



Questions and Answers: Farm to Fork Strategy - building a healthy and fully sustainable food system

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1. Why are you presenting the farm to fork strategy now?

The coronavirus crisis has underlined the importance of a robust and resilient food system that functions in all circumstances, and is capable of ensuring access to a sufficient supply of affordable food for citizens. It has also made us acutely aware of the interrelations between our health, ecosystems, supply chains, consumption patterns and planetary boundaries. It is clear that we need to do much more to keep ourselves and the planet healthy. The current pandemic is just one example. The increasing recurrence of droughts, floods, forest fires and new pests are a constant reminder that our food system is under threat and must become more sustainable and resilient.

2. How will the targets laid down in the Farm to Fork Strategy be achieved?

The Strategy sets ambitious targets:

- a reduction by 50% of the use and risk of chemical pesticides and the use of more hazardous pesticides by 50% by 2030.
- a reduction of nutrient losses by at least 50% while ensuring that there is no deterioration in soil fertility. This will reduce the use of fertilisers by at least 20% by 2030.
- a reduction by 50% of the sales of antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture by 2030
- and reaching 25% of agricultural land under organic farming by 2030

Finally, the strategy also includes the aim for all rural areas to have access to fast broadband by 2025, to enable digital innovation.

Based on experience with the implementation of the Sustainable Use Directive (SUD) it is clear that more can be done to reduce the overall risk and use of **pesticides** by promoting practices for integrated pest management to ensure that sustainable, biological, physical, other non-chemical methods and low risk pesticides are used to protect crops. To pave the way to alternatives and maintain farmers' incomes, the Commission will take a number of steps, including **revising the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive, enhance provisions on integrated pest management (IPM)** and promote greater use of safe alternative ways of protecting harvests from pests and diseases. The Commission will also facilitate the placing on the market of pesticides containing biological active substances and reinforce the environmental risk assessment of pesticides.

Existing indicators provide information on the sales of pesticides but also categorise them in terms of risk, allowing for the progress made towards achieving the targets to be measured on an annual basis. To refine the approach, the Commission will develop further indicators and propose changes to the 2009 Regulation concerning statistics on pesticides.

Member States will have to take ambitious and far-reaching measures to fully implement existing legislation on **nutrient pollution**, in order to avoid the associated nutrients losses that pollute the air and water, becoming harmful to human health and the environment. The Commission will develop with Member States an **integrated nutrient management action plan** to reduce and prevent further pollution from excessive nutrient use and to foster the recycling of nutrients. This will contribute to deliver the "zero pollution ambition" of the EU Green Deal.

To further limit the use and promote **prudent and responsible use of antimicrobials** in animals, the new **regulations on veterinary medicinal products and medicated feed**, to apply as of 2022, will provide for a wide range of concrete measures. Their impact on the ground will decrease the use of antimicrobials in farmed animals, which sales will be monitored on an annual basis.

In order to reach the target on **organic farming** in the EU, it is essential to ensure the sustainable economic development of the sector and promote demand. In addition to Common Agricultural policy (CAP) measures, such as eco-schemes, investments and advisory services, and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) measures, the Commission will put forward an Action Plan on organic farming. This will help Member States stimulate both supply and demand for organic products. It will ensure consumer trust through promotion campaigns and green public procurement.

3. How will this Strategy support farmers, fishers and aquaculture producers?

Farmers, fishers and aquaculture producers play a crucial role in the implementation of the Green Deal. This Strategy aims to reward those farmers, fishermen and other operators in the food chain who have already undergone the transition to sustainable practices, enable the transition for the others, and create additional opportunities for their businesses. Citizens' expectations are evolving and driving significant change in the food market. European food is already a global standard for safe, plentiful, nutritious and high quality food. This transition will allow them to also make sustainability their trademark and to guarantee the future of the EU food chain. The transition to sustainability presents a 'first mover' opportunity for all actors in the food chain. An example of a **new green business model** is carbon sequestration by farmers and foresters. Farming practices that remove CO₂ from the atmosphere contribute to the climate neutrality objective and should be rewarded, either via the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) or other public or private initiatives (carbon market).

The CAP will continue to be a key tool in supporting farmers in the transition towards a sustainable food system. The [2018 CAP reform](#) proposal already focuses on sustainability and tightly links CAP support to environment, climate and food safety legislation.

It includes key tools to achieve the Green Deal's objectives. The new '**eco-schemes**' will offer a major stream of funding to boost sustainable practices, such as precision agriculture, agro-ecology (including organic farming), the creation of landscape features, carbon farming and agro-forestry. Member States and the Commission will have to ensure that eco-schemes are appropriately resourced and implemented in the Strategic Plans. The Commission will support the introduction of a minimum ring-fencing budget for eco-schemes. In addition, the Commission will work with the co-legislators to ensure that the Green Deal ambition is fully reflected in the new CAP legislation.

The Commission will also make recommendations to each Member State on the nine specific objectives of the CAP, before they formally submit the draft Strategic Plans. The Commission will pay particular attention to addressing the Green Deal targets, and those stemming from this Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. It will ask Member States to set explicit national values for the targets in these Strategies, taking into account their specific situation and the above mentioned recommendations

The next European Maritime and Fisheries Fund will provide significant support to the continued transition to sustainable fisheries and seafood farming, including through the development of new EU guidelines for Member States' sustainable aquaculture and targeted support for innovative food segments like algae.

4. How will you ensure the necessary financial support for sectors which will need to adjust?

The Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) will remain key tools to support the transition to sustainable food systems while ensuring a decent living for farmers, fishers and their families.

Research and innovation (R&I) are key drivers in accelerating the transition to sustainable, healthy and inclusive food systems. Under **Horizon Europe**, the Commission proposes to spend €10 billion on R&I on food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and the environment as well as the use of digital technologies and nature-based solutions for agri-food.

The *InvestEU* Fund will foster investment in the agro-food sector by de-risking investments by European corporations and facilitating access to finance for small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) and mid-cap companies.

In 2020, the EU framework to facilitate sustainable investments (EU taxonomy) as well as the renewed strategy on sustainable finance will mobilise the financial sector to play a major role in the transition and to invest more sustainably, including in the agriculture and food production sector. The CAP must also increasingly facilitate investment support to improve the resilience and accelerate the green and digital transformation of farms.

5. How will this strategy ensure food security?

A sustainable food system must ensure sufficient and varied supply of safe, nutritious, affordable and sustainable food to people at all times, not least in times of crisis. Climate change and biodiversity loss constitute imminent and lasting threats to food security and livelihoods. The Commission will continue closely monitoring food security, as well as competitiveness of farmers and food operators. Increasing the sustainability of food producers will ultimately increase their resilience.

The Commission will step up its coordination of a **common European response to crises affecting food systems** in order to ensure food security and safety, reinforce public health and mitigate their socio-economic impact in the EU. Drawing on the lessons learned, the Commission will assess the resilience of the food system and develop a **contingency plan for ensuring food supply and food**

security to be put into place in times of crisis. The agricultural crisis reserve will be revamped so its full potential can be used upfront in the case of crisis in agricultural markets. In addition to risk assessment and management measures to be activated during crisis, the plan will set up a food crisis response mechanism coordinated by the Commission and involving Member States. It will be comprised of various sectors (agriculture, fisheries, food safety, workforce, health and transport issues) depending on the nature of the crisis.

6. How will the environmental footprint of livestock production be tackled and animal welfare improved?

Animal farming is an integral part of European agriculture and of EU food systems. To reduce the environmental and climate impact of animal production, the development of sustainable livestock production in the EU will be crucial.

The Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) will accompany this transformation by supporting innovative solutions and sustainable production practices. Sustainable demand will also be fostered by developing EU sustainable food labelling and considering animal welfare labelling to link on-farm sustainability efforts to consumer demand. The Commission will also facilitate the placing on the market of sustainable and innovative feed additives that help reduce the associated greenhouse gas (GHG) footprint and water and air pollution.

To encourage consumers to opt for more sustainably produced food, the Commission is undertaking a review of the EU promotion programme for agricultural products, with a view to enhancing its contribution to sustainable production and consumption, and in line with the evolving diets. In relation to meat, that review should focus on how the EU can use its promotion programme to support the most sustainable, carbon-efficient methods of livestock production.

In addition, the Horizon Europe programme will promote research to increase the availability and source of alternative proteins such as plant, microbial, marine and insect-based proteins and meat substitutes.

Animal welfare improves animal health and food quality, reduces the need for medication and can help preserve biodiversity. The Commission is evaluating the existing animal welfare provisions including on animal transport and slaughter of animals and will revise the Union's legislation. The Commission will also consider options for animal welfare labelling, enabling consumer choice whilst offering farmers incentives for improving animal welfare.

7. How will the Farm to Fork Strategy help in reducing pressure on fish stocks in the seas around Europe?

The Commission will step up efforts to bring fish stocks to sustainable levels via the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) where implementation gaps remain (e.g. by reducing wasteful discarding), strengthen fisheries management in the Mediterranean in cooperation with all coastal states and re-assess, by 2022, how the CFP addresses the risks triggered by climate change. The Commission will also adopt initiatives to ensure sustainability of seafood and consumer access to a low carbon footprint protein source. The revised strategy for EU aquaculture will aim at encourage the production and consumption of more diversified EU seafood products and foster even higher standards of environmental protection and animal welfare. This will reduce dependency on imported seafood products and pressure on fish stocks. The EU will also unlock the full potential of sustainable algae-based food and alternative feed sources for which there is growing demand.

8. How will the Strategy encourage food processors and retailers to produce more diversified and sustainable food?

Food processors and retailers shape food choices. Their scale and concentration give them considerable power to put food production and consumption on a sustainable path. Through both regulatory and non-regulatory initiatives, the Strategy will strive to steer the food industry towards practices that make the healthy, sustainable choice the easy one for consumers. Voluntary commitments will be encouraged through an **EU Code of Conduct** for responsible business and marketing practices.

9. What will the Commission do to support consumers in making healthy and sustainable diet choices?

Consumers can also themselves influence the type of food which is produced (and how) as well as its origin. Citizens want healthy diets from a healthy planet, and they deserve clear information to allow them to make informed choices. To encourage the food industry to offer healthy and sustainable food products, the Commission will propose **mandatory front-of-pack nutrition labelling** and launch initiatives to stimulate product reformulation, including by setting up **nutrient profiles** to restrict the promotion (via nutrition or health claims) of foods high in fat, sugars and salt. The Commission will also propose banning added sugars in baby foods and explore the possibility of setting maximum levels of sugars, saturated fat and salt in certain processed food. It will also propose how to better inform

consumers **where the food comes from**. In addition, the Commission will **examine the possibility to harmonise voluntary green claims** and **develop a sustainable food labelling framework** integrating nutritional, climate, environmental and social aspects.

To improve the availability and price of sustainable food and to promote healthy and sustainable diets, including organic products, in schools and public institutions, the Commission will determine the best modalities for setting minimum mandatory criteria for sustainable food procurement.

In parallel, the EU will scale up its fight against food fraud to achieve a level playing field for operators and strengthen the powers of control and enforcement authorities.

10. How does the Strategy ensure action is being taken against food waste?

The Commission will seek to scale-up action across the EU, mobilising Member States, food businesses and civil society notably through the work of the [EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste](#) and encouraging implementation of its [recommendations for action](#) by all players. Committed to reaching the UN Sustainable Development Goal target to halve per capita food waste at retail and consumer levels by 2030, the Commission will propose, by 2023, **legally binding targets to reduce food waste across the EU**. These will be defined against a baseline set following the first EU-wide monitoring of food waste levels, measured according to a common [EU methodology](#). The Commission will consider further opportunities to integrate food loss and waste prevention as part of all relevant EU policies and take action to strengthen the evidence base for food waste prevention interventions.

11. How will the Strategy promote a global transition to sustainable food systems?

The EU is committed to lead by example on the transition to sustainable food systems, not only within its borders, but also outside. Through international cooperation, bilaterally and multilaterally, the EU will promote more sustainable farming and fisheries practices, reduce deforestation, enhance biodiversity, and improve food security and nutrition outcomes. The Commission will incorporate these Farm-to-Fork priorities in the **programming guidance for cooperation with third countries** in the period 2021-2027. The EU's **bilateral trade agreements** also offer a means to foster EU environmental standards in third countries, in addition to food safety standards. Many bilateral agreements already include chapters on trade and sustainable development and on trade and the environment. Some contain provisions in areas such as animal welfare at slaughter or use of antimicrobials. The Commission will develop **Green Alliances** on sustainable food systems to respond to distinct challenges in different parts of the world and will pursue an ambitious outcome of the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit. Finally, the Commission will propose to **establish a legislative framework for sustainable food systems**, combined with labelling or other incentives, could contribute to raising sustainability standards so as to become the norm for all products placed on the EU market.

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