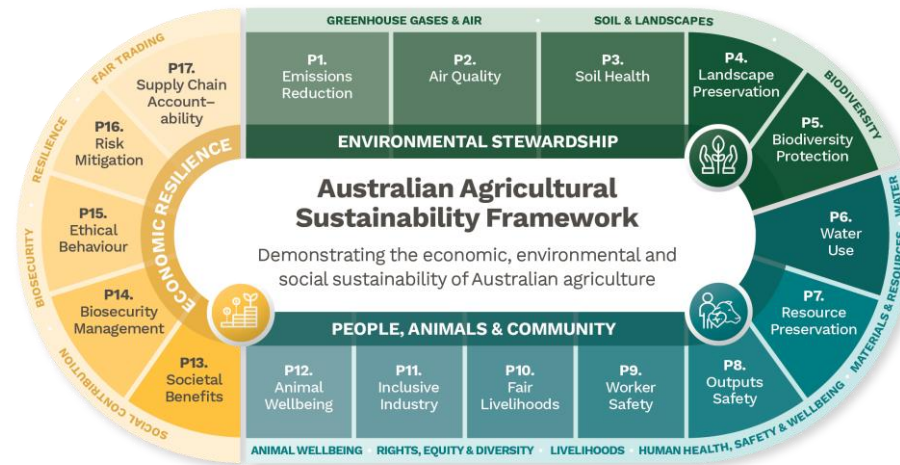


Values-based approach hitting the mark

Lessons from European engagement with the AASF



Taking the Australian sustainability approach to Europe

EUROPE TRIP | 23 October – 3 November 2023 | GFFPI + AASF + AgTrace

Demonstration of sustainability is an increasingly important aspect to trade negotiations. European markets in particular have been promoting high expectations of sustainability and have generally been conveying these expectations through the lens of prescribed practices. The AASF project team identified an opportunity to promote the Australian sustainability approach at two significant international events in October 2023:

- The 51st UN Committee on Food Security meeting in Rome from the 21st to the 27th October, and
- The Global Forum on Farm Policy and Innovation (GFFPI) workshop on Sustainability and Agricultural Trade at the OECD in Paris on the 26th and 27th October.

These two events attracted many private and public sector organisations, providing the opportunity to meet with multiple parties from around the world, promoting both the AASF specifically and principles-based approaches more generally. Following the two international meetings, a series of bilateral organisation interviews and farm visits in Belgium, The Netherlands, and the UK provided a thorough overview of the sustainability demands being experienced by European farmers, as well as further opportunity to advocate for principles-based approaches and shared sustainability values in global fora.

AFI ED Richard Heath & GM Katie McRobert travelled with NFF GM Natural Resources Warwick Ragg travelled to Europe from 23 October – 3 November 2023. The trip was resourced by a combination of funds from the AASF program and the AgTrace project, providing significant findings for both bodies of work.



The Global Forum on Farm Policy and Innovation is a collaboration between leading independent agricultural organisations to increase sustainability of agriculture across the world.



GFFPI
GLOBAL FORUM FOR FARM
POLICY AND INNOVATION

EUROPE TRIP | 23 October – 3 November 2023 | GFFPI + AASF + AgTrace

Challenge

Many countries are implementing policies to increase the sustainability of food and agriculture; however, many of these policies are not aligned. This creates the potential for barriers that could undermine the role that trade can play in advancing sustainability - and ultimately the goal of delivering desired outcomes for sustainable agriculture.



Response

Leveraging unique think-tank resources, the Australian Farm Institute, Canadian Agrifood Policy Institute, Forum for the Future of Agriculture and Farm Foundation formed GFFPI in 2022 to use existing evidence and emerging research to inform dialogue on agricultural sustainability. GFFPI provides a unique international forum through which these organisations and their partners can pursue innovative policy which delivers better outcomes for sustainable farm businesses and supports the farming industry's significant role in meeting critical economic, environmental and food security goals.

GFFPI Workshop | OECD Paris

26 / 27 OCTOBER 2023

The role of trade in advancing sustainable agriculture

GFFPI's inaugural workshop focused on the role of trade in advancing sustainable agriculture. Bringing together key senior stakeholders from the GFFPI member organisations, members of the OECD joint working party on Agriculture and Environment and select invited representatives from across the agri-food eco-system, the workshop explored what an ideal future and roadmap looks like for agriculture sustainability and trade.

The workshop was hosted in conjunction with the Permanent Representatives of Australia and the Netherlands, together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan.



Agricultural sustainability is on everyone's mind – but there is no clear path to action.



EUROPE TRIP | 23 October – 3 November 2023 | GFFPI workshop & AASF conversations

DAYS 1-3: Committee for Food Security at the FAO

The FAO-based [Committee for Food Security](#) is made up of **125 member states** plus the Private Sector Mechanism (PSM) and the Civil Society Indigenous Peoples Mechanism (CSIPM). The AFI & NFF were invited to join the PSM delegation by Australian representative Wayne Dredge, and actively participated in workshops and plenary sessions.

Key observations:

- The FAO is an intensely bureaucratic and sensitive diplomatic environment; while this sounds self-evident, the degree of bureaucracy and the barriers this environment can create are worthy of note:
 - Progression of fair and just global sustainability reporting for agriculture will need to account for the systems within which reporting processes will operate.
 - Australian methods of policy development will require some adaptation to gain traction in European systems.
- CFS discussions emphasised the **6 dimensions to food security**: availability, economic and physical access, utilisation, stability, agency, & (recently included) sustainability.
- It was clear from presentations and discussions that **data needs for sustainability measurement and reporting are universal** – i.e., we all need *better management processes*, not quantity
- “Every \$1 invested in data pays back \$32 of value in food systems” – Claire Melamed, GPSDD

STAND-OUTS

- **600M hungry by 2030**
- “Stop talking about *future* problems and *future* solutions – what must we do *now*?”
– PSM Chair Michael Keller
- 3+ years to reach (watered down) agreement on voluntary gender equity guidelines



An 'outcomes approach' to sustainability enables flexibility & innovation.



EUROPE TRIP | 23 October – 3 November 2023 | GFFPI workshop & AASF conversations

DAYS 4-5: GFFPI workshop at the OECD

98 people attended the inaugural GFFPI workshop on Ag Trade and Sustainability, representing a range of countries and interests (see *Appendix: GFFPI Workshop Attendee List*). Key points from the workshop included:

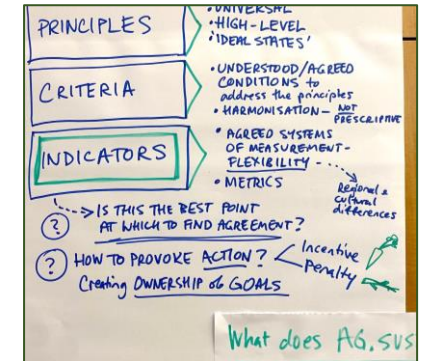
- Trade is integral to facilitating action on sustainability
- Shared values (principles) can remove defensiveness re: ag sustainability
- Agreed systems of measurement (i.e. common indicators) can allow for:
 - **Regional variations**
 - **Cultural differences**
 - **Flexible processes**
- Ownership of / investment in goals will lead to ACTION

For a full report on the workshop, see *Appendix: Farm Institute Insights article*.



STAND-OUTS

- “Practices are the jigsaw pieces of sustainability – PRINCIPLES are the picture on the box lid”
- OECD attendees’ response: very valuable, we should do this more often!
- Measurable actions identified by workshop groups (see Appendix)



The Australian Agricultural Sustainability Framework is globally unique.

EUROPE TRIP | 23 October – 3 November 2023 | GFFPI workshop & AASF conversations

DAYS 8-12: Bilaterals in Belgium, UK, Netherlands

Following the structured events, the AFI/NFF delegation continued on to Belgium for an on-farm visit and a series of meetings with organisations including Food Drink Europe, ApexBrasil, Copa Cogeca, FFFA, IEEP (Institute for European Environmental Policy) and the Danish Agriculture & Food Council. The team then split to cover meeting in the UK and The Netherlands, to meet with Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC), National Farmers Union (NFU), WWF, Pollination, the Ulster Farmers Union, Fediol, Rabobank, Country Landowners Association (UK), European Landowners Association, Global Farm Metric and the World Farmers Organisation.

Key observations:

- Most (if not all) comparable initiatives have started from bottom up ('what we *can* measure') instead of top down ('what we *should* measure')
- Very strong support for values-based approach as solution to 'prescribed practice' impasses
- Arbitrary targets (e.g. EC regulatory approach) have strong negative impacts (e.g. organic market collapse in Europe due to oversupply)
- **AASF is a long way ahead of the global pack – others want to join**
- **European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR)** is a looming and urgent issue for everyone



STAND-OUTS

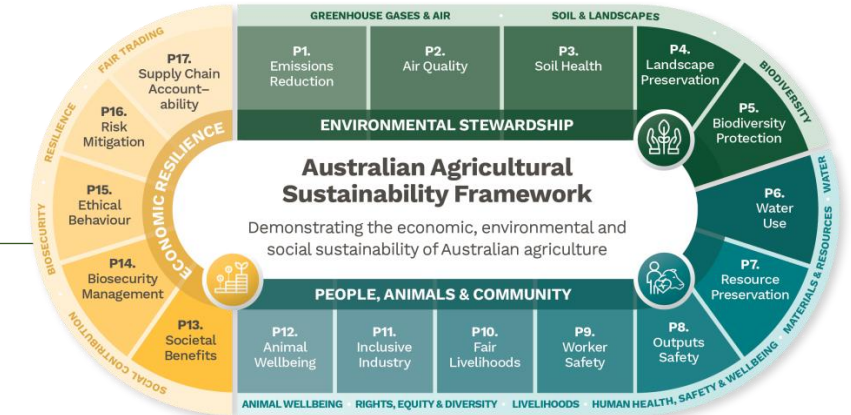
- *"How can we be part of what you're doing?"*
- EUDR could cause issues at WTO
- **Support for unified front on pragmatic agri sustainability approach**



Next steps: evolving AASF & building a global community.

FUTURE INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT 2024-26 onwards

- GFFPI partners are producing a paper on the trade/sustainability priorities identified by workshop groups to create **measurable actions list**
- AFI work on AASF indicators ('measurable states') will help inform policy proposals for delivering **sustainability outcomes**
- Related AASF / Traceability projects will assist with EUDR response
- AASF team will consider using momentum from positive engagement to create global group of like-minded ag sustainability advocates**



Appendix: GFFPI Workshop Attendee List



First Name	Last Name	Job Title	Company
CEDRIC	BENOIST	SECRETAIRE GENERAL ADJOINT	AGPB
Theo	Bouchardeau		AGPB
SYLVAIN	LHERMITTE	Expert	AGPB
Daniel	Basse	Chairman Farm Foundation US	AgResource Company
Irene	Gallagher Jones	Deputy Director, International Analysis	Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Marie-Cécile	Damave		Agridees.fr
Jean-Baptiste	Millard		Agridees.fr
Gabriel	Lodares	Landowner -farmer	Agropecuaria Albacete SL
Harry	Beeson	Agriculture Advisor	Australian delegation to the OECD
Erin	Tomkinson	Agriculture Counsellor	Australian Embassy to Belgium and Luxembourg
Richard	Heath	Executive Director	Australian Farm Institute
Katie	McRobert	General Manager	Australian Farm Institute
Joanna	Grainger	Minister Counsellor Agriculture	Australian Mission to the EU
Tom	van Wouwe		Belgium Ministry
Helena	Muller Queiroz		Brazilian Permanent Delegation to Int. Economic Orgs in Paris
Rokas	Morkunas	Policy Manager	Business at OECD
Claire	Citeau	Senior Advisor	CAPI
Marta	Zuluaga Zilbermann	VP Government Relations EMEA	Cargill
Émilie	Bergeron	Vice-President, Chemistry	CropLife Canada
Su	McCluskey	Special Representative for Australian Agriculture	Department Of Agriculture, Fisheries And Forestry
Chris	Williams	Assistant Director - International Strategy	Department Of Agriculture, Fisheries And Forestry
Kamala	Truelove		DFAT
Jurgen	Tack	Secretary General	ELO
Mark	Cropper	Senior expert	European Commission DG AGRI
Morgan	Craven	Senior Manager, Events	Farm Foundation
Martha	King	Vice President, Programs and Projects	Farm Foundation
Shari	Rogge-Fidler		Farm Foundation
Marie-Luise	Rau		Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture
Kate	Dassesse	Policy Advisor	Federal Office for Agriculture (Switzerland)
Emily	Sandall	Science Analyst/Advisor	Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
Mark	Titterington		Forum for the Future of Agriculture
Josephine	Bentham		Forum, trainee
Emmanuelle	Mikosz	Deputy Director	ForumforAg
Maëlie	Roger	Policy Officer on OECD matters	France - Ministère de l'agriculture
Grzegorz	Brodziak	Chairman of the Board	Goodvalley Agro S.A., Poland
Richard	Simonaitis	Chief Executive Officer - Grains Australia	Grains Australia

Celine	Kaufmann		IDDRI
Tassos	Haniotis		IIASA
Alison	Watson	Independent Consultant	Independent Consultant
Séa	Rouly	BNC Intern	MASA
Mary	Johnson	Market Access Manager	Meat & Livestock Australia
Marie	Castelnau		Ministere de l'Agriculture, France
Gerbert	van der Wal		Ministerie van Landbouw, Natuur en Voedselkwaliteit
Pinar	YALCIN BASTIRMACI		Ministry
Burcu	ISKENDER DUGENCIOGLU		Ministry
Aulikki	HULMI		Ministry Finland
Jennie	Sölving	OECD coordinator and delegate	Ministry for Rural Affairs and Infrastructure
Jochem	Wiers		Ministry Netherlands
Kimmo	Narhinen	Ministerial Adviser	Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Finland
Aivars	Lapins		Ministry of Agriculture of Republic of Latvia
Blanca	GARCÍA MARTÍN	Policy Expert	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Samuel	Juarez	Policy Expert	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Lucia	Pitarch	Counsellor of agriculture PER-REP	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
TETSUO	USHIKUSA	Advisor to Minister of Agriculture, Japan	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
Hideki	Hagiwara		Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Japan
Ritsuko	Yoneda		Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Japan
Margreet	Groenenboom		Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality
Katarina	ISAKSSON		Ministry Sweden
Adriana	Herrera Moreno		Mission of Mexico to the European Union
Chris	Carson	Counsellor	New Zealand Mission to the EU
Andrea	Gilbride	First Secretary	New Zealand Mission to the EU
Catherine	Marriott	Nuffield Scholar	Nuffield Scholar
Martin	Davies	Global Head of Nuveen Natural Capital	Nuveen Natural Capital
Helene	Bombrun		OECD
Koen	Deconinck		OECD
Annelies	Deuss	Senior Agricultural Policy Analyst	OECD
Olivia	du Bois	Young Associate	OECD
Clara	Frezal	Agricultural Policy Analyst	OECD
Celine	GINER	Policy analyst	OECD
Guillaume	Gruere		OECD
Lee-Ann	Jackson		OECD
Linda	Moran	Executive assistant	OECD
Julia	Nielson		OECD

Hiroko	Kuno		Permanent delegation of Japan to OECD
Guillermo	Martinez de Velasco		Permanent Delegation of Mexico to the OECD
Gomez	Galvan	Ambassador	Permanent representation of Mexico to the OECD
Carla	Boonstra		Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the EU
Jasper	Dalhuisen		Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the OECD
Ernie	Shea		Solutions from the Land
Pieter	de Gooijer		speaker
Laila	Pinheiro	Head of Public Affairs, EAME	Syngenta AG
Trip	Taylor		U.S. Mission to the European Union
W Garth	Thorburn		U.S. Mission to the European Union
Trey	Malone	Agricultural Economist	University of Arkansas
Christopher	Woodall	Scientist	US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service
Tom	Santoro		US Mission to the OECD
Xavier	Audran		USDA
Sophie	Bolla	Agricultural Specialist	USDA
Emilie	Bruchon		USDA
Elise	Golan	Director of Sustainable Development	USDA
David	Leishman		USDA
Utpal	Vasavada		USDA
Steve	Neff		USDA Foreign Agricultural Service
Warwick	Ragg	General Manager NRM	Warwick Ragg NFF
Mercedes	Campi	OECD	
Jennifer	Conje		
Ben	Henderson	OECD	
Helene	Leriche		
Sharon	Sydow	Speaker	



Farm Institute Insights

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Fostering innovative policies and practices

Trey Malone

Farm Foundation Agricultural Economics Fellow for Sustainable Food Systems



This past October, I attended the Global Forum on Farm Policy Innovation (GFFPI), hosted at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) headquarters in Paris. This first-of-its-kind partnership between the Farm Foundation, the Australian Farm Institute, the Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute, and the Forum for the Future of Agriculture served as a melting pot of ideas and expertise. The event's primary focus was to leverage our shared passion for sustainability to nurture collaboration in international trade. By bringing together diverse stakeholders, GFFPI aimed to foster innovative policies and practices,

driving the agenda of sustainable development through international trade in the global agri-food economy.

As an agricultural economist at the University of Arkansas, I appreciated the global urgency for all countries to collaborate toward a more sustainable agri-food system. I left the event with renewed optimism about the potential for international partnerships to address sustainability concerns via flexible, innovative agri-food trade policy. Here are three areas discussed at the event that I found particularly worth exploring via global collaboration.

In my view 6

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Spirit Plate; The West Wing – If only politics was really like this!; *Behavioural Game Theory; Alcarràs*, "Peaches or panels, there's no difference"; and *Weight of the world* – The climate scientists who saw the crisis coming

The diversity in methodologies could either spur innovation or sow confusion.

Global dialogue on environmental impact reporting

The need for a deeper global dialogue on environmental impact reporting in the agri-food supply chain is of paramount importance. The rising prominence of environmental impact reporting emphasises its growing influence across the agri-food value chain. As someone deeply engaged in agricultural sustainability, I view these developments with anticipation and caution. The surge in transparency and the increasing demands from consumers and policymakers for clear, honest disclosures have compelled companies to set ambitious emission reduction targets. Yet, robust measurement and reporting challenges are substantial, marked by a landscape rife with inconsistent standards and new directives like the EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive mandating Scope 3 emissions reporting.

I applaud the move towards greater transparency, empowering more sustainable production and consumption practices. However, I am also mindful of the potential ramifications. The diversity in methodologies could either spur innovation or sow confusion. A critical concern is whether this surge in reporting might unintentionally marginalise smaller or lower-income producers, who may lack the resources for compliance. The escalation in environmental impact reporting is an irreversible trend that demands vigilance from everyone involved in the food system. Ensuring that the frameworks we adopt genuinely advance sustainability without erecting new barriers is imperative. We must engage critically in these discussions, striving

for systems that are transparent, equitable, and supportive of sustainable advancements. In pursuing environmental accountability, we must not lose sight of the intended purpose: to foster a sustainable, inclusive, and equitable agri-food system.

Consumer awareness and engagement

Increasing consumer awareness and engagement is pivotal in the journey toward sustainable food production, a theme echoed strongly at GFFPI's workshop. Consumers play a crucial role in driving demand for sustainably produced foods, making their awareness and choices fundamental in shaping the agri-food market. The discussions at the workshop highlighted that an informed consumer base can significantly influence agricultural practices by preferring products that align with sustainable and ethical standards.

Consider gene editing, a revolutionary technology for creating more sustainable food systems. This cutting-edge technique can help develop more resilient crops to climate change, require fewer resources, and yield higher nutritional value. However, the success of gene editing hinges on consumer perceptions and acceptance, as widespread global misperceptions pose a significant barrier to adopting and advancing gene-edited crops. Consumers, often unaware of the benefits of gene editing, might inadvertently impede progress in agricultural sustainability due to these misconceptions. Addressing these misperceptions requires concerted efforts to educate consumers about the global importance of agricultural technology.

These efforts must include providing factual information about the reduced need for pesticides, the potential for increased crop yields, and the ability to fortify crops with essential nutrients.

The GFFPI event underscored the need for comprehensive strategies to educate and engage consumers, as informing consumer choices requires supporting innovative technologies that promise a more sustainable agri-food future. As we look towards sustainable solutions in agriculture, ensuring public understanding and acceptance of these new technologies becomes as important as the innovations themselves. In this endeavour, it is vital to recognise that consumer education is a two-way street. The agri-food industry must not only disseminate information but also actively listen to and address consumer concerns, meeting people where they are in their understanding and perceptions. This approach fosters a dialogue-based relationship where consumer feedback can guide and improve industry practices. Policies worth exploring might include clearer labelling, public awareness campaigns, and collaboration between policymakers, producers, and retailers to facilitate easier access to sustainable food choices. Such efforts are crucial in building a more sustainable agri-food system, where consumer choices are not just about personal preference but also about contributing to global sustainability goals. By engaging consumers as active participants in the sustainability conversation, we can ensure that evolution within the agri-food sector aligns with both environmental imperatives and societal needs.

Economic viability and productivity through technology and innovation

Environmental sustainability in agriculture is incomplete without economic viability for producers. Achieving a balance between these two elements is essential for the long-term sustainability of the agri-food sector. At the core of this balance is the understanding that economic productivity and environmental stewardship are not mutually exclusive; they can be synergistic when approached through innovative technologies and practices.

Consider advancements like artificial intelligence (AI), which has the potential to revolutionise agricultural practices. AI can optimise resource use, enhance crop yields, and reduce environmental impacts, thereby increasing the economic viability of farming while adhering to sustainability principles. For instance, precision agriculture, powered by AI, allows for the precise application of water, fertilisers, and pesticides, reducing waste and environmental damage. Similarly, AI-driven data analytics can provide insights for better crop management and decision-making, enhancing productivity and sustainability.

Transitioning to sustainable practices often requires initial investments that can be challenging for farmers, particularly smallholders. Subsidies, incentives, and fair compensation might play a critical role. By offsetting the initial costs and risks associated with adopting new technologies and practices, these financial mechanisms can make it



more feasible for farmers to transition toward sustainable agriculture. They also serve as a recognition of the environmental services that sustainable farming provides.

Modern sustainability challenges require modern, innovative solutions. Policy decisions must be mindful of supporting the development of technologies that are accessible and affordable for farmers of all scales and regions. Innovations should not only focus on high-tech solutions but also on sustainably improving traditional practices. For example, integrating indigenous knowledge with modern technology can lead to more holistic and effective agricultural practices.

The challenge lies in ensuring that these technological innovations and economic incentives are designed and implemented in a way that truly supports sustainable agriculture. Collaboration among governments, private sectors, researchers, and farmers is required to develop solutions that are practical, scalable, and aligned with both environmental and economic objectives. Indeed, advancements in the agri-food sector must continue to evolve in a way that supports the planet and its people, ensuring the economic viability of farming while safeguarding the environment for future generations.

Conclusion: toward heightened global cooperation

International cooperation is indispensable in addressing the multifaceted sustainability challenges in the agri-food system. The complexities of global food production and consumption patterns necessitate a collaborative approach that transcends borders, integrating long-term sustainability goals with practical, immediate actions. This approach involves harmonising policies and practices across nations while acknowledging and respecting regional and cultural differences. Meaningful dialogue between the public and private sectors is pivotal. Governments can set the sustainability agenda through public policy, regulatory reform, and incentives, enabling sustainable practices. Through public-private partnerships, agricultural policy might accelerate the private sector's capacity

for innovation, allowing the private sector to bring new technologies and processes to the forefront. The symbiotic relationship between these two sectors is essential for driving meaningful progress towards sustainability.

Furthermore, international cooperation is key to emphasising open trade, transparency, and establishing common standards. Open trade facilitates the exchange of goods, services, and knowledge, fostering an efficient and sustainable global marketplace. Transparency builds trust and accountability, ensuring that all stakeholders, from farmers to consumers, are well-informed and engaged. Common standards, meanwhile, provide a benchmark for sustainability, ensuring that practices and products meet agreed-upon environmental and social criteria. Flexibility is also crucial in this global framework. Agricultural practices are deeply rooted in local cultures and ecosystems; thus, solutions must be adaptable to different regional contexts. What works in one part of the world may not be suitable for another, and policies must be sensitive to these differences.

The GFFPI workshop underscored the importance of global collaboration in tackling sustainability challenges. As a participant, I witnessed firsthand the power of diverse perspectives coming together to shape a resilient and sustainable future for agriculture. This experience reinforced my belief in the collective commitment required to make a lasting impact. It's not just about individual actions but how we, as a global community, can unite our efforts and resources to create a sustainable agri-food system that benefits global society. The path ahead is complex and challenging, but with continued collaboration, innovation, and commitment through events like the GFFPI workshop, we can forge a prosperous and sustainable future for generations to come.

Trey Malone is the Farm Foundation Agricultural Economics Fellow for Sustainable Food Systems. This article is an account of his personal reflections of the GFFPI workshop held in October at the OECD. Trey will also be co-authoring a paper with Claire Citeau, Executive Director, European Union Chamber of Commerce in Canada that will provide a detailed summary of the workshop along with actions to progress the workshop outputs.

