

Connected Markets: Agrobiodiversity

Supply Chain Action Cards

How much do you know about
the ingredients you source?





Get Connected Action Cards

Connected Markets: Agrobiodiversity was developed by FACT (Food, Agrobiodiversity, Clarity, and Transparency), an initiative of Green Brown Blue. This food systems solutions accelerator brings together food companies, NGOs, scientists, entrepreneurs, and food producers from across the globe to tackle some of the most complex challenges facing our food systems. Instead of an accelerator for startups or new products, these groups design, rapidly prototype, and release ideas for change every six months.

Green Brown Blue is produced by The Lexicon, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Petaluma, USA.

To learn more about Green Brown Blue, FACT, and Connected Markets: Agrobiodiversity, contact info@greenbrownblue.com.



Promote Healthy Soils

What can you ask your supplier?

- Do you support producers who grow a diversity of crops?
- Do you support producers who practice conservation tillage?
- Do you support producers who use agroforestry methods?
- Do you support producers who use agroecological methods?
- Do you support producers who use no or limited synthetic pesticides or herbicides?
- Do you support producers who use no or limited synthetic fertilizers?
- Do you support producers who use cover crops?
- Do you support training in healthy soil practices for producers?

To learn more go to: www.greenbrownblue.com/agrobiodiversity/



How is it connected to agrobiodiversity?

In a time of unpredictable climate, environmental, and economic change, farmers who follow agroecological practices — which include planting a range of diverse crops — can build soil organic matter, protect and restore the environment, safeguard their water supplies, and improve the quality of the air we all breathe.



Support Conservation of Genetic and Natural Resources

What can you ask your supplier?

- Do your producers have access to seed sharing systems?
- Do you support producers that practice on-farm conservation / cultivation of neglected and underutilized crops?
- Do you support producers that cultivate traditional varieties of crops?
- Do you support producers who support on-farm biodiversity?
- Can you support capacity-building for producers related to the conservation and sustainable use of genetic materials?

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How is it connected to agrobiodiversity?

A key aspect of increasing agrobiodiversity is the conservation and stewardship of genetic resources, including seeds and germplasm. Conservation also includes supporting farmers who store, plant and conserve their own seeds for future use, not only for themselves, but to safeguard the genetic heritage of their crops for generations to come.



Uphold Resilient Land Use Practices

What can you ask your supplier?

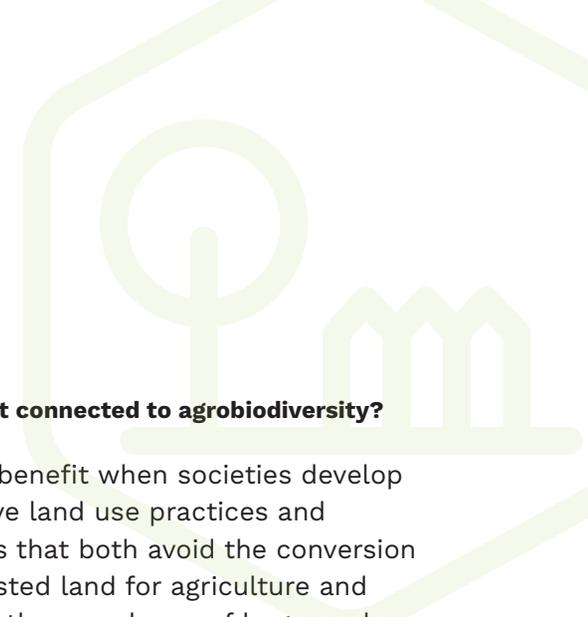
- Do you support producers who use agroforestry practices?
- Do you support producers who have diversified farming systems?
- Do you support producers that practice forest conservation?
- Do you collaborate with communities and third parties to provide incentives for landscape restoration and land access?

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How is it connected to agrobiodiversity?

We all benefit when societies develop effective land use practices and policies that both avoid the conversion of forested land for agriculture and reduce the prevalence of large-scale monoculture farming systems. Farmers can also do their part by utilizing diversified cropping systems and other sustainable regenerative production methods that build resilience.



Increase Resilience to Climate Change, Economic Fluctuations and Shocks

What can you ask your supplier?

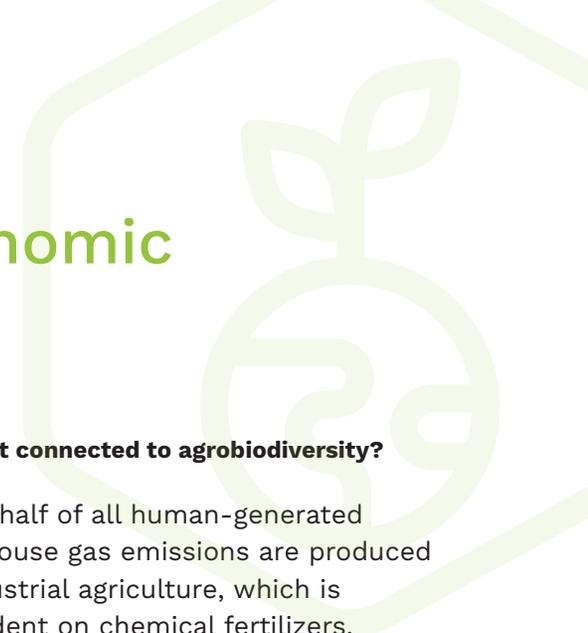
- Do you purchase this ingredient directly from the producer?
- How many purchasers do you purchase this ingredient from?
- Do you promote access to credit and banking programs for your producers?
- Do you support your producers in transitioning to the use of renewable energy?
- Do you support your producers in implementing carbon sequestration programs?
- Do you support farmer training programs for your producers?

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How is it connected to agrobiodiversity?

Nearly half of all human-generated greenhouse gas emissions are produced by industrial agriculture, which is dependent on chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and petroleum-reliant farm techniques. When food companies source ingredients from farmers using climate smart practices, they are also investing in their own businesses' adaptability and prosperity.



Enhance Livelihoods for Women

What can you ask your supplier?

- How many women are involved in the production of this product?
- Do you pay women producers directly?
- Do you support the provision of education and training for women producers?
- How many women are in positions of power inside your company?

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How is it connected to agrobiodiversity?

Diversity on farms translates into a wider variety of outputs, activities, and food products. Providing opportunities for women farmers, especially in growing regionally adapted and nutritious crops, often improves household livelihoods. This makes their empowerment of critically important for improving agricultural productivity and rural development.



Ensure Knowledge Sharing

What can you ask your supplier?

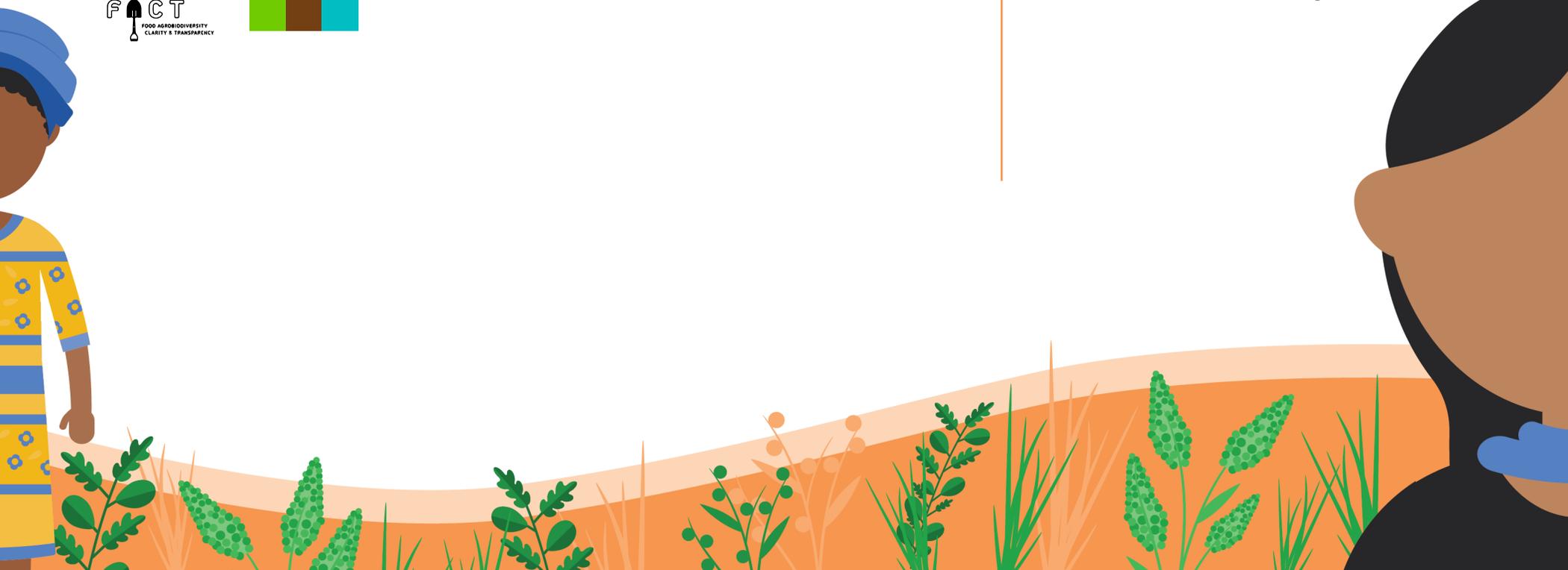
- Do you support the provision of training and education opportunities for your producers?
- Can producers access seeds and appropriate technology?
- Do you support partnerships with universities or research centers for the benefit of producers?

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How is it connected to agrobiodiversity?

The extensive, place-based practices used in diversified farming systems create opportunities for cooperation and knowledge sharing among farmers and within communities. Knowledge sharing keeps traditional farming practices alive; by planting traditionally diverse, bio-regionally adapted crops, farmers protect their cultural and natural resources while increasing their resilience to climate change.-



Empower Youth

What can you ask your supplier?

- Do you support youth producers in accessing education and training?
- Do you support producer cooperatives, unions or groups?

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How is it connected to agrobiodiversity?

In most regions of the world, the average age of farmers is nearly 60. A food production system founded on diversity, education, and knowledge-sharing can provide youth with the tools to become decision makers in their communities and gain better working opportunities across the whole supply chain.



Promote Nutrient Security

What can you ask your supplier?

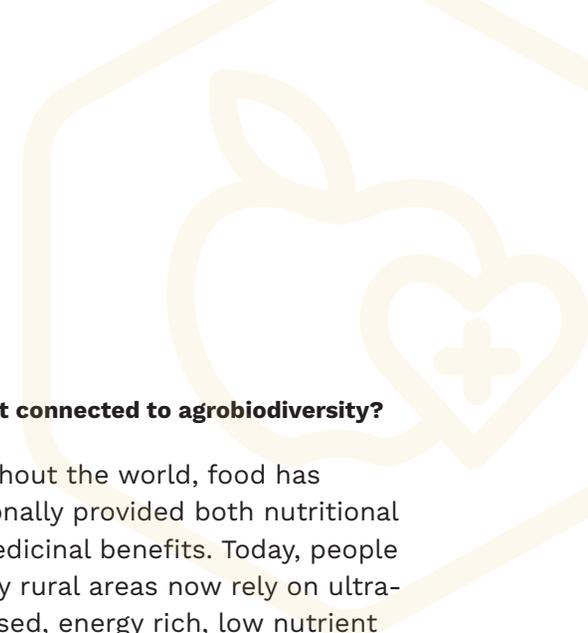
- Are your producers food secure?
- Do they have access to fresh, nutritious and culturally appropriate food?
- Do your producers consume the product they provide you?

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How is it connected to agrobiodiversity?

Throughout the world, food has traditionally provided both nutritional and medicinal benefits. Today, people in many rural areas now rely on ultra-processed, energy rich, low nutrient diets. By selecting more diverse ingredients, food purchasers can encourage the production of more nutritious crops that also benefit the communities where they are grown. Doing so will improve local health outcomes and provide greater food security.



Create Business and Job Opportunities Along the Value Chain

What can you ask your supplier?

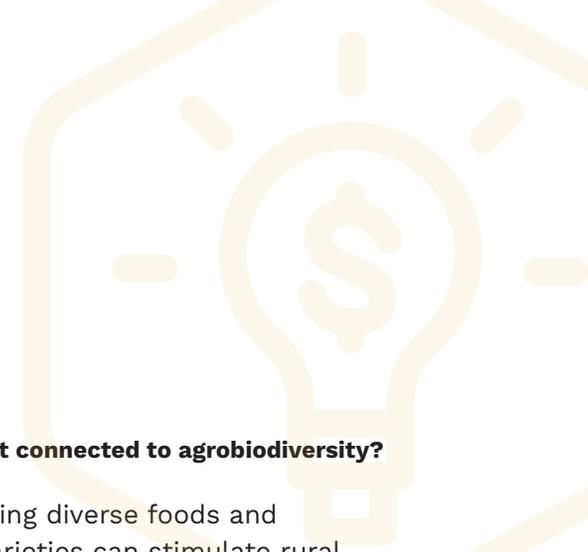
- Do you have full traceability of this product?
- Do you support any benefit-sharing mechanisms throughout your value chain?
- Do you practice fair trade and ensure equitable contracts?

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How is it connected to agrobiodiversity?

Producing diverse foods and crop varieties can stimulate rural development and lead to the creation of value-added products that build markets, attract new investments, and support local economies. These opportunities also build skills and knowledge for food preparation, processing, and the marketing of more innovative products.



Protect Indigenous and Local Cultures

What can you ask your supplier?

- Are you developing the recipes for your products? Are you recognizing any kind of royalty/right to the indigenous people?
- Are local farming practices respected and used in this crop's production?
- Is the crop eaten by the farmers and local communities/consumers?
- Are local communities involved in decision making about marketing/trade knowledge of the crops?

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How is it connected to agrobiodiversity?

Throughout the world, food production and consumption patterns play an important role in establishing, expressing, and celebrating diverse cultures. When people lose their native foods, they also lose a key part of their culture. In celebrating the diversity of traditional foods, communities connect not only with their each other, but also themselves.



Length of the Supply Chain

BONUS

What can you ask your supplier?

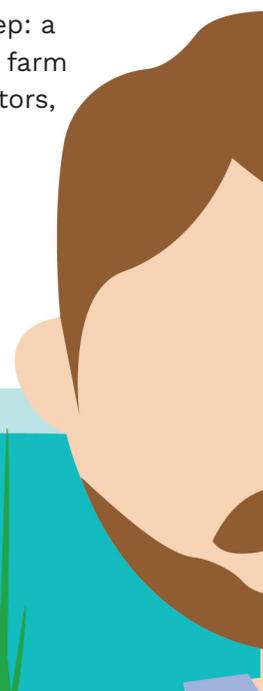
- How many intermediaries handle your ingredient before it reaches me?
- How far does the ingredient travel to reach me?
- How much is the producer paid for this?

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How is it connected to agrobiodiversity?

Longer supply chains are not inherently wrong. They are just more prone to become blind. Having a long supply chain usually means that products change several hands before reaching the final buyer. All these steps decrease the visibility over the whole chain and give actors the perception of being, paradoxically, isolated. Single nodes of a big faceless and hostile network that is centered on the buyers - who are therefore unaware of what happens in the borders. Not to talk about carbon footprint and their vulnerability when facing a global crisis (e.g. 2020's Covid19 Crisis). Short Food Supply Chains instead have the potential to improve farm incomes, promote sustainable farming systems, and contribute to local economic development*, while bringing actors closer to each other. This proximity fosters collaboration among them, widen the availability of product range to consumers and creates a more supportive network for the small scale farmers and local enterprises. Decentralization is then the next step: a supply chain that no more extracts value (with one direction, from farm to factory, from edges to a center) but spreads it among all the actors, creating new connections and therefore prosperity.



Transparency Programs

BONUS

What can you ask your supplier?

- How are you attesting the truthfulness of the practices you are claiming to use?
- What data about your activity are you assessing?
- Why did you choose this transparency practice instead of another one?

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How is it connected to agrobiodiversity?

Food companies often lack resources or tools for evaluating novel crops, ingredients, and/or products for purchase for various uses. Due to this deficit of universally agreed upon information supply chains often remain “blind” leading to environmental and nutritional problems. Increasing transparency can enable food companies, consumers and investors to have trustworthy information about the supply chain, including food production practices, and gain added value for sustainably-grown products that support biodiversity. Likewise, food producers can gain important advantages if they also have access to transparent information about the whole supply chain and effective methods for benefit-sharing with farmers, producers and value chain stakeholders. Transparency replace the trust that in long food systems (and supply chains) cannot be easily built. Not all transparency programs are the same: we can find programs of internal audit/self assessment, in which one has to trust the company that the shared information is true; third party certifications, in which an external organization acts as a guarantor of truthfulness of a company’s claims; and more complex blockchain based systems, in which immutable data about practices are fully accessible to the whole chain, and the truthfulness is guaranteed by the design of the platform itself.



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