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# Editorial: Organizational and consumption perspectives on sustainable food culture

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## Editorial on the Research Topic

Organizational and consumption perspectives on sustainable food culture

Sustainable food culture and its role in encouraging a more resilient food system is gaining increasing attention in the scientific community and beyond (Ota et al., 2022). This cultural shift reflects a growing awareness of the environmental, social, and economic impacts of food production and consumption. This promotes the importance of sourcing local and seasonal food from nearby farms and producers, reducing transportation and associated emissions, and supporting local economies. Seasonal food, in turn, reflects a connection to the rhythms of nature and reduces the need for energy-intensive storage and preservation techniques. As a result, sustainable food culture seeks to stimulate practices that are ecologically sound, socially responsible, economically viable, and which promote a greater community resilience.

Another important aspect of sustainable food culture is the move toward plant-based diets. Meat and dairy production are resource-intensive and contribute significantly to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, land use, and water consumption. By reducing meat and dairy consumption, individuals can significantly reduce their carbon footprint and promote more sustainable land use practices.

The present Research Topic on *Organizational and Consumption Perspectives on Sustainable Food Culture* aims to advance knowledge in this area. The collection includes four papers which raise issues at both micro, meso and macro level. According to the paper by Matschoss (2022), conscious consumption practices and a significant consumer behavior impact can be achieved by encouraging consumers to make informed choices and adopt sustainable consumption habits. This will lead to reduced food waste and promote sustainable production practices. To reduce GHG emissions from food chain, people should increase their share of plant-based diet and minimize food disposal.

Generally, research in this area has shown it is commendable that governments are taking measures to reduce GHG emissions from food production; many people are already taking individual steps to reduce their carbon footprint. Often, consumers start by cutting out meat and then move on to reducing their dairy from their diet. This shift in dietary habits is motivated by various factors, including concerns about animal welfare and personal

health, as well as a desire to reduce one's impact on the environment. While policy makers' support can certainly help promote sustainable food practices, it is important to recognize that individuals can also make a difference through their own choices and actions.

The second paper by [Autio et al. \(2023\)](#) finds the use of milk to be the second resource intensive food, right after meat. Dairy production is one of the main sources of GHG emissions that cause climate change. The consumption of liquid milk in Western European countries and the US is declining, but the consumption of other dairy products, such as cheese and sour-milk products, is increasing. Through qualitative data, the study analyzes how consumers narrate their detachment from using milk and justify their ongoing use of dairy products. The results show that consumers start their dietary change by first reducing eating meat, followed by milk. However, giving up milk is more challenging than giving up meat in everyday practices. The study argues that the declining use of fluid milk contributes to the reduced dairy influence of eating habits, but obstacles remain in reducing the consumption of other dairy products.

The third paper by [De Groot \(2022\)](#) finds there is a growing number of individuals who are adopting plant-based diets, either completely or partially, for ethical, health, or environmental reasons. It is also important that the most effective messages are developed and communicated to achieve wider public's change in behavior. This research suggests that dynamic normative messages, which highlight an increasing minority of people performing desirable behavior, are more effective when framed as a loss rather than a gain. De Groot's study suggests this simple change in message will encourage people to cut down meat consumption.

The last paper by [Ota et al. \(2022\)](#) argues that a region can address its food system by engaging with local stakeholders who are involved in the food supply chain. This can be achieved through a collaborative approach that involves identifying the key challenges facing the region's food system, as well as the opportunities for improvement. There is a need for a co-evolution and co-creation approach to address the sustainability of local food systems, which requires continuous cooperation and participation from different community sectors. Secondary effects of citizen surveys on food systems and how they can cultivate conditions for co-evolution were examined. A 6-months "transition seminar" organized by high school students in Japan, aimed to transform the local food system in the Noshiro area. The seminar had positive long-term impacts on the participants' understanding and ability to reflect on the food system and policies, and it also led to increased interest and networking among stakeholders. The authors suggest that citizen surveys can support collaboration and participation between different community sectors and spaces for mutual learning, thereby contributing to the co-evolution of local food systems.

To conclude – organizational and consumption perspectives are essential in promoting sustainable food culture. By

implementing sustainable practices at every stage of the food value chain, organizations, regions, and countries can reduce their carbon footprint and promote environmental stewardship. Therefore, food is a key to improving human and ecosystem health: through choices, both personal and global, significant inputs can be given to change food systems, from production to consumption, and make them more inclusive, healthier and more sustainable, adapted to real human needs and the limits of our planet. Overall, sustainable food culture is a multifaceted and evolving concept that encompasses a range of practices and values. By promoting local and seasonal food, reducing meat and dairy consumption, and emphasizing the social and economic impacts of food production, sustainable food culture seeks to create a more resilient food system. As this cultural shift continues to gain momentum, it has the potential to catalyze significant changes in the way we produce, distribute, and consume food, and contribute to a more sustainable and just future for all.

## Author contributions

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct, and intellectual contribution to the work and approved it for publication.

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