

Nourishing Europe: The Importance of Animal Proteins

Appeal of the Livestock Supply Chains to European Institutions

26th March 2025

European agriculture is recognized worldwide for its efficiency, crucial role in food security, and ability to innovate and address environmental challenges through balanced and sustainable solutions. Livestock farming, as recognized by the recent Vision for Agriculture and Food, is an essential part of EU agriculture, sharing the same natural cycle, to which it clearly brings important benefits that should be fully valorized and unlocked, to enhance biodiversity and economic and social vitality of rural areas. Agri-food production is based on a constant integration between animal and plant production— two systems closely linked in production and complementary in nutrition.

The European strategy for food, particularly protein production, must ensure a balance between various sources to guarantee food security, public health, and the sustainability of production and economic and social systems. An excessively unbalanced approach favoring plant proteins to the detriment of animal ones risks upsetting this balance, potentially affecting food security and health.

We call on the European Commission to develop a comprehensive EU Food Strategy that supports diversity in agricultural production, including livestock, mixed farming and sustainable intensification methods that optimize resource efficiency without compromising food security or rural livelihoods.

Why should we support an action plan that values animal proteins? We summarize it in three key points.

1. Threat to Food Security and Nutritional Sufficiency

- Meat, dairy, and eggs must be valued, harmful prejudices must be avoided, and dietary guidelines based on sound science must be promoted to protect consumers and producers.
- Livestock farming plays a crucial role in circular agricultural systems, utilizing marginal lands unsuitable for crops, converting 86% of inedible by-products into high-quality proteins, and providing essential nutrients that are difficult to obtain exclusively from a plant-based diet alone.
- Scientific evidence confirms that animal-based foods are important for human health, particularly for vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly, and those with nutritional deficiencies.
- Nutritional deficiencies and the rise in cardiometabolic diseases represent a global challenge exacerbated by reduced access to quality nutrients. Inadequate food policies may intensify this phenomenon, with serious consequences for public health.

2. Economic and Social Impact on European Farmers

- A forced transition that shifts the production and food system away from animal-based agriculture would have devastating consequences for rural areas, especially in many European regions where livestock farming is an important economic and social pillar.
- European farmers have been investing for years in innovation, precision agriculture and regenerative animal farming to promote balanced and sustainable production, ensuring high-quality and healthy food while countering the spread of ultra-processed foods. To continue on this path, they need effective support policies.
- Reducing domestic production of animal products – while demand is growing - would favor imports, leading not only to a loss of competitiveness for European farmers but also increased global emissions, as GHGs are not subjected to borders.

3. Environmental Sustainability: Recognizing the Complexity of Agro-Livestock Systems

- Recognize farmers' consistent and significant achievements in promoting increasingly sustainable production, avoiding ideological biases that jeopardize livestock farming unfairly favor plant-based alternatives or alleged replacements.
- When assessing the whole impact of livestock production, it is essential to support scientifically sound environmental assessments that consider the entire life cycle of products rather than promoting biased narratives that ignore the contribution of well-managed livestock production to sustainability.
- Life Cycle Assessments (LCA) show that innovative livestock practices, precision farming and pasture-based livestock systems improve soil fertility, enhance carbon sequestration, and preserve biodiversity. The assumption that a shift only to plant-based diets would automatically reduce the environmental footprint is a misconception.
- Unlike fossil-based greenhouse gases, which remain in the atmosphere for centuries, methane produced by ruminants disappears within a decade. Recognizing this difference is essential to define balanced environmental policies based on scientific evidence and avoid oversimplifications that promote one-sided solutions, such as the indiscriminate increase in plant-based food consumption without a comprehensive assessment of the environmental impact;
- Livestock farming utilizes non-agricultural land and is complementary to other types of agricultural production. Therefore, a differentiated approach is needed, rather than directly comparing different systems without considering their specificities and contributions.
- In organic farming, the only fertilizer allowed by regulations is of natural origin, derived from livestock. Livestock, therefore, plays a crucial role. Manure – digestate in particular - nourishes the soil naturally, eliminating the need for chemical fertilizers. Consequently, reducing livestock leads to lower availability of natural fertilizer, resulting in greater reliance on chemical fertilizers.

Europe needs to support a diversified and resilient food system that harmoniously integrates crop and livestock production. Only in this way can true sustainability be achieved, ensuring food security and promoting prosperity for both farmers and consumers. This strategy is based on sound science and experimental methods, considering the unintended consequences of ideological policies in recent years, which have weakened European competitiveness, increased inflation, and impoverished the agricultural sector.

We therefore urge EU policymakers to:

- Develop a holistic EU Food Strategy based on the scientific method of experimentation, integrating both crop and livestock farming while ensuring fair treatment for all agricultural sectors.
- Support scientifically based environmental assessments that consider the full life cycle of food products, avoiding misleading interpretations that unfairly penalise livestock farming, potentially encouraging imports and thus increasing emissions.
- Support science-based nutritional assessments that confirm the importance of animal-based foods for human health, particularly for vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly, and those with nutritional deficiencies.

We call on the European Commission to base future food policy on the scientific method of experimentation, moving away from ideological approaches that have unintended consequences and risk undermining the competitiveness and resilience of the agri-food system. This is the only way to ensure healthy, balanced and sustainable diets for European and global citizens in the long term.



International Butcher Confederation



The Liaison Centre for the Meat Processing Industry in the European Union - Clitravi



Danske Slagterier



International Meat Secretariat



Interprofession nationale porcine - Inaporc



EAT Europe



Farm Europe



Asociatia Romana Acarnii



Romalimenta



Die Fleischer



Organizzazione Interprofessionale INTERCARNEITALIA



Associazione di Organizzazioni Produttori AOP ITALIA ZOOTECNICA



ASSOCARNI - Associazione Nazionale Industria Commercio Carni e Bestiame



ASSITAMA Associazione Italiana Aziende di Macellazione



Associazione Produttori Zootecnici Calabria APZ Calabria



Cooperativa Produttori Arborea - OP ARBOREA



Organizzazione Produttori OP Azove



Associazione Produttori Asprocarne Piemonte



Associazione Produttori Carni Bovine UNICARVE



Organizzazione Produttori Assoboni - OP ASSOBONI



Organizzazione Produttori Vitello di Marca - OP Vitello di Marca



Organizzazione Produttori Vitellone di Marca- OP Vitellone di Marca



Organizzazione Produttori Bovinmarche - OP Bovinmarche



Organizzazione Produttori Carni Sicilia OP Carni Sicilia



Organizzazione Produttori Bovini da Carne di Qualità Certificata Unicarve - OP Unicarve



Cooperativa Zootecnica Scaligera - OP Scaligera



Consorzio Carni Qualità Piemonte



Associazione Produttori Vitelli a Carne Bianca - ALLEVIT



Cooperativa agricola TERRAMADRE



Associazione Produttori del Boccarone



European Livestock and Meat Trades Union - UECBV



Kárpáti Borzderes Tenyészök Egyesülete (Carpathian Brown Cattle Breeders Association)



Bábolna Brojler Kft. Bábolna Brojler Ltd.



Bocskai Halászati Kft. Bocskai Fishing Ltd.



Baromfi Terméktanacs - BTT (Poultry Product Board)



EAAP – European Federation of Animal Science



Limonous és Blonde D'Aquitaine Tenyészök Egyesülete - Association of Hungarian Limousin and Blonde D'Aquitaine Breeders



Nyúl Terméktanacs (NyTT) (Rabbit Product Board)



Magyar Juh- és KecskeTenyészök Szövetsége (MJKSZ) Hungarian Sheep and Goat Breeders Association



Magyar Szürke Szarvasmarhat Tenyesztek Egyesulete - MSZTE



Magyar Bivalytenyésztsök Egyesülete (MBTE) Association of Hungarian Buffalo Breeders



Slovenská poľnohospodárska a potravnárska komora SPPK



Tej Szakmaközi Szervezet és Terméktenács (TTT) (Milk Interprofessional Organization and Product Board)



Juh és Kecske Ágazati Szakmaközi Szervezet - Interbranch Organisation for the Sheep and Goat Sector



Magyar Állattenyésztsök Szövetsége - MASZ (Association of Hungarian Livestock Breeders)



Magyar Haszonállállat-Génmegőrző Intézet (MGE) - Association of Hungarian Farm Animal Gene Conservation



Mangalicatenyésztsök Országos Egyesülete (MOE) - (Association of Hungarian Mangalica Breeders)



Magyartka Tenyésztsök Egyesülete (MTE) (Association of Hungarian Simmental)



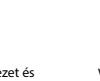
Nemzeti Agrárzágrádási Kamara - NAK (Hungarian Chamber of Agriculture (HCA) Simmental)



Bábolna Tetra Kft. Bábolna Tetra Ltd.



Tej Szakmaközi Szervezet és Terméktenács (TTT) Milk Interprofessional Organization and Product Board - TEJ SZIV



Vágóállat és Hús Szakmaközi Szervezet és Terméktenács (VHT) - Livestock and Meat Interbranch Organisation and Product Board (LMPB)



Svaz Chovatelu Holstynského Skotu Holstein Cz



Sdružení drůbežářských podniků



Ceskomoravska Drubezarska Unie - Cmdu



Ceskomoravsky Svaz Mleakarensy - Cmsm



Cestra - svaz chovatelej skotu



Schp



Cesky Szvaz Chovatelej Masneho Skotu - Cschms



Bottolo del Bierzo IGP



Vágoállat és Hús Szakmaközi Szervezet és Terméktenács (VHT) - Livestock and Meat Interbranch Organisation and Product Board (LMPB)



Castaña de Galicia



Federacion Empresarial de Carnes e Industrias Cárnicas - FECIC



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Conseljo Regulador da DOP - Arzua Ulloa



Consejo Regulador Denominación de Origien - Queso Mahon Menorca



Consejo Regulador Denominación de Origien Manzana Reinet del Bierzo



Mexillon de Galicia DOP



Mel de Galicia IGP



Peras de Rincon de Soto DOP - La Rioja



Queso de la Serena DOP

Denominación de Origen Queso Majorero



Queso Murcia al Vino DOP



Queijo Tetilla DOP



Conseljo Regulador Denominación de Origien - Queso Zamorano



Ternasco de Aragon - TA



Ternera Gallega IGP



Origen Espana



Agrarni Komora Ceske Republiky



Consortio di Tutela della Bresaola Valtellina



Cesky svaz zpracovatelej masa - CSZM

Consortio di Tutela Culatello di Zibello



Polski Związek Hodowców i Producentów Bydła Mięsnego - PZHIBPM



Polskie Zrzeszenie Producentów Bydła Mięsnego - PZPB



Polska Federacja Rolna



Stowarzyszenie



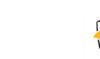
polscie mięso - Polish Meat Association



Unia Producentów i Pracodawców Przemysłu Mięsnego - UPEMI



Polski Związek Hodowców i Producentów Trzody Chlewnej - POLSUS



Krajowa Rada Drób i Przemysłu Rolnego - KRDIG



Federacja Branżowych Związków Producentów Rolnych



Polska Platforma Zrownowazonej Wolowiny



Krajowy Związek Pracodawców Trzody Chlewnej - POLPIG



Consortio Finocchiona IGP



Istituto Salumi Italiani Tutelati - ISIT



Istituto Valorizzazione Salumi Italiani - IVSI



Vzav Chovateľov Osipany na Slovensku Druzstvo - CH Kampan



Asociación de Industrias de la Carne de España - ANICE



Asociación Suinicoltori Italiani - ASSOSUINI



Carni Sostenibili



Associazione Industriali delle Carni e dei Salumi - ASSICA



Organization for an European Geographical Indications Network ORIGIN EU



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Unione Nazionale Filiere Agroalimentari Carni e Uova UNAITALIA



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Salame Brianza DOP



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Associazione Produttori Salame Felino



Salame Piemonte



Consortio di Tutela Cacciatore Italiano DOP - Salamini Italiani alla Cacciatoria



Consortio Salumi DOP Piacentini



Sudtiroler Speck g.g.A. Speck Alto Adige IGP



Consortio Zamponi e Cotechino Modena IGP



Parmigiano Reggiano



Grana Padano