

# Sustainable food consumption and production in a resource-constrained world. Freibauer et al., 2011

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**T**he Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR) is a European Union organization supposed to provide effective coordination about agricultural research policies. It is composed by 37 representatives from the European Unions members. Its main mission is to help and/or orientate a global research strategy in agriculture across EU. The first report they wrote identified scenarios predicting evolution of fossil fuel and bioresources, while the second one looked at the social forces that are implicated in agro systems. Here is a brief analyze of the third foresight they broadcasted in February 2011. This report focus about the sustainability of agriculture during the next century. It discusses the transition of our conventional system towards a sustainable one in a resource-constrained world. To do this it aims to provide long term perspectives to guide agricultural research in the EU.

The main purpose of the report is the opposition of two narratives that aim to provide a sustainable scenario. The first one is the *Productivity narrative*, in which economic growth is the only way forward for human development. Issues such as social inequality, resource scarcities and pollution are not ignored, but rather are considered as constraints, thus ignoring the underlying complexity of socioecological systems. Concretely, it predicts that cropland areas would be subject to massive intensification to prevent further extension into forests and other natural ecosystems. This assumption might seem correct when examining the global level of production, consumption and resources use, but when looking at the processes at stake, there is no evidence that intensification can lead to halting of the extension of cropland.

The other one is called *Sufficiency narrative*. It assumes that we can have both productive, respectful of ecosystems and resource saving agro-systems. However, to stay within the capacity of system Earth, demand increases need to be mitigated through behavioral change and more regulated trades. The Sufficiency Narrative's main assumption is that there are limits to growth imposed by the Earth's finite resources and by the vulnerability of its ecosystems that provide essential services to mankind. It believes that agro-ecological innovations and behavioral changes are sufficient conditions to meet the world's food demand in 2050. It calls for a diversification of research questions in agronomic research, reintroducing ecology in agronomic sciences. At the same time, this narrative supports a change in lifestyle to drastically reduce our ecological footprint, particularly by eating less red meat. The narrative also implies increased participation and dialogue between citizens and actors at all levels of the agro-food system.

However, an important uncertainty remains in the impact of climate change and resource scarcity that could put limits to the ability to reach potential productivity levels. Moreover, it seems impossible to produce a synthesis by only taking a mid-term position, mixing one with the other.

As a conclusion, this report underlines clearly that a new vision for agriculture is required to guarantee long-term food security. In order to have more details about the concrete plans, the conclusion section of the report illustrate the most important points in their eyes.