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**Agroecology Scientific Day 2024**  
Workshop n°6, Session n°3

**Title:**

Consumer's perceptions and sensitivities towards true cost of food: Evidence from literature review and a pilot survey conducted in Switzerland.

**Abstract:**

Food systems are expected to deliver on a triple challenge: ensuring food security and nutrition, providing inclusive livelihoods while maintaining environmental sustainability. The latest FAO SOFA report "*Revealing the True Cost of Food to Transform Agrifood Systems*" highlighted important environmental, social and health hidden costs associated to food. Addressing these externalities is an essential step in the needed transformation of food systems towards more sustainability.

In Switzerland, the Future Orientation of Agriculture Policy from 2030 onwards recognizes the promotion of healthy and sustainable food consumption as one of its 4 strategic pillars, and increased transparency and true cost as an important field of action. A nation-wide data collection in Switzerland in 2015 (menuCH) demonstrated that the current dietary patterns in Switzerland are not aligned to the dietary recommendations (Swiss Food Pyramid). According to von Ow et al. (2020), a food consumption aligned to the Swiss food pyramid could reduce the environmental burden from 15% to 52% (with environmental optimization of production systems).

The food consumption depends largely on the food environment and contextual factors: while many food purchases in store are made unconsciously, some people do not even have financial nor physical access to healthier and more sustainable food. Furthermore, multiple evidence highlights the influence of sociodemographic and lifestyle parameters on food choices.

When deciding to maintain a certain diet or purchase certain food products, consumers choose according to their preferences based on different characteristics: price, taste, origin, production criteria, environmental and health impact score, etc. Even if some synergies can be exploited, often this choice results in trade-offs. While some consumers choose healthier and more sustainable products consciously, others do not care or are confused with the amount of – sometimes contradicting – information provided. Surveys

and discrete choice experiments (DCE) are often used by researchers to investigate consumers' decision-making process.

Being aware of those contextual factors which influence consciously and subconsciously consumer's food consumption choices is key to develop targeted and efficient policy interventions towards more sustainable and healthy diets. In their review, (Ammann et al. 2023) determine 4 types of policy interventions for more sustainable consumption: information-based, nudging, market-based and regulatory instruments.

Our presentation in this session will address the following questions: What are the contextual factors influencing consumers' food consumption choices? Are consumers aware of the environmental, social and health externalities associated to their food consumption? Do consumers care more about the environmental and/or health externalities? And finally, what type of policy intervention(s) (information-based, nudging, market-based, regulatory) is needed to drive consumers towards healthier and more sustainable food consumption choices?

Insights from this exchange will inform the choice of attributes for the development of a stated preference survey (DCE) to be launched in spring 2025.

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