

Matt Eastland:

Hello and welcome back to the Food Fight podcast from EIT Food, a show dedicated to exploring the greatest challenges in our food system and the innovators committed to solving them. I'm your host Matt Eastland and today we're exploring how, even in the face of immense global challenges, we can make the global food system more resilient. The development of global food supply chains over the past 30 years has markedly altered how food is produced, distributed and sold. While bringing about many changes for the better, indeed, it also greatly increases the risk of disease, contamination, fraud and abuse of our planet and many who work in our food system. And today the food system is vulnerable to external shocks, putting stakeholders across the entire value chain at risk. So, to reduce this risk and increase food security and safety for consumers everywhere at all times, we have to collaborate to enable fairer, more resilient and transparent food supply chains. And it's a big ambition, and some would say a challenge too broad and immense to even begin to tackle. However, today I am joined by two people, Stéphane Durand and Damien Jourdain, who have set their ambitions on doing exactly that. Stéphane and Damien are part of the resilient agriculture think and do tank, which aims to accelerate the adoption of resilient agriculture to achieve food security and planetary health across Europe. Some goal indeed. Stéphane, Damien, welcome to the show. It's great to have you with us. Thank you. Thank you. So some personal reflections then, I actually know you both pretty well but for our listeners can you just tell us briefly who you are and what you do?

Damien Jourdain:

So I'm Damien, I'm working at Danone for the past 10 years and first working innovation and then increasingly getting getting the impression that lots of the questions that we were raising in the food industry really had their root cause in agriculture, or that agriculture was the epicenter of a number of stakes that we are facing in the sustainability or unsustainability of the system. And so gradually I got closer to farms, to farmers, getting to know them, to visit many different farms. Also questioning what kind of intervention, what kind of solutions should be brought in to try to move towards something a little bit more resilient. So I've been like dedicating the past five years really working on innovation, but more what I would call innovation around organization of the system itself, to try to push a number of topics like regenerative agriculture, for instance.

Matt Eastland:

Amazing. Thank you, Damien. And Stéphane?

Stéphane Durand :

Stéphane Durand. I've worked now for the last 33 years in the agri-food sector, mainly on the food side, so more the second part,

really, of the supply chain into retail, into consumer. And in the last 11 years, so always in the work related to product development, technical safety and innovation. In the last 11 years, I moved into a university, so I worked for the Queen's University in Belfast. And within this department I work for is the Institute of Global Food Security. So that's exactly what we're doing. We're evaluating the risk of supply chains across the world and how we limit those risks or find really a solution to those risks. My role is slightly different to an academic in the sense that I'm trying to translate and collaborate with lots of different partners to try to solve very, very complex systems. So that's my day-to-day job.

Matt Eastland:

Amazing. Thanks, Stefan. And this is a bit of a reunion for us, right? You were on podcast number one. Correct. About five years ago, I think it was. So yeah, it's so great. And talking about food supply chain. And talking about food supply chain. Well, it's obviously because you're an expert in this space. So on the topic, then, you know, we bandy around a lot of words, phrases in the food system, but Can I ask you both how would you define resilience in terms of agriculture and why does it matter today more than ever before? I mean Damien this is obviously something you're very committed to, maybe we could start with you.

Damien Jourdain:

Let me start by saying I think we can all agree that agriculture is a part of society that is pretty vital for how our society functions. It's also vital for, or it's highly influential in our cultures. And obviously it's still necessary today just to live, to feed ourselves. So we need an agricultural system that works. And over the past, probably we can say 70 years with the history of the Green Revolution, it worked very well to create abundance. So again, repeating what we all know, created abundance, but we know that today it's getting increasingly fragile because we have maybe exploited too much of the resources that we had in stock. Now it's getting more fragile, brittle. We also know the constraints from the environmental crisis, but also geopolitical, that maybe comes even first. It's going to accelerate that process of becoming more uncertain, more unsustainable for the system as it is today. When we talk about resilience, it's really this idea of bringing back agriculture into producing food in a reliable way. without depleting the stock, potentially even refilling the stock of natural resources that goes with it, that's obviously possible. With increasing as well the human capital that goes with it, we know how farmers are in a very difficult situation themselves, in an unsustainable situation from also a social point of view. the quantity of work they put, the little money they get, the little recognition they get, their age, with huge stake in renewal of generation. So those are a few elements that makes the system not sustainable, not resilient. And therefore, by opposition, we need to bring all of these into balance as holistically as possible. And that would equal to a more resilient system. That would be anyway, has to withstand the

increasing constraints that we'll have to support, regardless anyway, because the climate crisis is going to bring a lot of constraints onto this system and a lot of climatic events, etc. that we need, that the agriculture need to be able to support.

Matt Eastland:

Thanks Damien. I mean, you said words like sort of fragility there, and we were talking about balance, regeneration, you know, I like that idea of sort of not, you know, not depleting the stock, but actually replacing it more. I mean, Stéphane, anything else to add from your perspective on resilience?

Stéphane Durand :

Yeah, I'll go back, I'll strip back really to probably the history of humanity. And we've been very good as humans to drive our social environment thanks to how we manage to produce but also to stock food. In the last 30 years, that was your question, at the beginning was the last 30 years, the dirty word has been really, and it's been extremely successful, so I don't like using this word as a dirty word, but it's now being seen as negative, which is globalization. But globalization has allowed really humanity to continue really thriving and allow really all population to receive the right amount of food in the right place. And it's been amazing. In particular, past the Second World War, where people were really struggling to get that food. Unfortunately, exactly what Damien is saying is in order to do this, we've done that by relying almost exclusively on non-sustainable systems. And in particular, really adding a lot of inputs that really create the non-sustainable systems. So the output is still happening, but the input is creating really this imbalance. So resilience is about really how do you absorb those shocks that is going on, and unfortunately, not just because of us, but a lot of it because of humanity and because of human behavior, those shocks are increasing. So the frequency of those shocks are increasing. And because we're relying so much on global systems, It becomes less and less. The system is not allowing really those shocks to be absorbed properly to a point where eventually we see breaks. So resilience is about how you manage to create systems that can continue to receive the flow of food without depleting, really, the planet, as Damien was saying, but also in relation to the shocks at the moment that we see that are really extreme, which is climate change, is the one that suddenly form a concept in the 70s, 60s, 70s, really, by scientists and ecologists, mainly, into something that now is real, is you feel, really, the power of nature in its full force in all parts of the world. And the consequence is those shocks are happening more frequently. So resilience is about, despite this increases of shocks, how do you continue really to receive the flow of food and in a way that continue really to allow the humanity to thrive.

Matt Eastland:

Thank you, Stéphane. And I guess, you know, we're talking about

things starting to break down now. I mean, how is that affecting farmers specifically? I mean, Damien, you mentioned a few of the challenges that they're already facing, you know, social challenges, stress, overwork. Are there any any other things that you're seeing yourselves on the ground you know where farmers are literally because you know we've had farmers on the show before and I know that they're one of the hardest working people in society but if this isn't working for them I mean how when you say to them you need to be more resilient I mean that how do they take that you know what what's what's their feeling about all of this?

Damien Jourdain:

First of all, I don't tell them they need to be more resilient. They come and tell their story. So last Sunday, I was at another roundtable with farmers. And one of them, a cereal grower, was very much explaining that when he started being a farmer some 20 years ago, he would have he would assess like every six years to have a climate event. Now for him, it's once a year. It's once a year. And just to be even more precise, as an example, there is another farmer near where I live. She's growing fruit trees, Tanaka. Last year, there was a lot of rain, so no pollen because it was runoff. So no pollinization, no fruits. The year before it was frost in spring or burned by the frost, no fruits. The year before it was the drought and actually even the sun burned, no fruits. And on and on and on again and again. And each year there is one. And particularly fruit trees, for example, that's really becoming a very, very difficult agriculture, even more difficult than the other ones. So it's really on the ground, it's happening, they know it. And then all the other problems that we know are adding up, but really this one is making the whole. They are all really complicated. They don't really have time because they work so much. They don't have time to get trained in resilience. They don't have time to access that knowledge. Obviously, they speak to each other. But indeed, by the way, at EIT or at Danone or et cetera, we are working on how we bring that knowledge to farmers and then allow farmers to train themselves or be supported, et cetera, because themselves they cannot do it. So they need that support, knowing that they don't have the time, they don't have the resources, they don't have the money. And so they cannot do it themselves.

Matt Eastland:

Which brings us nicely on to the think and do tank. So think tanks, everyone's heard of think tanks. Think and do tank, what's all that about? I mean, I guess the clue's in the name, but maybe you can unpack that for us. What does it actually do, Stefan? Why is the do part just as important as the thinking part?

Stéphane Durand :

Again, it's been already a lot of thinking, a lot of talking, and now it's about really also how we translate it into actions. And if you disaggregate the two, the problem is it's a talk show. So how do

you avoid really being nice publication or nice talks into really something that is meaningful, in our case, to the farmers? Because the farmers are going to really feel it as exactly as Damien is saying, but also have the solutions or will need to have the solutions. So how do we translate really what we're learning from science, from work that is going on around the world, but also mainly in Europe? And how do we make this work? In Europe we, so that's the important part of it, is the activities that allow the farmers really to translate the knowledge into really something that is going to be meaningful for them. What we are really working with this think and do tank on resilience in agriculture is making sure we connect the policy part of it, which is really important in Europe, and some really good things, but some things that are creating barriers. into how those farmers, how we engage really with the knowledge that we're getting into really something that is meaningful for the farmers, and in turn, how we make it happen, because all this requires funding. So in a nutshell, that's the three pillars of work that we're going to be involved in, and all of them require more than just purely publication as you see in think tanks.

Matt Eastland:

Action. And you mentioned sort of some barriers there. Damien, maybe you can pick up there. Particularly from a maybe food policy perspective, but what kind of barriers with the think and do tank are you trying to or are actually already breaking down?

Damien Jourdain:

But maybe I want to add a few things on your previous question and building on what Stéphane was saying back on the why the think and do tank. Think is still important. So talk, yes, I totally agree with you, Stéphane. Talk less, do more. Think is important as well. We also live in a world of what I often refer to as shadow thinking. And so one of the works here for the think tank is really going into depth of all the knowledge that exists, bringing it together and from that shape a thoughtful direction from the action we want to support. What are the real needs, what are the root cause of the problems, the root cause of the problem, what are the needs, what are our theory of change, etc. And so that's really a big part out of which indeed we can then combine or leverage the platform that EIT is with all the existing programs around agriculture that are quite unique and exceptional, but really bring more intent into it. And they leverage it for applying the theory of change that we want to develop. So basically, I see the think and do talk working together as the brain that's going to orient a lot of the unique capabilities that EIT has. to create change on the ground and showcase it and further, through proof, influence also the policy, on advocacy and policy, and also go to the financiers to get more, basically, more support because the quantity that we need. The amount of effort that is needed is just enormous. So basically, yeah, using that direction we want to support, the theory of change, the actions, the interventions that we believe are essential for

making agriculture, a resilient agriculture, scaling.

Matt Eastland:

What kind of interventions are we talking about, Damien? I mean, what are you specifically concrete on the ground? What are you looking to change?

Damien Jourdain:

Today, we have started with EIT Food as developing this program that we call the Regenerative Agriculture Portfolio, which is taking landscapes as units of change. So we select landscapes. There are three that are now launched. We look at a full portfolio. It might be five, six, ten in the future. network of landscape with hundreds of farmers in each landscapes and the different stakeholders working together so that's the capacity that we need that we need to then enrich from having a level one landscape in term of quality of the change of the agriculture and level two we make it more complex and more rich and level three we had So more innovations, more complexity, the good sense to make it even more resilient, et cetera. So that's a big capacity that we can keep bringing. So I'm not sure it didn't go to the barriers, but in terms of enablers, that's sort of the enablers that the think tank should be an advisor and influencer within the ecosystem of EIT food and beyond.

Matt Eastland:

Okay, thank you.

Stéphane Durand :

Can I add a point really is that also why do tank? And to do tank is really a call to actions. because of the urgency. You cannot just think you need also in order to, because of this really enormous challenge that now is coming at 100 miles an hour towards us. We need actions because of this urgency. And we see that exactly what Damien was saying with the example is now it's once a year you've got an event. by a farmer, how is he coping with it? And the coping means that you really need to think about it. One of the action is on the top of the work that is going on, on portfolio, which is brilliant because suddenly you create really model at scale. The other part of it is also how we make society excited about this. Education is really, really important. Upskilling. Upskilling education for the young people to see that there is a future that is bright for them in this space. I mean, the average age of a farmer in most part of Europe, not everywhere, but in most part of Europe, in the UK where I live, it's 59. I was going to say, I've heard 59, 60, but it's... So in France, it's slightly younger, but 57 or something like that. So we are talking about, at the end of the day, we don't really replenish. The land is getting more expensive, it's getting harder really for... for attracting the young people into doing this work. And I think that's where EIT is also unique and the EIT food in particular is a work that we're doing in education and

education in the normal terms. I'm not talking about just education in universities. I'm talking about upskilling. I'm talking about really bringing knowledge to the people who really can do things differently.

Damien Jourdain:
Okay.

Stéphane Durand :
I want to add something on that.

Damien Jourdain:
Thanks for bringing it. The word that was coming to my mind is also weaving. We are, and most of the people here, and the people we meet, I mean, I'm a farmer, I live in cities. I am a white collar, so I spend a lot of time in front of my computer as well. I mean, most of us are completely out of touch with the ground, with the sun, with anything that makes you and me alive. And in particular, when it comes to connection with farming, we need to weave again the relationship between urban people, eaters, let's stop calling them consumers, eaters, and the farmers themselves. So weaving is something that keeps me quite busy actually also on my territory. What I'm involved as well is how do we get citizens from urban centers getting into the countryside, meeting the farmer that produce food, buying the food there, etc. and getting to know their perspective as well.

Matt Eastland:
And how do you, is this part of the whole think and do thing? How are you weaving, you know, that or bonding the urban people and the eaters to farmers?

Stéphane Durand :
It's interesting because, I mean, we've had those many discussions. It's the importance of engagement, engagement and communication, but in a good sense, communication as providing the right information is getting, really, the citizen closer to where their food is being produced. And as an example, within Queen's University, we've done a really brilliant piece of work about showing that if you give the young people, and I'm talking 7 to 11 years old in our case, a thousand of them were being looked... were being selected for a piece of research. And it was all about, not so much on the agriculture side, but it was the wider concept of the One Health. And One Health's concept is about, really, everything is interconnected. And what we found is if you give them the right tools, the right knowledge, and the right engagement with what's going on in the production system, including really at farm level, is they thrive from an education point of view. And that's proven. So it's... Reconnecting people. Reconnecting people to the land and

to the system, to the way that... How do you make really your porridge in the morning, your pasta in the afternoon and your chicken in the evening? there is a lot of things going on in order to make this happen. And if you give them, the young people, this kind of knowledge, they will actually not only use it, but actually also thrive and change their behavior. And that's really important. So the behavior change is something that we talk a lot about. But it's only possible if you really give them the right tools and information in order to do that. And that's what this study was proving. And that's what we're doing in the think and do tank, is connecting the dots. That's going to be the important thing. We do a lot of things in the IT food. but they tend to be siloed. How do you connect all the dots together between the work that Damien is doing on regenerative agriculture and portfolio, the work I'm doing on plausible pathways to net zero for dairy production systems, to the work that we're doing in education with the GROW project, for instance, with farmers, All those needs to be interconnected. And so far, EIT is probably lagging. More activities is happening, but there is a lot of opportunities to even do more of this.

Matt Eastland:

Sorry, I was just going to say, can we talk about connecting the dots? I mean, we're talking about connecting people more to the land and to where the food comes from, which is obviously an incredibly worthy goal and one of the things that I am a big advocate for. But in terms of the other objectives specifically of the Think and Do Tank, so securing farmer livelihoods, I know, is one of them. So how is the Think and Do Tank helping ensure farmers have both the means and incentives to adopt these more sustainable practices. How is that actually working?

Damien Jourdain:

So the Sik& Dutank is a forum that is now getting together and we'll look at the different levels that we can support this livelihood of farmers. Let's say What we know already, anyway, is that revenues of the farmers is one of the enormous issues that the profession has, that one of the root causes that stops or limits the capacity, the practices of agriculture as to reshape itself. People who are basically not earning a living out of their activities while working probably two or three times more every week than the average urban citizen is a problem. And so farmers' livelihood and farmer revenue is the entry point. It's the first thing. And maybe even the first thing, just to get the attention of farmers. I mean, if you start talking about being more sustainable for the planet and you go to farmers and you start from that, seriously, being a non-farmer, I'm not going to stay long before I get kicked out or anybody. So farmer revenue is legitimately the number one point of entry to have discussion that are constructive with farmers, because they really need it. And also to bring back around the table the fact that we don't pay as eaters the true price, or let's say the price we pay to farmers is not the price it should be paid. And certainly not in compared to, we're talking about history at the beginning. I mean, a

century ago, a household would spend 30% of their income into food. Today it's not the case anymore. I think in Europe it's around 12 to 14% out of which only 7% goes to the farmer. So farmer revenue is the first one and that's the first questions to open and pathways to increase the revenue of farmers that then unlock the conversation and additional condition and support we can bring to help them shift their practices. Yeah. Another point that would be on our plate is, you mentioned it, a renewal of a new generation of farmers, because it's much easier, in my view, to set a new farmer at the beginning of his activity on an agroecological farm than somebody who is 55, even 60, and go tell him that he should have more sustainable practices. Too late. Sorry. But again, that's the root of hope. If we put our effort into creating the condition for any new farmers, any young farmer that get on the lawn and straight goes into sustainable practices. I mean, that's, and it's going to be like 50% of the farmers the next 10 years. So if we get within the next 10 years, 50% of farming in more agroecological practice, I think we've won. So that's a space of intervention that is really critical to get.

Matt Eastland:

OK, and do you see that as the key thing that needs to be changed, that you need to attract the next generation into? I'm thinking about the solution to climate change, for example. I mean, so often farmers have been sort of had finger points at them. It's like they're actually the cause of all of this because of the things that they've had to do with the system to produce this abundance, which you spoke about, Damian. So how can, as part of the work you're doing as well with the Food and Think Tank, how can agriculture become part of the solution to climate and biodiversity challenges rather than the cause? You specifically, because you've said Entry point, it's money, but I guess one of the other key areas you've got to tackle is the climate piece.

Damien Jourdain:

Money is a prerequisite. It's also about fairness. We often say a fair transition. So it's a lot about fairness and as a prerequisite to start talking. And then, of course, it's a matter of agronomy. we need to bring to reset agriculture. And that was, this abundance was created through the kind of inputs that were developed after World War II. That created that abundance, but that's not sustainable. Let's not go back to it. We all know it. It's not sustainable. And now it's getting agronomy back and the art of agriculture, reset agriculture to function with natural systems. It's something that's amazing that is free, that is called photosynthesis or sunlight photosynthesis. And so when we talk about agroecology, it's making the best use possible, resetting our farm so that they maximize photosynthesis, that they maximize soil life. Again, we say there are lots of, there are about two tons of worms in one hectare of farmland that do amazing work for free if you let them live. And that creates fertility. And I love the work that has been currently being done to redefine what productivity is at farm level by the

European Alliance for Regenerative Agriculture. So I try to redefine this to really take into account all the ecosystem services and the ecosystem or the natural processes that create that fertility, that create yield that can be as high as conventional food. while not damaging the natural capital around, instead creating more biodiversity. So again, it's a reset. That's what's important. We are not here to optimize an existing intensive system and make it a little bit less harmful. It's called a reset. And from it, then we can, and all the data is there, to be honest. That's why we were insisting at the beginning as well, we need as a think tank to collate all this knowledge that exists, put it together to really set the direction we want to support. The knowledge is there. It's for us to then leverage the capacity, the doing capacity of EIT to put it into thoughtful implementation.

Matt Eastland:

Thank you. And Stefan I see you're scribbling as well. I mean anything to add or I mean Damian started to introduce like the work of kind of EIT food does specifically. I mean we we're very good at bringing together a remarkable group of stakeholders and I guess you need those everybody there. from the startups to the policy makers, as you said. So can I get a sense from you what actually happens when these people sit down at a table or wherever they are? I mean, does that happen? Do you get food policy makers and farmers face to face with each other as part of the work you're doing? And what are the conversations like? Are they combative? Are they collaborative? I'm interested.

Stéphane Durand :

So it depends where. So at the European level, when you talk Europe, there are so many different levels. And that's exactly what Damien said around the example of landscape. You cannot really think about it at Europe. It's too vast and too different. When you look at it at very regional or even really small level within the territory, a lot of brilliant things is happening already. The question is how then you make sure that those policies are not counteracting the brilliant work that is going on at local level. And because those policies tend to be very wide-sweeping, they miss really the listening at very local level. And therefore, making sure at the end of the day, the farmers are custodians of the land. It is not in their interest whatsoever of destroying the land. That is not what they are there for, because they are thinking the next 100 years. They are thinking about their children and the children of their children. That's how farmers think. So they're not there to destroy it at all. They are there really to make sure that there is a continuity of the system. In reality, policy is so wide-sweeping. CAP in particular has been so detrimental to the way of producing efficiently for the farmers and for the eaters. I like this one. As the eaters are using, in reality, this disconnect between how much it costs And putting the money on the land, not actually on an output, it's an input part of the policy, is very detrimental for the farmers. And this kind of policy is actually not helping. So

getting the right people Together, it's happening all the time, but it's a very local level. What is missing is that, how do you do that at top level? And that's where the disconnect is happening. And that's where EIT Food can make a difference. To say that we are there, not, absolutely not. But that's, today for instance, we are into a place where you will have the farmers, you will have the top decision makers within the EU, That's a perfect opportunity to at least really have a say about really what works because there are a lot of good things that work and the things that don't work. But I think we need to be mindful that at the highly local level, I cannot stress out how much already connections and work and discussions is already happening, but it's not where, unfortunately, the flow of money is going to. they're doing a lot with very little. How do we really balance the fairness part of it, that Lamia is saying, is also better reconnecting with those different small parts of the territory together. That's really a big part of it. And we were talking about it before this podcast. How do you connect all those different initiatives together? I go back really to what I said earlier is really important is because that will really stretch the money that we have so much further if we can create those connections.

Damien Jourdain:

And to jump or to build on it, EIT Food, in the past few years, have started this idea or practicing this idea of relocalizing some of our activities to this landscape. So it's kind of, okay, how we are not only a pan-European organization that is a bit disconnected from the ground, and now with the landscape we are landing back on territories at the right scale. And lots of reason, maybe too long here, but lots of reason to believe that a big part of the transition to resilient regenerative agriculture system will happen will be place-based and will happen within territories of bioregion because it's the right scale where you have all those relationships between farmers, elected officials, citizens, administrations, etc. This can happen between those people that know each other, that already work. You have many hundreds in France that we call territorial food projects. that assemble already this kind of people. So they want and they already move toward creating all the kind of things that should be part of a resilient, territorialized food system, bringing resilience in territory. So that happens. And the challenge, like you say, is reconnecting our rather actually so that those grassroots initiatives get the right support from Europe, from organizations like EIT. And again, what we do with the landscape is the level one, I would say, to start putting in place those contexts, those territories where we intervene.

Matt Eastland:

Okay and I mean you've almost moved me to there but I was just wondering can we build on that so we're starting to see those connections there's a lot of movement and on the ground level we need to kind of bridge that which I think EIT Food does a really good job of as you're saying. But if you then kind of play that

forward, then let's kind of futurescape it. What does a resilient food system then look like for you? I mean, and I kind of asked this with a personal view, you know, from what everything you've seen, all the work that you do, all the farmers you speak to, where are we going? I mean, what do you see is going to happen and do you feel positive about it? Stefan?

Stéphane Durand :

I mentioned about the project which is close to my heart because I think that if we can replicate those in different areas, but it's plausible pathways is really important. It's giving all the tools and all the knowledge for the farmers to make at the end of the day the right decision. And the decision will always really start with economic decision. And that is how much it costs, how long it takes to get something back, And is it better after? And all this, if we can do that at scale across really, again, different territories, because that is even really across a very small region, you will have so many different differences in terms of the soil, in terms of the type of culture, in terms of even really the agronomy. adronomy, adronomy, so the water aspect of it is so different, you need you need really to, to be able to, to create those, those links. But you can only do that if you give the right information. And that is really plan A, B, and C, and then it's up at the end of the day, the decision makers will always be the farmers. But at this moment in time, they're being bombarded by conflictual information very often that don't add up, definitely not for them, so it becomes unfair. We're putting all the pressure back into the people who are managing the land, to solve out really something that needs to be a lot wider. And we ask them to do too much with too little. And that's very simple. And that's where the think and do thing, that's why you can do those reflections at the thinking level. but you must translate it into the doing aspect of it. And that's why we're really passionate as a group, as EIT Food, to drive those think and do tank, not only in resilience agriculture, but actually in all areas that we're involved in, to make sure that we can do more things at scale and at speed.

Matt Eastland:

Okay. Scaling, speed, but also depressurizing for the farmers. I like that, Stéphane. And Damien, what's your view? Where are we going?

Damien Jourdain:

I will take an example that exists already, which is hopefully another proof that that can be real. It's an example where we have one brand, which is called Les Devaches. Les Devaches. that is territory-based, so all the farmers are in Normandy, and they are all organic farmers, and part of the... and the Browns support them in continuously improving their practices toward becoming more regenerative, so I would call them dairy farmers that are organic and regenerative, mostly because The cows are spending most of their

time outside grazing with almost complete food autonomy on the farm. What does that say? That says that we have farms there that have very little cost of input for the farms. I'm getting a little bit technical here, but that's important because you have farmers who are taking revenue that produce a little bit less than conventional farming. But the inputs are lower. But the inputs are lower and so the profitability is much higher. Actually, we have long-term contract with them, which is another element of resilience. And on top of this, this is a brand that is fair trade. Fair trade means we guarantee two French minimum salaries for farmers. You need to know that, I'm not sure I should give the right number, but it's a huge proportion of farmers that don't have any minimum revenue, actually, that earn almost no money. So a farmer that earns twice the minimum revenue in France, it's a huge quantity of money. So it's a real revenue for farmers. Another thing that we do with that brand is that farmers don't work exclusively for Danone. We actually encourage them to have also separate, diversified selling channel for their milk or even producing their yogurt for the local.

Matt Eastland:

They're not being locked in.

Damien Jourdain:

And we're actually encouraging the conversation between various stakeholders on the territory. And that's, again, creates more resilience at the level of the territory for the tenant farmers, but not only all together. So again, it's social resilience on the territory. And now I want just to finish with something that I find even more exciting in some way. No, I couldn't, I can't rank. But what we see, because we are doing some measurement after doing some more academic studies in the past year or so, where we look at the nutrient quality of this kind of milk that is getting from agroecological, organic, regenerative, whatever you want to call it, type of practices. uh and we see that not all milks are made of the same white so basically what we see that this from this kind of system we see a milk that is much uh more containing more omega-3s um more vitamin b12 in particular less saturated fatty acids which are bad actually producing even less methane And there was, with our partner doing this, they did a clinical study a few years ago where they could connect actually the quality. So they were basically measuring the soil microbiome. And from a healthy soil, you would have more nutritional dense grass that were eaten by cows that were healthier themselves, producing a milk of a better quality that were given to breastfeeding mums. I could track a higher quality, higher, more nutrient breast milk and even see a higher quality microbiota of the infant, which shows the whole loop on how we as humans are connected to the land and the more we treat well the land and the people working on the land, the better we will actually contribute to our own health. And so that's resilience in the build.

Matt Eastland:

Yeah, I love that. And I like the kind of full circle nature of that. It's such a positive way to finish. I mean, just very briefly, because I think we are well out of time now, but what's next then for the Think and Do Tank? What are your next goals?

Stéphane Durand :

Well, again, we need to, at this moment we are starting, so we need to put the right governance in place. And the right governance also means to sign up to really the right charter. What is it that we're really going to push and what is it we're not going to push? It's really important. and how we're going to make it happen. So that's where we are. After that, it's about really as much engagement as possible with really the actors, the farmers, as quickly as possible. And then understanding exactly what Damien was saying, which is understanding the knowledge. Let's not reinvent the wheel, but let's build upon that knowledge and then translate it into a summary of what are the things that we want to focus on. and then really how we're going to make it happen and that's really usually with funding. So and I think there is an extra layers really that is important and it's more at the IT food level is we need to tell stories. The storytelling is really important. We need to widen these stories. You would be amazed I mean I look sometimes on YouTube now the young farmers in particular so connected really with the storytelling through not only YouTube or TikTok.

Matt Eastland:

We actually had Will the farmer on here.

Stéphane Durand :

We need to do more of that, tell stories really. In the UK we've got a divisive person that has done a superb job at communicating farming and that's Jeremy Clarkson. Okay and Jeremy A petrolhead who was doing really crazy things with cars started to really detail about his journey as a farmer. And that's really suddenly opening up a new world to the majority of the population. How do we do more of that? This engagement part of it and the storytelling is because otherwise we are into our little bubble and it's not going, nothing will happen. So that's, again, I go back to the connecting the dots.

Matt Eastland:

Lovely. Thank you, Stéphane. And Damien, what's next from your perspective?

Damien Jourdain:

I think Stefan said most of it. I'm not sure I actually need to add more. I'll maybe wrap a few things actually I said probably at the beginning, which is setting firmly the direction. I used the word direction, but you said it. It's the same, what we want to do. setting the intervention, so looking at the system, and when it

comes to driving adoption and maybe communication and making story is a right way, but what are the interventions with the public, with the farmers, with the politicians, what are the retargeted interventions that can produce effects into a system? And with our story, back to it, It's also generating traction to the different decision makers, whether in policies or in funding, that we can rally to the cause. So next is building our pitch from the story perspective, the intent perspective, and getting more partners around the effort and the change we want to make.

Matt Eastland:

Well, I really wish you both and the whole think and do tank the absolute best success. That's amazing work that you're doing. So thank you to both for the work, but also for joining us to tell your stories today. So Stefan Damian, thank you very much for being on the podcast. Thank you everyone as well who's been tuning in to this week's episode. This has been the Food Fight podcast. If you'd like to find out more then check out our website at eitfood.eu and join the conversation via the hashtag [eitfoodfight](https://twitter.com/eitfoodfight) on our LinkedIn channel. Thank you everyone for listening.