

# **Nourishing Europe: The Importance of Animal Proteins**

## **Appeal of the Livestock Supply Chains to European Institutions**

26<sup>th</sup> 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



Asociația Română Acarii



Romaliminta



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 OP APZ Calabria



Cooperativa Produttori Arborea - OP ARBOREA



Organizzazione Produttori OP Azove



Associazione Produttori Asprocarne Piemonte



Associazione Produttori Carni Bovine UNICARVE



Organizzazione Produttori Assobovini - OP ASSOBOVINI



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 Tenyésztők Egyesülete (Carpathian Brown Cattle Breeders Association)



Bábolina Brojler Kft. Bábolina Brojler Ltd.



Bocskai Halászlás Kft. Bocskai Fishing Ltd.



Baromfi Terméktanács - BTT (Poultry Product Board)



EAAP - European Federation of Animal Science



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



Nyúl Terméktanács (Nytt) (Rabbit Product Board)



Magyar Juh- és Kecsketenyésztők Szövetsége (MJKSz) - Hungarian Sheep and Goat Breeders Association



Magyar Szurke Szarvasmarhat Tenyésztők Egyesülete - MSZTE



Magyar Bivalytenyésztők Egyesülete (MBTE) Association of Hungarian Buffalo Breeders



Slovenská poľnohospodárska a potravinárska komora SPKK



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



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



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



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



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



Magyararka Tenyésztők Egyesülete (MTE) (Association of Hungarian Simmental)



Coldiretti



Nemzeti Agrárgazdasági Kamara - NAK (Hungarian Chamber of Agricultural (HCA))



Bábolina Tetra Kft. Bábolina Tetra Ltd.



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



Filiera Italia



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



Svaz Chovatelu Holstynskeho Skotu Holstein Cz



Sdružení drůbežářských podniků



Ceskomoravská Drobežarska Unie - Cdmu



Ceskomoravský Svaz Mlekařenský - Cmsm



Svaz Chovatelů Ceskeho Strakateho Skotu - Cestr



Schp



Cesky Svaz Chovatelů Masneho Skotu - Cschms



Botillo del Bierzo IGP



Queso Cabrales DOP



Castaña de Galicia



Cordero de Extramadura Corderex



Federación Empresarial de Carnes e Industrias Cárnicas - FECIC



Guijuelo DOP



Jamon de Treveliz IGP



Consello Regulador da DOP - Arzua Ulloa



Consejo Regulador Denominación de Origin - Queso Mahon Menorca



Consejo Regulador Denominación de Origin - Manzana Reinaeta 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



Queixo Tetilla DOP



Consejo Regulador Denominación de Origin - Queso Zamorano



Ternasco de Aragón - TA



Ternera Gallega IGP



Origen España



Agrarni Komora Ceske Republiky



Consorzio di Tutela della Bresola Valtellina



Associazione Produttori Coppa di Parma



Cesky svaz zpracovatelů masa



Consorzio di Tutela Culatello di Zibello



Polski Związek Hodowców i Producentów Bydła Mięsnego - PZHBPB



Polskie Zrzeszenie Producentów Bydła Mięsnego - PZPB



Polska Federacja Rolna



Stowarzyszenie



Polskie Mięso - Polish Meat Association



Unia Producentów i Pracodawców Przemysłu Mięsnego - UPEMI



Polski Związek Hodowców i Producentów Trzody Chlewniej - POLSUS



Krajowa Rada Drobniarstwa Izba Gospodarcza - KRDIG



Federacja Branżowych Związków Producentów Rolnych



Polska Platforma Zrównowazonej Wolowiny



Krajowy Związek Pracodawców - Producentów Trzody Chlewniej - POLPIG



Consorzio Finocchiona IGP



Istituto Salumi Italiani Tutelati - ISIT



Istituto Valorizzazione Salumi Italiani - IVSI



Zvaz Chovatelov Osipany na Slovenku Druzstvo - CH KAMPA



Asociación de Industrias de la Carne de España - ANICE



Associazione Suinicoltori Italiani - ASSOSUINI



Sostentibili Carni Sostentibili



Associazione Industriale delle Carni e dei Salumi - ASSICA



Organization for an European Geographical Indications Network ORIGIN EU



Slovenský zväz spracovateľov mäsa SZSM



Unione Nazionale Filiere Agroalimentari Carni e Uova UNAITALIA



Consorzio Italiano Tutela Mortadella Bologna IGP



Consorzio del Prosciutto di Modena



Prosciutto di Carpegna



Prosciutto di Norcia IGP



Prosciutto di San Daniele



Prosciutto Toscano DOP



Salame Brianza DOP



Salame di Varzi DOP



Associazione Produttori Salame Felino



Salame Piemonte



Consorzio di Tutela Cacciatore Italiano DOP - Salamini Italiani alla Cacciatora



Consorzio di Tutela Salumi di Calabria DOP



Consorzio Salumi DOP Piacentini



Südtiroler Speck g.g.A. Speck Alto Adige IGP



Consorzio Zampone e Cotechino Modena IGP



Parmigiano Reggiano



Grana Padano