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Editorial: Food System Dynamics

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The food system involves all actors, activities, resources, and environments that produce and provide food to people wherever they are. It serves basic human needs and is as such of core relevance for human survival.

It is global in production, consumption, and environmental impacts. But it is also deeply rooted in the social, cultural, natural, political, and legal environments of society. It needs to serve a diversity of consumer needs and lifestyles and has to cope with an organizational complexity where, a.o. small scale farms or enterprises interact with globally active industry or retail groups and where rural sites of production are remote from the urban and ever growing centers of consumption.

This complex system is faced with major challenges that arise from changes in the sector's economic and non-economic environments, from changes in lifestyles, from possible climatic changes, from global increases and changes in food consumption, from a diminishing production base due to the loss of agricultural land, and, not the least, from changing attitudes of society towards the consequences of the food system's activities for environmental, social and economic issues, captured in the term of 'sustainability'.

To cope with these challenges, the actors involved in the system's operation and development from industry, policy, or other groups need to appropriately coordinate their activities and exploit the food system's innovation potential to secure the global availability of food that is affordable, safe, and of the quality and variety expected by consumers. It requires a **dynamic development view** to succeed and a **dynamic development approach** that is flexible enough to easily adapt to the wide range of possible future scenarios the sector might have to face.

This challenge requires the support of research and an interdisciplinary discussion, analysis, and evaluation of innovations, experiences, opportunities, and risks. The classical research focus on narrowly defined research domains like policy research, market research, management, chain or network science, food science, etc. does not sufficiently match the interrelationships and dependencies within the food system. Such research needs to be complemented by a broader view and requires scientists from different disciplines to interact.

The ***International Journal on Food System Dynamics*** is the peer-reviewed interdisciplinary scientific journal that publishes research on the analysis, organization, operation, and sustainable development of the food system.

The journal builds on a socio-economic foundation with a focus on e.g. economics, policy, management, organization, logistics, and consumer research. However it is open to research from all research disciplines that might affect the socio-economic base of the food system and its actors or might be affected by socio-economic developments.

This approach is reflected by the different sections established for the journal involving 'Economics and Policy', 'Management and Organization', 'Chains and Networks', 'Consumers and Markets', 'Globalization and Regionalization', 'System Analysis', 'System Innovation and Dynamics', 'Scenario Research', 'Sustainability and Transparency', 'Science and Technology', and 'Information and Communication'.

The journal complements other journals in the field and considers itself as part of a network of scientific exchange supporting the food system in coping with the challenges ahead.