

WRC Webinar: World Food Day Dialogue “Post Covid-19: strengthening indigenous food systems for more sustainable, equitable and healthy food systems.”

Date: 16 October 2020 | Time: 09:00

Venue: Zoom

BACKGROUND

World Food Day is observed every year on 16 October in remembrance of the day when the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations was founded in 1945. The primary focus is to tackle global hunger and strive to eradicate hunger across the world. In 2020, the World Food Day will fall on a Friday. The day is celebrated by all UN member states, which includes South Africa. The World Food Day is linked to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Based on several research conducted across the globe including work done by the Water Research Commission (WRC) less time is spent preparing meals at home, and consumers living in urban areas, increasingly rely on supermarkets, fast food outlets, street food vendors and take – away restaurants. As a result of the above-mentioned factors unhealthy diets and sedentary lifestyles have sent obesity rates soaring not only in developed countries but also in low -income countries, where hunger and obesity often coexist. Based on the FAO statistics at least over 670 million adults and 120 million girls and boys (5-19 years) are obese and over 40 million children under 5 are overweight, while over 820 million people suffer from hunger. For the past 49 years the WRC has been generating knowledge on food security & nutrition and health with its key strategic partners. The WRC has decided to join the global community to host the World Food Day dialogue in order to share results, findings and recommendations generated by the organisation on issues related food security, nutrition and health. The majority of these projects are linked to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 of the United Nations (UN) which deals with zero hunger.

This year, World Food Day is being celebrated in the backdrop of the ongoing covid-19 pandemic. The shocks that have been sent within the global food system by the pandemic have exposed the fragility and vulnerability of the global food system. In South Africa, owing to the historical imbalances of apartheid, people in rural and peri-urban areas have been disproportionately affected, and their coping mechanisms were put to the test. This has also brought to the fore, the need to strengthen and promote local food systems as part of transitioning to more sustainable, equitable and inclusive healthy systems. The WRC has over the years funded research and development aimed at strengthening household food security through strengthening local food systems. This conversation now needs to be brought to the fore as we start to emerge from the covid-19 and plan a post covid-19 society. A major part of this conversation has to look at strengthening indigenous crops and food systems as part of transforming food systems and addressing underlying inequalities in the current food system.

Based on these ongoing challenges, the Water Research Commission (WRC) together with its partners which is Centre for Transformative Agricultural and Food Systems of the University of KwaZulu – Natal, the Agricultural Research Council and

the Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development (DALRRD) have decided to host a dialogue as part of the World Food Day celebrations on the 16th October 2020. The event had originally been planned to be held at the University of KwaZulu – Natal, but will now be hosted as a virtual event due to ongoing covid-19 lockdown restrictions. We would like to invite you to attend this dialogue as part of World Food Day celebration on the 16 October 2020. Your attendance and contributions to the discussions on this day will add much value to the research and development initiatives that are undertaken as part of our research and development initiatives.

The aim of the dialogue or workshop is: (a) To exchange and share ideas with stakeholders as part of World Food Day event, (b) Share, disseminate research findings and also highlight some of the work done by the WRC based on several research projects completed by the WRC on food security, nutrition and health”.

Webinar Programme

Facilitator: Prof Sylvester Mpandeli

Time	Content	Presenter
09:00 – 10:05	Welcome and introductions	WRC
Sharing experiences		
09:05 – 09:20	Post Covid-19: A water-energy-food nexus perspective for South Africa	Dhesigen Naidoo
09:20 – 09:35	Indigenous crops as part of a transformative agenda: a focus on strengthening local food systems	Prof Albert Modi
09:35 – 09:50	Building food and nutrition security at local levels: a case study of a school garden project in Gauteng	Dr Hintsá Araya
09:50 – 10:05	Inherent resilience of indigenous food systems: the case of under-valued indigenous knowledge	Prof Victor Mmbengwa & Prof Fhatuwani Mudau
10:05 – 10:20	The future of food: understanding the potential of indigenous crops, a lifetime’s experiences	Prof Sue Walker
Discussion		
10:20 – 10:50	General discussion	All participants
10:50 – 11:00	Closure	Prof Tafadzwa Mabhaudhi