



American Heart Association®

Healthy for Good™

# FIFTH ANNUAL FOODSCAPE INNOVATION™ SUMMIT



Kroger is a national sponsor of  
the American Heart Association's  
Healthy for Good™ initiative.



# Executive Summary

Each year, the American Heart Association convenes a broad array of food system voices to explore innovative, forward-thinking and evidence-based opportunities for collective action that will transform our food system and achieve nutrition security for all. The **AHA's Fifth Annual Foodscape Innovation Summit** occurred on June 18, 2020, followed by targeted breakout sessions held on July 9, 2020. About 90 representatives from government agencies, academic institutions, nonprofit organizations, health associations and the food industry participated.

The simultaneous impact of the global pandemic and illumination of systemic racism in early 2020 created a unique backdrop for the summit, leading to discussions about the realities of the food system, public health, disparities in health and food access, and how consumers think about and experience food. The summit's agenda focused on nutrition insecurity, exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic, as well as industry innovations for a healthier food ecosystem. Attendees were challenged to consider ways to elevate racial and ethnic diversity and inclusion as a food ecosystem priority. Award-winning singer/songwriter Jewel also shared her personal journey from homelessness to well-being through song and meditation.

## **DISCUSSION THEMES**

The COVID-19 pandemic effects were still unfolding at the time of the Summit, creating unexpected and unprecedented stress on an already strained food system. The health and economic fallout of COVID-19 was disproportionately affecting the Black, Latinx, and economically disadvantaged individuals and communities and was amplifying and exacerbating nutrition insecurity and the risks of a poor diet. More people were identifying health as a priority in food decisions, tempered by increased stress and other competing priorities.

While nutrition insecurity emerged as a pandemic reality for some, it was noted to be a lifelong or even generational reality for too many people. It fuels a cycle of poor health, both physically and mentally. On the other hand, nutrition security provides not only nutrition, but also enjoyment, social connection, and cultural expression. Food, health, and well-being are interconnected.

Creating solutions that serve the health of all people as well as the environment, has been demonstrated by industry leaders to be good for business, although challenging. Dedicating attention to consumer demands (e.g., enjoyment, health, price, convenience), removing barriers to access for individuals and communities, and disrupting usual business practices are some of the difficult and necessary actions needed. Technology can serve as a bridge to behavior change and increased access, and also facilitate best practice sharing system-level solutions.

Both collaboration and diversity are essential. A systems approach highlights necessary action at all levels, including those that require collaboration, and requires attention to the needs of the system, as well as the sectors, organizations, and people in the system. Solutions will be more effective when developed in collaboration with the individuals and communities that they are intended to serve. To that end, diversity amongst food system stakeholders is necessary for the system to serve a diverse population.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

There was broad agreement that we must pursue and embrace changes in our food system by learning from where we have been and where we are now; collaborating to rebuild together; and using research, technology, and a people-centered approach to do so.

**Learn:** Examine systems within the food system to align sector- and organization-specific actions, with the overarching goal of a healthy food ecosystem. Use crisis-response simulation models to harness lessons learned from the pandemic. Study existing coalitions, movements, and other industries. Balance serving the interests of organizations and those of people thereby redefining profitability.

**Collaborate:** Build and continually cultivate trust. Elevate nutrition security and a healthy food ecosystem as national priorities. Reframe the approach to food systems change to focus on well-being across social, emotional, economic, physical, and planetary factors for those who are fed by and work in the system. Create a common agenda and action plan by breaking down silos between sectors and between efforts to address separate but related issues. Build inclusive collaborations.

**Transform communities:** Build a platform for sharing best practices. Build community-centered partnerships and use them to inform interventions around the country. Remove food and healthcare access issues at points of purchase and points of care. Invest in education and in building skills.

**Advance research:** Coordinate across sectors. Conduct implementation and translation research to inform efforts to influence consumer behavior. Leverage existing research. Develop models for collaboration. Collect best practices systematically to facilitate analysis, research and evidence-based efforts.

**Transform communication with people:** Focus on people. Leverage current momentum to develop common messaging among stakeholders. Embrace cultural and personal relevance and offer bite-sized, actionable tips. Reframe health. Address misinformation. Empower health professional “ambassadors” (such as physicians and dietitians). Expand the use of technology platforms to support people.

# Summary Report

The annual **American Heart Association Foodscape Innovation Summit** serves as an opportunity to convene multi-sector food system voices and delve into innovative, forward-thinking, and evidence-based opportunities for collective action to transform the food system toward nutrition security for all. **The Fifth Annual Foodscape Innovation Summit**, held on June 18, 2020, focused on nutrition security, related disparities and inequities, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as innovation aimed towards a healthier food ecosystem. Award-winning singer/songwriter, Jewel, shared her personal journey from homelessness to well-being through song and meditation. Participants returned on July 9, 2020 to participate in breakout groups that explored the potential to harness knowledge gained from the current public health crisis to strengthen the health focus of the food ecosystem equitably.



*Jewel, Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter and mental health advocate*

It is clear that the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the related economic crisis, and the illumination of systemic racism marked the beginning of a defining experience for the U.S. and the world. The pandemic revealed weaknesses in the food system, business models, the balance of equity and access, and diet quality. As the Foodscape Innovation Summit was underway, individuals and institutions were signaling a shift from seeing the pandemic as a short-term challenge toward a longer-term view of life with COVID-19. Because the effects of COVID-19 were so enormous and universally felt, attendees noted that it may be a powerful catalyst to create real and lasting change. This moment in time offered an opportunity to work collectively to focus on mutual benefits, move from ideation to action, and overcome disparities in nutrition security and diet-related health conditions.

## DISCUSSION THEMES

### **COVID-19 is a food system stressor.**

The pandemic demands agility from a food system that was built for supply chain efficiency. COVID-19 creates new and unique safety concerns at the individual and system levels. Food system workers are in greater jeopardy of contracting the virus because of their front-line role in systems that were not designed for social distancing. These and other factors have resulted in widespread food system disruption. As noted by Krystal Register of FMI, “Food retail is adapting minute to minute, day to day, and they will continue to flex. Necessity really is the mother of invention.”

The economic impact of COVID-19-related business disruptions, including but not limited to food system businesses, has expanded the depth and breadth of nutrition insecurity. Individuals and families newly affected by these challenges are often unaware of the resources available to them. Significantly, the long-term impact of these issues is unknown. It is increasingly clear, however, that widespread and durable nutrition security requires a food system that reaches all people with healthy and affordable food and is agile, responsive, and effective in times of crisis.

## **COVID-19 amplifies and exacerbates nutrition insecurity and the risks of poor diet.**

During the pandemic, nutrition security has worsened, and conditions such as obesity and heart disease have put the population at greater risk of hospitalization and death from COVID-19. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Dr. Susan Mayne remarked, "We are seeing higher mortality rates in patients with underlying conditions, as well as higher mortality rates in patients with unhealthy [body mass index]. I truly hope that when we get on the other side of this pandemic, we have a renewed call to action for better diet, nutrition and chronic disease prevention."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines nutrition security as "...a situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life." Food security is a commonly used term which may or may not prioritize the nutritional quality of food.

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## **Food, health and well-being are interconnected.**

Nutrition security is foundational to good health. Food provides nutrition, and also enjoyment, social connection and cultural expression. There is a rich value proposition associated with eating well that could be better conveyed to individuals. Several presenters, including Dr. Marc Watkins of Kroger, Bridget Carle of The Rockefeller Foundation, and Dr. Jeremy Goss of LINK Market, explored the concept that food can be all of these things simultaneously, and shared tangible approaches, such as food prescriptions and mobile fresh produce markets that serve food deserts.

Conversely, Gita Rampersad of Feeding America described the unhealthy cycle created by hunger, impacting both physical and mental health. She noted, "Food insecurity makes individuals have to make hard choices to feed their families," choosing between food and medicine, rent, and other essentials.

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## **Creating a food system that serves the health of all people, as well as the environment, is good for business.**

There is significant alignment between economic success and creating a system that equitably promotes the health of individuals, communities and the environment. Meeting people where they are by providing healthier options that are affordable and taste great, changing community systems to enable food access, and supporting people in overcoming individual barriers can facilitate increased demand and bolster business.

Presenters frequently highlighted the inseparable relationship between human health, the food system and environmental health. As Bridget Carle put it, "Poor diets are the number one contributing factor to poor health around the world, while also leading to environmental degradation." Christina Owens of Danone shared that agricultural practices are being transformed to reduce the carbon footprint of dairy production, improve soil biodiversity and the nutritional value of crops, and better care for animal welfare, all while supporting the well-being of farmers.

## There is a need for technology solutions on multiple levels.

It is important to connect with people in simple and accessible ways to empower them to apply knowledge at the point of choice and build food-related skills. Dr. Marc Watkins remarked, “I believe that some of the health disparities that exist in this country are because we don’t make it simple enough. We don’t connect on an emotional and personal level with our patients, let alone the ones who need it the most.” Technology also plays a role in removing barriers to access for those most vulnerable, such as Electronic Benefit Transfer access for both in-store and online grocery shopping, and supply chain logistics to bring healthy food to historically underserved communities.



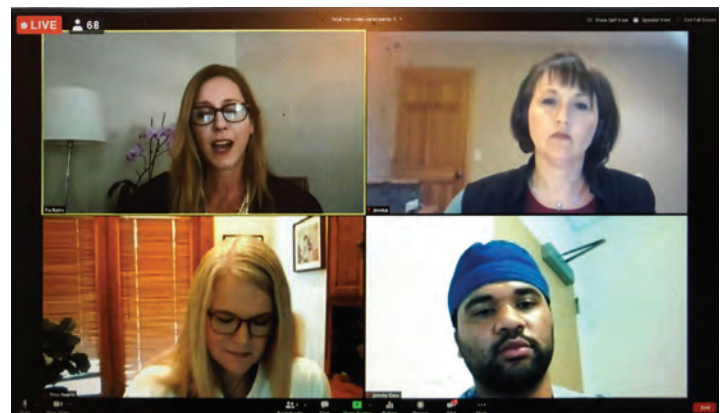
Dr Marc Watkins shared Kroger’s views on “food as medicine,” and other aspects of the company’s approach to well-being.

## Collaboration is essential, among foodscape stakeholders and with the public.

There has been an increase in leadership and commitments to address health, equity, and sustainability needs in the food system. For example, Jessica Campbell of General Mills highlighted their organizational approach of partnering with consumers to maximize the acceptance of products reformulated as part of the company’s long-term commitment to improving the healthfulness of its portfolio. Many of today’s challenges exist system-wide and require a systems approach to inform and ensure meaningful impact. As Jennifer Otten said, “The next generation is ready for a food system revolution.” Coalitions are forming across all levels of the food system, necessitating thoughtful observation, participation, and evaluation before developing new initiatives.

## Diversity as a mandate.

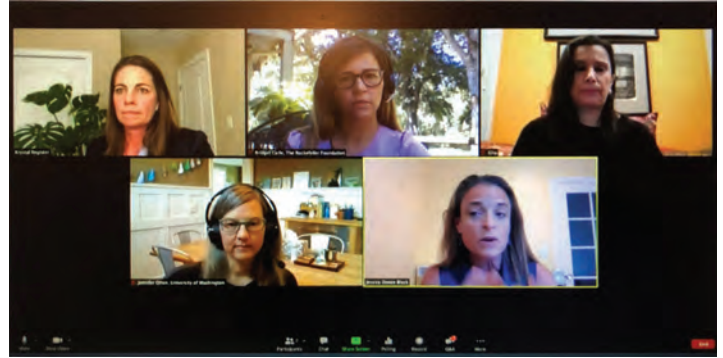
It is integral to establish a diverse work force to appropriately address disparities in the foodscape. Diverse perspectives and experiences spur innovation and facilitate meaningful connections with those who are disproportionately affected by nutrition insecurity and poor health. Deanna Belleny of Diversify Dietetics punctuated this point with a case study demonstrating the importance of diversity within the dietetics field, a profession with influence across many settings, including healthcare, community organizations, and the food industry.



Panel on Innovation.

## Need for a people-centered approach.

Expanding nutrition security for all will depend on the food system stakeholders' collective ability to educate, empower and motivate individuals and communities based on the needs that those individuals and communities identify and prioritize for themselves. Cooking and food preparation at home have been in a state of decline for decades for a variety of reasons, including the sometimes generational experience of



Panel on Nutrition Security.

poverty leading to inconsistent and inadequate access to a wide variety of foods, inadequate cooking appliances and tools, and/or limited time and energy for meal preparation due to heightened time demands related to work and other life necessities. There is a need for skills-based education, tools and resources to overcome barriers, as well as policies that will address access to food and other essentials.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION

Perhaps the most consistent and universal theme in summit discussions was that we are at a crossroads—we must learn from where we are now and collaboratively build a better, more effective and more equitable food system. Attendees discussed the following as opportunities and next steps.

### Learn

- Examine systems within the food system (such as supply chains and distribution channels) to identify and prioritize sector- and organization-specific actions that will ladder up to the overarching goal of a healthy food ecosystem.
- Use crisis response simulation models to harness lessons from the pandemic.
- Learn from and with other coalitions, movements, and industries (such as healthcare).
- Balance serving the interests of organizations and those of people, thereby seeking mutual profitability versus market share.

### Collaborate

- Build and continually cultivate trust between sectors and stakeholders.
- Elevate nutrition security and a healthy food ecosystem as a national priority.
- Reframe how we approach food systems change to create equitable health impact, focusing on well-being across social, emotional, economic, physical, and planetary factors for the people who are fed by and work in the system.

- Create a common agenda and action plan for forward movement by breaking down silos between sectors and between efforts to address separate, but related, issues such as food system agility, hunger and nutrition science.
- Think beyond the usual partners. Build inclusive collaborations that incorporate more diverse sectors, organizations and perspectives.

### **Transform communities**

- Build a platform through which it is possible to share community-level work nationally in order to identify best practices.
- Build community-centered partnerships and use them to inform interventions around the country.
- Integrate food and healthcare access at points of purchase and points of care, such as through food security and nutritional risk screening, referral to registered dietitian services and food assistance benefits, and healthy food prescription.
- Invest in education and building skills, starting at young ages. Consider ways to do this in conjunction with school meal and charitable food aid programs.

### **Advance research**

- Coordinate research across sectors to address critical questions that are broadly relevant to nutrition and/or the food system, such as those generated by the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee.
- Conduct implementation and translation research to inform efforts to influence healthy eating behaviors among the public.
- Leverage existing research and create models for collaboration.
- Collect best practices in systematic ways to facilitate analysis, research, and evidence-based efforts.

### **Transform communication with people**

- Focus on people. Shift thinking and language from “consumers” to “people” in order to transform communication.
- Leverage current momentum to develop common messaging among various stakeholders.
- Embrace cultural and personal relevance and offer bite-sized, actionable tips.
- Reframe health — emphasize that you don’t have to be “sick” to get “healthy.”
- Correct misinformation.
- Empower health professional ambassadors such as physicians and dietitians.
- Expand the use of technology platforms to support healthy food choices and increase access to food and nutrition assistance and benefits.



## **CONCLUSION**

Society is experiencing unprecedented global shared experiences around a number of foundational issues, including systemic racism and nutrition insecurity. Questions remain on the other side of the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, is it possible to sustain improvements in health behaviors motivated by the temporary circumstances? Will related changes in demand affect the food system going forward?

Despite unanswered questions, there are several certainties. It will not be a matter of “returning to normal” because normal was not working. The future foodscape must be new and better, and the time to act is now. Individual leadership and collective action will be integral in successfully creating a healthier food ecosystem.

As observed by AHA’s Dr. Eduardo Sanchez, “Through COVID-19, we are seeing that the existing systems are fragmented, and it’s important to think about a better-connected, more holistic and accessible food system for the future. There is no time like now to be innovative, learn from those who are the innovators in the moment, and apply the lessons and scale for impact.”



American Heart Association.

# SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE FOODSCAPE

The American Heart Association (AHA) is on the forefront of the movement to create sustainable nutrition security for all through access to affordable, healthy food produced through systems that are good for both people and the planet.

Learn more at [heart.org/Foodscapelnnovation](http://heart.org/Foodscapelnnovation)

## EVALUATE AND EVOLVE

Evaluating AHA programs and encouraging others to do the same generates critical data to ensure appropriate use of resources for system-wide impact.



## CONVENE AND ACCELERATE SOLUTIONS

To transform a system, all stakeholders must communicate to find common ground for action. AHA fosters open dialogue and development of collaborative solutions with influential leaders across sectors through the Annual Foodscapelnnovation™ Summit and the Industry Nutrition Forum.



## EMPOWER THE CONSUMER

AHA drives consumer demand through campaigns that promote awareness, understanding and action for both eating choices and grassroots advocacy, such as Healthy for Good™. And the Heart-Check mark is a recognized tool that makes it easy for consumers to purchase heart-healthy foods.



# INNOVATING THE FOODSCAPE

Creating sustainable nutrition security for all.

## REWARD GOOD WORK

Inspiring and recognizing good work, the Foodscapelnnovation Awards incentivizes organizations leading innovation in the food systems.



## LEAD COLLABORATIVELY

AHA works with Industry Nutrition Forum members and other foodscapelnnovation leaders to align food industry and public health efforts around data-informed action to build greater equity, sustainability and health impact in the food system.

## THE FOODSCAPE

The foodscapelnnovation is all of the places and spaces where food is grown, manufactured, marketed, acquired, prepared, consumed, talked about or given meaning.



# Appendix

## PARTICIPANTS

### Allan Acosta

General Manager, Global Tropical Sourcing  
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CMO  
Kroger Health

**Connie Weaver**

Distinguished Professor Emerita  
Weaver & Associates Consulting LLC

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**Meg Yuan**

Portfolio Advisor, Healthy Living  
American Heart Association

**Kelleen Zubick**

Director, Health Strategies  
Share Our Strength

# FIFTH ANNUAL FOODSCAPE INNOVATION™ SUMMIT

JUNE 18, 2020

## Agenda

- 9:00 AM**     **Welcome**  
**Eduardo Sanchez, MD, MPH, FAAFP**  
Chief Medical Officer for Prevention & Chief, Center for Health Metrics and Evaluation,  
American Heart Association
- 9:10 AM**     **American Heart Association Foodscape Innovation**  
**Cheryl Toner, MS, RDN**  
Director, Food Sector Engagement, American Heart Association
- 9:15 AM**     **Health & Nutrition at the Grocery Store**  
**Marc Watkins, MD**  
Chief Medical Officer and Vice President, Kroger
- 9:30 AM**     **Keynote Presentation: An Update on CFSAN Activities**  
**Susan T. Mayne, PhD**  
Director, Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition, U.S. Food and Drug Administration
- 10:00 AM**     **Food System Opportunities for Advancing Nutrition Security for All**  
**Moderator: Jessica Donze Black, MPH**  
National Vice President, Community Health, American Heart Association  
**Jennifer Otten, PhD, RD**, Associate Professor, Food Systems Director,  
School of Public Health, University of Washington  
**Gita Rampersad, JD, MHA**, Vice President of Healthcare Partnerships  
and Nutrition, Feeding America  
**Bridget Carle**, Senior Program Officer, Food Initiative,  
The Rockefeller Foundation  
**Krystal Register, MS, RDN, LDN**, Director, Health & Well-being,  
FMI-The Food Industry Association
- 11:05 AM**     **Meditation + Music with Jewel**  
*Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter and mental health advocate,  
Jewel, will lead us through one of her favorite meditations and serenade  
us with one of her new songs.*

Continued...

# Appendix

Agenda Continued...

**11:25 AM**

## **Innovation Vignettes**

**Moderator: Tia M. Rains, PhD**, Senior Director Public Relations, Ajinomoto Health & Nutrition North America, Inc. and American Heart Association Industry Nutrition Forum Chair, 2019-21

*Food system stakeholders will present 5-minute innovation vignettes featuring successes and lessons learned, followed by a moderated discussion with participants.*

### **Horizon 2.0 Commitment and the Impact to our Farming Partners**

**Tina Owens, MBA**, Senior Director, Food & Agriculture Impact, Danone

### **Our Nutrition Journey: Health Reporting and Sodium Reduction**

**Jessica Campbell, PhD**, Senior Nutrition Manager, General Mills, Inc

### **Food is Medicine**

**Jeremy Goss, MD**, Chairman and CEO, The Link Market

**12:05 PM**

## **The Importance of Diversity Among Dietitians Working in The Food System**

**Deanna Belleny, MPH, RD**, Co-Founder, Diversify Dietetics, Inc

**12:15 PM**

## **Stepping Forward Together**

**Cheryl Toner**

*Key points will be summarized and the breakout group session will be explained.*

**12:20 PM**

## **Closing Remarks**

**Eduardo Sanchez**

**12:30 PM**

## **Adjourn**



Kroger is a national sponsor of the American Heart Association's Healthy for Good™ initiative.



# Appendix

## BREAKOUT GROUPS SESSION: MAPPING A MULTI-SECTOR, COLLABORATIVE PATH TOWARDS NUTRITION SECURITY FOR ALL

JULY 9, 2020

### Agenda

**10:00 AM**     **Welcome and Refresh on Key Summit Themes**

**Eduardo Sanchez, MD, MPH, FAAFP**

Chief Medical Officer for Prevention & Chief, Center for Health Metrics and Evaluation,  
American Heart Association

**10:10 AM**     **Breakout Groups Process**

**Cheryl Toner, MS, RDN**

Director, Food Sector Engagement, American Heart Association

**10:20 AM**     **Breakout Groups**

**Facilitators:**

**Heather Gavras**, Program Director, Healthy for Life, American Heart Association

**Shelley Maniscalco**, Owner, Nutrition on Demand

**Liz McKnight**, Executive Portfolio Lead, Healthy Living, American Heart Association

**Cheryl Toner**

*There are wide calls for collaboration, for system-wide transformation. What is different today? Will this difference help us to create real change? If so, how?*

*At the intersection of nutrition security and a healthy food ecosystem, what would you say are the most critical challenges to be addressed? Explore existing efforts to respond, evidence and best practices, ways to amplify efforts and/or fill gaps, barriers and opportunities, bridges between challenge areas.*

**11:20 AM**     **5-Minute Break for Facilitators**

**11:25 AM**     **Breakout Groups Report Out**

**Cheryl Toner**

*5-minute summaries of breakout group dialogue will be reported out by each group's facilitator. Group members will be asked to add any missed points or clarifications, and the members of other groups will be able to ask questions for clarification.*

**11:50 AM**     **Closing Remarks**

**Eduardo Sanchez**