

The World Food Law Institute's 2020 Symposium



“Transforming Food Loss into Commercial and Nutritious Products: Innovations, Collaborations for Creative Financing and Supportive Legal Approaches”

The World Food Law Institute's 2020 Symposium was a virtual event “Transforming Food Loss into Commercial and Nutritious Products: Innovations, Collaborations for Creative Financing and Supportive Legal Approaches”. In 2019-2020 the Institute introduced its Food Loss and Food Waste Round Table Series and invited representatives of FAO, IFAD, local Embassies and US and international non-profits to discuss several basics like definitions, concerns about food waste, case studies and recent reports. The 2020 Symposium was co-hosted with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

The World Food Law Institute (Institute) decided that its 2020 Symposium should be forward thinking, focus on food loss, and explore creative and positive solutions. It reached out to existing and new collaborators from multilateral institutions, national governments and local Embassy Agricultural Attaches, international businesses and U.S. and overseas non-governmental organizations, as we developed a Symposium with the multidisciplinary approach that is an Institute hallmark.

The opening remarks for the Symposium were provided by Daniel Gustafson, FAO's former Deputy Director- General and current Special Adviser to the FAO Director-General. He offered a holistic picture of past and future FAO and international initiatives related to food security, creativity and international collaborations. Dan had been helpful in adding experts to the agenda. He described the independent voice on food law and policy provided by The World Food Law Institute, with which he is familiar. Dan's opening was booked by the closing remarks of Ambassador Hans Hoogeveens of the Netherlands Embassy in Geneva, a leader in international discussions about food loss, food waste and other aspects of food policy. He challenged the food community and lawyers to think more creatively about appropriate and helpful legal solutions to food loss.

At the Symposium three Panels reflected the Institute's forward-looking approach to food loss challenges (examples of innovative transformations, supportive legal approaches and creative financing). On the first Panel experts from USDA, Cargill and D.C. Central Kitchen illustrated the innovative ways in which the food sector is initiating creative approaches to transforming food loss into useful commercial and nutrition products. The Legal Counsel of FAO and the General Counsel of IFAD (both U.N. bodies) led the second panel and explained the basics of their institution's approach to food security, meeting the Sustainable Development Goals and case studies

about their work related to addressing food loss. The final Panel presented a novel consideration - collaborations for finding financing solutions to food loss challenges. The Panel brought together experts with varied backgrounds and expertise, again joining a multilateral institution (The World Bank), an international business (Mars) and a non-governmental organization (SOLAAL France). Geeta Sethi, co-author of the recent World Bank publication, “Addressing Food Loss and Waste: A Global Problem with Local Solutions” , offered her usual insightful contribution to the discussion.

An Agricultural Counselor or Attache concluded each Panel by adding a valuable national perspective from around the world (Ghana, Canada, and the Philippines).

The World Food Law Institute began its Symposiums in 2004 and has addressed topics as varied as food security and biodiversity, cooperatives, and food standards, among others. Most Symposiums are presented by the Institute in its independent capacity, while a few are collaborations like the 2020 Symposium held with FAO. The Institute decides each year whether and with which organizations to collaborate.

Look for the Institute’s Report about the Symposium *Three Keys to Transforming Food Loss into Commercial and Nutritious Products: Innovations, Collaborations for Creative Financing and Supportive Legal Approaches*, which will be available online in January 2021.