

International Plant Based Food Groups Urge Leaders at COP27 to Set Clear Targets for Global Food System Transition in Favor of Plant-Based

Eight international plant-based food trade associations join forces to promote plant-based food systems as transformational strategy to meet Paris Agreement climate goals and mitigate growing concerns around food security.

November 4, 2022 — Ahead of the United Nations' 27th Conference of the Parties (COP 27), the [International Plant Based Foods Working Group](#) (IPBFWG) urges world leaders to set clear and tangible targets for transition toward sustainable, plant-based food systems that prioritize growing food for direct human consumption. After calling on the international community and national governments to make a predominantly plant-based food system a central part of strategies to address the urgent climate crisis in 2021, IPBFWG applauds the inclusion of [Agriculture Day](#) as part of the COP27 Presidency Vision thematic days as well as the first-ever food pavilions dedicated to food systems change that aims to focus on transformation towards healthier, more resilient, and more equitable food systems.

Our global food system is responsible for over 30 percent of greenhouse gas emissions and 57 percent of emissions from all food production come from raising animals for industrial meat and dairy in addition to growing crops for feed.^{1,2} Reducing emissions from our food system is paramount to meeting goals to slow the rate of global warming as outlined in the Paris Agreement and shifting toward plant-based diets and food systems can not only play a role in curtailing emissions but also re-allocate crops to provide essential nutrition to people and alleviate growing resource inequities.³ In light of the war in Ukraine, global food supply network challenges, and the acceleration of extreme weather that makes food production increasingly unreliable, world leaders must acknowledge the transformational potential of a food system that centers on growing nutritious, sustainable plant-based foods and set a clear timeline to reduce reliance on resource-intensive industrial animal agriculture, which is a known driver of ocean dead zones, air and water pollution, as well as public health crises like antibiotic resistance and zoonotic diseases.⁴⁵⁶⁷

¹ [Food systems are responsible for a third of global anthropogenic GHG emissions](#), Crippa, M., Solazzo, E., Guizzardi, D. et al., Nat Food 2, 198–209 (2021).

² [Global greenhouse gas emissions from animal-based foods are twice those of plant-based foods](#), Xu, X., Sharma, P., Shu, S. et al, Nat Food 2, 724–732 (2021)

³ [Options for keeping the food system within environmental limits](#), Springmann, M., Clark, M., Mason-D'Croz, D. et al. Nature 562, 519–525 (2018).

⁴ [World Resource Institute](#) – <https://www.wri.org/initiatives/eutrophication-and-hypoxia/learn>

⁵ [Air quality–related health damages of food](#), Domingo, N., Balasubramanian, S., Thakrar, S., et al, PNAS Vol 18, No 20 (2021).

⁶ [Water pollution from agriculture: a global review](#), Mateo-Sagasta, J., Zadeh, S., Turrall, H., Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Rome, (2017).

⁷ [Zoonosis emergence linked to agricultural intensification and environmental change](#). Jones BA, Grace D, Kock R, Proc Natl Acad Sci (2013).

The IPBFWG commends COP27 organizers for clearly defining, as part of the [Round Table on “Food Security.”](#) that a shift towards sustainable global food systems includes advancing “demand for food towards diets that can remain within planetary boundaries, including lowering meat consumption, developing alternatives, and spurring the shift towards more native plants, crops, and grains.” COP27 represents a historic opportunity for global leaders to take stock of the progress made towards achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement, and to define a bold, concrete action plan to tackle the food system roots of our current climate crisis.

As leaders at COP27 meet to discuss strategies to feed our growing global population in a sustainable way, the IPBFWG recommends that nations set clear and measurable targets to shift the balance to a food system that prioritizes plant-based food production and promotes plant-based dietary patterns. These foundation targets will create the basis for world governments to set policies and regulations in support of plant-based food systems transition.

In addition, IPBFWG recommends that nations commit to:

- Supporting farmers in moving towards more sustainable agricultural practices and crops (e.g. plant protein crops) by providing and/or redirecting financial incentives to utilize the land for crops for direct human consumption and set clear targets for this transition;
- Educating citizens about plant-based foods via public campaigns;
- Ensuring that labelling requirements for plant-based foods products empower consumers to make more sustainable food choices;
- Integrating plant-based foods into public procurement (e.g. making plant-based options available in schools, hospitals, etc.), as well as in national dietary guidelines;
- Using economic incentives to facilitate access to plant-based products to ensure that the most sustainable choice is also the most affordable;
- Allocating funds for targeted research and innovation on plant-based foods, and to support diversified climate-friendly crops and plant aquaculture both on land and under the sea; and
- Developing food environments where plant-based foods are presented as the sustainable choice (e.g. in retail stores).

Our global food systems are intricately tied to climate change but plant-based foods and diets offer a transformative solution that can help us feed our growing population without further devastating our planet. The outcomes of COP27 must be ambitious and facilitate a shift to a plant-based food system, with the aim of meeting global climate goals.

The undersigned members of the IPBFWG share a like-minded mission to harness the benefits of plant-based foods, placing them at the heart of the transition towards more sustainable, equitable, and healthy food systems.

Rachel Dreskin, CEO, Plant Based Foods Association (USA): “Plant-based foods and food systems represent an opportunity to innovate and optimize the way we feed the world. As world leaders gather to discuss climate solutions at COP27, it is essential that there are clear targets identified to aid in global

transitions towards plant-based food systems. We have reached a moment in history when our actions will determine the viability of our planet and the life it sustains—and to ensure a healthier, more sustainable, and more equitable future for generations to come, we need a resilient food system that works for people, the planet, and animals alike.”

Siska Pottie, Secretary General, European Alliance for Plant-Based Foods: “There is an urgent need for political leaders worldwide to acknowledge formally the important impact of our current food systems on climate change and to set a vision/ambition to transition to new food systems focused predominantly on plant-based food production and products. Such a shift would result in a triple win, for the climate, for the health of people and for the long-term food security challenge. Clear ambitions need to be set in the various parts of the world allowing to set the right policies and regulations, facilitating, supporting and accelerating the shift towards more sustainable plant-based food production and consumption world-wide. A big win can be achieved in Europe where the consumption of animal proteins and products exceeds largely the WHO recommendations. Creating a level playing field for the plant-based foods and fostering research and innovation in the plant-based food sector would be a first good step in the transition, which is supported by many European citizens.”

Sanjay Sethi, Executive Director, Plant Based Foods Industry Association (India): “It is commendable that the need to deliver a food system transformation towards health and sustainability is being recognized with the Food4Climate Pavilion at COP27 this year. Plant-based Foods are a multi-problem solution, be it sustainability, land degradation, biodiversity loss, climate change, health hazards and ethical concerns. To feed the ever-growing global population, we must shift to a more efficient food system centered towards plant-based foods. India is pivotal to the global food ecosystem, and with the support from research institutions, government, businesses, and consumers we can collectively spearhead this transition.”

Leslie Ewing, Executive Director, Plant Based Foods of Canada: “As our world leaders gather at COP27 to discuss how we will work together to fight climate change, we also must ask our governments to look within their own borders to seek ways to unlock the power of industry to complement these goals. With strategic investments from both government and the private sector, innovation can flourish and the plant-based food industry can step up to meet global demand. By opening doors to consumer-friendly measures like allowing simplified product nomenclature, governments can signal their support for this dynamic and growing sector. By standing with those who are working to change our food system for the better, governments can send a strong message of support for their COP27 principles.”

Tove Larsson, Director, the European Plant-Based Foods Association, ENSA: “ENSA has raised awareness about the role of plant-based diet in moving towards more sustainable and healthier food consumption patterns. Plant-based alternatives are valuable in protecting biodiversity, while contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, thereby helping to mitigate climate change. The production of plant-based crops for human consumption can bring farmers economic opportunities, making them more resilient, while also ensuring long term food security by feeding a rapidly growing global

population. The COP27 offers an important opportunity to deliver on Europe’s farm to fork strategy as well as contributing to increasing global food security”

Rocio Cavazos, President, Association of Vegan Entrepreneurs of Mexico:

We applaud the recognition of the major impact of our food systems on climate change at COP27. We are confident that the presence of the Food Pavilions will spur the engagement of policymakers in the urgently required transition to more plant-based diets worldwide. The global threat to our survival posed by climate change demands a globally concerted effort on this critical front: the transformation of our food systems.

Marisa Heath, CEO, Plant-based Food Alliance UK: “For so many of the problems that international governments face, whether environmental, food security or human health, it is clear that food systems must change. We cannot continue to fail to address this reality and we must use COP27 to start the serious discussions that will expedite a shift to more resilient food systems in which plant-based diets sit at the centre. Otherwise we will continue to form responses to crises that only firefight the problems rather than solve them. The public are becoming much more receptive to the need to change and indeed many actively want to see their Government’s address the impact that current food systems have on their lives and the lives of future generations. We hope that COP27 will show real leadership and will work to set the pathway to clear reductions in meat and dairy consumption and a framework that enables plant-based innovation and growth.”

Signed:



About The International Plant Based Foods Working Group (IPBFWG)

IPBFWG is a coalition of eight international plant-based food trade associations, including the [Plant Based Foods Association \(USA\)](#), [Plant-Based Foods of Canada](#), [European Alliance for Plant Based Foods](#), [European Plant-based Foods Association](#), [Plant-Based Food Alliance UK](#), the [Plant Based Foods Industry Association](#) (India), the [Mexican Association of Vegan Entrepreneurs](#), and [China Plant Based Foods Association](#), united in the effort to bring about a healthier, more sustainable, and more humane food system.