How can we transform food systems for diet-related health?

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What is the food system?

The **food supply chain** is at the core of all food systems – the chain linking inputs into food production, production, & how food gets from farm to fork, & beyond.

Source: UC Davis: http://asi.ucdavis.edu/programs/sarep/about/what-is-sustainable-agriculture
Vision: what do we want food systems to do for diet-related health?

- Make vegetables, fruits and whole grains more Available, Affordable, Acceptable and Appealing for All people to eat.
- Make excessive consumption of energy, saturated fats, trans fats, sugar and salt less Available, Affordable, Acceptable and Appealing for All people to eat.
How do modern food supply chains currently work?

"To meet consumer need efficiently" through supply chain management, which aims to:

- coordinate activities into a seamless process
- connect partners
- make supply chains competitive
- cut costs

Result is that:

- Consumers have foods Available that are
  Affordable
  Acceptable
  Appealing
- Foods are traceable
How do modern food systems currently work for diet-related health?

Farmers are not incentivised to produce foods for health but to meet the demands of the modern supply chain.

Supply chains are a marvel of efficiency that create economic value but respond to incentives to add value not related to health.

“Consumers” are assumed to drive demand, but this is influenced by income, skills, busy lives - & preferences counter to health created by the supply chain.

EU Marketing & Retailer Standards require fruit to be intact, clean, fresh in appearance, free from pest damage. There is no requirement to be delicious for kids.

More value can be created from corn if it is used for deggerminated flour, animal feed, sweeteners, & oil rather than a wholegrain.

People like sweetness. But marketing of sugary drinks makes them more appealing.
But the evidence is building that food systems can be re-oriented for diet related health
So, how could food systems work better for diet related health?

By placing health-promoting diets as a central goal of the food system

Source: Global Panel on Agriculture for Food Systems & Nutrition, 2016
What do recommendations from evidence-based reports say?

“Foster policy coherence in order to improve diets and nutrition, through enhanced coordination across sectors, including agriculture,... health... economic & social development.”

“Governments & private sector actors need to work together to align food systems with the goal of attaining healthy diets. This will require creating incentives for private sector actors throughout the food system so that they can make decisions more favourable to the adoption of higher-quality diets.”

“Possible actions include creating or adjusting incentives along the food supply chain, such as through investments in production, supply chain logistics and procurement policies, in order to realign food system policies with public health goals and improve the availability and affordability of healthy diets.”
What are the proposals on **how to do this?**

1. **Food production / agriculture**
   - Provide subsidies to grow/produce more health-promoting foods
   - Diversification of monoculture
   - Redesign agricultural research landscape to focus on health not yield or supply chain demands
   - Urban agriculture
2. Food storage and trade
   • Reduce waste of health-promoting crops
   • Ensure import/export policies coherent with health-promoting diets

3. Food transformation/processing
   • Reformulation
   • Restricting advertising

4. Food retailing and service
   • Local food supply chains
   • Public procurement
Challenge 1: How to *align* incentives to make health-promoting diets AAAA for all?

Use **diagnostic tools** to identify food systems (dis)incentives that:

• start with the diet problems as people experience them and their (dis)incentives (why do they eat what they do?)

• *flow* backwards through the food system to identify the food supply chain (dis)incentives which influence people’s (dis) incentives
## Example 1. Diet-Centred Food Systems Tool: process to identify where food systems changes are needed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key questions</th>
<th>Studies required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is the problem to solve (e.g. veg intake; food insecurity; obesity)?</td>
<td>Quantitative data on people affected, SES, household drivers of the problem</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. What is people’s lived experiences of the problem?</td>
<td>Qualitative studies of how people perceive, feel, judge, make sense of the problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How do these experiences interact with people’s (i) social environments (ii) food environments?</td>
<td>Measurements of relationships and exposure to options &amp; signals that may influence the problem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How are people’s environments shaped by the food systems underpinning them?</td>
<td>Analysis of incentives and disincentives in food systems that affect options &amp; signals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What policies can solve the problem by addressing people’s experiences in a systems context?</td>
<td>Source: Hawkes, forthcoming</td>
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**Example 2. Food Systems Policy Tool under development by ”GLOPAN”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>What are the most important diet gaps that need to be addressed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>What do consumers say are the reasons for diet gaps (e.g. cost, availability)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>What parts of food systems are responsible for the diet quality gaps?</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Are there new or existing food system programmes/policies that can be utilised?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Which programmes/policies will be prioritised for action, based on cost / impact?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>How can policy ‘owners’ work better together to address the diet gaps?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>How can your proposed actions be made long-term and sustainable?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Developed from the Global Panel's Foresight Report: Food systems and diets: Facing the challenges of the 21st century**
Challenge 2: How to ensure *health* incentives align with *economic* incentives?

Example 3. “Consumption-Oriented Food Supply Chain Analysis.” Interviewing supply chain entities to understand incentives and disincentives to specific actions e.g. reducing sugar in manufactured foods (Hawkes, 2009)
In our study of supply chain incentives & disincentives to reducing sugar levels in manufactured foods, forthcoming from WHO Regional Office for Europe, we identified...

2 incentives

1. Reduced demand from health-aware consumers
2. Availability of substitutes

10 disincentives

Companies are locked into incentives they find it hard to escape from
What it will take to achieve change

1. An explicit **food systems framework**

2. **Rigorous diagnostics** that involve understanding the (dis)incentives of the people who eat and the people of the supply chain to identify where the most powerful levers for food systems change lie

3. **Political courage** to break the supply chain “lock ins”
Thank you

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