

Submission to the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture

May 2022



**HUMANE SOCIETY
INTERNATIONAL**



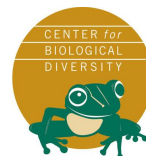
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Submission from organizations as part of the 50by40 UNFCCC Action Group Coalition, on future topics not listed in decision 4/CP.23 and views on the progress of the Koronivia Joint Work on Agriculture in order to report to the Conference of the Parties as per decision 4/CP.23, paragraph 4

Future topics of KJWA must address industrial animal agriculture and promote healthy plant-rich diets

The commitments made on the topics of methane and deforestation at COP26 are a first step in connecting climate change and food systems. However, food system commitments are lacking on multiple fronts and are not addressed well in most countries' NDCs, especially in regard to the industrial animal and aqua-farming sectors. In 2022, the IPCC's AR6 report recognized the high mitigation potential of reduced meat consumption in high consuming countries, insisting that "Dietary change in regions with excess consumption of animal-sourced

foods to a higher share of plant-based food has both mitigation and adaptation benefits along with reduced mortality from diet related non-communicable diseases, health, biodiversity and other environmental co-benefits (high confidence).”¹

Countries must acknowledge the importance of healthy and balanced nutrition (and specifically protein diversification) and shifting towards plant-rich diets and agroecology if we are serious about achieving the Paris Agreement and the SDGs. We cannot succeed in limiting global warming to even 2°C unless the agriculture/food systems sector is radically reformed.

These changes must go hand in hand with a Just Livestock Transition to make sure small farmers, women and economically marginalised children, Indigenous Peoples, and workers are the first beneficiaries of these major changes. Inclusive and timely interventions in food production and consumption can deliver manifold benefits to human and planetary health as well as to jobs and livelihoods.

To frame the urgency, we ask the KJWA to consider the following:

1. The **livestock sector contributes at least 14.5%² of all GHGs**, with a more recent estimation of close to 20%³ of total emissions. However, this does not include the industrial fishing and aquaculture industries.
2. **Cutting methane emissions⁴** was identified at COP26 as a crucial opportunity to achieve (especially short-term) emissions reductions. Yet the significant contribution of industrial animal agriculture to methane emissions (over 30% of total emissions⁴) has not been discussed seriously.
3. Animal agriculture (livestock grazing and feed crop production) is one of the leading cause of **deforestation⁵** worldwide, destroying livelihoods and endangering biodiversity. Industrial fishing and fish farming are destroying our oceans at an alarming rate.
4. It is well understood that the crowded and unhealthy conditions in industrial animal farms present ripe environments for **zoonotic diseases** and resulting risks of pandemics⁶ that directly impact food security and malnutrition, especially in the Global Majority.
5. Industrial agriculture and livestock farming promotes intensive use of agro-toxics, affecting food quality, human and environmental health, decreasing the soil's capacity to capture carbon, and disproportionately impacting rural women who are often the key holders of knowledge about seeds and agroecological practices.
6. **Government subsidies⁷** greatly fuel and exacerbate problematic business-as-usual animal food production patterns, while ignoring external socioeconomic, health,

environmental and climate costs. These subsidies support a broken system of intensive, industrial-scale animal agriculture that is controlled by a small number of large corporations, and leaves smallholder farmers and food producers behind.

Acknowledging all of this, we call on the KJWA to take the following recommendations into account:

1. To align climate and agricultural policies, recognizing the impact of food systems on greenhouse gas emissions and climate change-linked extreme weather events. **A shift towards plant-rich food production and consumption needs to be clearly identified as a valid and effective climate crisis mitigation solution.**
2. **To connect KJWA to the NDC process and to the key outcomes and recommendations related to dietary and production shifts of the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit.** By first acknowledging that current NDC targets do not fully consider food systems (and specifically industrial animal agriculture and aquaculture), and then recommending that these sectors be included in the NDC process, KJWA could have a real impact on national agricultural policies and contribute to concrete climate solutions.
3. To make the connection between **food insecurity and food crops, water resources and land use, including that apportioned or diverted to cultivation of livestock feed crops.** The supply chain of plant-based foods is shorter than animal-based foods, meaning plant-based food systems offer greater access to local, fresh, healthy food and also reduce food loss and waste in the supply chain. Local plant-based (and in some cases mixed-use small farms') food production is also more resource efficient and climate resilient than large-scale industrial animal-based food production, thereby reducing the demand for more and more land conversion, which impacts global warming, biodiversity and pollution, and even human well-being. Industrial animal foods are often produced for export to wealthier nations, negatively impacting local and marginalized communities.
4. To identify the positive contribution that a just transition to promote agro-ecological farming practices in fields and more plant-based food production and consumption can make to **achieving many SDGs, especially in terms of human and planetary health, as well as job creation, job upgrading, social justice, gender equality, and poverty reduction.**
5. To consider the **role of consumption** in transforming food systems, and develop measures for governments to implement, including formulating **national dietary guidelines.** Changes in production and consumption must go hand in hand, as one influences the other. KJWA can and should address not only agriculture, but also the greater food system, including the role of consumers, in order to deliver effective, long-term solutions.

6. To foster and support **sustainable food innovations**, especially healthy plant-based products, as alternatives to industrial, ultra-high processed meat, fish and dairy-derived foods. The IPCC AR6 report also pointed out that “clean meat” (also known as cultivated or cultured meat) could mitigate significant emissions in the future and that such technology could lead to significant reduction in land use for pastures and crop-based animal feeds.
7. The socio-economic, food security, cultural, health, gender and ecological dimensions of agriculture must be considered beyond carbon accounting and MRV approaches to reducing agricultural emissions. Agricultural improvements should not be used to offset fossil fuel and emissions, as this only hinders the transition required by countries.
8. **To ensure there is a just livestock transition**, which means acknowledging that the shift from industrial animal farming must be underpinned by appropriate policy and regulation, especially directing a shift in funding and subsidies to help farmers transition. Redirected subsidies should further recognize the needs and vulnerabilities of different communities and stakeholders within food systems, and tailor local solutions to local needs.

In conclusion, if we are serious about creating sustainable, equitable and resilient food systems and meeting or exceeding the goals of the Paris Agreement, policymakers and country leaders must prioritize food solutions at COP27 and beyond. So far, KJWA has focused on soils, nutrient use, water, livestock management, adaptation, gender equality, socio-economics and food security and food sovereignty. While these are important topics, it is now time to address the interconnected nature of the food systems’ entire chain (production to consumption to food loss/waste), highlight the impact of industrial animal agriculture and aquaculture in the climate crisis, and demonstrate the role that food consumption patterns around industrial agriculture can play in driving needed change. **Shifting towards plant-rich food production and consumption needs must be clearly identified as a serious climate crisis mitigation and adaptation solution.** This systemic approach would deliver concrete, ambitious and comprehensive policy recommendations to enable a just transition towards more healthy, plant-rich food systems, a chance for farmers and local communities to thrive, and a healthy planet that avoid the worst predictions of a climate emergency. KJWA could ignite this essential next step.

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Endnotes

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