

2nd National Debate **Our Planet – Our Common Future**

SUMMARY OF THE DEBATE

On 12 December 2025, the **2nd National Debate** entitled **“Our Planet – Our Common Future”** was held in conjunction with a scientific conference organized by the **University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów**.

The second edition of the event was combined with a presentation of the key objectives of the Agricultural Transformation Program towards Structural Change and Sustainable Development. The program is the outcome of a project carried out under the same title and financed from the state budget by the Minister of Education and Science as part of the “Science for Society II” initiative.

Interest in participating exceeded our expectations. Ultimately, more than 250 participants attended the event, including scientists, representatives of the agricultural sector, non-governmental organizations, policymakers, local government officials, and students.

This year’s edition expanded its academic dimension by introducing a poster session. Students, early-career researchers, and experienced scholars representing 15 academic institutions presented their research findings in the field of sustainable development. In total, 43 research topics were showcased during the poster session.

It’s not too late
to save the planet,
**but we can’t wait
any longer!**

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UNIVERSITY of INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY and MANAGEMENT
in Rzeszow, POLAND

2nd National Debate

Our Planet – Our Common Future

SECOND EDITION OF THE DEBATE

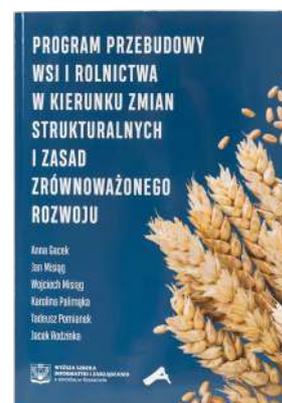
The event constituted an important element in the implementation of the **University of Information Technology and Management's Sustainable Development Strategy for 2025–2029**. For several years, we have placed particular emphasis on the transformation of the food production system and related issues. We actively participate in key discussions addressing the broad challenges of the green transition and ongoing civilizational changes. We also take the initiative in organizing events that promote environmental responsibility and care for the planet, addressed to a wide audience including researchers, staff, students, and secondary school pupils. Expert engagement and knowledge dissemination remain equally important pillars of our activities.

[▶ FULL RECORDING OF THE DEBATE](#)

MONOGRAPH

Each stage of research related to agriculture and rural development has been comprehensively addressed in dedicated monographs. The culmination of this work is the monograph presented during the event, outlining a comprehensive program for the transformation of rural areas and agriculture.

The publication, entitled **“A Program for the Transformation of Rural Areas and Agriculture Towards Structural Change and the Principles of Sustainable Development,”** is the result of the work carried out by the project team implementing the initiative under the same title. The book presents a set of concrete actions proposed within the framework of the program for the transformation of rural areas and agriculture.



CARING FOR THE PLANET MEANS CARING FOR YOUR FUTURE

However, our activities are not limited solely to systemic solutions. We are fully aware that education plays a crucial role in driving meaningful change. For this reason, at the initiative of Professor Tadeusz Pomianek, the book **“Caring for the Planet Means Caring for Your Future”** was published and fully funded by the University. In this publication, several authors representing various academic institutions offer practical guidance on the steps each of us can take to protect our health and secure a better future for ourselves and our loved ones, in the spirit of the principle “think globally, act locally.”





SESSION 1

HOW TO CHANGE THE FOOD PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION SYSTEM SO THAT IT SERVES PEOPLE AND RESPECTS NATURE?

Panel supervisor:

Prof. Tadeusz Pomianek, PhD. DSc. Eng. Prof. UITM – President of the University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów

Moderator:

Ewa Nowak-Koprowicz, M.A. – Head of EUROPE DIRECT Rzeszów, Deputy Director of the Sustainable Development Office for dissemination of knowledge and development of partnerships for sustainable development

Paneliści:

- **Prof. Małgorzata Bzowska-Bakalarz, PhD. Hab.**, professor of agricultural sciences, habilitated doctor in the field of agricultural engineering,
- **Paulina Kramarz, PhD. Hab. Prof. UJ**, Institute of Environmental Sciences, Faculty of Biology, Jagiellonian University, Climate Council of the Jagiellonian University, member of the State Council for Nature Conservation,
- **Mateusz Ciasnocha**, member of the Advisory Board of the European Soil Mission, European Commission,
- **Joanna Erbel, PhD**, sociologist, expert in building urban resilience, member of the Management Board of PLZ Cooperative, director of protopia at CoopTech Hub, chairwoman of the Supervisory Board of MOST Cooperative,
- **Katarzyna Wągrowka**, educator, speaker, internet creator, and mentor. Coordinator and co-founder of the ESG Management program at Collegium Da Vinci in Poznań, expert on the circular economy and environmental responsibility of producers, expert on the UNEP-GRID Climate initiative Leadership, Founder of the "Our Climates" podcast,
- **Małgorzata Gołota**, journalist collaborating with TOK FM, among others.



INTRODUCTORY SPEECH:



HOW TO CHANGE THE FOOD PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION SYSTEM SO THAT IT SERVES HUMANS AND RESPECTS NATURE

Dr. DSc. Eng. Tadeusz Pomianek , prof. UITM

INTRODUCTORY SPEECH:

In his opening remarks, Professor Tadeusz Pomianek argued that the European Union's focus on achieving climate neutrality by 2050 has a limited impact on the overall level of global greenhouse gas emissions. He emphasized that this objective alone is insufficient to address the key civilizational challenges we face and may, at the same time, weaken the competitiveness of the EU economy. According to Professor Pomianek, the prospects would be considerably more promising if, **alongside the dynamic development of renewable energy sources, equal priority were given to public health**. Such an approach would create an opportunity to secure affordable energy – a fundamental condition for maintaining the EU's competitiveness – while simultaneously contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Improving public health, he stressed, is inseparably linked to halting the degradation of our planet and strengthening environmental protection.

The speech then addressed the negative impact of the dominant industrial model of food production and consumption on both human health and the natural environment. Particular attention was given to the destructive consequences of monoculture farming and industrial-scale livestock operations. These systems constitute the primary source of raw materials for the food processing industry. The extensive use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides in monoculture cultivation leads to crops that are deficient in essential nutrients. At the same time, industrial livestock farms rely heavily on antibiotics and growth hormones, the residues of which may adversely affect human health. Furthermore, food processing methods and the widespread use of plastic packaging contribute to an increased presence of chemical substances in food products.

Unfortunately, ultra-processed foods dominate modern diets, particularly in Western countries. In Poland, their share exceeds 70% of total food consumption. The consequences are reflected in the steadily deteriorating health of society, especially among children. This trend has led to a continuous rise in healthcare expenditure. In Poland, healthcare spending is projected to exceed 300 billion PLN in 2025 – representing a twofold increase within four years, during which inflation amounted to approximately 42%. The United States – a global leader in the industrial model of food production and consumption – spends nearly USD 5 trillion annually on healthcare. This accounts for approximately 40% of total global healthcare expenditure, despite Americans representing only about 4.5% of the world's population. In practical terms, this means that 3.7 times more is spent on healthcare than on food. By contrast, in countries where the Mediterranean diet predominates, healthcare expenditure remains at a level comparable to spending on food.

Unfortunately, economic calculations do not take into account so-called hidden costs. They are shockingly high, reaching \$14 trillion annually (\$229 billion in Poland) in the case of meat production, usually industrialized. With food expenditures amounting to \$11.5 trillion and \$62 billion, respectively. Per kilogram of meat, these costs amount to:

- greenhouse gas emissions – by 9.6 PLN,
- reduction in biodiversity and destruction of the natural environment – by 18.7 PLN,
- loss of health – by 83 PLN,
- soil degradation – by 53.4 PLN.

In the case of organic meat, the cost attributed to greenhouse gas emissions amounts to only PLN 9.6. The analysis also demonstrated that exporting meat produced under caged farming systems constitutes an economic absurdity. These findings clearly illustrate the urgency and necessity of transforming the current food production and consumption system. The new model should operate in symbiosis with nature – grounded in a deep understanding of natural processes rather than in their exploitative and unsustainable use.

Next, Professor Pomianek outlined the directions for the transformation of the food system in Poland, demonstrating that **reducing meat consumption** from 75 to 25 kg per person per year – the level recommended by the WHO – and **eliminating meat exports from factory farms** will trigger a positive cause-and-effect mechanism. This will:

- we will regain up to 8 million hectares of agricultural land that can be used to produce plant protein and other food products that are beneficial to humans and less burdensome to the environment, as well as for free-range animal breeding,
- we will save more than 30 billion tons of water per year, which is crucial given the ongoing drought,
- the consumption of chemical production means will drop dramatically, which will trigger the process of environmental restoration and improving the health of society.

The transformation process should begin with the construction of organic markets in cities and a system to supply kindergartens, schools, and hospitals with healthy, unprocessed food. This

will create a market for organic farms. Austria should serve as a model, where as much as 27% of agricultural land is organic. In Poland, the figure is only 3.5%. Organic food prices there are typically 10 to 40% higher than conventional food, while in Poland they are 140-450% higher!

The concluding remarks addressed the necessary reforms to European Union agricultural policy, including those required in Poland. It was emphasized that the time has come for both Polish and EU authorities to fully recognize the strong interdependence between the state of the environment, the economic system, and public health, and to treat the required changes as a strategic priority. **If health becomes the central objective of the transformation process, there will be a genuine opportunity to unite both political will and societal support around a shared goal.** Such an approach could also strengthen the cohesion of the European Union, which is increasingly challenged by populist and nationalist tendencies. From a political perspective, prioritizing health within the transformation agenda could prove highly advantageous, offering a powerful and unifying narrative for future policy development.

SUMMARY OF THE DEBATE BETWEEN PANEL PARTICIPANTS:

Opening the discussion, Professor M. Bzowska-Bakalarz addressed the fundamental importance of soil for food production. She emphasized that **proper soil stewardship requires extensive knowledge and expertise.** The commonly held belief that simply supplying micro- and macronutrients – in the form of fertilizers – is sufficient to ensure high yields and soil fertility is, she stressed, fundamentally flawed.

Referring to the role of biodiversity in food production and consumption, Professor P. Kramarz highlighted the importance of an interdisciplinary approach, the need to reconnect agricultural practice with natural processes, and the **value of understanding the historical development of agriculture, including earlier “innovations” such as the three-field system.** While discussing the 10% rule in ecosystems – according to which only around 10% of energy is transferred from one trophic level to the next, with approximately 90% lost through metabolic processes, heat, and uneaten biomass – she underscored the scale of **the problem resulting from excessive livestock production and high levels of meat consumption.**

In turn, M. Ciasnocha presented the **European Union’s ambitions and initiatives aimed at restoring soil health, which he actively supports. In particular, he referred to the Horizon Europe programme and the EU Soil Mission,** whose objective is to ensure that by 2050 every parcel of land within the European Union is in a healthy condition. As a practicing farmer, he also shared his experience in implementing regenerative agriculture practices and in transforming the family farm he co-manages in the Żuławy Wiślane region, which is now part of the National Network of Demonstration Farms.

Responding to a question from the audience about whether urban residents can influence changes in the food production and consumption system, Dr. J. Erbel shared her experience in the field of cooperatives, co-managing an urban farm in Warsaw, and her involvement in the Coalition for Food Sovereignty established in June 2025. The Coalition brings together public institutions, civil society organizations, expert communities, agricultural producers, and activists united by a shared vision of transforming Poland’s food system. At the same time, **she encouraged participants to focus on those areas where they have the greatest influence and where their actions can generate meaningful change.**

Presenting the perspective of an educator and online content creator, K. Wągrowka emphasized **the importance of shared values in communicating about the transformation of the food production and consumption system. She identified “health” as a value that resonates strongly with many people.** By addressing topics such as “healthy soil,” she argued, it becomes easier to encourage consumers to reflect on the food products they purchase – the soil in which they were grown (if they were grown in soil at all), their country or region of origin, and the safety and sustainability of their production. She also drew attention to the growing threat posed by the widespread use of plastic food packaging and the presence of microplastics in food, encouraging education and awareness-building through personal example.

According to journalist M. Gołota, discussions about effectively promoting so-called healthy food and products derived from sustainable farming must take into account one crucial factor: price. She stressed that **as long as healthier and more sustainably produced food remains several times more expensive than conventional alternatives, it will remain accessible primarily to a narrow group of consumers who are both highly aware and economically privileged. She also encouraged reframing the public discourse – shifting the emphasis away from costs, loss, and sacrifice, and instead highlighting benefits, opportunities for growth, economic potential, and, above all, improvements in health.**



SESSION 2

PROGRAM FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF RURAL AND AGRICULTURE FOR HIGHER EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Panel supervisor:

Wojciech Misiąg, PhD. Prof. UITM – general director of the Institute of Financial Research and Analysis of UITM in Rzeszów

Moderator:

Katarzyna Kurzępa-Dedo, PhD – Department of Law and Public Policy at UITM

Paneliści:

- **Agata Jurkowska-Gomułka, PhD. Prof. UITM**, Department of Law and Public Policies UITM,
- **Jan Krupa, PhD. Hab, Eng. Prof. UITM**, Department of Management UITM,
- **Wawrzyniec Maziejuk**, “Figa” organic farm,
- **editor Szymon Bujalski**, “Journalist for Climate” profile, collaborator of “Gazeta Wyborcza”.



INTRODUCTORY SPEECH:



PROGRAM FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF RURAL AREAS AND AGRICULTURE FOR HIGHER EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Wojciech Misiąg, prof. UITM



INTRODUCTORY SPEECH:

Professor W. Misiąg's presentation focused on the **Program for the Transformation of Rural Areas and Agriculture**¹, representing the most recent outcome of research conducted since 2020 on the food production system and the adaptation of agriculture to the requirements of sustainable development. From the outset, the program was conceived as an attempt to define measures aimed at eliminating a number of negative phenomena, including:

- the low quality of agricultural and food products,
- a production structure misaligned with the principles of a balanced and rational diet,
- low efficiency in agricultural production,
- the adverse impact of agriculture on the natural environment and its contribution to climate change.

Preliminary analysis clearly demonstrated that **agricultural transformation cannot be effectively implemented without addressing, within a single integrated framework, the interrelated issues of food production and food demand, quality of life in rural areas, environmental protection, and climate change mitigation**. It also became evident that local government units should play a central role in the implementation of the program, given their capacity to coordinate actions at the regional and community levels.

The structure of the program consists of:

a. four main goals:

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|--|--|
| A healthier diet for people and the environment | changing consumption patterns: significantly reducing meat consumption and increasing the share of plant-based products, and ensuring the economic availability of good food for all |
| Sustainable agriculture | increasing the efficiency of agriculture and eliminating harmful production methods |
| Attractive countryside | transforming rural areas into attractive places to live and work |
| Clean environment | eliminating the negative impact of agriculture on the environment |

b. 7 areas corresponding to segments of the economy or directions of state intervention: agriculture, food production and quality, trade in agricultural products and food, climate and environmental protection, rural development, public finances and coordination – i.e. activities related to the organization of the program;

c. sectoral objectives assigned to the areas and measures of their implementation;

d. activities of various nature assigned to each of the sectoral objectives, including:

- educational and promotional programs,
- legislative actions,

¹ A detailed description of the program is included in: A. Gacek, J. Misiąg, W. Misiąg, K. Palimąka, T. Pomianek, J. Rodzinka, „Program for the Transformation of Rural Areas and Agriculture”, UITM, Rzeszów 2025.

- subsidies for entities from the agricultural sector and local governments in agricultural areas,
- tax reliefs and exclusions,
- organizational activities.

All 86 activities of the program can be arranged, according to their specific objectives, in the following sequence, defining the program logic:

- formalization of the strategy and program for the reconstruction of rural areas and agriculture,
- promotion of sustainable development principles,
- promotion of health and healthy eating,
- higher ecological and quality requirements for agricultural and food products,
- elimination of support for “subsistence” farms with public agricultural funds,
- stabilization of the finances of local government units,
- assistance programs for:
 - people leaving agriculture,
 - farmers – to adapt to new requirements,
 - local government in rural areas – for the creation of jobs and infrastructure, including infrastructure for the trade in agricultural products,
- facilities for organic farms.

The estimated cost of implementing the program is **55 billion PLN** over 5 years, with the largest part of this amount being consumed by aid programs.

The program’s success depends on changing public attitudes toward nutritional quality and accepting the limitations of sustainable development. Many potential threats to both the program’s launch and its implementation can be identified. Postponing necessary but socially and politically unpopular actions allows for the avoidance of unwanted decisions, but it does not eliminate the need for them and ultimately increases the social and financial costs of inaction.

SUMMARY OF THE DEBATE BETWEEN PANEL PARTICIPANTS:

Analyzing the challenges facing rural Poland, Professor W. Misiąg referred to the reform of local government revenues scheduled to enter into force in 2025. He noted that although reducing the role of general subsidies was a step in the right direction, the current shape of the regulations is chaotic and lacks clarity. As a result, the reform may deepen disparities between municipalities and weaken the initial conditions necessary for an effective transformation of agriculture.

Addressing the dominant model of food production, Professor J. Krupa drew attention to the growing resemblance between conventional farms and industrial production facilities, where pesticides and antibiotics are frequently overused. He emphasized the importance of education and of treating farmers as equal partners in dialogue with central government administration, observing that **the voice of agricultural organizations is often overlooked.** As potential remedies for improving the system, **he pointed to the development of local infrastructure, the shortening of supply chains, and the introduction of statutory requirements mandating a minimum share of organic food in public institutions such as schools and preschools.**

From the perspective of a practitioner, W. Maziejuk, representing the “Figa” farm, stressed that organic agriculture constitutes a fully viable alternative capable of feeding society, provided it is supported by adequate education and a coherent long-term vision. He **highlighted the success of grassroots initiatives, including producer associations that independently shorten supply chains and promote high-quality products without waiting for top-down regulatory decisions.** He also emphasized that any meaningful transformation must take into account local specificities and traditions rather than replicate ready-made solutions from other countries.

The issue of legal protection for producers was addressed by Professor A. Jurkowska-Gomułka in her assessment of the effectiveness of the so-called “predominance act.” She pointed to the alarmingly low number of decisions issued by the Office of Competition and Consumer Protection (UOKiK), attributing this to insufficient institutional resources and to the fact **that farmers – fearing the loss of market access – often accept even prohibited contractual**

clauses imposed by large retail chain. As a potential solution, she suggested assigning agricultural regulatory responsibilities to a specialized public administration body, rather than treating them as additional tasks for existing institutions.

The discussion was further enriched by the observations of journalist Szymon Bujalski on the communication of climate change. He argued **that the prevailing language of threat remains too abstract for many members of society. Instead, he suggested focusing on building a local "community of agency" and highlighting tangible, immediate benefits such as improved health and fair prices.** In his view, promoting cooperative models that connect farmers, municipalities, and consumers may prove key to the successful transformation of the food system.

Key proposals emerging from the discussions include:

- educating farmers and consumers about the health and climate benefits of transforming rural areas and agriculture towards a more sustainable future,
- promoting and supporting grassroots initiatives of farmers in the field of sales and promotion of sustainable food, shortening the supply chain,
- development of local infrastructure in order to sell agricultural products, make the countryside an attractive place to live and conduct profitable agricultural activities (stopping the outflow of people from rural areas to cities),
- establishing or separating from the public administration institutions dealing exclusively and comprehensively with agricultural issues and production quality control, methods of promoting and selling agricultural products, implementing existing but still underutilized legal solutions supporting the economic situation of farmers and stimulating their entrepreneurship,
- communicating through the media the individual and local benefits of sustainable agriculture and sustainable food, moving away from talking about global climate threats and showing more local ones related to the degradation of nature, human and animal health,
- building communities and local cooperatives that have a real impact on introducing local and national changes in the area of agriculture and organic production, shortening the supply chains of sustainable food.

The project „Program for the Transformation of Rural Areas and Agriculture“ is implemented by the University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów and co-financed from the state budget, allocated by the Minister of Education and Science as part of the „Science for Society II“ initiative.





SESSION 3

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT, HEALTHY FOOD, HEALTHY PEOPLE

Panel supervisor:

Zbigniew M. Karaczun, PhD. DSc, Eng. Prof. SGGW – Professor at the Department of Environmental Protection and Dendrology, Warsaw University of Life Sciences, co-founder of Climate Action Network Central and Eastern Europe (CAN CEE) and the Climate Coalition

Moderator:

Urszula Binduga, MD, PhD. – Director of the Center for Ecological Education, Assistant Professor at the Department of Civilization Diseases and Regenerative Medicine

Panelists:

- **Anna Winiarska, PhD. Hab. Prof. UP in Lublin**, University of Life Sciences in Lublin, Faculty of Animal Sciences and Bioeconomy, Institute of Animal Nutrition and Bramatology,
- **Katarzyna Wolnicka, PhD.**, clinical dietitian, member of the Food for the Future think tank, Institute of Sustainable Nutrition,
- **Paulina Sobiesiak-Penszko, PhD.**, Institute of Food Strategies “Grunt”,
- **Paulina Kaczmarek**, Director of Sustainable Development at the Danone group of companies in Poland, responsible for, among other things, implementing the “One Planet. One Health” vision,
- **Patryk Motyka**, journalist and publisher of the Onet homepage. Co-founder of the “Long Live the Planet” project and co-author of the multimedia reports on environmental issues, “We’re Drying” and “The Baltic Sea.”



INTRODUCTORY SPEECH:

Sustainable agriculture – healthy people

Zbigniew M. Karaczun, PhD. DSc, Eng. Prof. SGGW

INTRODUCTORY SPEECH:

The presentation focused on the crisis of the contemporary agricultural model, which is largely based on maximizing industrial output at the expense of human health, environmental sustainability, and the economic stability of farmers. Professor Z. Karaczun emphasized that while the primary function of agriculture remains the provision of food security, modern agriculture is now expected to fulfill a broader set of objectives. These should be taken into account both by policymakers shaping agricultural policy and by farmers themselves. These additional responsibilities include ensuring the high quality of agricultural products, reducing the negative impact of production on natural resources, biodiversity, and the climate, preserving local and national traditions, and responding to the growing influence of consumer trends and new technologies. Meeting these expectations requires farmers to assume multiple roles, demonstrate significantly greater engagement, and possess far more extensive knowledge than was necessary several decades ago. At the same time, this transformation is occurring with insufficient – and sometimes virtually no – support from public authorities or consumers. As a result, farmers' willingness to embrace and actively support these changes remains limited.

Nevertheless, transformation is essential. Continued global population growth is driving an increasing demand for food. However, **the decade 2011-2020 recorded the lowest growth in agricultural productivity in the past 70 years**, indicating that the current model – based on intensification and the expansion into natural areas – may be reaching its structural limits.

Among the most important topics discussed were:

- **Food waste and its environmental costs.** Over 1.5 billion tons of food are wasted annually. If food waste were a country, it would be the second largest source of greenhouse gas emissions after China. Effectively reducing this waste would not only reduce hunger but also contribute to halting climate change. This vast amount of food we waste clearly demonstrates that the claim that sustainable food production methods – organic or **regenerative agriculture** – **will not feed humanity is false.**
- **Food prices fail to account for all production costs.** The global, hidden costs of food production (poor diet, environmental impact) are estimated at **\$12 trillion annually**, equivalent to 15 years of Poland's GDP. In the Netherlands, studies have shown that every euro of value generated in agriculture generates as much as €1.08 in social losses.
- **Corporate dominance and the marginalization of farmers.** Modern agriculture has become a massive business controlled by large companies, not agricultural producers. **The grain market is 90% dominated by four corporations (the so-called ABCD)**, and the agrochemical market 70% by just five companies. Farmers are the weakest link – their share of the value added from every dollar spent on food has fallen from over 50% a century ago to just **14.9% today.**
- **Threats Associated with the EU-Mercosur Agreement.** According to Professor Z. Karaczun, the treaty with Mercosur – like any trade agreement – carries both benefits and threats for Poland and the EU. One of the main risks is that it could lead to a reduction in quality standards in Europe. Pesticide consumption in Mercosur countries is many times higher (e.g., in Brazil, 10 times higher than in Poland), and many substances used there are banned in the EU as too toxic. This agreement could **limit the EU's "precautionary principle,"** preventing European authorities from inspecting local producers.
- **The situation in Poland – antibiotics and factory farming.** Poland has become "the pigsty and henhouse of Europe," basing its development on large-scale farms and out-farming. The data regarding antibiotic consumption is alarming: **Poland uses 196 mg of antibiotics per kilogram of meat, while the European average is only 73 mg.** In the opinion of the speaker, without changing the animal production model and moving away from factory farming, it will be impossible to reduce antibiotic use in Polish agriculture.
- **The need for transformation and regenerative agriculture.** The panel's advisor emphasizes that maintaining the current model is impossible in the long term due to the limited space on our planet. A solution may lie in transitioning to **regenerative agriculture**, which is a model intermediate between industrial and ecological. As part of the work on the Social Pact for Polish agriculture and food production, with the participation of over 50 institutions, the first cross-sectoral definition of regenerative agriculture in Europe was developed. Its main premise is that regenerative agriculture is not about implementing a single practice. It is a holistic approach to food production, building harmony between farmers' actions and the needs of the natural environment.

Professor Karaczun concluded his speech by stating that the transformation of the agri-food sector must take place with the active participation of farmers, who should no longer be treated merely as clients of corporations or governments. Although the international order is crumbling (the war in Ukraine, US policy), and climate awareness has weakened in 2024, we remain with “radical hope” – a belief in the necessity of action and maintaining dignity even in situations that seem hopeless. Without a focus on quality, climate and environmental protection, and respect for the dignity of farmers, Polish agriculture will not be able to compete with major players such as Ukraine or Mercosur countries.

Transformation must take place with the active participation of farmers, who must no longer be treated merely as clients of corporations or governments. Although the international order is crumbling (the war in Ukraine, US policy), and climate awareness has weakened in 2024, the speaker invokes the idea of “radical hope” – the need to act and maintain dignity even in situations that seem hopeless. Without a focus on quality, Polish agriculture will be unable to compete with players such as Ukraine.

SUMMARY OF THE DEBATE BETWEEN PANEL PARTICIPANTS:

The panel discussion brought together experts representing scientific, public health, strategic, business, and media perspectives. At the center of the debate was the question of the long-term sustainability of the current food system and whether contemporary patterns of food production and consumption genuinely serve the health of both people and the planet.

Professor A. Winiarska highlighted the significant differences between food produced in intensive systems and that originating from more sustainable models. She emphasized that intensive production – focused primarily on maximizing yields and rapid growth – often leads to a reduction in the functional value of food, both in terms of bioactive compounds and micro-nutrient content. She also pointed to increased microbiological, chemical, and quality-related risks associated with the excessive use of plant protection products and production pressure in livestock systems. As an alternative, she proposed the cultivation of traditional and more resilient plant varieties, which – despite lower yields – offer higher nutritional value and greater food safety. **Raising awareness at all levels of education and public life remains, in her view, a key driver of change.**

Dr. K. Wolnicka stressed that intensive food production systems generate not only environmental costs but, above all, **hidden health costs that place a long-term burden on healthcare systems and national economies.** She referred to alarming data on overweight, obesity, and diet-related diseases in Poland, as well as the projected economic consequences of these trends. As a viable response, she presented **the planetary diet as a flexible nutritional model that supports both human health and environmental protection.** Even dietary changes introduced later in life, she noted, can significantly extend healthy life expectancy and reduce premature mortality. Consumer education, clear and accessible messaging, emotional engagement, and systemic solutions – such as amendments to regulations governing child and adolescent nutrition – are essential elements of this transformation.



Dr. P. Sobiesiak-Penszko emphasized the need to **shift the paradigm of thinking about food – from a market commodity to a public good, a fundamental right, and a social service**. In her view, the current agricultural support system should be redesigned to reward farmers for delivering public goods such as biodiversity protection, water retention, and high-quality food production. **She underscored the importance of integrating small and medium-sized farms into the transformation process, strengthening local markets, and shortening supply chains**. Looking ahead to Polish agriculture in 2035, she argued that climate, geopolitical, and economic pressures will inevitably drive changes toward greater resilience, localization, and quality – although this evolution will unfold amid intensifying crises.

Ms. Kaczmarek presented **the perspective of large food corporations, noting that their operations are strongly shaped by regulatory and economic frameworks**. Using the example of Danone, she demonstrated how businesses can exert meaningful influence on the transformation of the food system by supporting regenerative agriculture, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, decarbonizing production processes, limiting the use of chemical inputs and added sugars in food products, and shaping consumption patterns through the development of plant-based alternatives.

From a media perspective, it was **emphasized that issues related to climate, food systems, and environmental protection require reliable scientific data and close cooperation with experts**. **A major challenge remains disinformation**, which often achieves greater reach than fact-based communication. As Patryk Motyka observed, effective communication must be clear, audience-oriented, and resistant to misinterpretation, while maintaining credibility and precision.

SUMMARY AND FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Participants in the second edition of the National Debate “Our Planet, Our Common Future” included representatives of public administration, numerous national academic institutions, journalists and science communicators, as well as farmers and representatives of non-governmental organizations. The diversity of perspectives made it possible to draw several important conclusions, the most significant of which is that **transforming the food system is not the responsibility of a single sector. Rather, it constitutes a shared responsibility of science, policymakers, businesses, the media, and consumers. Agricultural reform must extend beyond technical and economic considerations. Equally essential are social and educational changes that can meaningfully influence the awareness and behavior of both producers and consumers. Moreover, given that building lasting habits is a long-term process, it is urgent to introduce systemic solutions that ensure access to high-quality food in preschools and schools. Such measures would contribute, in the long run, to improving the health of younger generations.**

The principal challenge remains the transformation of rural areas and agriculture in a way that enhances efficiency while simultaneously adhering to the principles of sustainable development. Achieving this objective requires coherent and coordinated action across multiple policy domains. The Program for the Transformation of Rural Areas and Agriculture was identified as a key instrument, designed to implement parallel and mutually reinforcing measures in both areas. The debate also underscored the crucial role of the media in shaping public understanding and awareness. One of the most pressing challenges in communicating environmental issues is combating disinformation and reframing the narrative – shifting the focus from perceived costs and sacrifices toward benefits and long-term gains. In conclusion, the debate clearly demonstrated that every consumer choice carries significance. The future of the food system depends on the integration of efforts across multiple sectors and stakeholder groups, with rural areas placed at the center of strategic action and policy development.



MEDIA ABOUT THE DEBATE

Radio Via [„Nasza planeta – nasza wspólna przyszłość”](#)

TVP 3 Rzeszów [Aktualności 12.12.2025, 18:30](#)

Kurier Rzeszowski [Przyszłość planety i rolnictwa tematem debaty w Kielnarowej, w Wyższej Szkole Informatyki i Zarządzania](#)

Food Industry Support [Przyszłość planety – wspólna odpowiedzialność](#)

Bezpieczna Żywność [Agroekologia i zrównoważony rozwój w centrum debaty WSiIZ](#)

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TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT
IN RZESZÓW, POLAND**

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