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Matt Eastland :
The incredible work championed by EIT Food is grounded in three core missions that drive everything that we do. Promoting healthier lives through food, achieving net zero food systems and building a fair and resilient food system by reducing risks. These shared missions guide us as we tackle the biggest challenges in the food system, striving to create better outcomes for people and the planet. I'm Matt Eastland and over the next three episodes of The Food Fight we'll dive deep into each of these missions. We'll talk to inspiring changemakers who are shaking up the status quo and making tangible progress towards a fairer, more sustainable and healthier food system. And find out how we as individuals can make an impact in our own lives. As COP29 in Baku draws to a conclusion, the urgency of our mission to achieve net zero food systems has never been clearer. The food system is responsible for almost a third of greenhouse gas emissions, owing to the connected challenges of food waste, resource depletion and energy consumption. In order to reach net zero and mitigate the impacts of the climate crisis, we must scale a systems approach to change that enables the transition to sustainable and regenerative agricultural practices, creates new markets and opportunities for food waste and loss reduction, and empowers all stakeholders to play an active role in the circular food economy. Achieving this transition requires nothing short of a systemic shift, but the potential impact is enormous. At next bike 2024, I grabbed a few minutes with Vivian Bordereau, mission lead for Net Zero Food Systems, to learn more about this critical work. EIT Food, we're a mission-led organisation, but what does that mean? What are the missions, and what are we hoping to achieve?

Vivian Bordereau:
We are very fortunate in this organisation. Our job titles are actually not job titles, they are goals that we want to see. And basically our role here is to ensure that all the effort of the company are geared toward meeting those goals. So that what we do, we convene, we advocate, and we bring people together to achieve those goals.

Matt Eastland :
OK, fantastic. And there are specific outcomes that we're looking for in the missions?

Vivian Bordereau:
Well, it says on the title, right? We want to achieve a net zero food system, in my case, by 2050. So we are looking on, you know, level of change and food system transformation. So we work with all the stakeholders in the value chain to make sure it happens through various initiatives.

Matt Eastland :
OK, thanks, Viv. Thanks for summarising that. And in order to bring this to life, it'd be good to get some examples on how, as an organisation and as a community, we are delivering on these missions. Viv, what about yourself from a net zero perspective? Any good examples you'd like to bring?

Vivian Bordereau:
So a great project I want to mention is the Ways to Plate initiative, which basically aims to create one million meals made of side stream or by-products. So basically tapping into Turning the word waste into resources and working with entrepreneurs to create a business model to make that happen. So increase the number of products on the marketing or the supermarket shelves made of food surplus ingredients that would have turned to landfill, turned to waste if there were no intervention from this project. So that's the one I want to highlight today. A million meals, would you say? A million meals by 2027. That's amazing. That's quite an ambition. It's a great ambition, but I think they feel they can do even more than that. And we certainly hope that it will. That's one of the initiatives out of many. We have a portfolio approach, and we also have a lot of education program about food waste. But we tackle the problem holistically, from prevention, we have intervention on that. We also have revalorization, we're proposing upcycling up to the end of life, and fiber recovery or the material recovery. So we try to look at that holistically and see if we can tackle some hot spots, you know, and do some incremental change.

Matt Eastland :
OK, well, you realize now that in 2027, you're coming back on to tell us how that's how that's gone. So, you know, I hope so. It's there. It's there. Vivian mentioned there about the Waste to Plate initiative being spearheaded by EIT Food. This ambitious project aims to tackle the critical issues of food waste and enhance healthier food options by turning food waste and side streams into nutritious and circular food products. Another organization working in this field is the Global Food Banking Network. I got the chance to speak to the Senior Director of Food Systems Partnership, Ignacio Gavilan, at NextByte last month.

Ignacio Gavilan:
My name is Ignacio Gavilan I'm originally from Spain but I've been 20 plus years traveling around the world working for the food and beverage sector mainly and specifically on sustainability. So I've worked for a number of multinationals and had the pleasure of leaving those early 2000s when social responsibility was being developed, or corporate social responsibility, today ESG. So I've spent a good amount of time working with the food and agriculture sector on sustainability. I've recently joined the Global Food Banking Network. I'm a senior director for something called Food

System Partnerships, which is basically the side of the organization that deals with the sourcing of the product for the food banks. Traditionally, it's linked to purely charity, but this is a very large network of food banks. We're present in 54 countries now, and it's 60-plus organizations. Now, food bank is not necessarily the one building. If you think about Latin America, for example, there are about 19 food banks on our network that represent 700 plus locations where they distribute food. So the beauty of a global organization doing this food banking is that we get product that will otherwise go to waste and redistribute to people in need. If I look at the numbers for 2023, we distributed 654 million kilos. Good grief. And that fed 42 million people. That's amazing. Around the world. Think about that food not going to people will otherwise end up in landfills or rotting in the fields. Which brings me to the environmental angle. those are methane emissions, those are greenhouse gas emissions. So my speech to corporates now, it's not just hunger alleviation, it's solving your scope three emissions. So I become a business solution rather than a pure charity, right? And that's the angle that I think it's important to highlight. And I appreciate the opportunity to do this on the podcast because it's, It's amazing the amount of food. One third of the food goes to waste. And even though you just heard 650 plus million kilos, that's not even five percent of that one third. So there's still an insane amount of food that goes to waste. And there's a number of causes for that, right? There's product despecification by retailers and manufacturers. That's us, as citizens, buying only beautiful, shiny, red, Disney-looking apples. So there's a number of things that our food system got used to and that is causing this amount of waste.

Matt Eastland :
Some of the things you're saying are amazing figures, and it's brilliant that there's companies like yours that are out there which are already making a bite out of that. But like you say, it's still a huge challenge. Can you explain, the logistics of this as a company must be incredible. So how do you even go about, as a global organization, making sure that the food is collected from the right places and delivered to the right people at the right time? Because I imagine a lot of this food can go off very quickly as well, right?

Ignacio Gavilan:
Yeah, so if you think about a supermarket, there's something called shrinkage. That's a number that they track in their P&L. You buy 100 bananas from the Dominican Republic, you sell 90. There's 10 in there. What happened there? There's a gap, there's theft, there's mismanagement, there's broken. That number can be huge for any given supermarket. If we're very quick and we have the logistics to take that product out, we solve a problem to the supermarket and we can distribute that quickly. That can be sushi, that can be fresh vegetables, that can be a number of things. Of course, we do have nutrition at the top of our list. Objective, right? It's okay to distribute food, but I don't want that to be just confectionery and Nespresso caps, right? It has to be there's a nutritional component

where we collected last year almost 40 to 50 percent of the product we distributed was fruit and vegetables. So we're moving up the stream into the farming community, precisely because of the suspects that I mentioned, right? So you look at big supermarkets in the UK, Tesco, Sainsbury's, they do collaborate with farmers, they open the door for these farmers. So our food bank, fair share in the United Kingdom, has direct access to those farmers. So if Tesco buys 80% of the crop, the other 20%, which is edible, but it might not fit whatever specifications they set, it goes straight into the food banks. So it doesn't get lost. That's great. That's really great. And the same, you look at less sophisticated chains. We have a number of food banks in Latin America, Asia Pacific, Africa. It's a question of connecting the dots in a very efficient way. Surplus or waste immediately connected to the food bank locally. Pick up, that collection might be paid by us, might be paid by them, might be paid by a third party. We have collaborations with the likes of GCCA, the Global Cold Chain Alliance, or we might end up paying for that as well. We raise money, we provide grants to food banks in our network, And that's the way we build capacity in areas where they need it the most.

Matt Eastland :
Amazing, amazing work that you're doing. And I really, really congratulate you. And because what you're doing is a big scale thing, which is obviously needed. Can we bring it back to personal accountability? So what is it that in terms of like strategies at a personal level, what is it that you would advise people to do in order to reduce food loss and waste?

Ignacio Gavilan:
Well, the personal sort of household is still 30% of the food waste, so it's significant. I would say good rotation on your fridge, first in first out, look at the expiration dates, and then Normally, you will find two expiration dates, used by and best before. Used by impacts product safety, so it's non-negotiable. That's your ground beef, that's your chicken. If it's beyond that expiration date, don't risk it. But have a good first in, first out mechanism at home. Best before, I mean, come on, pasta.

Matt Eastland :
Coffee can last forever, can't it? Pasta, pretty much? There you go.

Ignacio Gavilan:
Are you going to boil it anyway, right? So, I mean, that's the sort of thing where... I mean, I understand the quality or the taste might be different, but don't throw it away. It's that sort of thing. And then something I should mention here is its policies. We developed a map in our webpage. It's called the Atlas. It contains the policies for donation around the world. There are some places where it's very difficult to donate. And I talked to a lot of

multinationals and they said, look, even if I want, It's bloody difficult. Because they're not allowed to. They're not even allowed to. There's not any tax incentive. Quite the opposite. It might end up costing them money. And then some countries still have limitations on the best before dates. You cannot donate product with a best before date expiration. So it goes country by country. Sometimes it's really difficult. But on a personal level, it's just be vigilant of dates, inventory control at home, that sort of thing helps.

Matt Eastland :
If you're interested to learn more about the work of the Global Food Banking Network, check out our previous mini episode with Ignacio linked in the show notes. Now one of the often wasted products mentioned by Ignatia there was coffee. 9,000 tons of spent coffee grounds are wasted in Europe every single day, and one startup is trying to close the loop on coffee and reinvent the ways to bring low-carbon, coffee-derived chemicals to the market with the lowest possible carbon footprint. Here's my conversation with co-founder Kacper Kozlowski to find out more.

Kacper Kosowski:
Yeah, so my name is Kacper Kosowski. I'm the co-founder of EcoBean. I spent like the last two decades in a coffee business, but rather on the side of the roasted coffee beans. And now I jump into coffee waste, processing coffee waste. Since, I don't know if you are aware, but if you brew a cup of coffee, only 30% of it actually makes it to the cup of coffee. I read about this. It's shocking. You read about it. Yeah, it's really shocking. 70% of all the valuable compounds that are in a coffee are in a coffee waste. And this is exactly what we do. So we have developed as EcoBean, we have developed a disruptive technology that enables to process these spent coffee grounds into five different valuable sustainable ingredients being coffee oil, antioxidants, coffee linen, protein additives and lactic acid. And those ingredients can be then afterwards easily applied to different industries, starting from beauty industry, going through petrochemical industry, and ending up even at the pharmaceutical side of the business.

Matt Eastland :
Amazing. And is there a massive demand from all these other industries in terms of these valorized products?

Kacper Kosowski:
The market is there already, so we are not actually creating a new market for sustainable ingredients. We are rather pitching in the existing market and absolutely walking away from the fossil fuels. And as I was mentioning, we are also saving CO2. We have this measured by Bureau Veritas, so we are actually already capable to save three tons of CO2 from each ton of spent coffee grounds.

Matt Eastland :
Is that right? You can save three tons of CO2 for every ton?

Kacper Kosowski:
Yeah.

Matt Eastland :
Amazing.

Kacper Kosowski:
We are avoiding emissions. So in that sense, EcoBean is a sort of enabler for our business partners to reach their decarbonisation goals. I see.

Matt Eastland :
Okay. And Kacper, I know that you're delivering a speech today at NextByte, I'm assuming talking about your journey, but can you give our listeners a bit of an outline of what you'll be talking about and any key takeaways that you'd like people to have?

Kacper Kosowski:
we are drinking like two billions coffee cups daily. In Europe alone, it is like 30% of the global consumption. It's 9,000 tons also daily. So we are dealing with a huge and tangible issue. And coffee has also this dark side that we are not talking too much about. The dark side of coffee. Yeah, the dark side of coffee, exactly. So we are exactly addressing this issue. And currently most of the coffee is being either is composting or is being incinerated. So basically it's valorized to the level of the energy. What we managed to do is we are already able to valorize one ton of coffee, of spent coffee brands, into 8,000 of euro in revenue in those ingredients that we are producing out of the spent coffee plants.

Matt Eastland :
Amazing. You're obviously leading the way on the drive towards a circular economy. I know that's what EcoBean are trying to do. How critical do you think it is that we move from this kind of linear waste model to a circular model? How important is that for food systems change?

Kacper Kosowski:
Well, it is absolutely fundamental and crucial, but it's quite trivial because everybody's saying this. But finally, it's happening. You think it's happening? I think it's slowly happening. I can even tell from this quite a short perspective of us running

EcoBean, like for the last five years, I can absolutely say that the market is maturing. and this shift is something that is slowly beginning to happen. So the shift of the mind from something that was being voluntarily is definitely switching to something obligatory. Of course, it is also pushed by consumer, by all the CSRD directive, so all the regulations and the policies out there. But it's definitely happening and I think that the coffee industry is slowly embracing the sustainability and there is no other option, honestly.

Matt Eastland :
And why do you think that it's taken so long for the coffee industry to embrace this? Is it just because it fell into the too difficult box?

Kacper Kosowski:
You need to have a solid business case also to make things happen and to make some solutions being integrated within the corporate business. We do have it already, so we are on one side, we save CO2. was what I was mentioning. So in that case, we enable our partners to reach decarbonization goals. But on the other hand, we also have a very solid business case by transforming this spent coffee grounds into some solid value of 8,000 euro already from one ton.

Matt Eastland :
Yeah, so business cases, you've got to get that right, otherwise the industry won't change. I think so. Yeah, understood. And obviously what you're doing is on a huge scale, but just for any consumers out there listening to this podcast, what is it that the individual can do? We're all drinking all of this coffee and collectively there's a massive challenge here, but on an individual basis, is there anything that you would advise?

Kacper Kosowski:
You can drink a lot of coffee, that is one that you can do. But honestly, we need to ask questions as individual customers. We need to ask questions, what do you do with the waste? In that sense, the responsibility of big industry leaders, we should ask about those questions.

Matt Eastland :
You want consumers to be asking the questions and putting those questions to the people in power. Yeah, I think so. Okay, got it. And in terms of what's coming next, what's your goal for EcoBean?

Kacper Kosowski:
We plan to attach each of the bio-refinery to instant coffee producers. Because the random instant coffee plant is approximately

30 to 40 thousand of coffee waste yearly. Tons? Yeah. Since to produce one kilo of instant coffee you need at least two to three kilo of beans. Okay. And so the massive amount of waste is in one place in a huge amount. Okay. And if we manage to do it, and I'm sure we will, then we are talking about the new ingredients market worth billions, six, seven billions of euro. So the shift from looking at a coffee bean, at a coffee as a linear resource, it definitely should switch to look at a coffee as a circular asset. So this is the hard way to change the mind shift of the industry.

Matt Eastland :
So you heard it here everyone, we all need to start looking at coffee in a circular way, so don't just throw it away or do something else with it, and certainly engage with the likes of Casper and EcoBean. Achieving a net-zero food system is not just about reducing waste. A holistic, multifaceted approach is essential. Establishing regenerative agriculture as a commercially viable option and growing the circular food economy through packaging and labelling are key areas where impact can be created. And in order to tackle these areas, research is vital. ENEA, one of the biggest public research institutes in Italy, has a lab dedicated to sustainable innovation in agri-food supply chains. I got the chance to speak to the head of the lab, Maurizio Notarfonso, at Next Byte last month. Maurizio Nostrofonso, welcome very much to the Food Fight podcast at the Next Bite event for EIT Food. Thank you very much for being here. Thank you for the invitation. It's a pleasure. So can I start by just asking you to explain for our listeners and the people at the event who you are and what company do you work for and what is it that you do?

Maurizio Notarfonso:
Yes. I am coming from Enea, one of the biggest public research institutes of Italy. So Enea is doing a lot of different activities, but I am coming from the Department for Sustainability. And since the first of July, so quite recent news, I am the head of a new laboratory called Innovation of Agri-Food Supply Chains. So my role is to manage and to collaborate with 20 researchers. in Italy, based in Rome, and in the south of Italy, in Apulia region, where we have two different technical centers. So the ambition of this new, young laboratory is to cover the entire agri-food supply chain. So by not missing anyone from the operators dealing with the supply chain, inside and outside. So starting from the primary sector, farmers, and go to the processing sector with industrialists. As you know, in Italy we have the majority of small and medium enterprises, but not only small and medium, also bigger. and then going through the retailers, so the larger distribution, including Orica and Caterer sector, which is very important also for the supply chain, going to the final consumers. So in our laboratory, we have several knowledge and competencies dealing with this very big ambition. only 20 researchers, but a lot of experience and we can cover several topics, from microbiology of soil, so to work together on the soil health, and also to work on sustainable agricultural practices. with

some agronomists and then we have some food technologists to try to investigate what is happening inside the food processing, especially concerning food safety, food quality for the authenticity of food production. but not forgetting what is also happening about materials. Packaging, it was one of the hottest topics in the public European agenda, also at the regulatory framework. So we are working, especially in Brindisi Research Center in the south of Italy, with innovative packaging solution based on innovative polymers. made by agro-industrial wastes in order to be able to decrease and to mitigate the environmental impact of soft packaging. So this is our ambition.

Matt Eastland :
Wow, that's quite an ambition. So you're the new head of the lab, you've just started in July, you've got 20 researchers and you cover an amazing amount of areas. Where are you even starting in order to do all of this? What's your first step?

Maurizio Notarfonso:
Yes, as a first step, first of all, I tried to bring my previous experience at benefit of this research team. So I didn't say before that my previous experience was deployed in one of the biggest industrial federations for the agri-food sector in Italy. So I came across our mind, lesson learned, working and dealing with companies, dealing with entrepreneurs, farmers, And now this package and this portfolio of previous knowledge is putting the benefit of my research team. So the first thing is to try to motivate my researcher, my colleagues, to go out the lab. So to listen. To leave the labs. Yes, leave for certain day of the weeks to listen what is happening outside the lab. Otherwise there is the risk to be too much focused on our experimentation activity on what is happening in the lab, and there is the risk to forget the feeling and to lose the contacts and the dialogue with the operators working the AgriFood supply chain. The first message is to move in outside the laboratory and to visit meetings, other kind of events, roundtable, to discuss with operators, all together. Amazing. And then they should keep an eye to what is being offered by the European Commission in terms of co-funding opportunities. So today we are in this very important context organized by AT Food. So the opportunities coming from co-funding is very important to offer services to our agri-food supply chain operators by mutually organizing with them European project proposals. and differentiate the kind of activities on the basis of their needs, challenges, and portfolio of experience. So the second message is to not miss what has been happening in the past. For example, call for proposal offered by European Commission. And the last message is inclusivity. So sometimes researchers are doing by themselves their experimentation studies in very small group. So there is the lack of contamination and integration amongst them. So I am trying to establish a new way of collaboration in a good way, in a good feeling, in a positive feeling to contaminate each other with their knowledge, experience and future plans.

Matt Eastland :
Sounds like a fantastic way to start a job. I wish I had a boss like you in my previous life, Maurizio. At EIT Food, I know that you're part of a panel where we're talking about competitiveness in the food system. That's right. Do you think there are trade-offs in health and sustainability? Or can we be competitive as a food system and sustainable and healthy? Do you think that's possible?

Maurizio Notarfonso:
It is possible, but it is really difficult to investigate and better explore the trade-off existence if we didn't pay attention to the specificity of the agri-food supply chain. Food is not only a sector, it is a sector made by different sub-sectors. Only if you think the different agri-food production coming from the primary production to the secondary production to the ultra-processed foods. So it means that there are several sub-sectors in the food sector and we couldn't investigate better this trade-off if we didn't pay attention to this aspect. Competitiveness is still on the floor as a big issue. But, as I said this morning to the roundtable with the other colleagues, is to take care about the uncertainty from the regulatory framework, which is not really sometimes stable. and it is causing, it can affect or influence the agri-food operator strategies also for the future if this framework is continuously changing too much, too fast. So it is important to mitigate also the trade-off aspects to better convene key drivers for sustainability and competitiveness altogether to put them on the floor in a longer-term perspective so that the companies, but not only companies, also people working with companies or for companies, to let them aware about this driver, these key drivers, and be able to plan better the strategies, not only at business level, but also at for example, at a strategic research agenda level for the research sector.

Matt Eastland :
Okay, amazing. And as part of your work, you must come across and come up with so many innovations and technologies. Is there anything that you're able to talk to us about or share that you're particularly excited about? Some new innovations?

Maurizio Notarfonso:
Yes, there are some innovations coming from my lab where we are very much performing about the soil health, for example. So we are doing a lot of European funded projects, even by Horizon Europe. to investigate how soil health can have a big impact on the pathogens, on the health of crops and plants. So it is very important that this project show big results for enabling better farming practices. And as a second and last topic, I can say that we are going very, very much in innovation. It's about packaging. There are several agro-industrial wastes promising in terms of exploring their potential to create new, innovative, sustainable packaging. especially coming from citrus production. So this is an activity we are working for,

to extract from citrus scraps bioactive compounds to enrich food packaging in order to enable longer shelf life of products and also to mitigate food safety aspects.

Matt Eastland :
Amazing. Groundbreaking research from Maurizio's lab and others in the field is driving innovation to diversify global protein sources. Meat consumption worldwide is at an all-time high. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, global meat production could surge by up to 50% by 2050, posing significant challenges for sustainability and public health. Advancements in plant-based meat, cultivated meat and fermentation technologies offer transformative solutions. These innovations can reduce the environmental footprint of food production, lower the risk of zoonotic diseases and enable us to feed a growing population using fewer resources. The Good Food Institute, a leading non-profit think tank, is at the forefront of accelerating alternative protein development. Last month, Ellie Walden, a policy manager at the GFI, shared some insights at NextBite.

Ellie Walden:
So about who we are at GFI, so we are an NGO that is focused on accelerating the alternative protein space. So what do we mean by that? We mean all the companies in the ecosystem that are trying to create products that recreate that experience of meat and dairy, but using ways that don't involve farming animals. So for us at GFI, that means three things. That means plant-based, using fermentation, and using cultivation, so cultivating meat directly from cells. So that's our mission and the reason we are focused on that goal is because we know that one of the core drivers of so many of the problems in our food system is the fact that we in the Global North just love the taste of meat and dairy so much and as a result we are eating way, way too much of it, way beyond what is sustainable for our planet to support. and that is leading us to create these systems that are hugely intensified of animal agriculture and that has all these negative externalities I think everybody listening to this podcast will know so well. So at GFI our view is if we're going to really succeed in bringing down that level of demand to anywhere more sustainable that it needs to get to, We can't just rely on kind of individual goodwill. We can't just rely on people willingly giving up the foods that they love, the foods that they've grown up with, eating every day. In other words, we need to look at other options and supplying people with other foods that match what they're looking for in meat and dairy, so match that meat and dairy experience, but yeah, produced in other ways. So that's our mission, our goal as an NGO. We work to do that by bringing people together and identifying where the gaps are that is preventing the sector from reaching its potential, and basically mobilizing resources and people to solve those gaps.

Matt Eastland :

Amazing. Thank you for very succinctly summarizing that. I love the work that GFI is doing. At NextBite, you've just spoken at our session on net zero food systems, specifically about whether protein diversification and regenerative agriculture are distinctive or can be complementary, which is super interesting. Can you explain very briefly what you mean by protein diversification and why has this possibly been seen as incompatible with regenerative agriculture in the past?

Ellie Walden:
Well, your question is really interesting, because I think in our panel we were really getting into this topic of language, and I think even the concept of protein diversification could be maybe interpreted in different ways. But from my perspective at GFI, that protein diversification refers to the use of other sources of protein, like alternative proteins, that move us away from that current status quo of relying on these intensive systems. in terms of why they have been seen sometimes as distinct from the goals of regenerative agriculture. I think as we touched on the panel, again, language has been a big part of this. We perhaps have come across sometimes as not being completely on the same page as the regenerative agriculture movement in terms of things like the need for some animal agriculture in the food system in a more sustainable and mindful way. And I think some of the language we have used that perhaps makes unhelpful generalizations about animal agriculture has led to this kind of divide opening up between our two movements. I think also we talked about in the panel the risk of kind of this silver bullet thinking. We are so passionate about what we're doing at GFI. Everyone in the food system is. That's why we're here. But maybe that passion has sometimes led us to be a little bit redundant, a little bit about how this is only one part. of a future food system. And I think we need to get better at being a bit more nuanced and specific about the problems we're trying to solve, because as we concluded in the panel, the goals are very much the same between protein diversification, alternative proteins, whatever you want to call it, and regenerative agriculture. We both want a more sustainable food system, one that moves beyond the current kind of dominance of these industrial intensive systems we've had to build to keep up with the demand we have. So I think what is important is the big picture that we really do agree on the direction we're moving towards and I think the panel today was a really great step in moving the conversation to a starting point that hopefully there's enough trust on both sides that we can have constructive conversations about where the synergies can be between our two movements.

Matt Eastland :
That's really impressive that even just on one panel you've managed to unpack the kind of previous challenge which was almost about language and then bridge the gap and everyone's, oh, so we are actually on the same page and it just took sitting people down together and discussing that.

Ellie Walden:
Yeah, we've had discussions with people doing the panel. But yeah, I think it's a reflection that you get people sitting around the table that are really there in a constructive way, that really want to find these synergies and work towards these solutions. And yeah, as I've said, I think language has maybe got in the way of always seeing that we are on the same page in the big picture of things. And I think I think Lucy, the moderator, did a great job of really bringing us together and acknowledging what is sometimes a difficult question, that there is a divide. We have chosen different paths, different tools to get to that solution, but the important thing is that big picture we're working towards, and I think the panel was a great first step, but it doesn't end there. I mean, we're going to continue these conversations, and I think there's practical things at a kind of policy level that we can work on together.

Matt Eastland :
Okay, so in terms of the size of the prize then, if you can marry the two movements together, over and above saying something more general about this is going to be a much better future food system, is there anything specific you think that you can achieve if you can gel the two sides together?

Ellie Walden:
So I think there's power in numbers. I mean, the scale of the challenge we are facing is so huge. The goal of moving away from all of the current entrenched systems and status quo of doing things. So I think on a practical level, we need all the partners as we can get. And if we can recognize that we are really moving in the same direction, then that already helps that we can support each other and I think it's also especially important in kind of recent years because we've seen tractors and farmers on the streets and it's a very polarizing time politically on these topics. So I think the more that we can show policymakers and everybody that actually there are things are not so black and white and there are synergies to be found and there's ways to work together, I think that just strengthens both of our kind of efforts in this space.

Matt Eastland :
Definitely, amazing. And you mentioned policymakers, and I know that you, obviously in your role, you work very closely with policymakers to support innovation and protein diversification, et cetera. So what role do you think policymakers have, and what change are you specifically looking to influence as part of your work?

Ellie Walden:
So I think policymakers have an absolutely fundamental role. Our food system does not occur in a vacuum. It's greatly shaped by all

the incentives and the structures that kind of decide on the environment of our food system and what gets to our supermarkets, what gets to our plate. So at GFI, we specifically work on firstly increasing the amount of public funding that gets put towards alternative proteins. We think public funding is absolutely crucial because much in the same way we recognize this with things like renewable energy that private venture capital is not enough to bring about those tipping points needed in those technologies. The same really applies when it comes to alternative proteins. So that's one concrete kind of policy ask we have. We also do other things working to make sure that there's a fair and evidence-based kind of path to market for these new foods that are going to need to be properly assessed through the gold standard processes we have in place in Europe around food, normal foods authorization, but making sure that process is evidence-based and as streamlined and as efficient it can be whilst always privileging the point about consumer safety. So those are two concrete things we work on at GFI and I think, you know, following on from today's discussion, there's also some work to be done around the vision of the future food system that the European Commission is really thinking about and how, again, we can work in a complementary way with those other groups to make sure that is pushed in the most sustainable way and delivers the kind of food system you want to see in the future, including protein diversification and regenerative agriculture.

Matt Eastland :
Thanks there to Eli, Maurizio, Casper, Ignacio and Vivian for sharing some of the amazing work they're doing towards achieving a net zero food system. These are just some of the insightful conversations we had at Next Bite 2024 in Rome last month. And over the next couple of weeks, we're going to take a deeper look into EIT Food's two other missions, promoting healthier lives through food and reducing risk for a fair and resilient food system. Until then, goodbye and many thanks for listening.