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Sustainable agri-food value chains: state of the art and results of empirical surveys

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The transition towards sustainable agri-food systems in Italy is one of the most critical challenges and requires targeted interventions across the value chain.

In continuity with the final workshop, of the ONFOODS Project “Global Sustainability state of the art and perspectives of food value chains -results of empirical analysis”, held on 12 December 2025, this Special Issue explores potential interventions that can be implemented in the food production and food distribution stages, with aim of enhancing environmental, economic resilience, and social sustainability within the Italian agri-food systems.

Production, transformation, and distribution in the food value chain play a pivotal role in shaping the overall environmental footprint, economic viability, and social impact of agri-food systems. Enhancing sustainability in these domains is therefore essential to achieving long-term resilience, food security, and responsible resource management. In this broader context, embedding sustainable practices across the entire value chain has emerged as a strategic priority for researchers, policymakers, the food industry, and civil society."

Agri-food value chains are inherently complex systems, characterized by multiple actors, asymmetric power relationships, high levels of uncertainty, and strong interdependencies between environmental, economic, and social dimensions. Addressing sustainability within these systems requires integrated approaches that combine theoretical advancements with empirical evidence.

This Special Issue, *Sustainable Agri-Food Value Chains: State of the Art and Results of Empirical Surveys*, aims to provide an updated overview of current research on sustainability in food production and distribution, and to present empirical evidence from surveys, case studies, and quantitative analyses.

The topics of interest align with the overarching themes of Spoke 1 ONFOODS, “*Global Sustainability: Fair Food Market for Healthy Citizens*”. This Special Issue welcomes contributions presented during the final workshop ONFOODS Spoke 1 “Global Sustainability state of the art and perspectives of food value chains - results of empirical analysis” addressing sustainability across the entire food value chain, encompassing all stages of the system, including food production, processing, distribution, consumption, consumer perception, and governance models. Submissions may adopt multidisciplinary approaches and explore economic, social, environmental, and policy-related dimensions of sustainable food systems.

By combining state-of-the-art literature reviews with survey-based analyses and case studies, this Special Issue seeks to bridge the gap between conceptual frameworks and operational implementation.

Through this focused perspective, the collection aims to advance scientific knowledge while offering actionable insights for producers, distributors, policymakers, and other stakeholders committed to fostering more sustainable and resilient agri-food supply chains.

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