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Farm to Fork Strategy: how to reach the targets?

With the Farm to Fork deadline looming in 8 years' time and no comprehensive impact assessment in sight, we must build solution-oriented policies, based on the available data we have at hand, with innovation as their cornerstone.

European agri-food production is among the most resource-efficient and sustainable in the world. The European farming sector believes that, with innovation and further support at the forefront of EU agricultural policy, farmers will and can continue to produce in an even more sustainable manner. We acknowledge the expectations of society and policymakers for food production systems and believe that innovation is key in the sustainable transition outlined by the Farm to Fork Strategy. But innovation cannot happen without the necessary legislative and financial support. The agri-food sector calls on European policymakers to enable innovation as a driver of its Farm to Fork targets.

This is how the agri-food value chain can contribute:

AnimalhealthEurope

The animal health industry is currently at the forefront of a technological and digital transformation. Breakthroughs in biotechnology, detection tools and robotics, genomic testing, and advanced vaccines, amongst others, are set to become essential tools for the future of both livestock farming and the veterinary profession. By supporting access to and training on how to best use such innovations, farmers will be able to optimise the health and welfare of animals in their care, reduce environmental impacts, ensure better traceability, and support responsible use of medicines, amongst others.

AVEC - Association of Poultry Processors and Poultry Trade in the EU Countries

A large part of the GHG emissions associated with the poultry meat sector are coming from feed sources. The European poultry meat sector has the ambition to reduce its environmental impact by using more sustainable feed sources (phasing out the use of feed associated with deforestation) and by further improving the efficiency of the sector (digestibility). The sector is also looking to make its supply chain more circular (by using

biogas, solar panels) and more climate-friendly (on transport, packaging and on the use of resources).

CEMA

The European agricultural machinery sector supports farmers of all farm types and sizes to get the most from their land, while protecting the environment and bringing economic and social value. Investments in advanced farm machinery, precision farming technologies and digital solutions will help our farmers stay competitive in the transition towards more sustainable farming practices, ensuring a generation renewal of European farming activities. The objectives of the European Green Deal and the Farm to Fork strategy cannot be achieved without smart technologies and digital transformation. We call on European policy makers to champion the uptake of precision farming and smart technologies through advanced agricultural machinery and solutions.

CIBE

Impact assessments and studies have shown the significant impacts of the Farm to Fork targets on EU agricultural production and trade, as well as on EU farmers. The feasibility of reaching these targets will depend on the support provided to innovative practices, techniques and products. In particular, the current and future regulatory framework on plant protection must avoid the arising of agro-technical deadlocks resulting from the removal of plant protection solutions from the farmers' toolbox before viable alternatives come onstream. Enough time must be given for viable alternatives from innovation to become effectively available to (and workable for) farmers. Furthermore, policy/regulatory framework should not inhibit but promote innovation, notably as regards new plant breeding techniques and their results. Last but not least, policy/regulatory framework should be able to take account of the extent to which good agricultural practices, including IPM, are already applied by farmers in the EU.

CLITRAVI

The European Meat Processing sector believes that a swift transition towards more sustainable food systems should be made in a holistic, fair and coordinated way, by taking into account that any sector is part of the solution and solutions should be found within any sector. There are no sustainable and unsustainable sectors, but more and less sustainable business practices. The debate is now based on a divisive approach which could undermine the target of more sustainable food systems. We call on a less divisive approach in the implementation of the Farm to Fork Strategy, the removal of regulatory bottlenecks which can limit innovation and harmonized solutions which can promote a level playing field for the European operators.

COCERAL

The upcoming global challenges our food chains have started facing - from climate change to disruptive innovation - require comprehensive regulation to better adapt and possibly thrive in uncertain times. Safe crop protection solutions placed on the EU market, together with qualified advisory to farmers and growers, help meet the productivity goals under the Farm to Fork, thereby providing safe, affordable food for the EU population. Yet,

interconnectedness and rapid evolution of our food systems food demand unparalleled and fast-adapting regulatory tools.

COCERAL believes that standards established at the international level plus continuous dialogue with third countries should inspire actions directed to harmonisation, lessening hidden barriers whilst maintaining high safety standards for consumers and citizens wherever they live, plus environmental care. Advancements flourishing in the domain of sustainable alternatives and green agriculture - including life sciences and biotechnology - should ideally be reflected in enabling regulatory frameworks in due course. Furthermore, innovation doesn't stop at borders. There is much need for a world-oriented and future-looking European policy for innovation, accounting for food security, safety and sustainability, as well as for interoperability of current supply chains. In the absence of this, EU traders and Food Business Operators alike will be confronted with hidden obstacles and costly consequences. To do this, we believe that the broader EU regulatory architecture must have a fast-paced, solutions enabling and innovation-focused approach, with local relevance but also global outreach.

Copa-Cogeca

Copa-Cogeca agree with the main goals set out in the Farm to Fork Strategy, we know that changes are necessary, and we remain committed to playing our part in the path towards a transition to a more sustainable food system. Indeed, European farmers, forest owners and their cooperatives are already all working in that direction. We are now waiting for concrete proposals from the Commission, especially on the blind spots identified in the ongoing debate such as on the effects of carbon leakage, European strategic autonomy, or consumer prices. This is about finding new EU enabling ways to contribute to change in a practical and realistic manner talking about: low risk substances – to replace means to combat pest and disease while losing synthetic molecules; New Breeding/Genomic Techniques to improve farming resilience naturally through better genetic material; developing dynamic market for nutrients, by mineral fertilisers and in particular organic fertilisers; Next steps in the Unfair Trading Practices Directive, for more balanced, transparent value chain; Policy consistency across the EU – we are committed to the common policies, but how will this will be translated into the increasingly open international trade.

CropLife Europe

We need a regulatory framework that supports innovation in agriculture which will help deliver the European green and digital transformations. EU authorisation giving timely access to a variety of innovative crop protection solutions is the most important part of farmers' ability to improve quality, market access and tradability of fresh produce.

EFFAB - European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders

Through selective animal breeding, we achieve better use of feed by animals, reduced carbon footprint and improved animal health and welfare whilst preserving genetic resources – from conventional to organic farming. However, we need more support for research and innovation and to develop legal instruments and tools, in order to accelerate the genetic improvement of farmed animals, and to provide further solutions for farmers, breeders and our society boosting sustainability of EU food systems.

ELO European Landowners Organisation

Innovations such as the New Genomic Techniques (NGT) need to be considered if we are serious about reaching the F2F targets and remain competitive at a global scale. The EU's current legal framework on GMOs needs to be revised and gene-editing research needs to be encouraged to bridge the gap with other major producing countries. Likewise, we need to have more safe crop protection products and fertilisers on the market. Farmers need them in order to make the transition towards a more sustainable and viable food system. Enabling SMEs access on the market by ensuring a lighter registration process can give farmers the tools they need to reach the ambitious targets set for them.

ePURE

The biorefineries that produce renewable ethanol are working, real-life examples of the bioeconomy in action. European feedstock grown by EU farmers is used to make several important products: including not just renewable low-carbon fuel but also food, high-protein GMO-free animal feed, alcohol for use in hand sanitiser, and captured CO₂ for beverage use. The Farm-to-Fork Strategy should promote this domestic biorefinery system, empowering EU climate ambitions, improving food security and ensuring a strategic supply chain.

Euroseeds

We need a regulatory environment that encourages plant breeding and delivers on both purposes: quality assurance for customers (the reproductive material meets their demands regardless of the production system, conventional/organic) and speeding up the development of new varieties (for which New Genomic Techniques are a crucial element).

FEFANA

The Farm to Fork strategy has recognised the key role of specialty feed ingredients stressing the need to facilitate the placing on the market of sustainable and innovative feed additives. The up-coming modernization of the EU feed additive rules is a unique opportunity to address the shortcomings of the current regulatory framework, such as the lengthy and costly authorization procedure, unnecessary administrative burden, the regulatory hurdles to the application of digital solutions, and the need for alignment with other EU legislation. We are calling on the European Commission to work with the stakeholders of the feed sector in order to elaborate a proposal that supports innovation and progress towards achieving objectives of the Green Deal/Farm to Fork Strategy with the help of feed additives.

FEFAC

The production of feed for food-producing animals plays a key role in determining the sustainability of animal products. Animal production itself plays a key role in determining the sustainability of the whole food system. The impacts that the Farm to Fork Strategy is envisioned to make on the EU Regulatory Framework respective to food production should start from the premises that the different farm animals and the different livestock farming systems all have their strengths, as they excel differently in terms of nutrient and resource efficiency. In the effort to further boost the livestock sector's role in circular economy, with

its capacity to absorb residual biomass from other (industrial) food and non-food sectors, the EU should keep in mind that efforts to boost the sustainability of energy production, with use of advanced biofuels, can impact the competitive access of the feed sector to residual biomass flows in the future.

Fertilizers Europe

As 50 % of global food production is down to the use of mineral fertilizers, the European fertilizer industry plays a vital role in ensuring a resilient European agriculture and in providing citizens with affordable and nutritious food. Increased nutrient use efficiency will be key to meet Europe's ambitious goal of reducing nutrient losses while ensuring no deterioration of soil fertility. This goal can best be achieved by increasing nutrient use efficiency and setting up nutrient management plans as well as development and uptake of on-farm precise fertilization techniques. The sector is committed to work hand-in hand with farmers to advance a productive, resilient and sustainable EU agriculture.

AGRICULTURE & PROGRESS

Without innovative techniques, it is quite clear that the EU farming community and its downstream users would be unable to guarantee sufficient affordable high-quality produce for EU citizens and for the growing world population – and as a consequence achieve all the ambitious goals foreseen in the Farm-to-Fork Strategy. Innovative techniques such as New Genomic Techniques are key in meeting society's growing demand to speed up efforts to further increase sustainability and respect for the environment. However, innovation requires time and investments in terms of R&D to overcome technical barriers. The uncertainty currently generated at EU level risks preventing NGTs from becoming mainstream and a permanent part of the agricultural toolbox. Linked to this, the effects of climate change, as well as the efforts made to face them, affect all individuals and economic sectors, but in particular rural communities and agriculture. Agriculture being one of the economic sectors most strongly depending on natural conditions, the efforts required to adapt to a changing environment are particularly important for farmers. The Agriculture & Progress Platform would therefore like to call upon the European Commission to not only integrate globally the challenges of agriculture in its policies but to additionally see agriculture as a means to an end / key player for achieving them (climate change, energy transition, bio economy, ...).

UECBV

The European Livestock and Meat Trades Union is a reliable sustainability actor from the economic, ecological and social angle

- in the way our 50 associations and 20 000 companies handle welfare, trade, and reduce emissions
- in our supportive approach to the Farm-to-Fork strategy
- in concretely working towards a science-based methodology to devise solutions to our environmental footprint and in developing a data-based sensitivity analysis (to be communicated soon)

From farm to fork via factory, UECBV implements a true circular economy approach based on trade. It aims for a balanced biosystem which includes animals and plant production, supports innovation and prepares for the expected transition. Meat is a nutritious and cultural food able to be produced in a sustainable manner and delivering on consumer expectations. UECBV is strongly involved in finding innovative solutions using given and developing tools like the already signed Code of Conduct, and is able to open doors to transversal approaches for a proven resilient sector.

- Agriculture and Progress – European Platform for Sustainable Agricultural Production
- Agri-food Chain Coalition – European agri-food chain joint initiative
- AnimalhealthEurope – European Animal Medicines Industry
- AVEC – European Association of Poultry Processors and Poultry Trade
- CEMA – European Agricultural Machinery Association
- CIBE – International Confederation of European Beet Growers
- Clitravi – Liaison Centre for the Meat Processing Industry in the European Union
- COCERAL – European association of trade in cereals, oilseeds, pulses, olive oil, oils and fats, animal feed and agrosupply
- Copa-Cogeca – European Farmers and Agri-Cooperatives
- CropLife Europe- Europe’s Industry representing sustainable crop protection solutions
- EFFAB – European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders
- ELO – European Landowners’ Organization
- European Livestock Voice – European Platform of the Livestock Food Chain
- Euroseeds – European Seed Sector
- ePURE – European Renewable Ethanol Industry
- FEFAC – European Feed Manufacturers’ Federation
- FEFANA – European Association of Specialty Feed Ingredients and their Mixtures
- Fertilizers Europe – European Fertilizer Producers
- UECBV – European Livestock and Meat Trades Union

