

How do we become champions for transforming agri-food systems?

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The sustainable intensification of agri-food systems will play a prominent role in the new sustainable development agenda. The big unknown is how to set and achieve concrete, multiple targets associated with the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in what order of priority. New technologies should allow engineering transformative changes along the whole food chain and for the growing bioeconomy. However, political, economic and social drivers and constraints often seem to go against enabling faster development and wider adoption of new technologies. Countries and businesses will need to develop suitable roadmaps for achieving specific targets, which also presents new opportunities and challenges for the research community, including modellers. On one hand, models will need to increasingly address whole bioeconomy chains in order to identify the right entry points for technological and other interventions. On the other hand, modelling approaches need to be transparent and simple in order to communicate results and recommendations in the right language and using indicators that are of direct relevance for policy setting and decision making. Agricultural scientists, including modellers, will need to think differently and also change their ways of working in order to meet these new demands and have more impact from their research.