



**EMBARGOED TO 19 NOVEMBER 2019**

## **New report calls on businesses to move well beyond plant-based product innovation to ensure a sustainable future for food**

New analysis from international sustainability non-profit, Forum for the Future, explores the public commitments of 132 leading food companies and outlines a five-point plan to get businesses on track towards a more sustainable global food system

**00:01 GMT, London, 19 November 2019** – Food businesses need to move well beyond consumer-driven innovations in plant-based product ranges if they are to future-proof themselves and their supply chains through the growing climate crisis, reveals a new report from international sustainability non-profit, Forum for the Future.

*The Future of Food* assesses the public commitments of 132 of the largest, most influential businesses with a stake in the global food system, from major high-street retailers, brands and food service providers to meat, dairy and feed producers. It calls on businesses to follow a five-point plan with potential to create wholesale system change and deliver sustainable protein throughout the value chain — from the way we feed livestock to ensuring balanced, diverse and healthy diets.

With agriculture and land use change accounting for almost 24% of global greenhouse gas emissions<sup>1</sup>, the report asks whether businesses are doing enough to create a more sustainable global food system for protein; one in which animals are fed with sustainable feedstocks, natural ecosystems are restored and protected, and ultimately, a growing population is fed with healthy, affordable food that's good for both people and planet.

The report found that:

- Promisingly, we're seeing the **start of a widespread shift** among businesses in the US and Europe towards a more diverse protein offer. For example, **one in every two** companies are working to increase the availability of consumer plant-based products. Food and ingredient businesses are leading the way, with 79% actively advancing plant protein in their portfolios or on their menus, closely followed by food service and restaurants (61%), retailers (52%) and meat producers and processors (34%).
- Much of this is happening against a backdrop of **concurrent growth in meat sales** and while new product ranges are launched almost weekly, there have not yet been significant moves to **reformulate other, more mainstream ranges**, or to prioritise ensuring sustainable protein as part of **business models**.
- Action can often be **fragmented and isolated**. There remains a growing need for widespread systemic approaches that account for both protein consumption and production, and have the potential to drive change well beyond individual company boundaries.
- Despite the major influence of **animal feed** on health and welfare, end-product quality and overall costs of livestock production, only **one third** of companies are taking action to ensure its sustainability.



**Lesley Mitchell, Associate Director for Sustainable Nutrition at Forum for the Future, commented on the report:** *“The urgent need for the food system to transform, to enable a positive and sustainable future for people and the planet, has galvanised public interest. But we need to see companies taking a more ambitious, integrated approach to sustainable nutrition – and that means addressing sustainability across plant, meat and dairy production and consumption, and putting sustainable protein at the core of business strategies.”*

The report calls for businesses to lead a transformative shift in the global food system and outlines a ‘five-point plan’ for them to do so. Its recommendations are to:

1. **Develop an integrated protein strategy** that puts sustainable nutrition at the centre of delivering healthy diets, links to corporate climate targets and covers key protein impact areas.
2. **Make public, time-bound commitments** to shift to sustainable animal feed that send clear signals to the market.
3. **Embed across the business:** Focus resources on understanding the shifts needed across all consumer product portfolios to embed and enable healthy balanced diets, and how to align this across all business functions with a supportive business model, led from the top.
4. **Collaborate:** Identify and collaborate on precompetitive challenges, from shifting our food culture and transforming across the value chain to creating an effective enabling environment for scaling sustainable animal feed.
5. **Advocate for change** across the food sector, engaging policymakers and institutions. With 10 years left to address the climate challenge, businesses can play an active role in engaging policy makers, investors, funders and NGOs to accelerate action - sending a clear signal for outcomes that deliver both sustainability and nutrition outcomes and shifting incentives in the market.

*“Businesses can lead the change needed and the five-point plan is designed to accelerate progress,”* continues **Lesley Mitchell**. *“The big question is what their business will look like in a world where sustainable, nutritious, affordable protein is the norm – and start shaping that future, today.”*

Forum for the Future commissioned *The Future of Food* as the facilitator of the global *Protein Challenge 2040*, an international protein collaboration that brings together pioneering non-profits and businesses to explore how we can provide up to 10 billion people with enough protein in a way that is healthy, affordable and good for the planet. Each partner focuses on protein as a major issue within its business strategy.

**Tor Harris, Head of Corporate Social Responsibility at Protein Challenge-member, Waitrose & Partners, said:** *“The Future of Food report serves to build a bigger picture about the responsibility of the food and farming industry in growing and sourcing protein more sustainably. We recognise the role that we can play in offering people a way to enjoy less but better meat in their diet. While there is more to do, we have made great strides in the past few years: our work on sustainable forage and animal feed, and the introduction of more plant-based products in our stores, have been key areas of focus for us.”*

**Noel Mahony, Co-Chief Executive of Protein Challenge-member, BaxterStorey, said:** *“As a foodservice provider, we welcome this report and its recommendations. We play an important role in delivering delicious, nutritious and sustainable meals to our customers every*



day. *This report highlights the need for the industry to take an integrated approach to deliver a sustainable protein food system, and we are proud to be part of this conversation.*”

**-ENDS-**

For more information, interviews or comment, please email [u.stein@forumforthefuture.org](mailto:u.stein@forumforthefuture.org)

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

### **About *The Future of Food: Are food businesses on track to deliver a sustainable protein system by 2040?* report**

*The Future of Food: Are businesses on track to deliver a sustainable protein system by 2040?* report was written by Forum for the Future’s team of sustainable nutrition experts. It draws on desktop analysis of the public commitments of 132 of the largest and most influential businesses globally that interact with protein – from retailers, food service and food and ingredient manufacturers to meat, dairy and feed producers. The three focus areas examined in the report are: re-balancing protein in Western diets, the sustainability of animal feed and the extent of integration in protein strategies across businesses. [Read the report here.](#)

### **What is sustainability?**

Forum for the Future’s definition of sustainability is:

“Sustainability is a dynamic process which enables all people to realise their potential and to improve their quality of life in ways that simultaneously protect and enhance the Earth’s life support system.”

### **About Forum for the Future**

Forum for the Future is a leading international sustainability non-profit with offices in London, New York, Singapore and Mumbai. We specialise in addressing critical global challenges by catalysing change in key systems.

For over 20 years, we’ve been working in partnership with business, governments and civil society to accelerate the shift toward a sustainable future. Together we are reinventing the way the world works.

Find out more at [www.forumforthefuture.org](http://www.forumforthefuture.org) or by following [@Forum4theFuture](https://twitter.com/Forum4theFuture) on Twitter. Find out more about the [Protein Challenge](#).

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<sup>i</sup> The agriculture, forestry and other land use sector is responsible for just under a quarter (24%) of anthropogenic GHG emissions mainly from deforestation and agricultural emissions from livestock, soil and nutrient management. See IPCC (2014) AR5 Mitigation of Climate Change: Chapter 11: Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use. Available at:

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