



# CFS47 Side Event:

Agricultural Solutions: Forging Consensus Against Linked Food Security, Nutrition, Health and Climate Challenges

A farmer panel at CFS47, the Committee on World Food Security, showed that key elements of the Sustainable Development vision put forth by Solutions from the Land are already embraced by innovative farmers on at least four continents.

The event was organized by Solutions from the Land, the Global Farmer Network, the Global Dairy Platform, the FAO Private Service Mechanism, as well as member state partners Argentina, Australia, the Netherlands, and the United States. Its intent was to spotlight the systems and practices farmers use to improve food and nutrition security, enhance health and livelihoods, improve the environment, enhance biodiversity, and deliver high-value terrestrial solutions to climate change.

Moderated by AG Kawamura, a fruit and vegetable grower and former secretary of the California Department of Food & Agriculture, the 75-minute program featured presentations by four farmers who shared their experiences with high-value, near-term, scalable solutions to the web of challenges the world faces today.

Karol Kissane, a dairy farmer and Nuffield scholar from the village of Asdee in southwest Ireland, converted the family beef farm to a dairy farm in 2013 and milks 100 cows in a spring-based calving system. Living on land where—due to high rainfall and a hilly landscape—the only realistic thing to grow is grass, the goal is to use technology, genetics and conservation practices to help his dairy herd turn that grass and supplemental grain into solid milk products as efficiently as possible.

In Marondera, Zimbabwe, Ruramiso Mashumba grows snap peas, maize, whole brown rice, sorghum, millet, and gum tress, and raises pigs. She is a member of the Global Farmer Network and is the founder of Mnandi Africa, an organization that helps rural woman combat poverty and malnutrition. For her, a key to sustainability is cooperatives, whether they focus on equipment sharing among smallholder farmers, solar panels to power the operations, and marketing. Together, they can raise the yields for large groups of small farmers in the region.

Both Trey Hill in the United States and Edgard Ramirez in Argentina produce maize, soybeans, and other crops in fields where the reduction or elimination of tillage, and crop rotation, builds resilience in the soil and provides natural nutrients. Ramirez, an agricultural engineer and an advisor for Aapresid, an Argentinian farmers' organization, stresses cooperation among farmers. "We will have new problems in the future," he said. "So, we have to work together to look for these solutions. When we share knowledge, we make the distance shorter."

Hill, a fourth-generation farmer in Maryland, spoke of farming as an art as well as a science: "Farmers must be sustainable, resilient, ecologically minded, climate smart, aware of regenerative principles, profitable, but most importantly—an artist who uses healthy, productive landscapes as a medium and understands creating beautiful work."

And all of them stressed the importance of balancing the diverse factors and goals in in both the economics and ecology of their farms. Kawamura concluded that finding such a balance "is an 'Aha' moment for many of us—that this new sharing of knowledge, this explosion of knowledge, really has created this opportunity for an ongoing and accelerating Renaissance."

Karol Kissane



“We can all have a perfect idea of what agriculture should look like, but if that doesn’t work in the ground, we’ve got to have give and take—and if you do, we can all work together for a better world for all.”

Ruramiso Mashumba



“When I started farming I had no equipment. I had to start from scratch... this is something that's very different for farmers in Zimbabwe compared to farmers around the world, where a lot of the time you inherit a farm with some sort of knowledge. So we had to start from scratch and look at our unique tools... and how can we commercialize them.”

Edgard Ramirez



“Cooperation is very important from farmer to farmer. For example, in Argentina we have more than 30 years of no till experience, but in this time, we made a lot of mistakes. Our idea is, when we share the knowledge, we avoid... people making the same mistakes. Obviously, we will have new problems in the future, and we don't have solutions now. So, we have to work together to look for these solutions. When we share knowledge, we make the distance shorter.”

Trey Hill



“That sums up farming for me—that every farmer and every person that produces food can have their own little spot, their own little place in the world, but as long as all of us change just a little bit, the face of the world will change.”