Collaboration Needed to Achieve Sustainable Food Systems
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Solutions from the Land (SfL) has reviewed the EAT-Lancet report released earlier this week in Oslo. The report calls for a "radical transformation of the global food system," including an overhaul of food production systems.

In issuing the report, the EAT-Lancet Commission on Food, Planet, Health attempts to offer a path forward for consumer diets and the food-production system. However, wholesale, fundamental changes to agriculture as it exists today cannot be undertaken without fearlessly confronting the challenges and opportunities uniquely understood by farmers and livestock producers.

For over a decade, SfL has championed the call for transformational change to build a more resilient food system. However, SfL questions EAT-Lancet's conclusions, which underscore the report's key shortcoming: a failure to engage farmers or others who work the land in putting together this assessment.

With the global population jumping nearly 30 percent – up to nearly 9 billion people – by mid-century, maintaining and expanding the capacity of agriculture to help meet sustainable development goals is critical. These results cannot be achieved by shutting down agricultural systems or prescribing food choices, as the EAT-Lancet report advocates. The transformational change demanded by the current food system is one which elevates farmers as stewards and searches for tools, incentives, and markets to enable the solutions which the land can provide.

While we recognize the need for improvement, the report fails to acknowledge the massive technological advances and land management practices, made under historic pressures, that agriculture has been adopting for decades. These practices have enabled greater productivity to meet sharply growing demand for nutritious foods, while using fewer resources, including land, water and inputs.

We should not confuse the capacity to create abundance with poor choices. The question is "What is needed to enable even greater efficiency, nutrition and environmental outcomes?" SfL understands that answers and solutions will be provided by centering on the voices of those who produce our food, feed, fiber and energy.

The evolution and improvement of agriculture through "climate smart" systems and precision management should be promoted to reduce hunger and malnutrition during exponential population growth; improve soil, water and air quality; enhance biodiversity and ensure
ecosystem health, all while delivering the high-priority carbon sequestration, mitigation and adaptation solutions for a changing climate.

SfL acknowledges that there are many diverging perspectives on what best benefits people and the planet. Our view is that a system-wide approach is needed, informed by a broader group of food systems stakeholders, that considers factors beyond what is addressed in this report.

SfL stands ready to participate and contribute to the dialogue on pathways to improve nutrition, public health and the planet through integrated management solutions that farmers, ranchers and foresters can deliver from the land.