TABLE

www.tabledebates.org

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Overview of TABLE

- We're a think tank based at the University of Oxford, Wageningen University and Research, and the Swedish University of Agricultural Science
- We explore **contested issues** in food systems with a particular focus on **values**, **beliefs** and **context**

- We publish explainers on major food systems topics, blog posts on individual research projects, letterbox debates between stakeholders with different perspectives, a fortnightly newsletter of important food systems research, a research library of papers featured in the newsletter, podcasts featuring interviews with researchers and stakeholders, and a jobs and events board, and host events

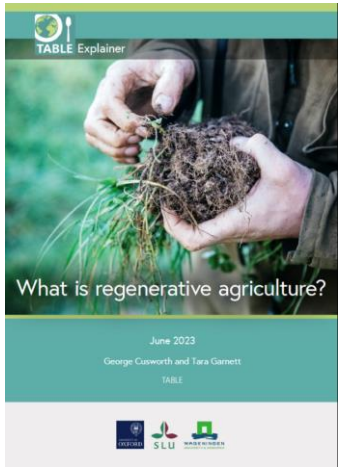
Resources for undergrads

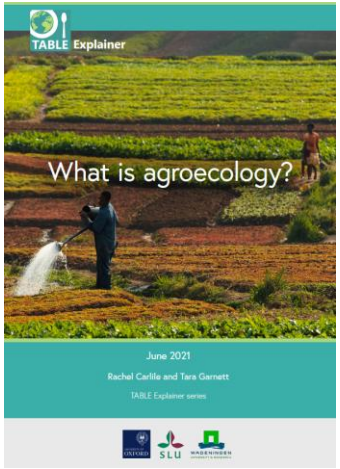
- We have a variety of resources suitable as readings or other course material for undergraduate level students
  - explainers
  - explainer summaries
  - podcasts: **Feed** and **Meat: the Four Futures**

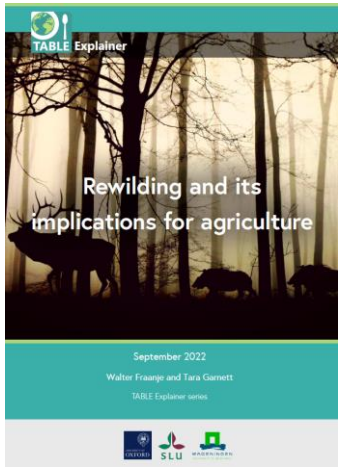
All our resources are available on our website - www.tabledebates.org

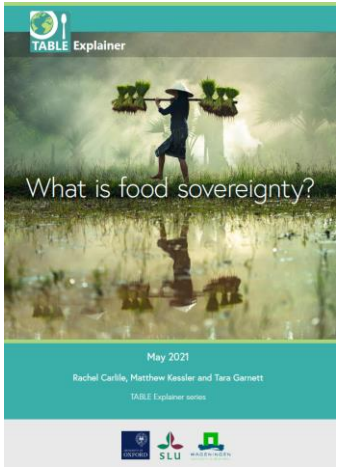
Explainers

- Cover contested concepts in agriculture and food systems
- PDFs are 20-30 pages long (including references)
- also available embedded on the website
- accessible level for undergraduates (and interested non-experts)
- peer-reviewed by domain experts









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Explainers

- Cover the fundamentals: the **what**, the **why** and the **who** of different movements and concepts
- But also look at the contested parts:
  - what do stakeholders disagree about?
  - what kinds of evidence do different sides rely on?
  - are there different assumptions behind different claims?
  - what are the values behind different understandings?

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TABLE Explainer: What is regenerative agriculture?

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A shade-grown coffee plantation in Brazil.
Photo by Projecto Café Gato-Mourisco via Unsplash.

4. Keeping living roots in the soil

The main idea here is that plant roots 'leak' photosynthetic sugars into the soil, which feeds the soil microbial community. This is a key mechanism for increasing carbon inputs into the soil which is the key determinant in increasing levels of carbon sequestration (Jones *et al.*, 2009). There are other benefits to maintaining living root and plant systems over the full year. These include increasing nutrient availability for uptake by future plant roots, and greater aeration, drainage, and water infiltration capacity of the soil (Kaspar & Singer, 2011). Options for keeping living roots in the soil include integrating overwinter cover crops into arable rotations, and resting pasture with sufficient residual heights rather than overgrazing, particularly during the winter.

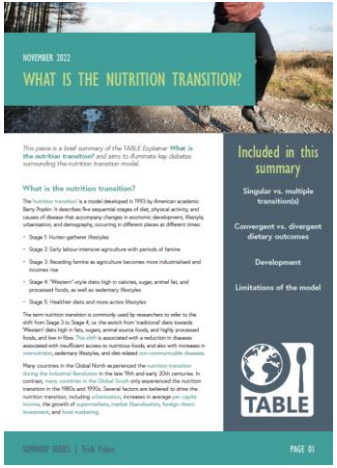
5. Integration of animals and cropping systems

Livestock can be integrated into arable systems by grazing them on temporary grass-based leys, and by including forage crops such as brassicas in the rotation, as well as cover crops. Although measures that reduce crop yield (e.g., switching from autumn- to spring-sown crops to allow a forage crop) or totally eliminate crop production in a given year (e.g., a temporary grass ley) may result in compensatory cultivation elsewhere, this could in part be mitigated by reorientating livestock production to forage grown in mixed grass-arable systems rather than feed produced from exclusively arable systems. Measures such as temporary grass-based leys increase soil carbon stocks in arable rotations and there is some evidence that grazing livestock on these may achieve modest further increases in soil organic content compared to stock-free rotations (Teague & Kreuter, 2020). However, if arable systems are stocked using 'additional' livestock rather than simply animals redistributed from other areas, then the increase in emissions from ruminant enteric fermentation would likely far exceed any arising soil carbon sequestration benefits. Nevertheless, where the risks of compensatory cultivation or increases in livestock numbers can be mitigated, better integration of livestock and cropping systems is likely to result in environmental benefits compared to current conventional production which is typically spatially segregated (Jordon *et al.*, 2022). Our piece on feed-food competition explores these debates in greater detail (Breewood & Garnett, 2020).

The role that livestock animals, particularly ruminants like sheep and cattle, should play in the food system has been a source of major contestation (Breewood & Garnett, 2023; Garnett *et al.*, 2017) By attempting to re-cast livestock animals as part of a diverse, sustainable, natural and traditional way of farming (Cusworth *et al.*, 2022), there are concerns that regenerative agriculture is problematically unengaged with now-mainstream concerns about the outsize impact meat and dairy products have on the warming footprint of our diets (Dutkiewicz, 2021). These disagreements can be understood in the terms provided by the discussions around *less and better* meat. Whilst regenerative agriculture majors on how and why livestock can be managed in a *better* way (livestock-arable integration, mixed species grazing, rotational grazing etc.) there are concerns that without

Explainer summaries

- 2-3 page versions of the full explainers
- good revision or reference material for students
- available only for a few of our explainers so far, but more are on the way!



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Podcasts

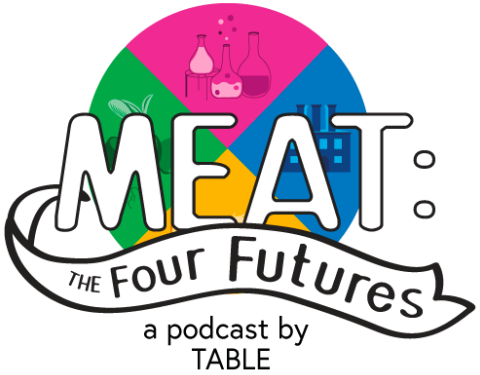
Feed: our regular podcast, featuring interviews with food systems stakeholders (most often researchers, but also writers, farmers, innovators)

- typically 30-60 minutes long
- appropriate for higher-level students–those who want to hear about issues straight from the horse's mouth!

Meat: the four futures: a standalone series on the different scenarios being advocated for by stakeholders for the future of meat production and consumption

- 40-60 minute long episode feature many different speakers
- appropriate for all students

LANDING PAGES: https://www.tabledebates.org/podcast, https://www.tabledebates.org/meat



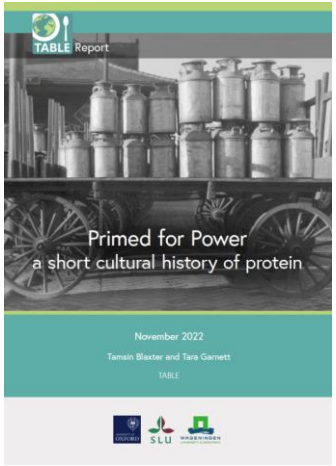
Resources for lecturers and graduate students

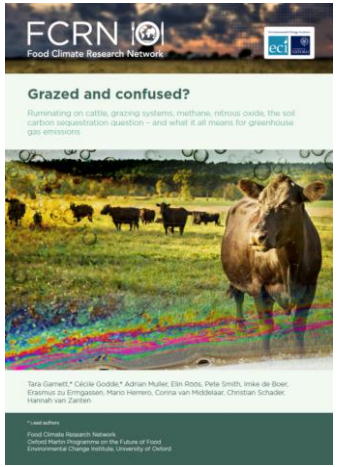
We have a variety of resources that may be useful for lecturers, other educators, and more advanced students:

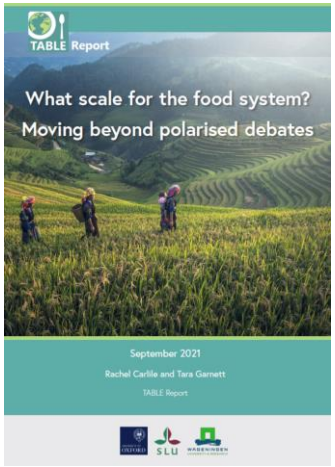
- subject reports
- blogs+essays
- interactive tools
- **Fodder**, our newsletter
- research library
- **Ferment**, our online discussion platform
- jobs and events listings (included in Fodder, but also available on the website)
- finally, **Feed** podcast may be more of interest to academics than students!

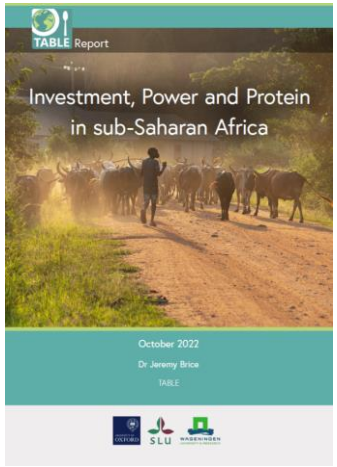
Reports

- similar to our explainers in scope and length, but dealing with a more eclectic set of topics ranging from the very abstract (like *What scale for the food system?*) to the relatively narrow (who is investing in protein production in sub-Saharan Africa?)
- some may be of interest to students, all may be of interest to educators





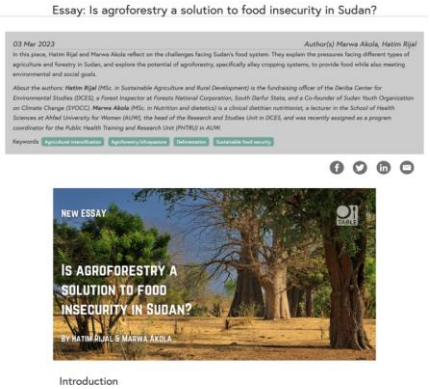


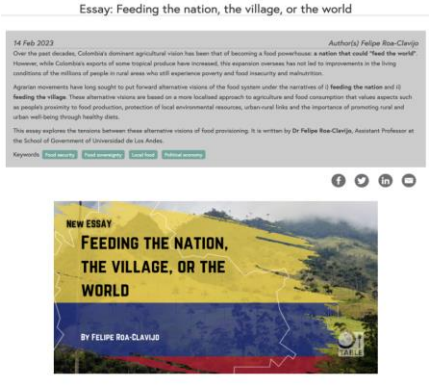


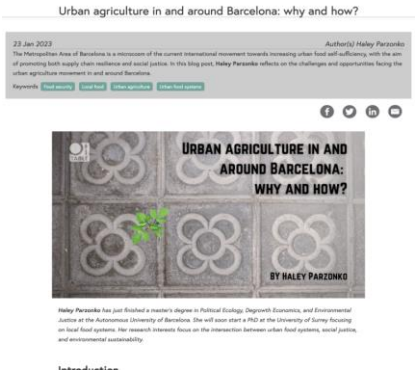
LANDING PAGE: https://tabledebates.org/publications

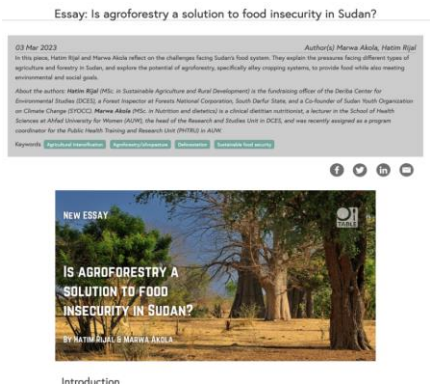
Blogs and essays

- Presenting a specific perspective on one food and agriculture topic (blogs) or contrasting and discussing conflicting perspectives (essays)
- Written by third parties–often a researcher presenting their own recent work
- **We welcome submissions, especially from ECRs and grad students!**





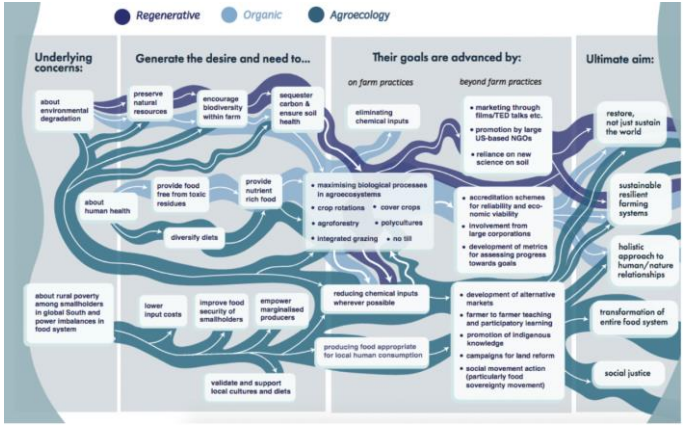


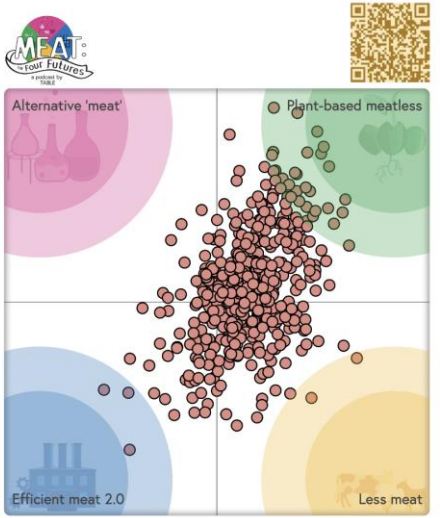


LANDING PAGE: https://www.tabledebates.org/blog

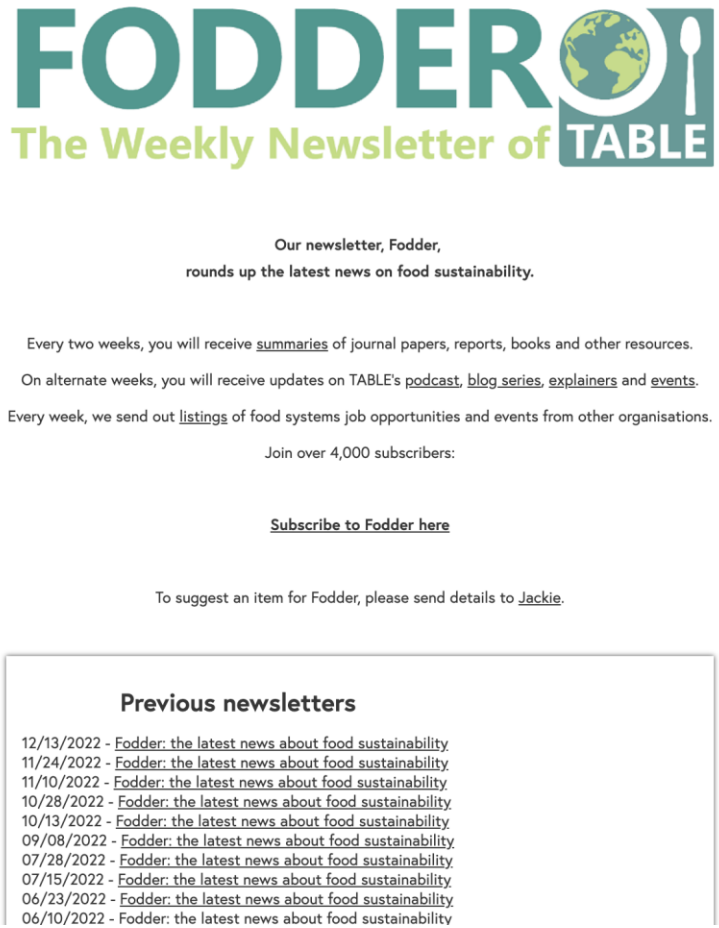
Interactives

- We’re starting to create interactive tools for exploring contested issue
- these can be used for running workshops and as prompts for discussion in seminars and classes
- do contact us if you’re interested in using these and would like support to do so!





Newsletter: Fodder



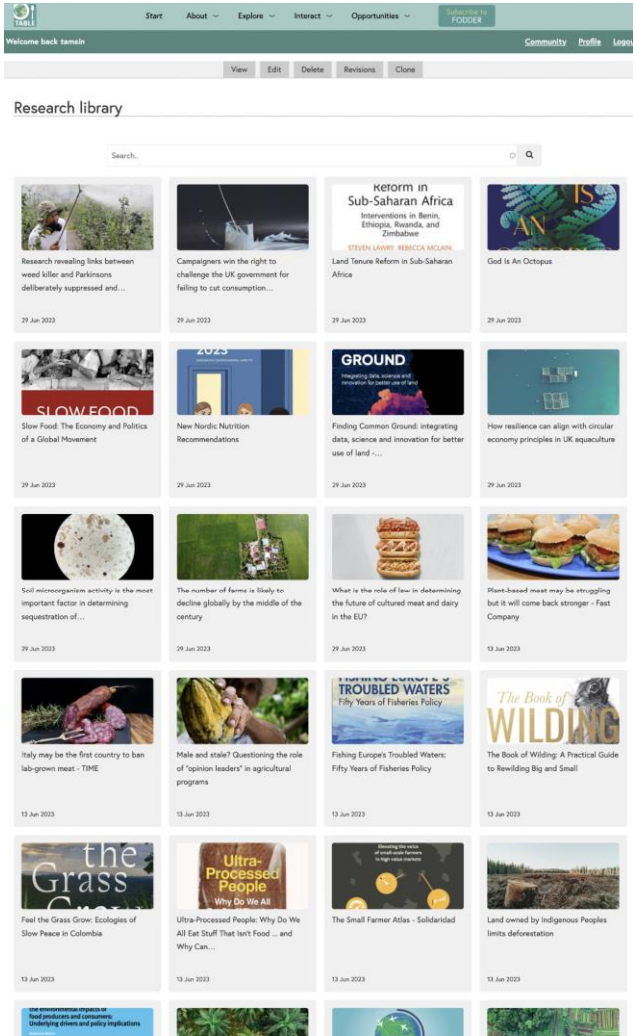
Our weekly newsletter includes:

- summaries of important new papers and books on food systems and agriculture
- job listings
- event listings
- our own new publications!

LANDING PAGE: https://www.tabledebates.org/fodder

Research library

- Library of research items - major papers, reports, books, etc.
- all include abstracts, links and keywords
- many also include our own accessible summaries



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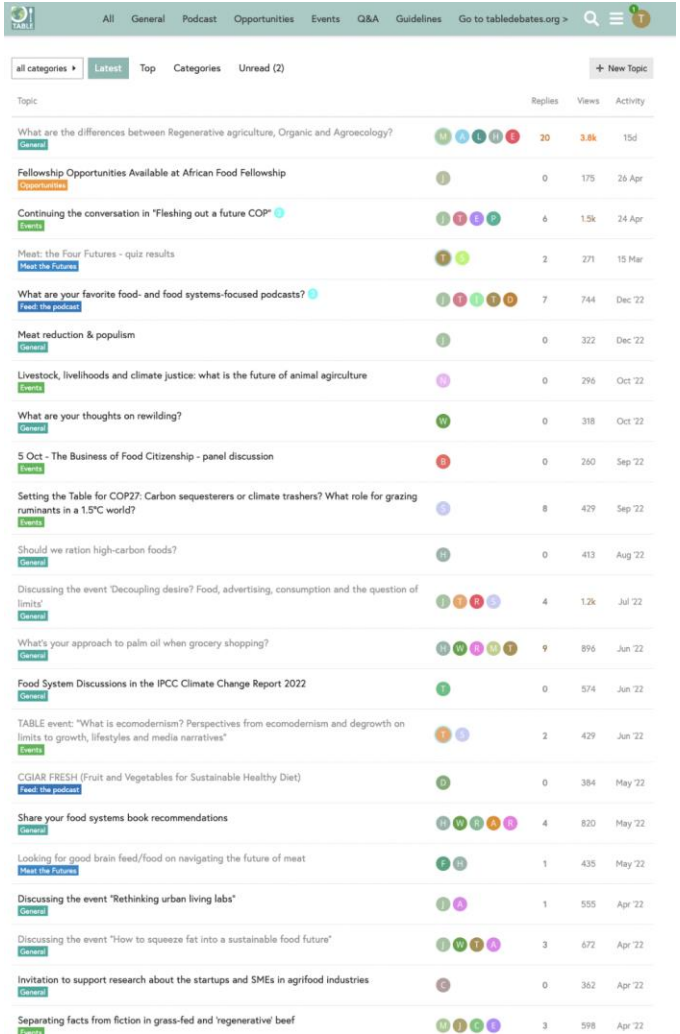
Ferment

- Our online discussion platform
- We’re keen to partner with educators to use this as a space for students to comment, discuss, contribute–please do get in touch if this would be a useful tool for you!



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thanks for listening!

questions, comments, etc. welcome!