

# AGNR

## FIVE STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

### Establish a Healthy Food System and Ensure Global Food and Nutritional Security



- **Improve human health and well-being by generating and sharing knowledge on the production, processing, availability, access, and consumption of safe and nutritious food.**
- **Encourage creativity and entrepreneurship in the production, processing, availability, access, and consumption of safe and nutritious food.**
- **Inform policy based on sound basic and applied research.**

### BACKGROUND: WHERE ARE WE NOW?

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development spearheaded by the United Nations lists seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which call on the commitment and action of all countries. The second goal addresses hunger, calling for food security and improved nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture. Food insecurity is a growing worldwide challenge that must be addressed locally, nationally, and globally. Food security “exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food.” Nutrition security is defined as “access by all people at all times to the adequate utilization and absorption of nutrients in food, in order to be able to live a healthy and active life.” Food safety supports food and nutrition security goals by ensuring availability and access to food free of contaminants that can compromise health. Increased food availability and access to nutritious and safe foods are fundamental human necessities. In AGNR, we have the expertise to identify issues pertaining to inequality in food and nutritional security and the ability and creativity to explore innovative solutions. Our research, academics, and Extension programs are educating the next generation of food systems researchers, professionals, and educators. Our wide-ranging research and Extension activities help devise innovative and creative solutions to guarantee a healthy food system in Maryland. Moreover, our existing expertise, partnerships, programs, and geographic location place us in a unique position to assess needs, provide solutions, and have an impact on a global scale.

### AREAS OF FOCUS

Food and nutritional security and safety are complex issues that depend on a healthy food system. Healthy food systems encompass all the processes that are required to produce and deliver food in a socially, economically, and ecologically sustainable manner to promote human health. This is achieved through sustainable production, adequate processing and accessibility, and requires knowledge, access, resources, education, innovative technologies, and entrepreneurship. With an ever-increasing world population, unpredictable climate variability, and enhanced pressure on land use and water resources, the need to research new solutions, educate the next generation of experts, and reach out to communities is more critical than ever.



## Healthy Food Systems

### Co-Chairs

#### Rohan Tikekar,

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## Healthy Food Systems

### Team Members

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## GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

Our goal is to enable the availability, access, nutrition, and safety of food for all by:

- **Generating and sharing knowledge:** We will foster the generation of new information on food production, food processing, food safety and marketing, translating and communicating those findings for the benefit of our societies.
- **Encouraging creativity and entrepreneurship:** We will encourage creativity and entrepreneurship. We will identify courses that encourage entrepreneurship, create incentives for students to participate in AgI2C and university entrepreneurship competitions, and develop hands-on, experiential courses in all areas to better prepare students for the complex issues and jobs of the future.
- **Informing policy:** We must educate government, organizations, corporations, community partners and all stakeholders to better understand and promote a sustainable, safe, and nutritious food supply and system. We must address the barriers that lead to food deserts and food hardship. As the Food Safety Modernization Act goes into effect, AGNR will continue to work to provide data needed to inform food safety regulations, while serving as a communication bridge with growers. AGNR will serve to educate food producers on the rules for Produce Safety and Preventive Controls for Human Food, and help in their implementation.

## TAKING ACTION

We will:

1. Create a comprehensive database for AGNR faculty, administrators, and staff to share information about active research and Extension projects in Maryland and around the world. This database will be a go-to resource for highlighting accomplishments, announcing opportunities, and/or available positions. It will serve to better connect faculty across AGNR through an accessible and organized network that promotes interdisciplinary collaboration, knowledge exchange and strategic project management.
2. Create fact sheets to drive the message of the Strategic Initiative. The fact sheets will define what a healthy food system is. Other fact sheets will emphasize key points about food security, nutritional security, and food safety.
3. Conduct a series of needs assessments in all focus areas and throughout stakeholder groups, including the community and industry. We will also identify target audiences and their needs as they relate to this topic.
4. Develop strategic partnerships with key stakeholders to enhance research and Extension impacts.
5. Develop a seminar series and organize training to educate students and bring faculty together around issues pertaining to healthy food systems.
6. Expand our international programs addressing needs in developing countries.
7. Develop an undergraduate, cross-listed 'Healthy Food Systems' course.
8. Launch a mini-grant competition for graduate students to solicit and support innovative ideas for research and Extension.
9. Explore internships, collaborative research, and study abroad opportunities in healthy food systems for graduate students.

