Safeguarding agricultural resilience for the future

Annual Report 2020
## Contents

**About us**

- President’s Review 4
- Director General’s Review 6
- Who we are 10
- Our members 12
- Our team 18

**Leadership**

- Sustainable Agriculture Principles and Practices 22
- Our Principles and Practices in action 24
- Harmonising Regenerative Agriculture 26
- Position Statements on industry issues 27
- Online events that continue to inspire 28
- SAI Platform Australia 34
- Partnerships - our nature and success 35
- Raising awareness, understanding and engagement 36

**Collaboration**

- Harvesting the Future 42
- Advancing the growth of sustainable agriculture in the Americas 44
- Projects, Partnerships and Innovations 48
- Collective power to address sector challenges 56
- Climate intelligence 60
- Partnership development Pakistan - a series of firsts 61

**Industry solutions**

- European Roundtable for Beef Sustainability 64
- Sustainable Dairy Partnership 68
- Farm Sustainability Assessment 74
- Progressing the FSA in China 80
- Wild Harvest Sustainability Assessment 83
- Spotlight 84
- FSA Accelerator Russia 85

**The meaning of agricultural resilience in 2020 and for the future** 86

**Financial Summary** 92
President’s Review

2020

A resilient agricultural system is one that finds a healthy balance between productivity, climate and nature. It has the agility to adapt to societal expectations while ensuring farmers’ livelihoods. This is where SAI Platform plays an important role, to help build this resilience through collaborative action among its members.

Last year, COVID-19 forced us to go online but it also brought together a broader and wider engagement with our members’ employees. Our webinars with experts and panel discussions, training on the Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) or the Sustainable Dairy Partnership (SDP) as well as our General Assembly all experienced record attendance. This ability to reach more people within member organisations has accelerated an awareness and understanding of the value that we as SAI Platform offer by working and learning together.

Our members come together because we have a shared purpose. This is also reflected in the changing nature of our global presence. We formed the Americas Working Group with a targeted focus on North America and regenerative agriculture and revitalised our work in Brazil. In China we saw a growing interest in the uptake of the FSA. As a result of this, I see an opportunity to engage more widely there.

We are entering into an era in which agriculture will continue to receive a lot of attention. As a boots-on-the-ground organisation we aim to pilot a number of projects at small-scale to test future production systems, with the aim of scaling up to a landscape level and across different supply chains. Our projects are to be driven by need and commitment and ideally have the potential to be transferable to different regions around the world.

Looking at the European Roundtable for Beef Sustainability (ERBS), the FSA, and the SDP, we recognise the value of aligned industry solutions and how they address issues such as farmers’ income, sustainability, ecology and animal welfare. The SDP has been aligning companies and national approaches through its simple, clear but also inclusive approach allowing room for local adoption where relevant. The ERBS has made significant progress by developing its recognition framework. Likewise, with the 2021 launch of the FSA 3.0, which includes a metrics approach, this increasingly popular tool continues to advance. This is where we are special: our industry solutions enable users to learn and capture where they are at, monitor their improvements and share their learning experiences and knowledge.

Our path to 2025

2020 gave us the opportunity to reflect and reassess our 2025 goals. Climate, protecting nature and regenerative agriculture now lead our members’ priorities. After our Advisory Council challenged us on other issues including food security and better support for farming livelihoods, our aim now is to offer a more holistic and wholesome agriculture that protects the planet. We acknowledge the importance of metrics and an accountability system that requires radical transparency and is ultimately our license to operate. Finally, we must support and provide benefit to farmers. They are central to sustainable agriculture.

This has been my first year as President and I have seen first-hand the important role that SAI Platform has in forming a new sustainable future. Our members expect leadership through aligned industry solutions, a commonality of themes that can be integrated across our Working Groups and communities and pre-competitive collaboration. On behalf of my colleagues on the Executive Committee, our Advisory Council and our team at the Secretariat we look forward to putting our goals into action.
The impact of COVID-19 throughout 2020 has been difficult for us all. It highlighted the diversity of issues to consider, the need for a holistic and collaborative approach within the agriculture industry, and new ways of working to remain connected as a team and as a community. Resilience and agility are essential to farmers and the whole supply chain, especially in times of crisis. We recognise the challenges our members face and are committed to integrate these into our priorities.

Our leadership, collaboration, and industry solutions are at the core of SAI Platform. As a leader in sustainable agriculture we are continually reviewing where and what actions can best drive success and we look to our Advisory Council, which saw a change of advisors this year, to keep us forward thinking and alert. As part of this, we consolidated our Sustainable Agriculture Principles and Practices which have guided our work since they were first created in 2009. We also published Position Statements on key themes such as climate action, animal welfare, and human rights. We look to provide a position statement for the theme of nature in 2021.

In 2020, we witnessed a real change of conversation regarding collaborative project commitments. We started to see potential projects in Spotlight become bigger, more ambitious and much more holistic. SAI Platform is now at around 150 project opportunities in Spotlight but we still need more of our members to use this tool and strengthen the ones we already have and to add even more requests. The more specific and direct our members can be regarding their own needs, the more quickly we can align on collaborative action and scale positive change.

The growth and diversity of our industry solutions has been phenomenal. The use of the Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) and related verifications has increased across geographies and different crops. The development of FSA 3.0 continued, and we look forward to its launch in 2021. Together with the European Roundtable for Beef Sustainability (ERBS) and the Sustainable Dairy Partnership (SDP) we are providing efficiency, consistency and the ability to lift the whole industry to meet the challenges we need to address. The level of commitment we have seen in the dairy and the European beef industries to get their more recent solutions up and running is inspiring.

As a diverse organisation, our focus turned to addressing the need to work more closely with farmers and really understand the practical realities of farming and the challenges farmers face. By broadening our membership in 2020 to include farm input providers we can bridge that gap, providing insights and a clearer understanding of what the agriculture industry and farmers need and potential solutions we can apply.

I am really proud of the work that we are doing and how our achievements are helping the whole industry. SAI Platform is showing leadership in many areas, facilitated, supported and instigated by us all as a community and driven directly by our members.

“The future must ensure resilience to achieve a thriving agriculture sector. Collaboration will ensure efficiency of approach and effective use of resources and finances. SAI Platform, and others, are key to that success and we see the role we must play.”

ADRIAN GREET, Director General, SAI Platform.
About SAI Platform

We connect, collaborate, and build industry-wide solutions globally to catalyse and support sustainable change in agriculture.

Founded in 2002, the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform (SAI Platform) is a global not-for-profit organisation transforming the food and drink industry to source and produce more sustainably.

We enable our members to share expertise, create solutions to common challenges and promote sustainable agriculture in a pre-competitive environment. By developing tools and principles we are creating secure and resilient agricultural supply chains. Our current focus is on beef, crops and dairy. Our innovative and industry-focused tools, the European Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (ERBS), the Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA), Spotlight and the Sustainable Dairy Partnership (SDP), lead the way to effective sustainable practices while delivering value to our members, farmers, their communities and consumers.

With over 120 members, from companies and organisations in the food and drink industry, we are at the forefront in pioneering sustainable agriculture around the world.
New members
2020

SAI Platform’s membership continued to grow in 2020, despite unprecedented challenges and disruptions to the agricultural value chain caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This growth to our membership is a significant indicator of our progress as we welcomed 16 new members bringing the total to 126 member companies and organisations in the SAI Platform community.

Bonduelle

Bonduelle is an international company producing processed vegetables with headquarters in France. This family business aims to be the go-to brand across the globe when it comes to ensuring living well through vegetable products. It operates in over 100 different countries, in 3 strategic centres: Western Europe, Eastern Europe and the Americas.

Brooks Grain

Brooks Grain is a family grain company in the United States, and a partner to the Consolidated Grain and Barge (CGB) Company. They have spent the past ten years focused on improving their quality and sustainability around craft and malt grain.

Capua 1880

Capua 1880 is a leading Italian company in the extraction and processing of citrus essential oils like bergamot, mandarin, lemon and sweet orange.

Based in Reggio Calabria, Italy, their direct sales extend across 54 countries.

Capua 1880 are members of UEBT (Union for Ethical BioTrade), CDP, EcoVadis and Sedex.

Cutrale

Cutrale is one of the biggest producers and exporters of oranges, orange juice and by products, with operations in Brazil, Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Cutrale’s mission is to be a consistent worldwide source of high-quality orange juice, by products and services that adds value to the citrus business, promotes safe and healthy production and working conditions, and respects the community and the environment.

The Eckes-Granini Group GmbH is an international corporate group based in Nieder-Olm in the state of Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany. The Group, which employs around 1720 people, is specialised in the production and sale of non-alcoholic fruit beverages and operates under the umbrella of Eckes AG.

“We bring every consumer the best of fruit for a healthy and enjoyable life”. That is the guiding principle for the Eckes-Granini Group which is actively taking responsibility for the environment and society.

Dakofø (Danish Grain & Feed Trade Association) is the industry organisation for the Danish Grain and Feed industry.

Dakofø’s member companies include the Danish grain and feed companies, the fish feed industry as well as a number of internationally operating trading and brokerage companies headquartered in Denmark.

Importaco

Importaco was founded in 1940 starting with a single production and distribution centre in Beniparrell, Valencia, Spain. As an international food company, it provides a wide range of products and services from its three businesses: dried fruit, dried nuts, and mineral water.

Currently, Importaco has a total of 38 work centres in 7 different countries, establishing Importaco as one of Spain’s main food and drinks companies.

The company has a strong commitment to sustainable agriculture through a global programme present in Europe, Asia and South America. The pillars of its programme are to ensure food safety and quality, protection of the environment and social development.

“Eckes Granini are already members of AJIN and the Sustainable Juice Covenant along with other members of SAI Platform. We are committed to the value that the FSA can provide in support of our targets and will be a supporting voice for what we provide and the success we can achieve.”

BERND NEUFERT, Procurement Manager, Eckes-Granini

“Because agri-food systems are complex and the challenges are huge, we strongly believe in the power of collaboration to transition towards sustainability in agriculture and food systems.”

CLAUDINE LAMBERT, Group Agronomy Director, Bonduelle
A joint venture of Cargill, Inc. and Louisiana Sugar Growers and Refiners, Inc. (SUGAR), LSR was formed to ensure the growth and stability of Louisiana’s sugar cane farmers and to further integrate more than 800+ growers into the industry’s economic structure. LSR produces the only sugar that is 100% U.S. Non-GMO. As an integral member of the sugar belt, LSR relies on cooperation and transparency to ensure sustainability and quality standards are met.

Lyco-Trnava Malt House is located in Slovakia, and produces malt for the largest brewers, including Asahi, Heineken and Carlsberg. The company sources barley from Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary and Austria and occasionally from France. At present they produce malt of Pilsen type on three production lines with a total capacity of approximately 70,000 MT annually. More than 95% of its production is exported to markets in Europe. Customers are independent breweries and multinational holding companies.

OP Esperidio is an Italian farm cooperative who works in the citrus production and distribution sectors. With 1,350 hectares of farming land, the cooperative is leader in the export of their products. In fact, 70% of their production is exported mainly to Germany, Austria, France, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Slovenia. The company is located close to Palagonia, Catania, Sicily, in an area which is famous for the production of red orange, tarocco, moro and sanguinello, all certified with the Protected Geographical Indication (IGP) EU label.

Rahr Malting is a family inspired by vision, about tradition and family – dedicated to the founder’s core values. With modern malting facilities at their company headquarters in Shakopee, Minnesota and at their malt house in Alix, Alberta, Canada, Rahr Malting Co. maintains the traditions of quality and customer service that have been the standard of industry excellence for over 170 years.

Kraft Heinz has committed to a new ESG strategy in 2020 which focuses on three main pillars: environmental stewardship, responsible sourcing, healthy living & community support.

Vreugdenhil Dairy Foods is one of the leading global suppliers of high-quality milk powders and dairy ingredients for the food and beverage industry.

Based in the Netherlands, Vreugdenhil Dairy Foods, together with partners across the chain, took valuable steps in the field of sustainability in 2019. For example, more than 90% of dairy farmers participate in the Vreugdenhil sustainability programme.

“At Ocean Spray, we see SAI Platform membership as an opportunity to advance sustainable agriculture in supply chains by leveraging SAI Platform tools and sharing its experience with other member companies, particularly on knowledge of perennial and specialty crops.”

JENNIFER BOWE, Head of Global Impact & Sustainability, Ocean Spray

“We exist to make it easy for people to eat better and live healthier lives without recklessly taxing the planet’s resources. We believe SAI Platform will be important in the process when expanding to global sourcing and production.”

TOMAS WENNERHOLM, Oat Supply Manager, Oatly

The Rahr Malting story is about tradition and family – a family inspired by vision, imagination and determination. Founded by entrepreneur William Rahr in 1847 as the Eagle Brewery, the company soon found that their ability to produce quality malt exceeded the needs of their tiny brewery. Since then, Rahr has been nurtured by five successive generations of the same family, dedicated to the founder’s core values. With modern malting facilities at their company headquarters in Shakopee, Minnesota and at their malt house in Alix, Alberta, Canada, Rahr Malting Co. maintains the traditions of quality and customer service that have been the standard of industry excellence for over 170 years.

Rahr’s parent company is Rahr Corporation. Along with Rahr Corporation’s other business divisions Gambrinus Malting, Brewers Supply Group (BSG), BSG Hops, Bevie, Bintani, and Koda Energy, Rahr serves the brewing, wine, spirits, and allied industries worldwide.

The Kraft Heinz Company is a global food company formed by the merger of Kraft Foods and Heinz and is co-headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Kraft Heinz is the third-largest food and beverage company in North America and the fifth largest in the world.

Kraft Heinz has over 40 other brands as part of the company’s profile including Boca Burger; Gevalia; Grey Poupon, Oscar Mayer, Philadelphia Cream Cheese, Planters, and Wattie’s.

The Kraft Heinz Company has committed to a new ESG strategy in 2020 which focuses on three main pillars: environmental stewardship, responsible sourcing, healthy living & community support.

Vreugdenhil Dairy Foods is one of the leading global suppliers of high-quality milk powders and dairy ingredients for the food and beverage industry.

Based in the Netherlands, Vreugdenhil Dairy Foods, together with partners across the chain, took valuable steps in the field of sustainability in 2019. For example, more than 90% of dairy farmers participate in the Vreugdenhil sustainability programme.
Membership across the supply chain

Affiliate

Full

10 Agricultural, farm support associations
3 Farm service, input providers
1 Assurance scheme, standard, certification
4 Traders
8 Retailers
14 Farmer cooperatives
66 Manufacturers
76 Processors

Advisory Council*

President
Robert Erhard
Agricultural Raw Materials Sourcing Specialist, Nestlé

Vice-President
Rob Meyers
Sustainability Director, PepsiCo

Treasurer
Leon Mol
Director Product Safety & Social Compliance, Ahold Delhaize

Luc Beerens
Global Sustainability Sourcing Director, Mars Inc.

Rozanne Davis
Head of Sustainability, innocent drinks

Ghislain Pelletier
Vice President Agronomy, McCain Foods

Yann-Gaël Rio
V.P. Global Milk Procurement, Danone

Katharine Teague
Head of Advocacy, AB Sugar

Jan Kees Vis
Global Director Sustainable Sourcing Development, Unilever

Giovana Baggio
Sustainable Agriculture Manager, The Nature Conservancy Brazil

Jason Clay
Senior Vice-President of Markets, WWF

Gemma Cranston
Director, Natural Resource Security, Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership

Arianna Giuliani
Secretary General, World Farmers’ Organisation

Dr Tracey Jones
Director of Food Business, Compassion in World Farming

Alan Johnson
Lead, Smallholder Supply Chains, IFC

Jane Nelson
Director of Corporate Responsibility Initiative, Harvard Kennedy School

Janet Ranganathan
Vice President Science and Research, WRI

Carla Romeu Dalmay
Living Wage and Living Income Strategy Lead, IDH

Horacio Caperan
Executive Director or External Affairs, MIT

*as on 31st December 2020

Secretariat

Director General
Adrian Greet

Director, Operations
Jane Duncan

Director, Crops
Jenny Edwards

Director, Americas
Nick Betts

Director, Livestock
Patricia García Díaz

Director, Systems
Sven Sielhorst

ERBS Manager
Bulle Pouzoulet

Project Manager,
Leah Blechschmidt

Programme Lead, Farm Sustainability Assessment
Joe Rushton

Global Events Manager
Yael Fattal

Communications Manager
Brigid Norde-McAleer

Communications & Engagement Manager
Marco Consalvo

Systems User
Support Officer
Joe Iveson

Administration Officer
Ashling Cahill
Bringing together the Sustainable Agriculture Principles and Practices underpin who we are and everything we do.

They have been created by our members and working groups since our foundation in 2002, and are now an integral part of our organisation.

SAI Platform’s Principles and Practices define sustainable agriculture and our vision for what we believe the industry can achieve. They form the foundation of our working groups, enable us to prioritise activities and how we use resources, and determine how we align with activities inside our members’ companies.

Our increasingly influential industry solutions such as the FSA are based on the Principles and Practices. Whenever we take a position on a key issue or share our points of view publicly, we are guided by them.

As Jenny Edwards, Director of the Crops Working Group, who during 2020 managed the process of consolidating our Principles and Practices into a single document, (now available online) explained, “Having the Principles and Practices easily accessible to members will help us adhere to our vision and guide everything we do.”

A holistic framework covering farm and supply chain management

We developed 11 Sustainable Agriculture Principles & Practices that each aim to prevent negative impacts while creating an improved or beneficial outcome. All the principles are interdependent with best practices often benefiting several principles.

When we reviewed and gathered together our existing Principles and Practices, we referred to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from the perspective of agricultural priorities.

Because we are aware that responsibility does not lie solely with farmers, the Principles and Practices provide a holistic framework that applies equally to buyers of agricultural materials and suppliers of products and services to farmers.

“Having our Principles and Practices easily accessible to members will help us adhere to our vision and guide everything we do.”

JENNY EDWARDS, Crops Director

Our Sustainable Agriculture Principles and Practices cover:

- Our vision

A sustainable, thriving and resilient agricultural sector that protects the earth’s resources, human rights and animal welfare.
Our Principles and Practices in action

For SAI Platform and its members, the projects we initiate express our commitment to the pre-competitive collaboration that enables us to scale change across our entire reach. In 2020, the number of project opportunities created by members as well as the amount that went live reached new heights.

Projects begin with a member in a particular industry sector and/or region recognising that they have a challenge. Often using Spotlight, our unique online tool for sharing project opportunities, members register their interest and search for other members with the same or a similar challenge. If enough members discover they have a shared interest, they have the opportunity to come together and pitch a project.

Should SAI Platform regard the project as having sufficient merit and the potential to have a demonstrable impact, it is likely to be funded.

For new SAI Platform member Marta Maireles Gonzalez of DuPont Nutrition and Biosciences, the opportunity to initiate and take part in projects is a major part of the appeal.

“Collaboration is paramount to transforming global supply chains,” she said. “Projects give the opportunity to innovate, learn and challenge the status quo. Through the Wild Harvest Project, we have gained shared understanding of the sustainability and engagement challenges regarding wild harvested ingredients. Together, we are working towards an industry aligned reference. This brings efficiency gains by having common tools and approaches.”

“Together, we are working towards an industry aligned reference assessment. This brings efficiency gains by having common tools and approaches.”

MARTA MAIRELES GONZÁLEZ, DuPont Nutrition and Biosciences

Projects

Status in 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name</th>
<th>TOPICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doñana Berry Sustainability</td>
<td>Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Approach: Improving Water Management</td>
<td>Land and Soil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAIRISI: Sustainable Italian Rice</td>
<td>Climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference Trials: Wild Harvest - Phase 1</td>
<td>Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference Development: Wild Harvest - Phase 2</td>
<td>Legal Compliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming for Sustainable Development</td>
<td>Business Case: Sustainable Management in Almonds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSA Accelerator Turkey</td>
<td>Harvesting the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSA Accelerator: Russia (SUBERU)</td>
<td>Gap Analysis: Partnership Development Pakistan – Phase 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap Analysis: Partnership Development Pakistan – Phase 3</td>
<td>Markets and Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap Analysis: Climate Intelligence (Brazil)</td>
<td>Livelihoods</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For new SAI Platform member Marta Maireles Gonzalez of DuPont Nutrition and Biosciences, the opportunity to initiate and take part in projects is a major part of the appeal.
Harmonising Solutions: Regenerative Agriculture Project

Although regenerative agriculture has growing support as a concept in North America, we recognised that the industry is not fully aligned in how the principles are put into practice. This project addresses harmonising regenerative agriculture language, aligns approach and enables implementation of common principles and practices among our members and partners.

Regenerative agriculture takes the sustainability concept in agriculture to another level. It focuses on factors such as soil regeneration, increasing resilience to climate change, increasing biodiversity and improving water management.

Outcomes include lessening the impact of farming on nature, improved crop productivity and yields and an expanded market opportunity.

For the project, SAI Platform aligned members and partners around a common set of regenerative agriculture principles that enable broad adoption and the ability to scale up the regenerative capacity of farms across multiple regions.

The principles aim to: maintain soil cover, minimise disturbance, maximise biodiversity, integrate animals and organic fertilisers and enable living root systems. We created a Menu of Indicators to support practical on-farm implementation and scalable adoption.

The project helps to create more resilient and vibrant agro-ecological systems and farming communities while normalising regenerative agriculture in North America.

To encourage this fundamental change, we are promoting our message and building meaningful partnerships for maximum impact. We are enabling the move to regenerative agriculture through collaborations that focus on local and regional capacity building for peer-to-peer learning and encouraging the next generation of farmers to adopt regenerative practices.

By the end of 2020, 12 members were part of the project, scoping solutions that cover all crops grown in the US and Canada. In 2021, the project is expanding to explore approaches for external engagement and secure funding for generating impact. Although the project began in the USA and Canada in December 2019, it will be adopted as a global approach in 2021.

SAI Platform is regularly asked for our position on big issues facing our industry such as Climate Action. It is also vital we demonstrate our determination to be part of the solution to the problems facing our industry.

SAI Platform is regularly asked for our position on big issues facing our industry such as Climate Action. It is also vital we demonstrate our determination to be part of the solution to the problems facing our industry.

SAI Platform is regularly asked for our position on big issues facing our industry such as Climate Action. It is also vital we demonstrate our determination to be part of the solution to the problems facing our industry.

Position Statements help demonstrate the role SAI Platform plays as part of the solution.

We appreciate that all members benefit from SAI Platform publishing Position Statements,” said Adrian Greet, Director General. “They enable larger members to demonstrate their own current approaches to particular subjects to a broader audience and to have them more widely adopted. Smaller members without the resources to create their own statements can align with our position on the big issues like climate action.

For 2021, we plan to publish a position on Nature. Nature is not a new theme, but it has become more prominent in relation to our industry in 2020.

Anticipating an industrywide approach, we are now a proud industry partner of Business for Nature, the global coalition bringing together business and conservation organisations and forward-thinking companies to call for governments to reverse nature loss this decade.

Moving swiftly to establish our position on nature demonstrates our willingness to challenge ourselves to not just remain relevant, but to cement our position as a leading voice in sustainable agriculture.

Project partners
ABInBev, Barry Callebaut, Bonduelle, Danone North America, Diageo, General Mills, Ingredion, Kellogg’s, Nestlé, Ocean Spray, PepsiCo and Unilever.
It was a year like no other. However, SAI Platform rose to the challenge of reaching out to our members to share knowledge, maintain contact and remind us all of our deep-seated commitment to sustainability in our industry.

Our Sustainability Insights series of webinars was created in the absence of our annual event and featured presentations by highly regarded experts and thought leaders who shared their impressive knowledge. These regularly reached 150 attendees that were moderated by SAI Platform with interaction from the audience via a chat box.

This was especially valuable when presenters offered their perspective on the big picture, helping members to put issues into context and to reflect on their significance.

Sustainability Insights: a series of interactive webinars addressing the issues

Implementing regenerative agriculture: lessons learned

Focusing on regenerative agriculture and its relevance to members’ organisations. Covering Europe and the USA and including different examples and lessons learned from Cargill, Illinois Corn Growers Association, PepsiCo, and Precision Conservation Management.

Speakers:
Clay Bess, Lead Conservation Specialist, Precision Conservation Management
James Ede, Sustainability Manager, Cargill
Laura Gentry, Director, Water Quality Research, Illinois Corn Growers Association

COVID-19 crisis and the transformation of the global food system

Covering a variety of themes including regenerative agriculture, nature and carbon, the implications of the food chain from farmer to consumer and how the food industry is managing during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Speakers:
Jason Clay, Senior Vice-President of Markets and Food, WWF and Advisory Council member of SAI Platform.
Managing the COVID-19 crisis: solutions, best practices & the future impact on food supply chains

Providing a catalyst for knowledge sharing during which members shared their first-hand experiences as topics such as the effects of COVID-19 on the supply chain, risk measures and looking ahead were discussed.

Speakers:
- Leon Mol, Director Product Safety and Social Compliance, Ahold Delhaize
- Hamish Taylor, Senior Advisor on Sustainability, Symrise
- James Young, Agriculture Director, Nomad Foods

Business for Nature: securing a resilient future – a call to action

Demonstrating how nature is everyone’s business, introducing the business case for global coalition Business for Nature and explaining why supporting it could be vital for SAI Platform members and the agri-food industry.

Speakers:
- Ed Shepherd, Global Sustainability Senior Manager, Unilever
- Martin V. Sneary, Partnerships Director, Business for Nature
- Jan Kees Vis, Global Director Sustainable Sourcing Development, Unilever

Resilient farming systems – how animal welfare can become a win-win

Exploring the meaning of animal welfare and its importance to the future, security and sustainability of our food system through short- and long-term goals.

Speakers:
- Cees Jan Hollander, Global Farming Expertise Manager Cycles & Procurement, Danone
- Dr Tracey Jones, Director of Food Business, Compassion in World Farming, SAI Platform Advisory Council Member

Unravelling the possibilities for the food and beverage sector

An in-depth explanation of how the WWF Living Planet Index demonstrates the level of humanity’s impact on nature and puts the future of food production at stake.

Speakers:
- Felipe Fuentelsaz, Agriculture and Water Co-ordinator of the Doñana Project
- Melissa Ho, Senior Vice President, Freshwater and Food, WWF US
- Ulrike Sapiro, Senior Director, Water Stewardship and Agriculture, The Coca-Cola Company

His thought-provoking insights made it clear just how great is the challenge we face. For example, considering our food system as a cause of zoonotic diseases such as COVID-19 is believed to be. The loss of wildlife caused by destruction of habitats can potentially cause farmed animals such as cows, pigs, and chickens to spread disease. However, if we eliminate livestock from the land, the risk to humanity could be even greater.

He also explained how pandemics will become more common due to stresses from climate change, habitat loss, free-range livestock and Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFO) that do not sufficiently control access and contamination.

Jason described what members could have been forgiven for thinking was a hopeless situation. Fortunately, there are solutions and Jason outlined a number of strategies that can already be adopted to address global food issues as we look ahead.

“‘We need to learn faster and react more quickly, support green recovery and use the disruption to pivot to a more sustainable food business model.’”

He argued that we need to learn faster and react more quickly, support green recovery and use the disruption to pivot to a more sustainable food business model.

Jason also emphasised the value in members of the food and drink industry learning from each other. Now, more than ever before, pre-competitive collaboration is coming into its own.

After such a wake-up call, it was hardly surprising that the chatroom was buzzing with members asking questions that covered scaling solutions, government attitudes towards climate action and the impact of COVID-19 on digitisation in the supply chain.
Leadership

While this was obviously disappointing to many, it is a great stimulus to ITC and SAI Platform to continuously raise our game.

This year’s IEP, held entirely online for the first time, brought together 75 professionals from around the world with backgrounds in areas as diverse as sustainability, procurement and branding.

It took place between 13 October and 3 November and was led by the International Trade Centre (ITC) - the only development agency fully dedicated to supporting the internationalisation of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) - with support from SAI Platform.

“The speakers were excellent and provoked interesting conversations. The topics were relevant and practically focused for anyone wanting to learn more about sustainable sourcing.”

DAVID FITZGERALD, Head of Responsible Sourcing Europe, Kelloggs

High demand for the International Executive Programme on Sustainable Sourcing and Trade

The announcement of this year’s International Executive Programme (IEP) on Sustainable Sourcing and Trade was met with exceptionally high levels of interest as a result of the momentum created by last year’s programme. Requests to join far exceeded capacity.

While this was obviously disappointing to many, it is a great stimulus to ITC and SAI Platform to continuously raise our game.

This year’s IEP, held entirely online for the first time, brought together 75 professionals from around the world with backgrounds in areas as diverse as sustainability, procurement and branding.

It took place between 13 October and 3 November and was led by the International Trade Centre (ITC) - the only development agency fully dedicated to supporting the internationalisation of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) - with support from SAI Platform.

“For the 2020 edition of our International Executive Programme marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, we wanted to offer an interactive learning experience to stimulate debate. The programme took place on a multi-purpose platform that also gave access to sessions’ recordings, videos and related resources.” explained Mathieu Lamolle, ITC Senior Advisor.

The programme was made up of four modules facilitated each week by a different university partner: BFH – Bern University of Applied Sciences, Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL), Cranfield University, HEC Lausanne, and ISAE Business School.

Each of the four modules was designed around specific themes offering alternative perspectives and generating strong interest and discussion.

In the first module, speakers gave an overview on megatrends impacting sustainable supply chains. The main topic of the second module focused on applied regenerative agriculture.

For the third module, participants received an outline of tools to improve yield, efficiency, and profitability, including a presentation of SAI Platform’s industry solutions: the Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA), the European Roundtable for Beef Sustainability (ERBS) and the Sustainable Dairy Partnership (SDP) along with other tools.

The final module was dedicated to the importance of engaging with multiple stakeholders to catalyse change.

For Francesca Pellis, Senior Coffee Buyer at illycaffè, “The topics of the IEP were really well presented and the idea of having panellists coming from different backgrounds was of great help as it allowed the opportunity to convey important messages from different perspectives.”

On completion of all four modules participants received a certificate from ITC and SAI Platform. This showed that they had actively participated throughout the programme and had submitted a final project assignment, supported by a leading mentor.

Asked what he thought of this year’s IEP, David Fitzgerald, Head of Responsible Sourcing Europe for Kellogg said “I really enjoyed attending the International Executive Programme. Although I have worked in the area for many years, I found the programme stimulating with lots of great content which I can take away and apply in my role.”
In 2020 many Australians became more aware of how important it is that the country has an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable agricultural supply chain.

SAI Platform Australia uniquely placed to help strengthen supply chain

The COVID-19 related disruptions offer SAI Platform Australia Chapter the opportunity to make a significant contribution to strengthening supply chains.

As the world went online, the Australian chapter offered a range of both public, and member only events that enabled group participation to remain high.

We continued to implement our 2017-2020 Strategy including sharing sustainability learning through Roundtables involving our members.

In addition, we held a series of external and internal sessions where leading experts presented the latest research and developments in sustainable agriculture, water markets, investment in sustainable agriculture, remote animal monitoring systems, bonded labour, and climate resilience.

Meeting online had positive advantages for the Chapter as we were better able to leverage knowledge events and communications to achieve all of our strategic priorities.

These are to facilitate learning among members, promote sustainable practices among members, farmers and other stakeholders and build partnerships and alliances to implement sustainable practices along the supply chain.

Project leads to involvement in government programme

In 2020, the results of a collaborative project on ecosystem services were disseminated to government officials and policymakers. Subsequently, the Australian government initiated a multi-million-dollar programme to support environmental services on farms along the lines suggested by our work.

“We’re viewed as an important stakeholder and we have actively engaged on these matters in the past,” said Jack Holden, President of the SAI Platform Australia Chapter, “and SAI Platform is in a unique position to contribute significantly as public interest develops around sustainable agriculture in Australia.”

“SAI Platform is in a unique position to contribute significantly as public interest develops around sustainable agriculture in Australia.”

JACK HOLDEN, President, SAI Platform Australia Chapter

Partnerships

our nature and our success

Engaging across the sector and collaborating even more widely, with like-minded organisations as partners, means we can achieve even more together and enable efficiency of delivery for our members, whether independent or shared.

SAI Platform defines partners as organisations we are actively working with or those with whom we share aspirations. They all have a clear value proposition that, in combination with ours, means our partnership is highly likely to bear fruit, particularly in terms of offering value to our members.

We respond rapidly and capitalise on an existing partnership because of the premium we place on partnerships in general. They are integral to pre-competitive collaboration and, as such, fundamental to our success.

Our current partners work in food and drink sustainability or in areas such as nature, climate change or related social issues that align with our values. The way we work with them can arise strategically, organically, or simply out of fortuitous timing. For us all, it is not about the MoU, the agreement we have together of fortuitous timing. For us all, it is not about the outcomes we can achieve and the scale of success we can deliver.

Our current partners work in food and drink sustainability or in areas such as nature, climate change or related social issues that align with our values. The way we work with them can arise strategically, organically, or simply out of fortuitous timing. For us all, it is not about the MoU, the agreement we have together of fortuitous timing. For us all, it is not about the outcomes we can achieve and the scale of success we can deliver.

We celebrate the good work done by our partners, consolidate and leverage shared approaches and solutions and collaborate actively on the ground in projects driving real change.

Celebrating the outstanding work other organisations are doing helps share more valuable knowledge with our members. They are aware of what we are doing and are clear how they can get involved or simply benefit.

We also make sure we do not duplicate other organisations’ efforts.

Consolidation adds value to investments already made and leverages work already being done. Together we develop a common language and integration and interoperability across existing standards. Our Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) partnerships with GLOBALG.A.P., Field to Market and Cool Farm Alliance bring this to life every day.

This is also the reason why we benchmark so many solutions. Consolidating them enables organisations to show equivalency across broad supply chains, saving time and resources.

Driving change on the ground together can take various forms. It spans projects such as Doñana with WWF, FSA implementations including SUBERU, human rights in Turkey with FLA, Regenerative Agriculture in the US with many partners, Climate Action in Brazil with TNC and others and, in 2020, as industry partner with Business for Nature.

We invite our members to get involved with partnerships at the grassroots. This is how we effect real change in supply chains.

Our current partner list is on our website. It is evolving all the time.

Working with partners in three ways

We celebrate the good work done by our partners, consolidate and leverage shared approaches and solutions and collaborate actively on the ground in projects driving real change.

Celebrating the outstanding work other organisations are doing helps share more valuable knowledge with our members. They are aware of what we are doing and are clear how they can get involved or simply benefit.

We also make sure we do not duplicate other organisations’ efforts.

Consolidation adds value to investments already made and leverages work already being done. Together we develop a common language and integration and interoperability across existing standards. Our Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) partnerships with GLOBALG.A.P., Field to Market and Cool Farm Alliance bring this to life every day.

This is also the reason why we benchmark so many solutions. Consolidating them enables organisations to show equivalency across broad supply chains, saving time and resources.

Driving change on the ground together can take various forms. It spans projects such as Doñana with WWF, FSA implementations including SUBERU, human rights in Turkey with FLA, Regenerative Agriculture in the US with many partners, Climate Action in Brazil with TNC and others and, in 2020, as industry partner with Business for Nature.

We invite our members to get involved with partnerships at the grassroots. This is how we effect real change in supply chains.

Our current partner list is on our website. It is evolving all the time.
Raising awareness, understanding and engagement

Communications and member engagement serve a key function in raising the awareness and understanding of SAI Platform’s continuous narrative.

As the Global Communications and Engagement team expands across multimedia channels and industry news media platforms, we inform, update and share our latest developments to members, partners and interested stakeholders on our industry solutions, global events and on-the-ground projects.

An expanding digital presence

In 2020, online presence became more important than ever and just a year after launching our new website, we created the SAI Platform Members’ Zone. This members’ only area provides a safe space to distribute resources as well as integrate our digital industry solutions such as the FSA web app and Spotlight.

Some of the popular features of our Members’ Zone include a knowledge base offering multimedia resources across a range of topics including guidance on industry solutions and a member directory to help companies connect.

We built new web pages for the European Roundtable for Beef Sustainability (ERBS) and the Sustainable Dairy Partnership (SDP) to generate awareness and connect to companies interested in sustainability through an industry-wide approach.

The SAI Platform Resource Centre was launched to guide the use of our tools with open access to training guides and webinars, technical documents, and key information regarding the ERBS and Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA).
Informing SAI Platform’s global community

We work to inform and engage with our members and the wider SAI Platform community. News articles, newsletters and press releases inform our readers on our latest achievements, interests and developments. Feature articles included multiple member interviews giving their insights on key sustainability issues as well as the impact of COVID-19 across agricultural supply chains.

We revisited the SAIRISI Sustainable Italian Rice Project case-study to include an addendum with updated accomplishments and key learning points. The project was originally tasked with the aim of improving sustainability of rice farming in the north-east of Italy and has become a unique example of pre-competitive collaboration across the value chain including SAI Platform member companies, farmers, millers, local experts and institutions.

The number of news articles and announcements in 2020 rose by 35% compared to 2019.

73 website news articles
9 member interviews
4 newsletters
4 Press Releases

LinkedIn is our primary social media channel. 80% of our social media traffic to the website comes from our LinkedIn followers.

In 2020 we started to centralise our LinkedIn followers to our company page.

Traffic analytic • 1 Jan > 31 Dec

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Page views</td>
<td>205,973 (+15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Users</td>
<td>51,132 (+12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Users</td>
<td>50,384 (+11%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(v. 2019)

LinkedIn

2,197 (+34%)

(v. 2019)

Top 10 countries

1. United States
2. United Kingdom
3. Netherlands
4. France
5. Germany
6. India
7. Canada
8. Italy
9. Finland
10. China

The number of news articles and announcements in 2020 rose by 35% compared to 2019.
Collaboration
Harvesting the Future
the first SAI Platform project addressing human rights

The Harvesting the Future project is one of a kind for SAI Platform and the food and drink industry at large. It is the first SAI Platform project to address human rights issues, focusing on the urgent need to address responsible recruitment in agricultural labour in Turkey. The project’s cross-commodity approach is unique.

Agricultural labour in Turkey is seasonal and migratory which, in the past, has made it possible for the human rights of workers to potentially be disregarded.

SAI Platform members with interests in the region and awareness of the issues were keen to make recruitment in Turkey more responsible. They began working together in the Harvesting the Future project initiated via Spotlight.

Project members soon discovered that the Fair Labour Association (FLA) was gearing up to do something similar. This created an opportunity to collaborate and substantially increase the project’s impact.

After the FLA agreed to join forces with SAI Platform, members interested in supply chain mapping and supporting FLA activities came together to work on the project.

It builds on previous work done by the FLA which established that the workforce in Turkey moves between the supply chains of several large multinational companies sourcing apricot, cumin, grape, hazelnut, corn, potato, pistachio, sugar beet and sunflower seeds.

In 2020, the FLA mapped the supply chains of participating companies and provided training to labour contractors, suppliers, and government representatives on the principles of fair recruitment, decent work and addressing child labour.

The FLA also identified and profiled labour contractors to understand how the labour force is recruited and what were the current health and safety challenges. Many of these labour contractors were also registered with the national registry, increasing supply chain compliance with legal requirements.

By the time the Harvesting the Future project finishes in 2021, tools developed by the FLA will have increased the capacity of SAI Platform members to map their own supply chains.

As the project draws to its conclusion, SAI Platform and the FLA are developing several communications pieces to highlight this collaborative work. We anticipate moving forwards with a second phase of the project focusing on grievance mechanisms.

“Areas on which the project focused included mapping labour contractors and workers moving through members’ supply chains in Turkey throughout a field season.”

LEAH BLECHSCHMIDT, Projects Manager

Project partner
The Fair Labour Association

Areas on which the project focused included mapping labour contractors and workers moving through members’ supply chains in Turkey throughout a field season.”

LEAH BLECHSCHMIDT, Projects Manager
Representing more than 35 members in the Americas, SAI Platform’s Americas Working Group is fast becoming a powerful force for change. Our mission is to advance the growth of sustainable agriculture across North and South America in every single agricultural product category.

Advancing and leading sustainable agriculture in the Americas

In 2020, we began building our community strategically in the USA and Canada, doing the groundwork to deliver on our unique potential to explore exciting new ideas and promote SAI Platform’s game-changing industry solutions.

Community engagement took the form of a three-pronged approach.

Our Engagement Workstream began the work of building the capacity we need to manage what could potentially be exponential growth. We actively promoted awareness of SAI Platform and the benefits of being part of our increasingly influential organisation and grew our membership.

The Opportunities Workstream identified five proactive ways to explore new ideas that can push the boundaries of what sustainable agriculture means in the Americas and beyond.

In practice, this could be quantifying on-farm change when growers transition from one Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) equivalency to another and determining what it costs in time and money. It could also involve developing a protocol for communicating and expanding sustainable sourcing in brokered and commodity supply chains.

The Localisation Workstream prepared the community to support the 2021 roll-out of the latest developments in SAI Platform’s tools and systems. This will benefit FSA 3.0 and scale the take-up of the Sustainability Dairy Partnership (SDP).

Spotlight, our collaboration tool, will continue to be our guide.

“In the Americas, we are using our collaborative power to develop and deploy projects that measurably impact sustainable change.”

NICK BETTS, Americas Director
Inspiring projects in the Americas

Projects are where SAI Platform puts its principle of pre-competitive collaboration for the benefit of our members and sustainable agriculture for the greater good into action.

“In the Americas,” says Nick Betts, Americas Director for SAI Platform, “we are using our collaborative power to develop and deploy projects that measurably impact sustainable change.”

The Enhancing Farm Continuous Improvement project in Ontario, Canada and Colorado, USA, will run until 2021. It aims to remove duplication and misalignment by demonstrating how industry can use a harmonised approach and measurement to benchmark sustainability of farms growing the same crops in rotation in a region.

As almonds have become California’s most extensive irrigated crop, there has been concern arising from the large amount of water required. The Business Case for Sustainability in Almonds project in Central Valley, California, which began in 2020 and will run until 2022, is driving the uptake of improved management tools that save water, biodiversity, money and promote sustainability for the longer term.

By the end of 2020, 12 members were part of the project and 13 member-led projects were well underway, covering various crops in the US and Canada. In 2022, the goal is to expand implementation, explore mechanisms for external engagement and secure funding for scaling impact.

“With our regenerative agriculture project, we are not simply addressing local and regional challenges,” says Nick Betts. “We are using our collective strength to deliver value to SAI Platform’s membership in all parts of the world.”

Looking ahead to 2021, the Americas Working Group will continue to expand its reach in the Americas, where over 30% of all SAI Platform members are headquartered. Work is already underway in Mexico to advance scoping activities around the use of the FSA in corn and to build a sustainability community in the citrus sector. We are also exploring potential opportunities in Argentina.

Born in the Americas with a global perspective

Our ambitious Regenerative Agriculture project began in North America in 2020 and will go global in 2021.

Drawing on expertise within the Americas Working Group, we created a harmonised set of five regenerative agriculture principles aligned with industry and scientific thinking. These include regenerative principles like maintaining soil cover. We created a Menu of Indicators for regenerative themes to support their practical on-farm implementation.

Our goal is to create more resilient and vibrant ecological systems and farming communities to demonstrate the importance of farming as a solution to climate change and healthy food production while normalising regenerative agriculture in North America.

About the Americas Working Group

The SAI Platform community in the Americas is made up of over 35 members ranging from farm cooperatives to retailers, supported by industry partners, academia, and other NGOs, encompassing the entire supply chain. This community is guided by active members in the region, known as the Americas Working Group.

The Working Group began in 2020 with the aim of advancing sustainable agriculture in the Americas across all agricultural products. To achieve this, the community works collaboratively to develop on the ground projects and tools that support the work of a continually increasing membership base. Projects seek to address regional challenges with a global impact perspective.

While the group’s current geographic focus is North America, further expansion and inclusion of the broader Americas is of interest and growth will be identified by member priorities.
Projects, Partnerships and Innovation in a year like no other

The events of 2020 did not prevent the Crops Working Group from forging ahead and introducing three ambitious new workstreams to better enable collaboration and achieve greater impact.

Our new Projects, Partnerships and Innovation workstreams create a framework for members to become more active and have a stronger voice in working group activities and outcomes.

In recent years, projects have moved closer to the heart of what the Crops Working Group is about. The new Projects workstream provides a structure to better identify, prioritise and implement member-led projects to achieve on the ground impact and contribute to the rise of sustainability best practices.

The Partnerships workstream focuses on identifying and developing more strategic partnerships, particularly when it comes to promoting the take up of the Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) and encouraging better agricultural practices.

Innovation is all about identifying and adopting existing tools and innovations to future-proof agricultural supply chains.

Even though the Crops Working Group is moving forwards at an impressive pace, we are careful to progress on solid foundations. The four new value areas we put in place in 2019 guide us in every decision we make.

Our four value areas are Positive Farming, Knowledge Building, Creating Shared Value and Developing Partnerships.

Positive farming is about helping farming become a solution to climatic and social challenges. Knowledge building is generating knowledge through the value chain. Creating Shared Value focuses on the farmer and value chain optimisation. Developing Partnerships involves building long-term relationships with experts outside the Crops Working Group.

"With the new workstreams we built on our four value areas introduced in 2019" says Jenny Edwards, Crops Director. "They give us a true north for everything we do."

Responding to challenge brings insight

For many Crops Working Group members, the major challenges were how to adapt when travel is impossible, how to stay connected and how to take care of people. In each instance, adapting led to new insights.

Because it was impossible to travel - to farms, for instance - members realised they needed a better perspective on their entire supply chain to evaluate the consequences of a weak link. This push to understand supply chains more comprehensively led to members asking the question: are sustainable supply chains inherently more resilient?

The answer to this question appears to be yes. For example, if growers are in a company sustainable agriculture programme and they have completed the FSA, it is possible to see how resilient they are.
Insight leads to greater resilience

In a challenging year, we pivoted our ways of working by becoming more resilient and agile and by changing how we communicate and network, using online surveys, collaborative tools, increased effort and resourcing to meet member needs.

At the end of 2020, we were a dynamic programme with renewed drive, busy applying the key learning points of the year for the future.

We continue to promote Projects, Partnership and Innovation, to make supply chains more resilient and, above all, build on heightened awareness of the need to adapt to climate change.

The Crops Working Group

The Crops Working Group is made up of over 90 companies that range from farmer cooperatives to retailers and represent the entire crops supply chain.

The diversity of the crops, regions and challenges that the working group covers is vast, from wild harvested rosemary in North Africa, smallholder orange production in Brazil and coconuts in South East Asia to large scale wheat growing in France.

We bring stakeholders together in a pre-competitive environment to establish common ground, encourage mutually beneficial activities and accelerate the delivery of sustainability on the ground.

This is done via projects, solutions development, in real world and online workshops and on field trips that offer an informal setting for members to have an equal voice in the conversation. These provide members with the opportunity to see the bigger picture, collaborate with innovators and drive change.

We aim to lead projects in such a way that they snowball, initiating others that can be rolled out within the sector or different parts of the world.

Members

• AB Sugar
• ACOR - Sociedad Cooperativa General Agropecuaria
• ADM - Archer Daniels Midland Company
• AgraFlora
• Agrifirm
• AgroAlimentare Sud
• AgroTerra
• Ahold Delhaize
• ALN - European Fruit Juice Association
• Almond Board of California
• Andriani S.p.A.
• Barilla
• Barry Callebaut
• BIOSS Rohstoffe GmbH
• Bondoule
• Boortmalt
• C. Thywissen
• Cargill
• CIO - Consorzio Interregionale Ortofrutti
• Coop Agropecuaria Cooperativa General
• Denmark
• European Coop
• Federation of Farmer Cooperatives
• Grupo Soluplus
• Heineken
• Holland Malt
• Importaco
• Ingredion
• innocent drinks
• Intersnack Group
• John I. Haas
• Kalsec
• Kellogg Company
• Kerry Group
• Keurig Dr Pepper
• Lamb Weston
• Louis Dreyfus Company
• Lycos-Trnava Malt House s.r.o.
• Mars Incorporated
• McCormick Global Ingredients Limited
• McDonald’s
• Migros
• Mirlitz
• Muntons
• Nestle
• Netafim
• Nomad Foods
• Nordzucker
• Oatly
• Ocean Spray
• OP Esperidio
• Orkla
• PepsiCo
• Prodelim
• Rahr Malting
• Riso Gallo
• Roquette
• Royal Cosun
• S.P. S.p.A.
• S.S. Steiner, Inc.
• Starbucks
• Sudzucker
• Surexport
• SVZ
• Symrise
• Tereos
• Unilever
• Viking Malt OY
• Virosol Ltd.
• VOG PRODUCTS
• Weruming Feinkost
• Western Sugar
• Cooperative
• Yakima Chief Hops
How was 2020 for you?

It was a challenging year, particularly when you talk about sustainable agriculture. A lot of the work we do involves going out and meeting people and so in most geographies that work was impacted. But it was also a year of learning.

We opened up new ways of communication that might mean we’re now more in touch with each other and even better able to progress our agenda without having to travel.

We discovered that you can go into the field with your iPhone, record a video and show it to growers on a video call. Anything we record can be shared online for someone to watch when it suits them.

Video calls with farmers to talk about specific topics to minimise visiting every farm in our supply chain may be something we want to explore going forward.

How have you managed to maintain connection and solidarity in the Crops Working Group this year?

We couldn’t have our annual conference which is an opportunity to have really valuable conversations during breakouts, on field trips or at the bar. However, we began having more video calls and attendance was great. We saw that if a meeting is online, people are more likely to attend. I personally listened into calls while I got on with my work and managed to get something out of the meeting, which wouldn’t have been the case if it had been face-to-face and I simply couldn’t attend.

A positive result was that I got to spend much more time speaking to SAI Platform members about what we want to work on together. And I’ve really got to know people a lot better.

How have you worked with Martina, your new co-chair?

Because we’ve been able to get together with Jenny Edwards, Crops Director, on a monthly basis, our collaboration has gone really well. Martina is open and honest and challenges the way we do things which has been fantastic. We have an excellent ongoing dialogue and are excited about the future.

What did the value areas introduced in 2019 (Positive Farming, Knowledge Building, Creating Shared Value, Developing Partnerships) add in 2020?

They’ve been a great addition. I think the question is how to take those value areas and extend them out over everything we do. So, with projects and workstreams, we have to ask ourselves how can we touch on all the value areas?

Mostly, the value areas have given us a true north that will only get stronger as we go forward. We’ll continue to challenge ourselves and ask how we incorporate the value areas into everything we do and progress. I think that’s the end result we want.

Would you say that sustainable supply chains are more resilient supply chains?

I would say yes. For example, if I have 100 growers in a given region who are all in my sustainable agriculture programme and have completed the FSA, I have transparency as to how resilient they are to a pandemic or, more likely, climate change.

For the Crops Working Group, the focus on resiliency coming out of 2020 is excellent because we’re seeing companies like Ingredion continue to receive senior level resourcing for sustainable agriculture. I don’t think that focus is going away.

Climate change, along with sustainable agriculture have really hit peoples’ radars coming out of 2020.

Turning to climate change, has there been progression in terms of awareness?

The focus has only gone up during the pandemic. It’s gone up at a corporate level – Unilever recently announced it was going to put its climate strategy to vote among its shareholders. I don’t know of any company that’s done this before.

There’s also the growth in awareness among consumers. People have seen the reduction in pollution that’s come with less travel in cars, for instance. They like breathing clean air and seeing clear blue skies.

And what do you hope for 2021?

That all the lessons we learned in 2020 get integrated into business practices going forward. I hope we don’t go back to normal. I hope we take the best of what happened last year and figure out how to be stronger and more efficient in the future. I think we will. There’s going to be a focus on supply chain resiliency, climate change and embracing technology to make us more efficient at doing our jobs and driving progress faster.
Collaboration generally enjoy at physical meetings under normal circumstances due to member’s resource and time constraints. We’ve had excellent numbers joining webinars and meetings, and I think we’ve all had to adapt to life with Zoom and figuring out new ways to work effectively together despite the physical barriers!

We’ve also developed some exciting new workstreams to help promote greater value for members from both their SAI Platform and Crops Working Group memberships, hopefully providing the opportunity for all members to contribute and have their voice heard. The workstreams are in their infancy right now but we’re hoping to kick off with specific deliverables and outputs throughout 2021 and beyond.

How has working with Brian been? Brian is a terrific guy with a lot of energy… and patience! Ingredion, who Brian works for, is an ingredients company, while Diageo produces finished goods. They’re B2B, we’re both B2B and B2C. So, we have different perspectives which hopefully reflect those of the broader membership. We also have quite different approaches and personalities, so we tend to keep Jenny quite busy with our respective points of view!

Resilience has been the watchword for 2020. How has this applied to the Crops Working Group? Within Crops, I’d say resilience has come down to pivoting to online meetings and coming together more often in a virtual space rather than a physical one. It’s important to remember that the climate and social issues we’re all concerned about didn’t cease because we all started working at home! Because of the passion that people who typically work in our field bring to their roles, we’ve all been determined to adapt and think differently to pursue our goals.

Do you think attitudes to climate have changed this year? Though climate change is without doubt a major driver behind a lot of global issues and our ambition, it’s important to remember that the issues are not solely environmentally linked, but there is a holistic approach required to address the interconnected social and economic challenges facing humanity as well.

What we value about SAI Platform and the FSA is that they are not just concerned with environmental issues in an isolated way, but rather approach solutions towards a more holistic approach to farm management at a landscape level, and how best to create the industry-wide reach and scale necessary to realise the change that is required – that is the real challenge we face for the next 10 years!
The Dairy Working Group addresses key sector challenges

Towards the end of 2020, the Dairy Working Group found new ways to use its collective power to address key sector challenges and initiated two projects that will kick off in 2021.

Once we had launched the Sustainable Dairy Partnership (SDP) in September 2020, we had the capacity to consider far-reaching projects that will support the implementation of the SDP.

Deforestation in the Feed Supply Chain of Dairy Companies

Deforestation as a contributor to climate change and biodiversity loss, along with a lack of transparency and traceability to the origin of feed ingredients such as soy, is a major challenge to a sustainable dairy industry. Partnering with World Wildlife Fund (WWF), we will identify opportunities for the dairy industry to tackle deforestation and conversion of natural ecosystems, which we aim to scope through the piloting of the Accountability Framework Initiative (AFi).

The AFi represents a common approach for ethical supply chains in agriculture and forestry, supporting the global effort to produce agricultural and forestry commodities while protecting forests, other natural ecosystems, and human rights.

In late 2020 we began the work of piloting the Accountability Framework with ten Sustainable Dairy Partnership (SDP) companies with guidance and support from WWF, which will continue throughout 2021. The pilot companies started with a risk assessment, during which they developed risk profiles regarding potential deforestation and conversion in animal feed supply chains of soy from South America.

This step is followed by an implementation stage whereby companies can create customised deforestation and conversion free (DCF) implementation plans that organise DCF activities with associated milestones.

WWF will review implementation plans, provide recommendations for adjustments, and help address questions regarding any recommended adjustments to the implementation plans that best suit the companies’ situations, context, and ambitions.

In the execution stage of the project, which covers monitoring, verification, and reporting systems to track progress, WWF will provide a Technical Reference File that includes signposts to materials and tools that could be useful during implementation such as Agroideal, CDP Forests, and Forest 500.

Toolbox Practices for GHG reduction on Dairy Farms

With 80% of Greenhouse Gas emissions in the dairy industry generated at farm level, companies are trying different ways to reduce this impact and are at different stages of the journey.

This project aims to capture and consolidate best practices in the dairy and beef industries - current and evolving - in a structured way so that content can be shared to scale their activities on climate action. It will help drive innovation and collaboration among the industry to advance farm practices to reduce GHG emissions.

With the project, the Dairy Working Group is collaborating with SAI Platform’s ERBS representing the European beef industry.

“Collectively, we have a significant amount of influence and responsibility to achieve a sector-wide impact and make dairy sustainable.”

PATRICIA GARCÍA DIAZ, Dairy Director
Hansel New
Co-chair Dairy Working Group

When did you become co-chair with Axelle?

I was nominated at the end of 2019. With the Sustainable Dairy Partnership (SDP) specifically, my role has been to stay close to the SDP Steering Committee and lead the work of the technical workstream in preparing essential documents. I’ve also been involved with some project work with various Dairy Working Group members.

What would you say the Dairy Working Group and SDP have meant to the industry throughout 2020?

The Dairy Working Group has been critical for a lot of different reasons. It helps to bring together the work of other dairy industry associations like the Dairy Sustainability Framework (DSF), the Global Dairy Platform and the International Dairy Federation and execute many of the aligned global goals in the dairy space. It’s why, through the SDP, we’ve adopted the 11 criteria of the DSF. Our job is not to reinvent the wheel but focus on implementation and drive best practices in a B2B environment.

At the same time, what we’re building with the SDP really is huge and the Dairy Working Group itself is growing at an impressive rate as we attract interest from more and more global dairy buyers and processors. We have to look to our future and begin to put ways to manage and fund our growth in place now.

How would you say the progress of sustainability has been affected by the events of 2020?

It’s certainly not been deprioritised across the dairy industry. If anything, the crisis and the resulting cascading effect it had on the industry has highlighted the importance of sustainability.

What have you enjoyed most this year?

I go back to the pre-competitive nature of collaboration. I’m old enough to remember the days when sustainability was largely seen by many consumer-facing brands as mainly a competitive issue. Everyone was scrambling to get out in front, to have the latest bio-based packaging or get their cocoa rainforest alliance certified, for instance.

Of course, companies are always going to compete on all kinds of issues and sustainability can be a differentiator in that space. But what I enjoy in the dairy industry – and I think it’s special – is that sustainability is largely seen as pre-competitive and we really do come together as equals around a table, whether we’re buyers or processors. This has normalised a new way of working.

In what way?

Before, I think processors were generally speaking more inclined to say yes to any buyer demand because they wanted to keep and increase that business. Now, with the Dairy Working Group and SDP, we all have the opportunity to come to the table as equals and work through the issues together. We know it’s in everyone’s best interest to work together as a group and make sure priorities and even funding are aligned with the direction we all agree we need to go in.

Looking to 2021. What do you hope will be achieved?

Like everyone I talk to, I’m cautiously optimistic about next year. I certainly think it’s going to be a year of evolution and growth for the Dairy Working Group based on the foundations we’ve established in 2020. It will be important for us to roll out and normalise the SDP in Western dairy markets. It’s important to make the industry as aware as possible of the SDP’s potential to drive innovation and change. This will mean continuing to explore how it can be a valuable tool for some of our brethren in markets like India, China or elsewhere in the world.

I’m keen to demonstrate how the Dairy Working Group and other groups can lead our industry by example, by the way we work and how our systems and processes are set up.

All in all, I think 2021 is going to be a banner year for the dairy industry as we continue to champion pre-competitive collaboration. Who knows what we’ll come up against but if 2020 has taught us anything it’s that we have the adaptability to pivot as and when necessary. We’ve also learned that tackling the problems we face on the basis of our shared values will enable us to make progress.

HANSSEL NEW is the Director of Sustainability Programs at Dairy Farmers of America (DFA). The organisation joined the Dairy Working Group exclusively as full members in 2019, when Hansel became a member. He became co-chair in 2020.
Gap Analysis: 
Climate Intelligence (Brazil)

In 2020, the SAI Platform Brazil Committee launched the scoping phase of its pioneering Gap Analysis: Climate Intelligence (Brazil) project focusing on the vast Mantiqueiria region.

Mantiqueiria is a key region for food production globally. It is the largest dairy producing area in Brazil and much of the world’s arabica coffee is produced here. Mantiqueiria suffers from serious water scarcity which has become more prevalent in recent years, prompting the urgent need for decisive collaborative action by the Brazil Committee.

During 2020, we began the process of developing a gap analysis to establish why and where we should act, identify key stakeholders and partners, local resources and finally identify potential funding sources to secure a robust project on the ground in 2021.

We carried out scoping with The Nature Conservancy Brazil who will later lead the project on the ground.

By developing scalable solutions at landscape level, the Climate Intelligence (Brazil) project aims to produce a widely applicable model that can be replicated for other commodities and regions.

This ambitious, forward-looking project aims to start in 2021, and will focus on helping small- and medium-scale farmers in the region to become more climate resilient and improve their livelihoods. It will also be based on the increasingly widespread principles of regenerative agriculture.

Our goal is to achieve permanent transformational change for dairy and coffee growers spanning food production, water supply and biodiversity conservation. To achieve this, the project will enable collaboration between a wide-ranging, committed group that includes farmers, local municipalities, individual companies, and technical bodies.

We believe that widespread adoption of an innovative approach to agriculture will improve soil health, manage water management effectively even in extreme weather, balance carbon/nutrients cycling and protect biodiversity. This will deliver huge benefit to society.

This project began in early 2020 when an alliance of leading multinational agri-businesses came together to explore opportunities for pre-competitive collaboration in Pakistan based on shared supply chain priorities.

Collectively, our member companies have a track record of over 100 years, operating in Pakistan. They are committed to protecting the livelihoods of their suppliers and the communities in which they operate as well as the environmental health of the region.

Focusing on improved water management, climate resilience and post-harvest loss prevention, we will investigate potential projects in key opportunity areas for sustainable agricultural production in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh areas of Pakistan.

In terms of water management, we are aiming to increase the adoption of enhanced irrigation techniques, offer more access to affordable, quality water management solutions and construct on-farm storage reservoirs to improve access to a reliable supply.

As far as climate resilience is concerned, the next steps are to enhance accessible weather prediction technology access and use by farmers as well as demonstrate and promote crop rotation, diversity benefits and invest in climate-resilient seed R&D.

With regards to post-harvest loss, the project intends to focus resources on ways to improve transit conditions and access to cold storage facilities, conduct training on preventing on-farm handling losses and increase the share of product that meets marketable toxicity standards.

Throughout 2020, we aligned on opportunity areas for partnerships while planning and co-creating in preparation for implementing the project. From 2021 onwards, this gap analysis will drive collaboration and investment on meaningful activities to address the opportunities highlighted in this project.

The Gap Analysis: Partnership Development Pakistan - a series of firsts

The Gap Analysis: Partnership Development Pakistan project is our first South Asian initiative, and the first time we scoped a project that includes gender equality.
ERBS Platforms demonstrate commitment to sustainable beef production

The beef industry is actively addressing key sustainability issues that are imperative for the future of the sector. To demonstrate this, ERBS and the six European Platforms have developed a system to report on their progress against eight specific outcome targets. The ability to recognise the efforts these Platforms are making is a major step forward in our journey towards pan-European beef sustainability.

A Platform is a group of members of the beef supply chain who work together in a country towards achieving the goals set out in the outcome targets. These targets are grouped into action areas that cover the environment, animal health and welfare, animal medicines and farm management.

The outcome targets include reducing the intensity of GHG emissions by 15% by 2025 with the aim of setting a future target that recognises the positive role beef production plays in mitigating soil degradation, restoring healthy ecosystems and sequestering carbon. Other outcome targets are making sure animals have access to loose housing by 2030 – if they are housed – and addressing the issue of farm management so that beef farms are financially viable.

Setting targets across Europe has been the first major task for the ERBS. It involved deep dive consultations with key stakeholders across industry, academia, government, and civil society. From here, Platforms were established to ensure that the goals are implemented across the production systems in the six countries.

Having access to data to establish baselines, developing relationships with partners in each country to make progress against the targets and working out a way of reporting that progress has been a substantial piece of work for ERBS members and the Platforms in each country. It has been a vital milestone to be able to demonstrate commitment and progress.

The construction and premise of the Platforms offer great flexibility as stakeholders within a country can continue with their current sustainability programmes while incorporating and adapting this to work with ERBS targets. Programmes can combine forces to aim towards targets. Or, as in the case of Italy’s Allevamenti Sostenibili, they can establish an entirely new programme.

**Strengthening ERBS internal governance for the future**

Once we passed the major milestone of having recognised Platforms in place, we turned our attention to the support of a strong and diverse leadership at ERBS.

The first elected ERBS board took over from the interim board in July 2020 and began consolidating their work, particularly making sure all ERBS membership constituencies are represented as we move forwards.

**Looking ahead**

The challenges we faced at the end of 2020 continued to be around the detail of our work – developing documentation, validation, verification and reporting mechanisms for Platforms, especially related to the Beef Recognition Framework, as well as training materials.

The biggest single challenge we face is progress reporting. And, as Bulle Pouzoulet, the ERBS Manager, says, “It’s also an opportunity to demonstrate how beef production across Europe is making positive changes when it comes to sustainability.”

### At a glance

- 24 members
- 5 new members in 2020
- 6 recognised Platforms

**About the ERBS**

We are a multi-stakeholder organisation focused on European beef sustainability from farm to fork that, through our Platforms, influences 214,000 farmers.

We evolved out of the Beef Working Group after SAI Platform was approached by the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) who saw it was the only forum in Europe working towards sustainable beef. Today, we are aligned to the principles of the GRSB.

The ERBS brings stakeholders together in a pre-competitive environment to establish a common agenda, encourage mutually beneficial activities and accelerate sustainability.

We unite and coordinate sustainability programmes around a common agenda to deliver measurable and positive impact within the beef value chain.

Our aim is to provide a framework to achieve meaningful and demonstrable progress on beef sustainability to create a food system in which people, animals and the planet thrive.
Claire Donoghue
Chair of the European Roundtable for Beef Sustainability (ERBS)

You officially became Chair of the ERBS on 15 July 2020. Why were you keen to take on the responsibility?

I believe that if we want to have meaningful impact on the beef industry, we need to act as one body. OSI has actively supported the ERBS and the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) from the beginning to strengthen our sustainability efforts by working with a multitude of industry stakeholders to generate greater impact. Our sustainability team are keen to maintain this commitment so I was delighted to be offered the role of Chair and hope I can deliver what is needed by the members and the industry as a whole.

Why is the ERBS so important for OSI?

OSI operates across multiple European markets, therefore the ERBS makes complete sense from our point of view. The sustainability challenges that the beef industry faces are broad and can be complex but the ERBS demonstrates that OSI’s goals are part of a collective vision that’s easy to explain internally and, most important, externally to our customers and wider stakeholders.

Within the ERBS, we have a mandate to represent five constituencies: producers, allied industry, processors, retail and food service and civil society – which enables us to share expertise and insights from all aspects of the beef value chain and make informed decisions on the direction in which we need to be going. It really is a roundtable.

How long have you been part of the ERBS?

I was already a member of SAI Platform for three years before I became Chair. I've been involved with the ERBS right from its inception in 2018, looking in particular at the strategic direction. I was Chair of the ERBS Technical Working Group, which developed the outcome targets that we collaboratively work towards as a multi-stakeholder group. As well as developing measures to recognise national and local beef sustainability programmes, putting the structure in place, and establishing membership criteria.

What were your biggest challenges and achievements in 2020?

Since I became Chair, we’ve done a lot of work on developing a reporting mechanism to assess how platforms are meeting the outcome targets across the different regions.

We now have six countries in Europe that have completed materiality assessments and have established country-level platforms to work towards the ERBS targets. The reporting process that we have developed will allow us to measure and monitor progress towards these goals. This will also allow us to formally recognise the Platforms for their contribution towards a more sustainable beef industry under the ERBS. I think this is the biggest achievement of the ERBS so far.

How about COVID-19?

While it obviously had an effect in terms of how we meet, we were lucky in that we had firm timelines. We wanted to have our full Board established, targets in place, and a formal recognition process agreed so we could focus on our plan for 2021, which is all about the actual work of the Platforms and moving forwards with new members.

Inevitably, COVID-19 forced us to adapt. For example, the ERBS itself has now become a large committed collective. The freedom technology has provided has allowed us to meet virtually to collaborate and achieve our work.

What have you enjoyed the most about 2020?

I believe that if we want to have meaningful impact on the beef industry, we need to act as one body. OSI has actively supported the ERBS and the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) from the beginning to strengthen our sustainability efforts by working with a multitude of industry stakeholders to generate greater impact. Our sustainability team are keen to maintain this commitment so I was delighted to be offered the role of Chair and hope I can deliver what is needed by the members and the industry as a whole.

Within the ERBS, we have a mandate to represent five constituencies: producers, allied industry, processors, retail and food service and civil society – which enables us to share expertise and insights from all aspects of the beef value chain and make informed decisions on the direction in which we need to be going. It really is a roundtable.

How long have you been part of the ERBS?

I was already a member of SAI Platform for three years before I became Chair. I’ve been involved with the ERBS right from its inception in 2018, looking in particular at the strategic direction. I was Chair of the ERBS Technical Working Group, which developed the outcome targets that we collaboratively work towards as a multi-stakeholder group. As well as developing measures to recognise national and local beef sustainability programmes, putting the structure in place, and establishing membership criteria.

What were your biggest challenges and achievements in 2020?

Since I became Chair, we’ve done a lot of work on developing a reporting mechanism to assess how platforms are meeting the outcome targets across the different regions.

We now have six countries in Europe that have completed materiality assessments and have established country-level platforms to work towards the ERBS targets. The reporting process that we have developed will allow us to measure and monitor progress towards these goals. This will also allow us to formally recognise the Platforms for their contribution towards a more sustainable beef industry under the ERBS. I think this is the biggest achievement of the ERBS so far.

How about COVID-19?

While it obviously had an effect in terms of how we meet, we were lucky in that we had firm timelines. We wanted to have our full Board established, targets in place, and a formal recognition process agreed so we could focus on our plan for 2021, which is all about the actual work of the Platforms and moving forwards with new members.

Inevitably, COVID-19 forced us to adapt. For example, the ERBS itself has now become a large committed collective. The freedom technology has provided has allowed us to meet virtually to collaborate and achieve our work.

What have you enjoyed the most about 2020?

I believe that if we want to have meaningful impact on the beef industry, we need to act as one body. OSI has actively supported the ERBS and the Global Roundtable for Sustainable Beef (GRSB) from the beginning to strengthen our sustainability efforts by working with a multitude of industry stakeholders to generate greater impact. Our sustainability team are keen to maintain this commitment so I was delighted to be offered the role of Chair and hope I can deliver what is needed by the members and the industry as a whole.

Within the ERBS, we have a mandate to represent five constituencies: producers, allied industry, processors, retail and food service and civil society – which enables us to share expertise and insights from all aspects of the beef value chain and make informed decisions on the direction in which we need to be going. It really is a roundtable.

How long have you been part of the ERBS?

I was already a member of SAI Platform for three years before I became Chair. I’ve been involved with the ERBS right from its inception in 2018, looking in particular at the strategic direction. I was Chair of the ERBS Technical Working Group, which developed the outcome targets that we collaboratively work towards as a multi-stakeholder group. As well as developing measures to recognise national and local beef sustainability programmes, putting the structure in place, and establishing membership criteria.

What were your biggest challenges and achievements in 2020?

Since I became Chair, we’ve done a lot of work on developing a reporting mechanism to assess how platforms are meeting the outcome targets across the different regions.

We now have six countries in Europe that have completed materiality assessments and have established country-level platforms to work towards the ERBS targets. The reporting process that we have developed will allow us to measure and monitor progress towards these goals. This will also allow us to formally recognise the Platforms for their contribution towards a more sustainable beef industry under the ERBS. I think this is the biggest achievement of the ERBS so far.

How about COVID-19?

While it obviously had an effect in terms of how we meet, we were lucky in that we had firm timelines. We wanted to have our full Board established, targets in place, and a formal recognition process agreed so we could focus on our plan for 2021, which is all about the actual work of the Platforms and moving forwards with new members.

Inevitably, COVID-19 forced us to adapt. For example, the ERBS itself has now become a large committed collective. The freedom technology has provided has allowed us to meet virtually to collaborate and achieve our work.

What have you enjoyed the most about 2020?

The interaction between different members is great. We're quite unique in that we're competitors talking in a pre-competitive environment. I thoroughly enjoy the way we share insights into different markets, thrash out ideas and ultimately end up with a process that has been thoroughly checked, verified, and scoped out by quite a diverse group of people across multiple countries.

How does 2021 look to you?

I think we're in an excellent place heading into 2021. We have our strategy and our targets. Our process is in place, so we know what countries need to do and what they're working on. We're clear on how they report back to us.

The first annual reporting deadline for the six existing platforms is April 2021. I'm looking forward to seeing their achievement of the ERBS so far.

We'll be recruiting more members to the ERBS from more European countries which will benefit the group and the industry. I'm also excited about the prospect of closer collaboration with the GRSB as they work to draft goals for the global beef industry.
The Sustainable Dairy Partnership (SDP) went live in September 2020, followed by well attended online training events in the US in October and Europe in November.

Years in the planning, this visionary initiative is the result of a concerted effort on the part of SAI Platform’s influential Dairy Working Group to streamline the relationship between buyers and processors, promote essential alignment and strengthen existing approaches to sustainability at national and company levels.

The SDP is already being heralded as a game changing roadmap to sustainability for the dairy processor. Dairy buyers have a simple, straightforward insight into their supplier base in terms of sustainability. The fact that the SDP recognises existing national and company programmes is a major step forwards for the dairy industry.

Most significantly, the SDP cuts back on farm audits and enables processors to provide clear evidence of their sustainability performance. It also demonstrates continuous improvement to customers and saves costs across the supply chain.

Patricia Garcia Diaz, Dairy Director of the SAI Platform Dairy Working Group that drove the creation of the SDP said, “The launch of the SDP is an amazing group achievement. We represent around 30% of the total global milk volume and the SDP clearly demonstrates the dairy industry’s appetite for sustainability. We can all be proud of what we have done together.”

Overcoming a complex challenge

Bringing the SDP to life involved pulling together all the content relating to this ambitious programme, and developing training modules to enable implementation and scalability.

“We represent around 30% of the total global milk volume and the SDP clearly demonstrates the dairy industry’s appetite for sustainability.”

PATRICIA GARCIA DIAZ, Dairy Director, Dairy Working Group

This significant achievement would not have been possible without strong, dedicated leadership from the SDP Steering Committee, created in 2019.

The Steering Committee is made up of five buyers, five processors and three ex-officio members: Robert Erhard of SAI Platform’s Executive Committee, Brian Lindsay, Director of the Dairy Sustainability Framework, Patricia Garcia Diaz, Dairy Director, SAI Platform and Axelle Bodoy and Hansel New, Co-Chairs of the Dairy Working Group.

A comprehensive, easy to use Learning Centre offers essential information to anyone interested in working with the Sustainable Dairy Partnership or simply understanding sustainability in relation to the dairy industry. This is structured so that it provides generic information through to in-depth technical documentation which can all be downloaded.
The training modules are based on the SDP’s structure and cover what it is and how it is verified. Four foundational modules cover compliance with local legislation, animal welfare, deforestation, and human rights and how they relate to the SDP. It also includes a special model on how to perform a materiality analysis, one of the main elements of the SDP.

Once the SDP was launched with the Learning Centre and a dedicated online area within the SAI Platform website was in place, we held two introductory events.

October’s event in the USA was hosted by the Dairy Innovation Centre and the Sustainability Alliance and 120 people attended. A similar event in November introduced the initiative to its European audience and 85 people took part.

Opening up membership

To fulfil its promise, the SDP needs to be as accessible to as many members and changemakers within the dairy industry as possible.

With this in mind, we created membership options whereby companies can access only the Learning Centre and scheme documentation but full members of SAI Platform enjoy the opportunity of joining other working groups and benefiting from other industry led solutions and projects.

“At the end of a year of extremely hard work and major achievements, the SDP offers the dairy industry an innovative solution to really drive sustainability in an efficient, impactful way,” said Patricia Garcia Diaz.

About the Sustainable Dairy Partnership

The Sustainable Dairy Partnership provides a consistent global approach to dairy sustainability in commercial relationships between dairy buyers and processors.

Developed through a multi-stakeholder process that included dairy processors, industry associations, and dairy buyers, it was created with the goal of driving continuous improvement in dairy sustainability.

To achieve this goal, the SDP accommodates industry sustainability initiatives, national programmes, voluntary certifications and regulatory compliance drawing on consistency and credibility.

The SDP builds on the Dairy Sustainability Framework (DSF) and its 11 criteria, which provide a global framework for a holistic, pre-competitive and collaborative approach to sustainability in the dairy value chain.

Representing a commitment to the DSF and a collaborative and common approach to assurance and reporting, the Sustainable Dairy Partnership will help the global dairy sector to scale success and lead the dairy industry to a new level of sustainability.

Architects of the Sustainable Dairy Partnership

- Ahold Delhaize
- Arla
- Barilla
- Bord Bia
- Cayuga Marketing
- Coca-Cola
- Dairy Australia
- Dairy Farmers of America
- Danone
- Ferrero
- Fonterra
- Friesland Campina
- Givaudan
- Glanbia Ireland
- Innovation Center for US Dairy
- Kerry
- Kraft Heinz
- Land O’ Lakes Inc
- Mars
- Nestlé
- Orkla
- RB
- Starbucks
- Unilever
- Vreugdenhil
Chair of the Sustainable Dairy Partnership (SDP) Steering Committee, Autumn Fox

What challenges did you face this year and how did you overcome them?

In the first part of the year, one of our big challenges was addressing the question of how to make sure SDP reports are credible and how we can put a robust but efficient verification process in place. The technical workstream, together with members of the Dairy Working Group (DWG), spent many hours creating a verification protocol that provides guidance to dairy processors.

We also had to develop a membership approach to welcome new users of the SDP while making sure we deliver great value to SAI Platform members. Negotiating this and ensuring alignment with SAI Platform’s overall strategy and approach involved considerable effort.

Finally, we needed to put in place ways companies can effectively operationalise the SDP. We developed the learning centre that is now on the SAI Platform site for members and SDP users and introduced the next generation of training we provide to members.

Did COVID-19 present particular challenges?

It did, of course. We had to move away from the existing Dairy Working Group culture where we met in person three times a year – an approach that had really driven consensus around the SDP. But, because we’d invested so much time in previous years to building relationships and camaraderie between members, we knew we had a solid group. The time we spent in person developing the SDP, learning about local dairy operations, and building relationships paid off. The members really see the vision of what we are trying to achieve, and they want to contribute.

We developed a new approach to our Dairy Working Group meetings and utilised new tools to support interactions. We managed to keep up the pace and meet all our targets for 2020. So, we can be really proud of what we achieved working from home.

When members join SAI Platform and they have an interest in either the SDP or the DWG, how do you make sure they benefit?

Apart from the appeal of SAI Platform itself, the one thing that’s been extremely successful in engaging new members is the testimony of existing members. They are the architects of what we’re doing with the SDP. In general, what’s appealing to new members is the fact that Dairy is now seen as an industry group leveraging value that’s also a source of knowledge, information and access to the market. Also, companies are increasingly seeing the value of aligning with companies in the same position as they are rather than going it alone. They understand that collaboration enables resilience.

The SDP was driven by collaboration to make sustainable supply chains more commercially efficient. What about other issues related to sustainability such as climate change?

The SDP is all about bringing commercial efficiency into driving sustainability more widely throughout the dairy industry around the globe, leveraging the 11 criteria of the Dairy Sustainability Framework. Also, our view of sustainability is that we’re all on a journey to address the serious challenges and risks we see in our future, and that includes climate change, animal welfare, human rights, nutrient runoff, and many other topics.

How have you worked with the co-chairs of the Dairy Working Group this year?

This year, Hansel New took on the role of processor co-chair and Axelle Bodoy was the buyer co-chair. We made sure we stayed well-connected and able to coordinate everything that had to be done for the SDP and the wider DWG. For the SDP itself, we have a steering committee that meets every six to eight weeks which is made up of equal parts buyers and processors. So, you have all the chairs working closely together, with the steering committee providing the broader perspective.

What was the biggest highlight for you this year?

We fully rolled out the SDP, something we’ve been working on since before my time in the DWG! One of the ways we did this was through regional webinars and I really enjoyed seeing the excitement beginning to build in our suppliers as they were able to consider the SDP in a far more concrete way.

And what’s the one message you really want to get across?

That the SDP is live, this is happening. It’s ready for SAI Platform members in the dairy category to take out of the box and run with. You can scale it up in your networks and invite anyone you have a relationship with to join. This is a big invitation to get involved.
A challenging year all-round accelerates FSA growth online

In 2020, the FSA story went digital. It was perhaps not surprising that the focus of the Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) shifted online in 2020 but, while this was partly a result of COVID-19, it was not the only reason for the sharp growth of FSA online use.

Trust appeared to be a major factor, with a 97% increase in the number of farm management groups registered on our Web App. This impressive statistic also suggested that users had warmed to the benefits of using the online version rather than having to spend valuable time integrating it into their own offline systems.

Add to this more efficient and effective helpdesk support from SAI Platform and the International Trade Centre (ITC) resulting in improved user onboarding, and it is not hard to see why confidence in the FSA online increased.

Reflecting this, the FSA Resource Centre attracted 3,224 unique visitors who downloaded documents in 2020 – a persuasive three-fold increase on last year.

Top five documents were: FSA Self-Assessment Questionnaire (English), FSA Benchmark Equivalency Overview, FSA Training Toolkit, FSA Statements and Claims Guide and the FSA Supply Chain Implementation Guide.

To make it quicker and easier to compare other on-farm sustainability schemes to the FSA, we also launched a Benchmarking Portal.

Healthy sector and regional growth

Much of the growth in the online popularity of the FSA came from the juices and grains sectors, followed closely by frozen and canned vegetables. We were pleased to see that the fresh vegetables sector also began taking a keener interest in what the FSA delivers.

Our work promoting the FSA in Latin America began to pay dividends. Mexico and Brazil led the way with healthy growth. We attribute this partly to a Spanish language FSA introduction seminar in April attended by 80 potential users with a clear need.

Elsewhere, as a result of projects to accelerate take up of the FSA, we made substantial inroads into the sugar beet sector, especially in Russia and Turkey.
How COVID-19 shaped our year

While COVID-19 and the fallout from the virus in terms of travel bans, lockdowns and quarantine clearly affected aspects of our work with the FSA in 2020, it certainly did not derail our momentum.

We were determined to find ways to work around every challenge. So, when FSA verification audits were postponed as auditors were unable to travel to farms, we responded by introducing enhanced possibilities for Verification Bodies to extend the validity of claims and perform remote audits.

When scheduled in-person training events around the world were cancelled, we reacted by creating a fully customisable remote training course consisting of training materials and instructions for members who wanted to use the time of their grounded staff productively.

As a result of our determination and adaptability, the FSA ended 2020 in a stronger position than ever. Even being obliged to postpone the launch of FSA 3.0 to April 2020 failed to slow us down.

“At the end of 2020, the FSA remained a front-of-mind option for companies wanting to work on driving environmental, social and economic farm performance around the world.”

SVEN SIELHORST, FSA Systems Director

FSA 3.0 – helping the conversation to trigger change

In the years that we have been developing the FSA, we have realised that change is really sparked by conversations between the right people at the right time. Our role is to help this happen by offering the right toolset as an enabler.

FSA 3.0 was born out of our awareness that there was still room to improve the toolset. The Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) was a good conversation starter, but we needed more.

“We needed to improve the toolset to enable more informed and structured conversations to happen particularly because people are at different comfort levels talking about sustainability,” Sven Sielhorst, Systems Director for FSA, explained.

“Sustainability means different things depending on where you are in the supply chain, which country you are in and which crop you work with. Increasing sustainability performance requires collaboration. And collaboration requires everyone involved to speak a similar language. We aim to provide that language,” he added.

The FSA 3.0 development team discovered that the toolset was most effective and triggered relevant continuous improvement wherever supply chain partners and farmers worked together to define challenges, options and priorities before coming up with and implementing a plan.

Building on this insight, the FSA 3.0 developed the Priority Screening Tool, the Continuous Improvement Module and the Outcome Measurement Handbook. These new tools will be released in April 2021, together with the revised toolset.

Hundreds of people representing dozens of member companies and other stakeholders worked in several online workstreams on the development of the upcoming version of the FSA, as well as contributing through focus group discussions, road tests, surveys, interviews and webinars.

One of these was Athanasios Mandis from innocent drinks who chaired the FSA 3.0 Systems Working Group and was also a member of the FSA 3.0 Guidance Committee.

About the Farm Sustainability Assessment

The Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) was developed by SAI Platform members together with suppliers, farmers, and external stakeholders. It is a set of tools for food and drink businesses that want to assess, improve, and validate on-farm sustainability in their supply chains.

Built around a set of questions to farmers, the FSA is relevant for all cultivated crops, in all locations, regardless of farm size, and facilitates effective and efficient collaboration across the supply chain.

Members of the food and drink industry, farmers and sustainability scheme toolkit owners who adopt the FSA demonstrate their commitment to promoting reliable and consistent sustainable food production.

Since its launch in 2014, the FSA has become world-renowned as a leading tool to guide and develop the continuous improvement of on-farm sustainability practices. The success of the FSA has become a shining example of the collaborative focus of SAI Platform members to create an industry aligned tool set that addresses common challenges.

Key figures at a glance

105 sustainability schemes with benchmark equivalence against the FSA, available in 450 combinations, are in place.

104,802 farmers around the world belong to FSA verified Farm Management Groups.

33 countries, with the UK, Germany, Ukraine, Turkey and Indonesia being added to the list of countries in 2020.

10,740 farms producing 24 different fruits and vegetables have been verified under GLOBALG.A.P. with the FSA Add-on.
Athanasios Mandis, innocent drinks

What are the main changes to the current Self-Assessment Questionnaire (SAQ) that we will see in version 3.0?

It should not come as too much of a surprise to see soil health and biodiversity feature strongly. There is more emphasis on resource management of farm inputs, whether that is water, nutrients, crop protection or energy sources. We have also created caveats to a limited number of questions for smallholders to take some pressure off demonstrating practices with resource-heavy questions.

What are the biggest improvements to the SAQ in terms of its ability to assess and enhance on-farm sustainability?

There are three significant improvements which broaden into a more user-friendly and enhanced experience. In essence, we are looking at a slicker SAQ with a call for greater clarity on performance.

First, we have addressed some of the repetitiveness and ambiguity from the current version and classified the order of questions in a more logical flow. We have also clarified and narrowed the scope of questions without being prescriptive. This improvement not only better informs the user of the ask but also requires a more mindful and thorough response to satisfy the performance criteria.

Second, we have created pre-filter sections. By categorising questions more effectively, we have introduced six pre-filters to determine whether the upcoming set of questions is relevant. For example, if the user does not use irrigation systems, the section is pre-filtered as not applicable so they don’t have to wade through the entire set of questions. Removing unnecessary layers permits a more tailored user experience.

Third, we have placed greater emphasis on activities that are known to have the most significant impact on climate change and environmental degradation.
Consistent progress with the FSA in China as SAI Platform looks to the future

By the end of the year, the FSA was being used across a range of crops and regions China, particularly by suppliers of crops that include green soybeans, bamboo shoots and pumpkin to our members.

Verification bodies granted FSA audit certificates for apples and applications for corn. Chilli and Stigma Croci, a valuable traditional Chinese medicine, were also in the pipeline. This latter application is an intriguing example of the penetration of the FSA into China.

Throughout the year, we continued to work on the ground with Angela Hu, an expert in sustainable agriculture and Chinese supply chain operations.

At the beginning of the year, we acted on the findings of the taskforce led by Angela that explored how the FSA was being used in the Chinese context. This included developing guidelines on interpretation for Chinese users while maintaining the tool’s integrity and credibility.

While progress in China in 2020 was challenging, we were able to refine our strategy via our Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA), as a means of enabling best practices and continuous improvement for sustainable agriculture in China.

Online meetings grow awareness

Despite only being able to meet online this year, we held two well-attended FSA workshops in April and October. Our first was a general introduction to the FSA. The second, attended by 45 representatives from multiple companies with interests across a range of crops, focused on biodiversity and soil health – key issues that users in China are keen to address.

This deep dive was a highly positive indication of the interest from users in China, especially as the FSA is new there, as indeed are measures for addressing sustainability. The FSA is also not as commonly recognised as other established schemes that, for example, provide assurance on food safety.

We addressed this lack of awareness of the potential of the FSA to enable change by including case studies that demonstrated how the tool is practically implemented at farm level. These succeeded in prompting in-depth discussion among attendees.

Mr. Tong of Zhuhai Kanglongyuan Import and Export Co. LTD, a supplier to BIOSS Rohstoffe GmbH, pointed out that “The FSA provides a relevant and simple way to evaluate our farmers. It is easy to address issues with this tool but driving improvement will need more work. We know that change is essential for sustainable development.”

Changing perceptions of sustainability in China

Although sustainability is called “ecological civilisation” in China, the principles being supported and promoted by the country’s government are the same as elsewhere in the world.
Members of the Crops Working Group who source wild harvested ingredients, face unique challenges to assess and verify sustainable practices.

The Wild Harvest project was set up to create an industry sustainability assessment for wild harvest sourcing that would improve transparency, facilitate engagement of wild harvest supply chains and highlight areas for improvement.

“Wild harvested” refers to plant material gathered or harvested from areas maintained in a natural state not under cultivation or other agricultural or aquatic management. Given that these are typically found in forests, along rivers and streams, hedges and roadsides, there are complex sustainability and engagement issues that are markedly different from those our Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA) was designed to manage.

By the end of 2020, we had completed phase one of the project and arrived at a biodiversity and field assessment that had been reviewed by external experts, including standard owners and auditors. In 2021, we will move on to field test and refine what will become the Wild Harvest Sustainability Assessment. This will involve working with member supply chains who will conduct pilot tests and provide us with feedback.

Ultimately, the Wild Harvest Sustainability Assessment will be a stand-alone system covering all plants and fungi defined as wild harvest that works alongside the FSA, designed, tested and applied with the same industry-admired rigour. It will be a major step forward for our members who work with wild harvested ingredients.
In 2020, our unique online tool Spotlight became the go-to tool for members looking to find others who shared their interests and concerns with a view to developing the projects that put our Principles and Practices into action.

Spotlight becomes integral to selecting SAI Platform projects

Spotlight is available to all SAI Platform members and enables users to share knowledge, address shared opportunities and challenges and find timely, cost-effective and practical solutions.

Its recognition as an efficient and quick means for members with common interests in specific crops and regions to identify each other, instigate projects and learning opportunities and reach common goals is growing all the time.

Alongside SAI Platform members who use the tool, it can also be used by partners who can add project opportunities in the region and priority area in which they are interested and receive notifications when a user adds a relevant opportunity.

As Nick Betts, Americas Director said, “Spotlight helps drive the pre-competitive collaboration which is empowering members to put in place locally relevant and globally significant sustainable practices. It is now embedded in how we initiate and scope projects and fundamental to our prioritisation process.”

NICK BETTS, Americas Director

“Spotlight is now fundamental to the SAI Platform prioritisation process.”

FSA Accelerator Russia:
SUBERU - innovation driving collaboration

SUBERU is an acronym formed from sugar beet and Russia. It was the first non-EU project for the Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA). As the first ever FSA Accelerator project globally, it also introduced a new model for implementing the FSA with members.

Launched in September 2018, SUBERU was started by six members with an interest in sugar beet in Russia. The project kicked off with over 40 relevant stakeholders representing major buyers and suppliers working together.

Having so many key players in the same room right from the beginning meant we were able to ensure commitment from all sides and set out a path for the next 18 months.

At that time, Russia was the largest sugar beet producer in the world, producing over 45 million tons annually. It is also a major processor of sugar beet into sugar. In 2019, it produced a total of 6.4 million tons of sugar.

SUBERU’s goal was to create a more sustainable sugar beet industry. The challenge was that there was no single industry-aligned sustainability reference. In some regions, growers were obliged to comply with multiple standards while in other areas there was no set standard. It was difficult for growers to prove their level of sustainability to buyers with clear requirements.

There was an obvious need for a standard method of assessing and verifying on-farm sustainability. Our goal was to align buyers and sellers through a common approach and create standards that could be implemented long-term.

The FSA was key to the success of the project. It allowed farmers to self-evaluate their on-farm practices online with an easy scoring mechanism.

By April 2020, the FSA had been implemented successfully by the majority of Russian sugar beet suppliers. All assessments were complete, and independently verified by June 2020 to FSA Silver and Gold equivalency, meeting the requirements of all buyers.

In 2020, as well as consolidating its place at the core of how we work, Spotlight added users from among some of our sister organisations not necessarily working only in agriculture but also in other extractive sectors where there is a crossover. We have developed a model to enable the Spotlight software to be used by other organisations for a fee.

SUBERU is an acronym formed from sugar beet and Russia. It was the first non-EU project for the Farm Sustainability Assessment (FSA). As the first ever FSA Accelerator project globally, it also introduced a new model for implementing the FSA with members.

Launched in September 2018, SUBERU was started by six members with an interest in sugar beet in Russia. The project kicked off with over 40 relevant stakeholders representing major buyers and suppliers working together.

Having so many key players in the same room right from the beginning meant we were able to ensure commitment from all sides and set out a path for the next 18 months.

At that time, Russia was the largest sugar beet producer in the world, producing over 45 million tons annually. It is also a major processor of sugar beet into sugar. In 2019, it produced a total of 6.4 million tons of sugar.

SUBERU’s goal was to create a more sustainable sugar beet industry. The challenge was that there

was no single industry-aligned sustainability reference. In some regions, growers were obliged to comply with multiple standards while in other areas there was no set standard. It was difficult for growers to prove their level of sustainability to buyers with clear requirements.

There was an obvious need for a standard method of assessing and verifying on-farm sustainability. Our goal was to align buyers and sellers through a common approach and create standards that could be implemented long-term.

The FSA was key to the success of the project. It allowed farmers to self-evaluate their on-farm practices online with an easy scoring mechanism.

By April 2020, the FSA had been implemented successfully by the majority of Russian sugar beet suppliers. All assessments were complete, and independently verified by June 2020 to FSA Silver and Gold equivalency, meeting the requirements of all buyers.

In 2020, as well as consolidating its place at the core of how we work, Spotlight added users from among some of our sister organisations not necessarily working only in agriculture but also in other extractive sectors where there is a crossover. We have developed a model to enable the Spotlight software to be used by other organisations for a fee.

1 FAOStat
2 Statista
The meaning of agricultural resilience in 2020 and for the future

- a conversation between SAI Platform members

A sustainable, resilient, and thriving agricultural sector is at the core of our vision. The events of 2020, and specifically the impact from COVID-19, made it clear to us all what components of agriculture, food production and supply chains were critical to that resilience. Important questions were raised and discussed about the real meaning of resilience in agriculture supply chain management and how we can safeguard it for the future.

To address these issues, our Communications Manager Brigid Norde-McAleer presided over an online conversation between Hans Jöhr, former Corporate Head of Agriculture at Nestlé and Honorary President of SAI Platform, Shazia Hussenbux, Global Sustainable Sourcing Lead at Oatly and SAI Platform member and Ulrike Sapiro, Senior Director Sustainability and Sustainable Agriculture at The Coca Cola Company and former SAI Platform President.

Brigid: Ulrike, can I start by asking what resilience means to you and how it links to sustainability in agriculture and the agri-food supply chain?

Ulrike: Before COVID-19, we spoke about resilience in relation to what we saw as the slow, rolling but accelerating wave of climate change and its impact on the context in which we and our supply chains operate. At that time, resilience sat on three pillars for us.

First, establishing how far we need to anticipate and adapt policies, regulation and economics in relation to reducing carbon emissions. It’s about preventing the tidal wave from hitting us.

Second, preparing for the change that will happen anyway. Here the question is how we anticipate this by future proofing our sustainability programmes and supply chains to really stay ahead of the climate change curve.

Third, bouncing back from a crisis like a disaster, event, drought or a pandemic. Agri-food supply chains are really at the heart of these challenges, be it as a major carbon emitter or water user or in terms of productivity and community vulnerabilities.

We’ve already seen these happen locally, but COVID-19 is a truly global crisis.

Brigid: Hans, what does resilience mean to you and how is it linked to sustainability in agriculture?

Hans: I agree with Ulrike that resilience is about anticipating and mapping out risks and ensuring continuity from farm to table. For me, it’s about developing new strategies, tools and instruments that can overcome disruption to manage these unexpected events or stress factors.

Resilience is part of managing factors such as crop and animal diseases, climate change, food safety, political risk and so on. We have to consider what tools we can use at farm level. For example, micro-insurance for small-holders and financial support for production continuity as well as focusing on maintaining or regenerating soil health. Then we must
expanding our perspective from local to regional to international levels.

With COVID-19, we have a clear opportunity to ask the simple question: how can SAI Platform contribute when it comes to resilience, robustness and continuity, and feeding our world?

**Brigid:** Shazia?

**Shazia:** Oatly is a small company compared to Coca-Cola and Nestlé but, especially as we’re moving from very local to global value chains, we have to look at embedding resilience now.

This means we must anticipate potential risks. To me, that means working with data which, if it’s the right data, is like the new oil.

But that’s only part of it. I don’t think we can build resilience alone. Even if we identify the risks ourselves, we need to learn from and build resilience from others. This feeds the growing awareness of the need for resilience.

**Brigid:** What were the immediate changes you had to make as a result of COVID-19 Shazia?

**Shazia:** It is surely fair to say that with an increased speed of growth, we need to get better at anticipating events and crises and maintaining business continuity. Basically, activities at different layers of the supply chain need to be implemented to build long term resilience.

**Brigid:** So, in this sense COVID-19 has been a stress test. Unlike, what are the immediate changes you’ve had to make and the lessons you’ve learned?

**Ulrike:** One of the big lessons learnt has been to understand the connections between impacts on nature and human health. I credit SAI Platform with helping companies and members to understand this. I’m thinking in particular of the webinar with Jason Clay this year.

COVID-19 made it clear that it does matter if, for instance, the Irawaddy River Dolphin disappears. It could be a sign of something that’s going to affect humanity. This is a big learning point and something we need to take with us so we can do better.

In terms of immediate effects, we had to re-establish protecting our people as a priority. We’ve also had to adapt considerably in other ways.

**Brigid:** What were the immediate changes you had to make as a result of COVID-19 Shazia?

**Shazia:** With COVID-19, we have a clear opportunity to ask the simple question: how can SAI Platform contribute when it comes to resilience, robustness and continuity, and feeding our world?

**Brigid:** That’s only part of it. I don’t think we can build resilience alone. Even if we identify the risks ourselves, we need to learn from and build resilience from others. This feeds the growing awareness of the need for resilience.

**Brigid:** What were the immediate changes you had to make as a result of COVID-19 Shazia?

**Shazia:** It is surely fair to say that with an increased speed of growth, we need to get better at anticipating events and crises and maintaining business continuity. Basically, activities at different layers of the supply chain need to be implemented to build long term resilience.

**Brigid:** So, in this sense COVID-19 has been a stress test. Unlike, what are the immediate changes you’ve had to make and the lessons you’ve learned?

**Ulrike:** One of the big lessons learnt has been to understand the connections between impacts on nature and human health. I credit SAI Platform with helping companies and members to understand this. I’m thinking in particular of the webinar with Jason Clay this year.

COVID-19 made it clear that it does matter if, for instance, the Irawaddy River Dolphin disappears. It could be a sign of something that’s going to affect humanity. This is a big learning point and something we need to take with us so we can do better.

In terms of immediate effects, we had to re-establish protecting our people as a priority. We’ve also had to adapt considerably in other ways.

**Brigid:** What were the immediate changes you had to make as a result of COVID-19 Shazia?

**Shazia:** There have also been changes in consumer demand. Early on, for example, our juice sales went through the roof while other products suffered. We had to work with suppliers to adapt to demand while navigating lockdowns, border closures and real disruptions to trade. This made it clear to us how much we need strong, connected supply chain relationships.

**Brigid:** Hans, could I have your views on interpreting the virus as a stress test as well as on what can and needs to be improved for the long-term?

**Hans:** One of the big lessons learnt has been to understand the connections between impacts on nature and human health. I credit SAI Platform with helping companies and members to understand this. I’m thinking in particular of the webinar with Jason Clay this year.

COVID-19 made it clear that it does matter if, for instance, the Irawaddy River Dolphin disappears. It could be a sign of something that’s going to affect humanity. This is a big learning point and something we need to take with us so we can do better.

In terms of immediate effects, we had to re-establish protecting our people as a priority. We’ve also had to adapt considerably in other ways.

**Brigid:** Hans, could I have your views on interpreting the virus as a stress test as well as on what can and needs to be improved for the long-term?

**Hans:** One of the big lessons learnt has been to understand the connections between impacts on nature and human health. I credit SAI Platform with helping companies and members to understand this. I’m thinking in particular of the webinar with Jason Clay this year.

COVID-19 made it clear that it does matter if, for instance, the Irawaddy River Dolphin disappears. It could be a sign of something that’s going to affect humanity. This is a big learning point and something we need to take with us so we can do better.

In terms of immediate effects, we had to re-establish protecting our people as a priority. We’ve also had to adapt considerably in other ways.

**Brigid:** Hans, could I have your views on interpreting the virus as a stress test as well as on what can and needs to be improved for the long-term?

**Hans:** One of the big lessons learnt has been to understand the connections between impacts on nature and human health. I credit SAI Platform with helping companies and members to understand this. I’m thinking in particular of the webinar with Jason Clay this year.

COVID-19 made it clear that it does matter if, for instance, the Irawaddy River Dolphin disappears. It could be a sign of something that’s going to affect humanity. This is a big learning point and something we need to take with us so we can do better.

In terms of immediate effects, we had to re-establish protecting our people as a priority. We’ve also had to adapt considerably in other ways.

**Brigid:** Hans, could I have your views on interpreting the virus as a stress test as well as on what can and needs to be improved for the long-term?

**Hans:** One of the big lessons learnt has been to understand the connections between impacts on nature and human health. I credit SAI Platform with helping companies and members to understand this. I’m thinking in particular of the webinar with Jason Clay this year.

COVID-19 made it clear that it does matter if, for instance, the Irawaddy River Dolphin disappears. It could be a sign of something that’s going to affect humanity. This is a big learning point and something we need to take with us so we can do better.

In terms of immediate effects, we had to re-establish protecting our people as a priority. We’ve also had to adapt considerably in other ways.

**Brigid:** Hans, could I have your views on interpreting the virus as a stress test as well as on what can and needs to be improved for the long-term?

**Hans:** One of the big lessons learnt has been to understand the connections between impacts on nature and human health. I credit SAI Platform with helping companies and members to understand this. I’m thinking in particular of the webinar with Jason Clay this year.

COVID-19 made it clear that it does matter if, for instance, the Irawaddy River Dolphin disappears. It could be a sign of something that’s going to affect humanity. This is a big learning point and something we need to take with us so we can do better.

In terms of immediate effects, we had to re-establish protecting our people as a priority. We’ve also had to adapt considerably in other ways.

**Brigid:** Hans, could I have your views on interpreting the virus as a stress test as well as on what can and needs to be improved for the long-term?
Hans: It’s really about what we can all do together. I think you have to start with the bigger picture: what is a resilient mid- or long-term food system composed of? What should we focus on? Then you drill down to the farm.

This comes back to what we’ve emphasised with SAI Platform – good agricultural practice and proven quality assurance. We look at the pain points, start to eliminate critical processes that are no longer acceptable and promote climate smart and regenerative agriculture. Then we drill down, crop by crop, production system by production system, region by region.

SAI Platform is in a very strong position here. We’re out in the fields so we know what’s going on. We have the outreach to change the processes of millions of farmers and the supply chains of our members.

Brigid: Ulrike?

Ulrike: How to make farmers more resilient is the heart of the matter, right? Here, I agree with Hans that SAI Platform is in a great position to help. Although all food companies have a different approach to their supply chain, they can come together with suppliers and arrive at a common point of view as to how to create resilience along with more productivity and income. Our role is to leverage our position, to support farmers and suppliers from the demand side while driving change. The second big challenge will be for all of us to figure out what to grow.

Climate change means that, for example, we won’t be able to grow coffee in the same areas we do today. We know that corn production in the USA and alfalfa in the south-west of the country, crops that are water intensive, will not be possible in the long-term. How do we adapt together? There’s a systemic change we need to move towards.

Brigid: And Shazia?

Shazia: In November I was part of the SAI Platform International Executive Programme on Sustainable Sourcing and Trade and I realised that Oatly doesn’t have a close connection with our farmers. A French farmer who was part of the Programme, who’s driving a lot of sustainability issues, said something along the lines of ‘Ask us what we need from you. How do you want to collaborate?’

Although I’m new to the food industry, sometimes I feel companies are pushing through initiatives and requirements without asking or talking to farmers or being out in the field with them. It appears to me that there’s no one size fits all. After all, they’re the people who know their land and crops and what they want to achieve. It should be a two-way process. And how can SAI Platform and its members help support them and make them more resilient?

Brigid: You’re not alone in saying that you feel distant from the farmer. Shazia. Farmers also tell us they feel distant from companies.

Hans: You’re absolutely right, Shazia. Every farmer’s situation is different, and you can’t normally compare one with the other. No matter how much we attempt to standardise quality, ingredients from farms that go into products will always be slightly different. Brand gurus miss the point a little when they emphasise consistency.

But, while we can’t and shouldn’t be overly concerned with consistency as long as we have quality, we should help train farmers on the big issues such as biodiversity. While making sure that everything we do is very local and married to the skills and competencies of the farmer. We should also be helping farmers to respond to consumer demand, acknowledging the trend away from animal proteins towards vegetable.

Brigid: I agree, the average consumer definitely wants to know where their food is coming from. Can I ask one last question: what do you think have been the opportunities arising out of everything we’ve faced this year?

Hans: Home consumption went up tremendously because restaurants were closed. People had more time to think about food. This gives us an opportunity to educate them which will, in turn, strengthen responsible brands.
SAI Platform ended 2020 in a healthy financial position with an operating reserve of circa €210K to carry into 2021. New member revenue grew by €156K which was lower than forecast but a good result, given the circumstances of the pandemic. This was coupled with strong member retention and a healthy pipeline of new members committed to joining in January 2021.

Expenditure on projects and activity in some areas was less than budgeted as progress was stalled where work on the ground was not possible due to travel restrictions. Exceptionally, we have made a provision for some of this funding to be carried over to 2021 and this is reflected in both general and project accruals.

We recruited two new team members in 2020 to manage the ERBS and provide administrative support.

In November 2020, the Secretariat and Working Group Chairs presented their budget requests to the Executive Committee. This provided a holistic view of the 2021 work programme and the requested funds. On this basis, the Executive Committee prioritised and allocated budget to ensure that the work programme reflects the requirements of a broad membership.

Over recent years the number of requests for funding continues to exceed available funds which is a positive development, but at the same time it creates challenges. For 2021, we have budgeted a shortfall in revenue versus expenditure of €185K and this will be offset by the operating reserve of €215K, leaving €30K at year end.

SAI Platform is financed for the most part by members’ annual membership fees. It is our responsibility to ensure that we maximise all resources and manage activity and expenditure in order to provide value to our members.

In order to address the demands for funding, we are continuously looking at new business models to finance our work, including external funding opportunities.

SAI Platform maintains a restructuring reserve to cover costs in the unlikely event of the organisation ceasing operations. The reserve is reviewed annually to ensure that it is in line with the growth of the organisation.

The financial statements for SAI Platform for the year ended 31 December 2020 were audited by Fiducaire TECAFIN SA, Geneva, Switzerland.
Annual Report 2020

saiplatform.org