

OMNI-ACTION LAUNCH

Tim Lang talk

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I want to focus our attention on why Omni-Action is calling for a new Framework on food, and why this is essential for consumers to be brought into urgently needed process of food systems change. A Framework is the pragmatic way to get more people and interest groups onto the same page. Or, to put it simply, a Framework is the hook on which we hang all the various arguments for change we have.

I see 10 reasons for Omni-Action's call for a framework:

1. A framework is 'code' for getting a NEW CONSENSUS / NEW BASELINE FOR WHAT IS REQUIRED FROM THE FOOD SYSTEM.
2. The criteria for judging 'good food' and a 'good food system' are complex. Lots of benchmarks need to be pulled together.
3. The public interest requires a simple, accountable & coherent system.
4. A public framework is needed to stop food information being a commercial fight-out. (There's a danger that labels become brand protection rather than consumer information!).
5. A Framework is the right organising goal. It's the pragmatic way to get more people and more sectional interest groups onto the same page.

6. The challenges to the food system are already clear and known. These big issues need to be the new benchmarks and include: ingredients, health, enviro (climate, Biodiv, H2O, soil etc), methods of production, economic fairness (pay, labour conditions)
7. Frameworks can be achieved at national level but also need international agreement as food crosses borders. Calling for a Framework Agreement allows countries to come up with what they can do politically.
8. A Framework allows different modes for information transfer. Omni-Action is taking liberal capitalism at its word, that consumers have the right to be informed. We are saying: ok but about what? Here's what we think....
9. The old blocks on massive extension of information flow were that it was technically impossible or commercially confidential. These don't pass the laugh test today. What consumers need to know is complex but doable with technology: QR codes, disclosure.
10. At the EU level, this must be part of the Farm to Fork strategy which specifically calls for consumers to be engaged. Well how can they be engaged unless they know?

Thanks

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