

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Sustainable Foods Summit: Key Outcomes

London – The Asia-Pacific edition of the Sustainable Foods Summit (www.sustainablefoodssummit.com) drew to a successful close a few weeks ago in Singapore. About 200 executives attended the Asia-Pacific and European (hosted earlier in Amsterdam) editions. Eight of the key outcomes of these two executive summits were...

1. Proteins crisis in Asia. In his opening keynote, David Yeung (Founder of Green Common in Hong Kong and the Green Monday movement) said the Asian food industry is facing a sustainability crisis. The growing population and changes in food consumption were putting a strain on protein production systems. Livestock products generate about 15% of all greenhouse gases and take up two-thirds of agricultural land. There are 1.5 billion cows on the planet, generating 5.5 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide; this is more carbon emissions of the UK, Canada, Brazil, Australia, Germany, Italy, France, Spain, Japan and South Korea combined.

Pork is the most widely eaten meat in the world, especially in Asia. China houses almost half the global pig population, with roughly 723 million pigs reared for meat consumption. Intensive pork production brings environmental and health repercussions.

Ben McCarron presented latest research from Asia Research and Engagement, showing that meat & seafood consumption in Asia is projected to rise by 78% between 2018 and 2050. The increase will require an additional 7.1 million km² land area, 1 billion m³ water per annum, 39,000 tonnes of antibiotics per annum, and generate an additional 5.4 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide per annum.

2. Potential of clean meat. Shir Friedman, Co-Founder of the Israeli company Supermeat, believes the future is with clean meat: cellular meat grown in refineries. She said clean meat overcomes ethical issues concerning rearing and slaughtering animals, whilst providing consumers identical meat products. After commercialisation, her company is looking to license its cultured meat technology to conventional meat processors.

3. Address packaging impacts. Food and beverage companies are under pressure to reduce their packaging footprint because of growing awareness of plastic pollution. Plastic pollution is a major environmental issue in Asia; Indonesia is the second largest plastic polluter to the ocean. According to Evoware, 90% of plastic goes into the ocean with 70% coming from food & beverage packaging. A quarter of Indonesian fish is now contaminated with plastic.

EkoPlaza, the Dutch organic food retail chain, has introduced plastic-free aisles in its stores. Erik Does, CEO, said “the idea behind the world’s first plastic-free supermarket aisle was to show what is possible. We do not want packaging-free food, but plastic-free packaging.” EkoPlaza is introducing a plastic-free logo on its private label products.

4. Innovative packaging solutions. At the summits, several examples were given of plastic-free packaging. The Dutch company EOSTA has introduced ‘natural branding’ laser marking for its organic fruit & vegetables. The move has saved 6.3 million plastic packaging units, 88 tonnes of plastic, and 396 tonnes of carbon emissions. Natural Branding received the Sustainable Packaging award at the 2018 Sustainable Food Awards (also organised by Ecovia Intelligence).

Futamura is providing cellulose-based biolaminates for food and beverage applications. Its biolaminates have the same performance as plastic films, but are biodegradable and compostable. According to Andy Sweetman, EMEA Sales & Marketing Manager, the green packaging materials provide greater consumer engagement and positive PR. He gave the examples of an organic tea company that said the new material helped raise sales by 64%. Innovation is also occurring in Asia; Evoware is making seaweed-based packaging for foods, beverages and related products. As well as biodegradable, some of the packaging is edible.

5. Need for creativity. Organisations were encouraged to be creative in finding solutions to sustainability challenges. Jesus Cia, Founder of Josenea Bio, showed what is possible when you ‘think outside the box’. The social enterprise has set up an organic farm in north-eastern Spain, hires workers who are at risk of social exclusions and trains them for employment. Since 2002, it has helped provide a livelihood to over 100 persons. Josenea Bio produces a range of organic herbs, aromatherapy and cosmetic products.

Making the case for biodiversity, Caryl Levine from Lotus Foods shared the company’s experiences in bringing rare heirloom rice varieties into the US market. The Californian firm ethically sources organic handcrafted rice from Asian countries. Sophie Boyadjian showed how Les Verges du Mekong has set up sustainable farming projects in Vietnam. The firm is sourcing fruits from 2,000 family farms in the Mekong Delta.

6. Blockchain technology prospects. Blockchain has the opportunity to revolutionise supply chains for agricultural products. Trust and transparency are the major sustainability benefits according to Tim Hadsel-Mares from ScanTrust. Ambrosus explained how blockchain can also reduce risks of food fraud and food safety in supply chains. Examples were given on how blockchain technology is deployed for olive oil, coffee and meats.

7. Vegan and vegetarian trend. Demand for vegan and plant-based foods has become global. David Yeung, founder of the Green Monday movement, commented that 22% of the Hong Kong population (1.6 million) now practice Green Monday and go vegetarian each Monday. The move has saved 900,000 tonnes of carbon emissions, 375 billion gallons of water by avoiding the meat of 300 million animals. David has also set up 6 Green Common shops that specialise in plant-based foods in Hong Kong.

Verena Wiederkehr from ProVeg International said that global sales of plant-based meat alternatives are rising by 8-10% per year. She sees the biggest growth for such products in China, UAE and Australia. A growing number of companies were adopting third party labels, such as Vegan Society and ProVeg.

8. Know thy target customer. According to Ed Silk from Bulletproof, consumers see complexity, confusion and contradiction in the sustainable food industry. Brands need to target their customers more effectively if they are to succeed. Ed gave the example of Quorn which re-positioned itself from a vegetarian to healthy eating brand to broaden consumer appeal. The re-positioning is part of the brand's ambition to generate USD 1 billion sales.

Sustainability discussions will continue in upcoming editions of this international series...

Sustainable Foods Summit Latin America

29-30 November, São Paulo

Sustainable Foods Summit North America

16-17 January, San Francisco

Sustainable Foods Summit Europe

13-14 June, Amsterdam



Picture 1: David Yeung Keynote

Picture 2: Audience

Picture 3: Ecovia Intell. Team

About the Sustainable Foods Summit

The aim of the Sustainable Foods Summit is to explore new horizons for eco-labels and sustainability in the food industry by discussing key industry issues in a high-level forum. The 2nd Asia-Pacific edition was hosted at the Marina Mandarin in Singapore on 4-5th September, whilst the 10th European edition took place at the Mövenpick Hotel Amsterdam City Centre in June. More information is available from <http://www.sustainablefoodssummit.com/>

The Asia-Pacific edition in pictures:

<https://sustainablefoodssummit.com/asia/gallery2018/>

The European edition in pictures:

<http://sustainablefoodssummit.com/europe/gallery2018/>

About Ecovia Intelligence

Ecovia Intelligence (formerly known as Organic Monitor) is a specialist research, consulting & training company that focuses on global ethical product industries. Since 2001, we have been encouraging sustainable development via our services portfolio: market research publications, business & sustainability consulting, technical research, seminars & workshops, and sustainability summits. Visit us at www.ecoviaint.com

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