EFFAB
European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders

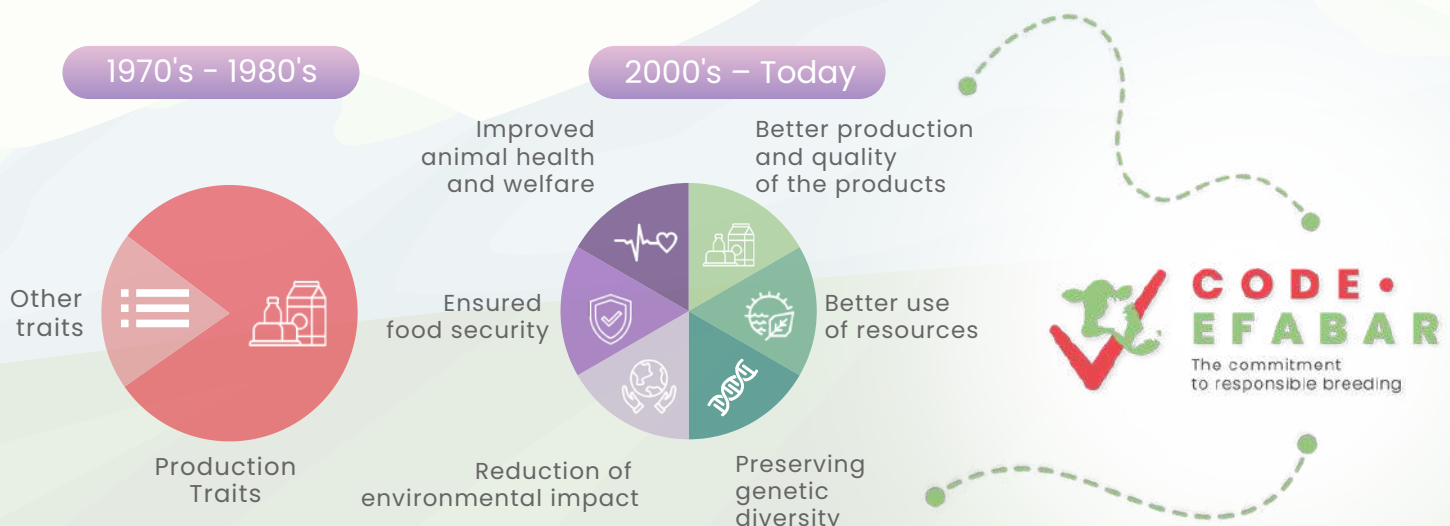# EUROPEAN ANIMAL BREEDERS VISION FOR 2030

WHO WE ARE

The European Forum of Farm Animal Breeders (EFFAB) is the voice of European animal breeding and reproduction organizations active in **ruminant, pig, poultry, aqua, and insect** genetics. From small, medium, and global organisations, we cover a wide variety of actors **breeding for conventional, outdoor, and organic** animal farmers.

Our mission is to engage in dialogue and raise awareness around the role of animal breeding **in improving all types of animal farming systems.**

CONTEXT

In animal breeding, the focus has traditionally been on responding to farming and societal challenges. In recent decades, this meant a shift towards more responsible and balanced breeding strategies that enhance animal welfare and health, reduce resource use and climate impact, and preserve genetic diversity.

To demonstrate and illustrate this evolution, EFFAB has developed **Code EFABAR**, which aims to showcase how breeders nowadays implement all these elements in their breeding programs, with the sole objective of contributing responsibly to improving the sustainability of all animal farming systems.

1970's - 1980's

2000's – Today

Other traits

Production Traits

Improved animal health and welfare

Ensured food security

Reduction of environmental impact

Better production and quality of the products

Better use of resources

Preserving genetic diversity

CODE · EFABAR
The commitment to responsible breeding

ENSURING ACCESS TO SAFE AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD:
FOOD SECURITY AND SAFETY

Animal breeders are at the start of European food systems. With the development of **balanced and responsible breeding strategies**, breeders strive to ensure:

FOR FARMERS
Reliable access to appropriate genetic progress for their farms in all farming systems and a variety of local and commercial breeds.

FOR EU CITIZENS
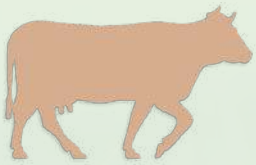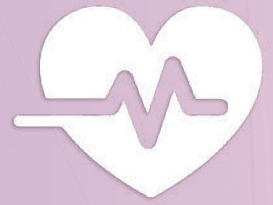Safe, sufficient, affordable and nutritious food through their contributions to sustainable food systems.

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PLACING THE WELFARE & HEALTH OF ANIMALS AT THE FOREFRONT OF BREEDING STRATEGIES

Animal breeding is an essential tool to improve both welfare and health in farmed animals

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 2008 AND 2018 IN THREE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Advances in dairy breeding significantly reduced the prevalence of mastitis and reduced the need for antimicrobials.

- Less Antibiotics used:
  4,270 kg
- Less permanent milk loss:
  54.9 mill. kg
- Less discarded milk:
 **17.2 mill. kg**

POULTRY WELFARE IMPROVEMENT

40% of poultry breeding programs are dedicated to improving the welfare of birds, driving improvements in leg strength, heart and lung functions.

From 1995 to 2021, dedicated efforts in poultry breeding have improved *leg health, reducing valgus/varus issues* by more than 90% and ensuring stable, healthier flocks over time.

DECREASE IN MORTALITY THROUGH THE YEARS

infectious pancreatic necrosis (iPN) is a viral disease that is one of the main concerns for salmon farming. Particularly around the turn of the 21st century, frequent outbreaks causing high levels of mortality (up to 90%) were occuring. Resistance to IPN is highly heritable, and **breeding for IPN resistance drastically decreased outbreaks and mortality to near zero**.

**BETWEEN 2009 AND 2015 MORTALITY HAS DECREASED BY MORE THAN 90%**
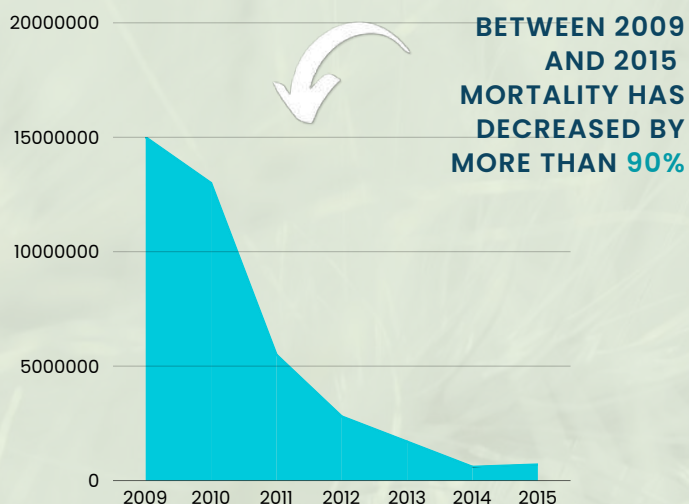
THROUGH BALANCED BREEDING PROGRAMS, PREWEANING PIGLETS SURVIVAL CONTINUES TO INCREASE
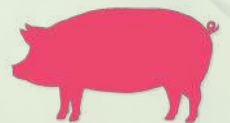
By implementing balanced breeding strategies, which consider the welfare of piglets and sows, the European pig breeding sector has provided consistent improvements in reducing piglet survival.

PIGLET SURVIVAL BETWEEN 2015 and 2020
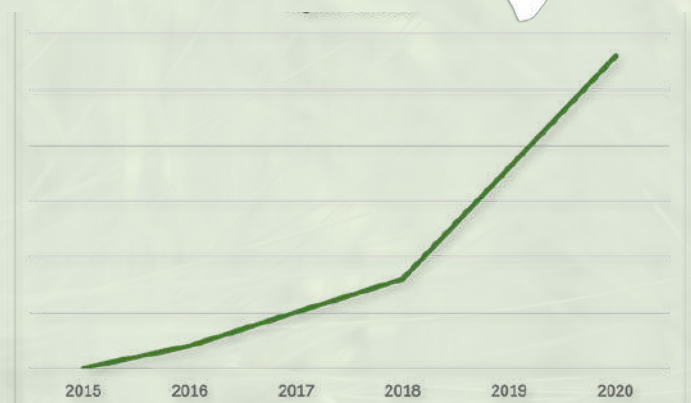
ADDRESSING THE 3 PILLARS OF SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of animal farming needs to be assessed considering **the three pillars: environmental, economic, and social.** Animal breeding provides solutions and positively impacts those three pillars, providing tools to livestock and aquaculture farmers to address the challenges faced.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF BREEDING

✓ Methane emissions:
1% reduction annually

✓ Nitrogen excretion:
3.5% reduction every 5 years

POSITIVELY IMPACTS THE ECONOMICS OF FARMS

✓ Using 30% less feed compared to 30 years ago positively impacts the environment and the economics of farms.

SOCIAL IMPACT IN OUR FARMS AND COMMUNITY

✓ By providing high-quality germinal products and breeding animals for a diversity of farming systems and local conditions, the sector supports farmers' livelihoods in rural and coastal areas throughout Europe.

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SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVENESS AND GROWTH THROUGH CONTINUOUS R&I INVESTMENTS

Ongoing advancements in animal genetics, genomics, precision livestock farming tools, Artificial intelligence, and machine learning enable EU animal breeders to analyse vast amounts of data, leading to a better understanding of animals and conducting more and more responsible breeding strategies **FOR ALL FARMERS, AND FARMING SYSTEMS.**
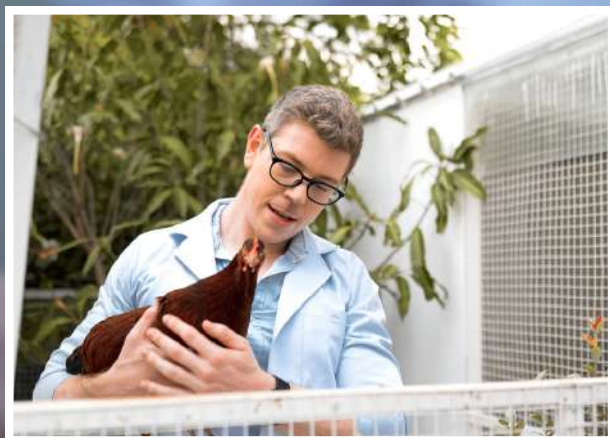
AT EU LEVEL

The EU's community of skilled scientists in the private and public sectors allows for a dynamic environment for Research & Innovation.

AT GLOBAL LEVEL

Ensure the European competitiveness and sustainability of the global food systems.

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BREEDING SECTOR VISION
A BLUEPRINT FOR THE NEXT 5 YEARS

1 **CONSIDER RESPONSIBLE AND BALANCED BREEDING AS A BASIS FOR POLICY INITIATIVES**

Despite some simplistic narratives, **animal breeding strategies focusing solely on increasing production are no longer in place and cannot be the basis for policy discussions.** Current animal breeding strategies follow the Code of good practices for responsible and balanced breeding, **Code EFABAR**. This new direction of travel needs to be recognised as the current standard when drafting new legislation.

Calls for banning specific breeds or lines are unacceptable, as they don't consider the current balanced breeding strategies. Responsible breeding can overcome trade-offs of past breeding strategies and improve animal welfare.

2 **BOOST SUSTAINABLE COMPETITIVENESS**

Animal breeding is a crucial tool to improve the three pillars of sustainability, in commercial, local and endangered breeds.

A science-based, agile, appropriate and coherent regulatory framework is needed to improve the sustainability of all animal farming systems and maintain competitiveness. Regulations should be designed with this in mind, **to quickly analyze and adapt to recent scientific progress**, ensuring a safe operating space and the competitiveness of EU animal breeders in the EU and at global stage.

Animal health and welfare regulatory coherence and practicability; in particular for **the intra-trade and export of germinal products, and breeding animals.**

Moving towards science-based for agile, and coherent regulatory frameworks. This will allow to keep up with the dynamic Research & Innovation developments (e.g. **EU Biotechnology** initiative).
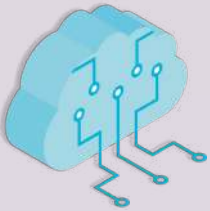
Create a fair and smart landscape of **animal data** for the purpose of breeding.

Secure and improve the **preservation** of terrestrial and aquatic genetic **resources.**

3 PRESERVING AND DEVELOPING R&I SKILLS IN THE EU REQUIRE MORE SUPPORT

Responsible and balanced breeding has been possible because of the development of further scientific knowledge and associated technologies. We must ensure further improvements and EU and global competitiveness while promoting sustainability.

Europe must invest in ambitious EU research and innovation frameworks for pre-farm gate activities, including animal breeding and genetics.
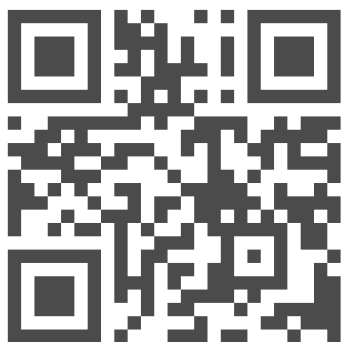
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THE ANSWER LIES IN ANIMAL GENETICS

FOR COMPETITIVE AND SUSTAINABLE GROWTH, IMPROVED CIRCULARITY, AND RESILIENCE OF ALL ANIMAL FARMING SYSTEMS

EFFAB is committed to collaborating with policymakers to ensure food security and safety, improve animal health and welfare, and address the 3 pillars of sustainability.

Get to know more about our mission here:

Follow us!