, and innovation support, to overcome the imagination gap that currently prevents food systems from being treated as a core climate lever.



8.7 Support Local Crop Utilisation and Just Transitions for Farmers

International and national programming should prioritise crops and processing models that build on existing agricultural systems, particularly in Africa and South Asia. Smallholder farmers, women, and youth must be central to the transition, with support for agroecological practices, local processing facilities, and market linkages to institutional buyers. Community food systems, such as school-garden-to-canteen programmes, offer a model that simultaneously advances food security, nutrition, environmental education, and economic inclusion.



Annex A. Speaker Profiles

The following profiles are based on the event agenda and speakers' introductions during the dialogue.

Dr. Anita Krajnc,

Executive Director of The Save Movement and Global Campaign Coordinator for the Plant Based Treaty. An advocate for aligning food systems with planetary boundaries and food security, she works extensively on promoting institutional plant-based food systems change at local and international levels. She moderated the panel and delivered the opening framework on planetary boundaries and the food system.

Dr. Rune-Christoffer Dragsdahl

Executive Director of the Danish Vegetarian Society and President of the International Vegetarian Union. He serves on the board of the Danish Government's Plant-Based Food Grant and has been instrumental in shaping Denmark's national action plan for plant-based foods. He addressed policy innovation, the economics of dietary guidelines, and international replication of the Danish model.

Udi Lazimy

Founder & CEO, FUDI Protein & FUDI Impact Partners. A leader in alternative protein innovation, his work focuses on rubisco protein extraction from alfalfa to create functional, neutral-tasting plant proteins for mainstream food manufacturing. He addressed industry barriers, the importance of ingredient-layer investment, and the farmer-forward business model.

Chef Jaya Rai

Regional Liaison for Asia for the Plant Based Treaty and an international cuisine specialist. She has led institutional menu change projects in Bhutan and India, training chefs and schools to adopt plant-based meals through culturally adapted recipes. She addressed culinary education, institutional change, and consumer psychology.

Ms. Gauri Maulekhi

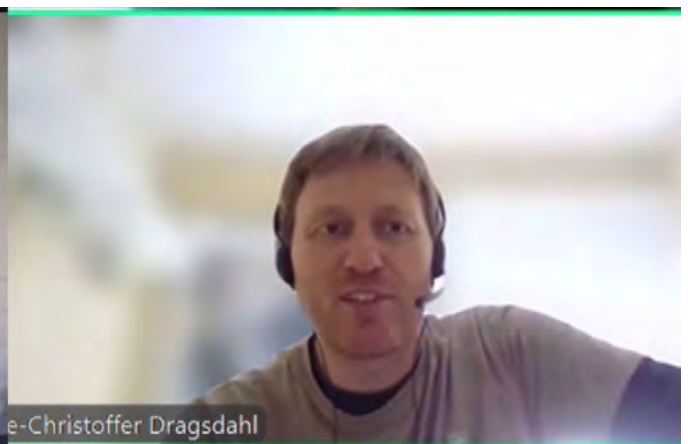
Public Policy Expert and Trustee at People for Animals India. She works at the intersection of animal welfare, food policy, and public health, focusing on regulatory reform, corporate accountability, and civil-society coalition-building. She addressed India's dietary traditions, public procurement opportunities, regulatory capture, and narrative positioning.

Ms. Sira Secka

Founder of the ENENNFOOF Excellence Foundation, The Gambia, and the country's lead negotiator for agriculture and Action for Climate Empowerment at the UNFCCC. She advances climate education, youth engagement, and community-based agricultural programmes. She addressed Africa's vulnerability, community-based school-garden models, and the role of developing countries in leading food-system transformation.



Anita Krajnc, Toronto



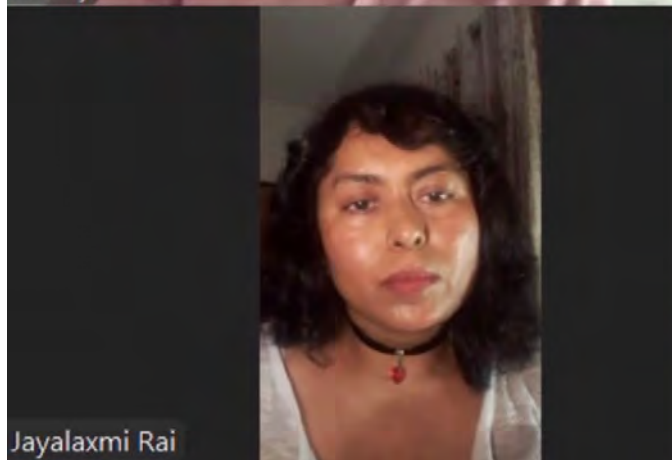
e-Christoffer Dragsdahl



Lazimy



gauri Maulekhi



Jayalaxmi Rai



Annex B. Key Data Points from the Dialogue

Indicator	Value
Food system share of global greenhouse gas emissions	Approximately one-third
Animal agriculture's share of farmland	83 percent, delivering only 18 percent of calories
Potential farmland reduction under a global plant-based diet	75 percent (from 4 billion to 1 billion ha)
Dietary shift mitigation potential (IPCC)	8 Gt CO ₂ equivalent per year
Methane warming contribution from animal agriculture	Approximately 0.5°C of 1.1°C observed warming
Diet-related premature adult deaths per year	15 million (19 to 24 percent of all adult deaths)
Estimated food bill reduction from plant-based diets (high-income)	Approximately one-third
Denmark's plant-based food grant (current)	€170 million, permanent beyond 2030
NYC public hospital plant-based meal uptake (default nudge)	50 percent of patients
India GST reduction on plant-based foods (2026)	From 18 percent to 5 percent
Planetary boundaries currently breached	Five of nine (food system is dominant driver)
FAO true cost of food relative to income (low-income countries)	Can exceed 27 percent of income
Alternative protein sector peak investment (2021)	Nearly USD 7 billion
Alternative protein sector investment by 2025	Below USD 1 billion
Alfalfa protein content vs soy	Twice the protein per acre
Methane 20-year global warming potential vs CO ₂	84 times

Table B.1. Key figures cited during the WAF-Plant Based Treaty Policy Dialogue, 5 June 2026.

Annex C. Glossary

Agroecology	A farming approach that applies ecological principles to agricultural systems, emphasising biodiversity, nutrient cycling, and reduced reliance on external inputs.
B2B (Business-to-Business)	A model in which plant protein ingredients are sold to food manufacturers for incorporation into mainstream consumer products, rather than directly to end consumers as branded plant-based foods.
Just Transition	A framework ensuring that shifts toward sustainable economies do not leave workers and communities behind, particularly farmers and rural populations dependent on animal agriculture.
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions: national climate action plans submitted by countries under the Paris Agreement, outlining efforts to reduce emissions and adapt to climate impacts.
Planetary Boundaries	A scientific framework defining a safe operating space for humanity across nine Earth system processes; seven have been assessed, with six breached as of 2023.
Plant-Based by Default	A nudge strategy where plant-based options are presented as the standard choice in institutional settings, without removing meat options, significantly increasing uptake.
Protein Security	Reliable, affordable access to sufficient dietary protein that meets health requirements while respecting planetary boundaries.
Rubisco Protein	Ribulose-1,5-bisphosphate carboxylase/oxygenase, the most abundant protein on Earth, found in plant leaves and particularly abundant in alfalfa; valued for its high functionality, digestibility comparable to egg white, and potential as a cost-competitive B2B ingredient.
True Cost Accounting	An assessment method that quantifies the unpriced environmental, health, and social costs embedded in food production, revealing hidden economic burdens not captured in market prices.
Virtual Water Trade	The international trade in commodities, especially food, viewed through the lens of the water embedded in their production; allows water-scarce countries to import water-intensive goods and specialise in lower-water production.

Annex D. Programme, Acknowledgements, and Contact

Programme

Date: 5 June 2026 (World Environment Day)

Convenors: World Agriculture Forum and Plant Based Treaty

Moderator: Dr. Anita Krajnc, Executive Director, The Save Movement; Global Campaign Coordinator, Plant Based Treaty

Format: Opening framework; panel presentations; moderated cross-discussion; public question-and-answer

Theme: Plant-Based Pathways to Protein Security: Aligning Nutrition and Environmental Sustainability

Acknowledgements

The World Agriculture Forum and the Plant Based Treaty gratefully acknowledge the contributions of all panellists and participants. Special thanks are owed to the organisations represented: the Danish Vegetarian Society and the International Vegetarian Union; FUDI Protein and FUDI Impact Partners; the The Save Movement; People for Animals India; and the ENENNFOOF Excellence Foundation, The Gambia. This report was prepared by the World Agriculture Forum Secretariat and reflects the views expressed by participants; it does not represent the official positions of convening organizations.

Source

This report is a synthesis of the WAF-Plant Based Treaty Policy Dialogue of 5 June 2026. It draws on the dialogue record and synthesises speakers' contributions; all figures cited are those presented during the dialogue and should be verified against original sources where used in subsequent publications.

Contact

World Agriculture Forum Secretariat

Website: www.worldagricultureforum.org

Plant Based Treaty: www.plantbasedtreaty.org