



Brussels, XXX
SANTE/2020/XXXX
[...] (2020) XXX draft

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**A Farm to Fork Strategy
For a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system**

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**A Farm to Fork Strategy
For a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system**

1. INTRODUCTION: WHY A TRANSITION TO SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS IS URGENTLY NEEDED

The climate and environmental ambition of the **European Green Deal** can only be achieved by addressing the sustainability of our food systems. **Climate change** is a reality. Extreme weather events, which are already proliferating around the globe and are set to increase significantly with higher temperatures¹, are **severely affecting agricultural and seafood production**, including through the spread of pests and diseases².

At the same time, globally, the food system is responsible for around 21-37% of total greenhouse gas emissions³, has a profound effect on biodiversity, carbon sinks and is one of the causes of resource depletion and degradation of natural ecosystems.

Antimicrobial resistance is a serious public health threat linked to the excessive and inappropriate use of antimicrobials in human and animal health. Each year, more than 670.000 infections in humans due to antibiotic-resistant bacteria occur in Europe and antimicrobial resistance leads to an estimated 33.000 human deaths.

The EU's agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture sectors and the food system in a wider sense have been successful in providing the EU population with plentiful, safe and affordable food. Still **food insecurity** remains an issue. The global population is projected to increase to more than 9 billion by 2050. Considering also that over 820 million people presently suffer from hunger, global food availability would need to increase by 60% percent by 2050 in order to meet the increased demand⁴.

In the EU, whilst 36 million citizens cannot afford a quality meal every second day, about 20% of the food produced is currently **wasted**. This is set against a backdrop of rising **obesity**. Over half of the European Union's adult population is now overweight, contributing to a high prevalence of diet-related diseases⁵, including various forms of cancer and related health care costs. Most consumers know that a balanced diet is important for health. However, overall, the **diets** of European consumers are not in line with dietary recommendations and the food environment⁶ does not always allow the healthy option to be the easiest option.

¹ EC, 10 Trends reshaping climate and energy, 2018 and Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, IPBES, 2019.

² Such as African Swine Fever and *Xylella fastidiosa*

³ Special Report on *Climate Change and Land*, IPCC (2019)

⁴ FAO report, Food and agriculture: key to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2016.

⁵ The Global Burden of Disease 2017 study estimates that, in the European Union, over 950,000 deaths and over 16 million disability adjusted life year (DALY) are attributable to dietary risks due to unhealthy diets." (source: the European Commission's Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Knowledge Gateway (<https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/health-knowledge-gateway/societal-impacts/burden>))

⁶ Food environment refers to the physical, economic, political and socio-cultural context in which consumers engage with the food system to make their decisions about acquiring, preparing and consuming food. (The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition. *Nutrition and Food Systems*. September 2017).

Production, processing, packaging and transportation of food greatly contribute to pollution of air, soil and water and greenhouse gas emissions⁷. A transition to green business models is needed but the size of economic operators affects the conditions and speed of such a transition in different ways and we know that at present SMEs represent 99% of all businesses in the EU.

Citizens' choices dictate what and how food is produced and can contribute to better health. Citizens pay increasing attention to environmental⁸, health and ethical issues and **expect transparency** across the entire supply chain to be sure that they are buying "healthy food from a healthy planet". Many companies and organisations have responded to these demands through guidelines and certification schemes on using for instance sustainable fish, cocoa or palm oil as well as through partnerships with farmers and fishers inside and outside the EU. However, not all of the information related to such schemes is transparent and easily comparable.

The EU has a functioning regulatory framework ensuring food safety but attempts by some fraudulent food business operators to obtain unfair advantages over competitors by deceiving them (and/or consumers) about the characteristics of food through intentional violations of agri-food chain rules have led to a series of prominent food fraud cases. Additionally, the new trends such as e-commerce create new opportunities for deceptive and dishonest practices in the food system.

The EU is the world's **second largest importer and the biggest exporter**⁹ of food and trades an increasing diversity of food products and inputs with countries all over the world. The EU imports certain commodities (e.g. animal feed, tropical fruit, seafood, palm oil, coffee, fertilizers) which may result in negative environmental and social impacts in third countries (including deforestation and land use change, natural resources, labour conditions, embedded fossil fuel use). Increasing the sustainability requirements of European food production may affect the level playing field between EU and third country producers or may risk to externalise unsustainable practices but can also help raise standards globally.

If our current food system is to tackle these challenges and if it is to provide a growing world population with healthy diets, it **urgently needs to become sustainable**. This means it needs to *"deliver food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition for future generations are not compromised"*.¹⁰

The transition to sustainability has already started: since 1990 greenhouse gas emissions from farming have been cut by 20% and nitrate levels in rivers have been reduced by 18%¹¹ – both

⁷ EC- JRC (2017) Consumer Footprint. Basket of Products indicator on Food, EUR 28764 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg

⁸ 94% of EU citizens declare that protecting the environment is important for them. Special Eurobarometer 468 : *Attitudes of European citizens towards the environment*. 2017.

⁹ In 2018, the EU agri-food trade reached a value of €254 billion - €138 billion of exports and €116 billion of imports. https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/trade/trade-and-international-policy-analysis_en

¹⁰ *Sustainable food systems: concept and framework (FAO, 2018)*

¹¹ AGRI to add reference

as a result of private initiatives and technological development (digital revolution) and as a result of policy changes. However, the **pace and the scale of change are not sufficient**. A new policy impetus is required.

A sustainable food system is instrumental in delivering the ambitious Green Deal goal of turning Europe into a climate-neutral continent by 2050, in reducing pollution and in halting biodiversity loss, in contributing to a circular economy while reinforcing EU's sustainable competitiveness. Sustainability of our food system must become beneficial not just to front-runners but to all citizens and economic players across value chains, throughout Europe and beyond. A shift to a sustainable system can bring environmental, social and health benefits while also offering new economic gains. At global level, it is estimated that a food and agriculture system in line with the Sustainable Development Goals could create **new economic value** of more than EUR 1.8 trillion by 2030¹².

Accelerating the transition to a sustainable food system must involve stakeholders throughout value chains. It will open up new business and job opportunities, supported by key enablers such as research, innovation, technology and financial investments but also inclusive and transparent processes to ensure policy coherence and the multi-level involvement of stakeholders.

2. THE WAY FORWARD

Recognizing the interconnection between people, animals, plants, and their shared environment, and taking into account the three pillars of sustainability (economic, environmental and social), the EU's long-term vision is to **support and lead a global transition to a sustainable food system** that should:

- **Have a neutral or positive environmental impact, preserving and restoring the resources** on which the food system depends: contributing to a **stable climate and adapting to its impacts**; protecting land, soil, water, air, **plant and animal health**; and conserving or restoring habitats and **biodiversity**.
- **Ensure food security and citizens' health**: making sure all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.
- **Create a favourable food environment, which makes healthy and sustainable diets the easy choice for EU citizens**: that is, one in which they have access to, can afford and are encouraged to select healthy, balanced, diverse and sustainable diets supported by improved consumer information.
- **Have the highest possible standards** of food safety and quality, plant, animal health and welfare as well as occupational health and safety.

The achievement of the vision presupposes economic sustainability of a food system. This implies primary production (agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture), manufacturing and retail sectors in the EU that are both competitive and environmentally sustainable. This will result not only in preserving but improving farmers' and fishers' income by creating new business

¹² Business and Sustainable Development Commission, "Better Business Better World, The report of the Business & Sustainable Development Commission", January 2017.

opportunities linked to the transition. This in turn will ensure that the EU remains a global leader of trade in agri-food products as well as securing food affordability.

The Farm to Fork Strategy sets out six specific objectives which are mutually reinforcing and interrelated and designed to secure a **fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system**. To achieve the EU vision, we need to have an **integrated approach covering the entire food chain from farm to fork**, and considering possible synergies and short-term trade-offs in the transition to sustainable food systems.

The strategy's objectives are supported by **targets** indicating what we strive to achieve and by when and **specific actions**. The actions will be subject to further consultations and impact assessments where necessary. In addition to new initiatives, it is necessary to work with Member States to step up the EU's efforts to ensure that relevant current legislation and policies are enforced and effectively implemented.

2.1 Ensuring sustainable food production

The aim is to help achieve the Green Deal objectives by stimulating more resource efficient, fairer and inclusive food production that safeguards the environment and climate, and is resilient to the negative effects of climate change whilst supporting farmers, fishers and aquaculture producers in the transition to sustainability.

Farmers, fishers and aquaculture producers can preserve important ecosystem functions of land and oceans. However, the climate and biodiversity emergencies that we are facing mean they will need to quickly adapt and make the best use of new technological and digital solutions, which deliver better environmental results and increase the efficiency of input use. Such solutions entail higher profits but also require investments, the availability of new inputs (e.g. new seeds, alternatives to pesticides), better advice and knowledge transfer, a change in the way primary producers are used to work as well as adequate pricing signals.

The Commission's CAP reform proposal aims to contribute to addressing these needs and aspirations - through a more results-oriented model, better use of data, improved mandatory sustainability standards and more voluntary measures. **The Commission will work with Member States to ensure that the post-2020 CAP national strategic plans adhere to a concerted and ambitious approach**, including on pesticides, fertilisers and antibiotics.

The Commission will take actions to reduce the use and risk of synthetic chemical **pesticides**, including through a targeted revision of the relevant Directive, enhanced provisions on **integrated pest management** and greater use of other ways to protect harvests from pests and diseases. In order to improve biodiversity and the quality of ground and surface water and soil, actions will be taken to prevent [nitrogen- and phosphorus-based] **fertilisers' pollution** and to achieve sustainable water management.

In addition to the ban on the use of **antimicrobials** in animals for promoting growth, the Commission is implementing legislative measures to reduce the use of antimicrobials in livestock farming and aquaculture. Improving animal welfare contributes to reduction in antibiotics' use and thus benefits both humans and animals.

As regards **animal welfare**, the Commission will evaluate the existing EU legislation with the view to revise it. It will increase its controls in Member States and designate two additional EU reference centres to boost enforcement. In addition, to better monitor the implementation of EU rules, a baseline and indicators on key animal welfare provisions will be defined.

In order to **reduce the environmental impact of animal production**, the Commission will facilitate the placing on the market of innovative feed additives that help reduce the carbon footprint, water pollution and methane emission of livestock farming.

Moreover, the Commission will stimulate production and use of sustainable and novel feed materials and food such as new protein sources from the oceans (e.g. algae), the bio-economy or insect production, whilst ensuring food safety and animal health.

The Commission will support a higher uptake of sustainable practices, such as precision agriculture, agro-ecology, agro-forestry and **organic farming**.

Not only the land but also our oceans and seas need to be managed sustainably. Although wild capture fisheries cannot meet the growing demand, it is important to ensure the sustainable management of fish stocks. The **Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)** has been instrumental in achieving this objective¹³. By switching to more selective fishing gear, fishers can reduce unwanted catches and related costs. Full implementation of the CFP and sustainable aquaculture will be crucial to meeting consumer demand for sustainable fish. In this regard, the Commission will adopt a revised EU strategy for sustainable aquaculture. A revision of the marketing standards for agricultural, fishery and aquaculture products will also contribute to the supply of sustainable products on the EU market.

Moreover, to **protect plant health** from emerging pests and diseases, vigilance on imports of plants and surveillance of the Union territory will be strengthened. The Commission will also assess the status of **new genomic techniques** under Union law, including their potential to improve sustainability along the food chain. It will take measures related to **marketing of seeds** and other plant reproductive material and **marketing of forest reproductive material** in order to help increase agricultural biodiversity and climate resilience.

The Commission will **support primary producers in the transition**, including by clarifying the competition rules regarding collective initiatives promoting sustainability in supply chains and by helping producers capture a fair share of the added value of sustainable products.

In order to ensure sustainable food production, the following **targets** are set:

Target 1

Reduce by [X%] the use and risk of synthetic chemical pesticides between 2017 and 2030

Within the first XX years of its mandate, the Commission will establish this as a mandatory target, with a clear legal basis and using the existing Harmonised Risk Indicator 1 established under the Sustainable Use Directive (SUD)¹⁴. The Commission will monitor progress towards achieving this target each year, and for each Member State and make the data public.

The Commission also considers that more can be done to implement Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to achieve these targets. In addition to encouraging implementation of the existing provision in the SUD a proposal will be made for new legislation, enhancing the provisions related to IPM and related record keeping

Target 2

Increase by [X%] the EU organic farming area to be achieved by a mix of measures, including appropriate stimulation of demand for organic products

¹³ Fish stocks have grown by 30% over the last 15 years and in the Atlantic, North Sea and Baltic Sea, more than 99% of fish landed from EU waters are fished sustainably

¹⁴ The target and indicator use available data on both the quantities of pesticides sold, and therefore subsequently used, and the properties of these pesticides, to show the trend in the risks associated with pesticides.

Target 3

Reduce by [X%] sales of antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture, between 2017 and 2030¹⁵

There is a growing body of evidence that the use of antimicrobials in animals is linked to antimicrobial-resistant infections in animals and humans^{16,17}.

In context of the strategy's mid-term review, the Commission will further propose, in 2025-2026, refined aspirational targets on antimicrobial use (by animal species, sector and Member State) for the main animal food-producing species. Such targets will be informed by the collection of data on antimicrobial use foreseen in the Veterinary Medicinal Products (VMP) Regulation as of 2022. Finally, in 2028, the Commission will assess whether the adoption of legally-binding targets would be necessary to ensure sustainable reduction of use of antimicrobials in food-producing animals, taking into account Member States' progress towards the aspirational targets

Target 4

Target on mineral and organic fertilisers

2.2 Stimulating sustainable food processing, retail, hospitality and food services' practices

The aim is to **reduce the environmental and climate impacts of the food industry** to a sustainable level, while helping to achieve a circular economy.

Food processors, food service operators and retailers play a pivotal role between farm and fork: their position, weight and practices have a key impact on food consumption and production. They have a profound effect in shaping the market through the types of food produced, their nutritional contribution, packaging, merchandising and marketing practices.

Food business operators have the power to **influence consumers' dietary choices** by promoting more (or less) healthy and sustainable products. They can also shape production and marketing patterns, by requiring more ambitious environmental and quality standards from their suppliers and taking action on processes that are most relevant for better environmental performance, including on energy, raw materials and water. Furthermore, the EU food and drink industry (as an important exporter) can affect the environmental and social footprint of global trade.

¹⁵ EU measures, such as the ban on the use of antimicrobials as feed additives for growth promotion in 2006, backed-up by the set-up and implementation of National Action Plans against AMR and other targeted initiatives in some EU Member States, have led already to a 32% decrease in overall sales of veterinary antimicrobial medicinal products between 2011 and 2017 across Europe. 9th ESVAC Report (2019): https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/report/sales-veterinary-antimicrobial-agents-31-european-countries-2017_en.pdf

¹⁶ Joint Interagency Antimicrobial Consumption and Resistance Analysis 'JIACRA I' Report' (2015) "ECDC/EFSA/EMA first joint report on the integrated analysis of the consumption of antimicrobial agents and occurrence of antimicrobial resistance in bacteria from humans and food-producing animals": https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/report/ccdc/efsa/ema-first-joint-report-integrated-analysis-consumption-antimicrobial-agents-occurrence-antimicrobial_en.pdf & 'JIACRA II Report' (2017): https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/report/ccdc/efsa/ema-second-joint-report-integrated-analysis-consumption-antimicrobial-agents-occurrence_en.pdf

¹⁷ O'Neill et al., *Review on Antimicrobial Resistance* (2015): "Antimicrobials in agriculture and the environment: reducing unnecessary use and waste": <http://bit.ly/2d36sEH>

The Commission will take action to further **promote and scale-up sustainable production methods and circular business models** in food processing, including specific actions for SMEs.

The Commission will propose **legislation for substantiating green claims** based on the harmonised methodology it has developed for the calculation of the environmental footprint of products¹⁸ (including various foods) and organisations.

To increase the availability and affordability of healthy, sustainable options, the Commission will take measures to: promote product reformulation in line with guidelines for healthy, sustainable diets; adapt marketing strategies taking into account the needs of the most vulnerable; reduce packaging whilst ensuring food safety through packaging waste prevention measures announced in the Circular Economy Action Plan; improve business practices through regulatory and voluntary measures to reduce their environmental footprint and increase the availability of healthy, sustainable options. As regards the latter, the Commission will develop, in cooperation with actors in the food supply chain, an EU Code of Conduct for responsible business and marketing practice including commitments to ensure that marketing strategies support healthy diet objectives and that campaigns related to food prices not undermine citizens' perception of the value of food.

2.3 Promoting sustainable food consumption, facilitating the shift towards healthy, sustainable diets

Current consumption patterns are not sustainable from both a health and environmental point of view. While intakes of energy, meat, sugars, salt and fats continue to exceed recommendations, consumption of whole-grain cereals, fish, fruits, vegetables, legumes and nuts is insufficient¹⁹. Animal source foods have higher environmental impacts per calorie or grams of food produced than do most plant-based foods²⁰. Low quality diets contribute to rising incidence of obesity and non-communicable diseases including of some cancers.

Tackling cancer is of critical importance for Europe's future. Europe's Beating Cancer Plan will propose actions at every key stage of the disease. We know that 40% of all cancers can be prevented and healthy diets have a key role to play in this regard. Therefore, a dietary change towards a healthier diet, such as a shift from an animal-based to a plant-based diet, can not only reduce risk of life-threatening diseases such as cancer but also reduce the environmental impact of the food system.²¹

Citizens and their choices as consumers steer to a great extent which food is produced, the way it is produced and its origin. Clear food information on sustainability can incentivise consumers to choose, and food business operators to offer, sustainable food and healthy diets, thus creating a virtuous circle of higher market demand and supply of sustainable food. Therefore, actions in the area of food information are an integral part of the transition to food sustainable systems.

The Commission will propose actions to empower consumers to make sustainable food choices by: elaborating a legislative proposal to harmonise **front-of-pack nutrition labelling** and ensure all foods bear on a mandatory basis an informative label enabling consumers to

¹⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/environment/eusdd/smgp/ef_transition.htm

²⁰ FAO and WHO. 2019. Sustainable healthy diets – Guiding principles. Rome.

²¹ FAO and WHO. 2019. Sustainable healthy diets – Guiding principles. Rome.

make health-conscious food choices; setting **nutrient profiles** to limit the use of nutrition and health claims on foods high in fat, sugar and/or salt; requiring **origin indication** for certain food products. The Commission will also consider different options for animal welfare labelling; envisage provision of some food information by digital means; and explore labelling-related initiatives to tackle excess consumption of sugars, saturated fat and salt in the EU. These different steps together with the harmonised methodology for green claims will contribute to a more long-term objective of developing a sustainable food labelling framework integrating nutritional, environmental and social aspects. Finally, the Commission will monitor citizens' dietary intakes across the EU in order to assess progress towards achieving national dietary recommendations.

In order to support Member States in integrating sustainability elements in national dietary advice and information and educational tools, the Commission will develop EU-wide guidelines for healthy, sustainable diets, building on international work in this field²². In addition, the Commission will promote healthy and sustainable diets in institutional catering by developing guidance for sustainable food procurement.

Fiscal incentives can also help support consumers' selection of sustainable and healthy diets. In this regard, the Commission's proposal on value added tax (VAT) rates (currently under discussion in Council) could allow Member States to make a more targeted use of VAT rates to reflect increased environmental ambitions, for example to support organic fruit and vegetables.

Target 5

Reverse the rise in overweight and obesity rates across the EU by 2030

An increasing number of Europeans fail to meet the dietary recommendation of balancing energy intakes with needs, keeping or achieving a healthy body weight. In the last four decades, the levels of overweight and obesity in the EU population has risen dramatically, particularly among children. However, this trend has been slowed or starts to be slightly reversed only in some Member States and for some population groups.

2.4 Reducing food loss and waste

Tackling food loss and waste is key to achieving EU climate action goals²³, environmental protection, sustainable agriculture and fisheries, circular economy and is interlinked with policies in specific areas such as renewable energy, production of feed, food safety or waste management. The Commission will therefore endeavour to integrate food loss and waste prevention in relevant EU policies to achieve synergies and avoid conflicts wherever possible.

To address data gaps in the area of food loss and waste in the supply chain, the Commission will launch studies to inter alia better understand the extent of **food loss at farm level**²⁴, the

²² FAO/WHO. *Sustainable healthy diets: guiding principles* (2019).

²³ At European level, the overall CO₂ equivalents attributable to food waste is at least 227 Mt. emitted per year - approximately 6% of total EU27 emissions in 2012. This figure includes all steps of the life cycle of food waste, namely agricultural, food processing, transportation, storage, consumption and end-of-life impacts. (FUSIONS)

²⁴ The estimations of loss of food which has been grown but not-harvested or never left the farm vary significantly depending on country and crop. FUSIONS (2016) estimated such loss at 9 mln tons for EU27

possible impact of **marketing and cosmetic standards** and the role of **date marking** ('use by' and 'best before' dates). The Commission will review the feed ban rules for feed for non-ruminant animals (in particular pigs and poultry) as well as certain rules of the Animal By-Products Regulations in order to promote more circularity and better valorisation of animal by-products while safeguarding animal and human health.

As part of the Circular Economy Action Plan adopted in 2015, the EU has made significant progress to reach the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goal Target 12.3 to halve per capita food waste at retail and consumer levels by 2030**, and reduce food loss across the supply chain. However, more focused and joined-up action is needed. There is still excessive food waste generated throughout the EU food supply chain, over half of which occurs at the level of households²⁵.

Coordinating action at EU level is essential to drive and reinforce action at national level. The Commission will launch, in 2020, an EU Food Loss and Waste Fighters Programme calling for public and private entities to commit to reducing food loss and waste in their operations. Through the future Single Market Programme, the Commission will award grants to help accelerate food waste prevention action in Member States and support stakeholders, in particular SMEs, to integrate food waste prevention in their business operations.

Finally, following the introduction of an EU methodology to measure food waste²⁶, and based on the data expected from Member States in 2022, **the Commission will set a baseline and propose legally binding targets to reduce food waste across the EU.**

2.5 Combatting food fraud along the agri-food chain

Recent fraud events (such as those related to horse meat, fipronil, melamine or dioxine) demonstrate the importance of combating food fraud to maintain consumer confidence and in relevant cases maintain a high level of food safety. The EU should scale up its combat against food fraud to achieve a level playing field for operators and further empower the competent authorities responsible for control and enforcement, while preventing consumer deception regarding the foods they purchase, including on their quality, origin and legality. Aiming for zero-tolerance and increasing prevention, controls, deterrence and effective sanctions contribute to the achievement of sustainability objectives (e.g. EU policy on illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU)). Effective cooperation among competent authorities, EU institutions and agencies is crucial to ensure an effective enforcement of EU legislation.

The **Communication on food fraud** elaborates on the list of actions aiming to identify and address knowledge and data gaps. Actions cover the complete anti-fraud cycle and comprises: (i) improving prevention, detection and the conditions for investigating fraud; and (ii) ensuring there is sufficient reparation and deterrence, with proportionate and dissuasive sanctions.

2.6 Promote a global transition to sustainable food systems

(10% of total food loss and waste), while some estimations reach 36% (FAO 2011) [FAO to be checked, given by NGOs]

²⁵ EU-funded research project FUSIONS estimated household food waste generation at 92 kg/person year (FUSIONS, 2016).

²⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/food_waste/eu_actions/food-waste-measurement_en [alternatively we may give link to legal act only]

The global challenges that we try to address require a global response and the overall ambition of food sustainable systems will not be successfully achieved by the EU acting alone. In the spirit of the Union's global leadership in fighting climate change and environmental degradation, the EU will continue to leverage its external instruments, including trade cooperation, development and financial support in order to drive global convergence towards higher levels of food safety, health, animal welfare, environmental and social standards in global food supply chains.

To be further elaborated in light of ongoing discussions

3. ENABLING THE TRANSITION

While the specific objectives of the strategy are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, attention will be paid to gauge and manage potential trade-offs. The Commission will make use of all available policies and instruments to **support a fair transition and turn challenges into opportunities for sustainable growth.**

3.1 Driving the transition through research, innovation, technology, investments and finance

Research and innovation are a key driver in accelerating the transition towards sustainable, healthy and inclusive food systems and can help to resolve tensions, overcome barriers and unveil new market opportunities. A sustainable food system requires targeted investments and instruments to actively promote the generation as well as the use of new knowledge. Through its instruments, the Commission aims to deliver impact-driven and societally relevant outcomes in support of sustainable food systems.

Under the current Research and Innovation (R&I) investment programme Horizon 2020, a new 'European Green Deal call [with a budget of...] will deploy R&I actions to foster close-to-market solutions for sustainable food systems, from land to consumers.

For the next EU R&I Investment Programme (2021-2027), the European Commission proposed to spend 10 billion EUR on food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and environment.

Under this new programme, the Commission will develop R&I actions with a view to speed up the food system's transformation. The Commission will focus in particular on solutions for climate change and the environment, including alternative proteins and dietary shift, agro-ecological approaches, sustainable aquaculture, food waste prevention and sustainable packaging. Other R&I actions will target solutions for urban food systems, food fraud and traceability systems of the future. The Commission will also focus on specific solutions for primary producers, including water and nutrient management, and will support the further development of digital solutions for increasing the sustainability performance in primary production. To innovate, new technologies and business models need to be demonstrated, adapted and deployed, in particular in the places where people live. The Commission will finance large-scale local demonstrators in areas relevant to food system digitalization and decarbonisation.

Synergies with Member States are key to deliver solutions on the ground. The Commission will support several partnerships under Horizon Europe, which will provide important platforms for engagement in support of the Farm to Fork Strategy, such as in the area of agro-ecology, animal health, safer chemicals and food systems in general. The European Innovation Partnership 'EIP-AGRI' will specifically pursue further synergies between the Common Agricultural Policy and Horizon Europe.

The Commission will seek to mobilise and leverage investments in Member States, regions and of the private sector through additional instruments beyond Horizon Europe, by exploiting synergies with other funds such as rural development, cohesion and Erasmus+ funds. The upcoming EU framework to **facilitate sustainable investments** (EU taxonomy), starting with climate change mitigation and adaptation in 2020, will help identify environmentally sustainable economic activities with a high positive impact, including for agriculture and food production. As part of the renewed strategy on sustainable finance foreseen in autumn 2020, the European Commission will specify, for further four environmental objectives²⁷, the economic activities which are sustainable, in order to mobilise private capital for such investments.

The InvestEU Fund will help mobilise public and private investment in four main policy areas (sustainable infrastructure; research, innovation and digitisation; small and medium businesses; and social investment and skills) using an EU budget guarantee. As part of the proposed Regulation establishing the InvestEU programme (COM(2018) 439), sustainable agriculture, forestry, fishery, aquaculture and other elements of the wider sustainable bioeconomy are eligible areas for financing, elements which will be further specified in Investment Guidelines. Such creative approaches to financing the food sector will encourage innovation.

Other EU instruments will support innovative solutions along the food value chain, including the Single Market Programme, the EU LIFE Programme and the EU Innovation Fund.

Finally, the Commission will consider in ongoing studies and evaluations the extent to which innovative techniques could contribute to more sustainable food production processes while guaranteeing food safety.

3.2 Inclusive and transparent processes to ensure policy coherence and the multi-level involvement of stakeholders

The transition to a sustainable food system needs the **involvement of all relevant actors**, in order to come up with the most effective policies that are supported by all. A **collective approach** involving authorities, industry, non-governmental organisations and citizens, and which targets both the production and the consumption sides of the food chain is needed.

Rural and coastal communities as well as **cities** are uniquely placed in their ability to raise awareness and implement concrete action on the ground, working directly with citizens of all ages and backgrounds, as well as a wide range of actors across sectors, organisations and policy areas. The initiatives they launch can serve as laboratories for broader action undertaken at regional and national levels. For instance, the European Climate Pact initiative will bring together local actors and provide real and virtual space and support for communities to engage, design and commit to a set of pledges on sustainable, local, circular and inclusive food systems. In addition, the existing rural networks and Local Action Groups under LEADER²⁸ could boost citizens' bottom-up engagement.

²⁷ Environmental objectives covered by the upcoming EU framework to facilitate sustainable investments are: sustainable use and protection of water and maritime resources; transition to a circular economy; pollution prevention and control; protection of healthy ecosystems.

²⁸ The LEADER programme (an acronym in French – *Liaison entre actions de développement de l'économie rurale* – meaning *Links between actions for the development of the rural economy*) is a European Union initiative to support rural development projects initiated at the local level in order to revitalise rural areas and create jobs.

For the strategy to be successfully implemented, not only is the involvement of all actors needed, but it is also necessary to **ensure cooperation across governance levels** through appropriate coordination mechanisms between and within institutions and Member States, regional and local authorities and other stakeholders. With the help of the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee, the Commission will encourage sharing of experiences between all levels of governance actors on the transition to sustainable food systems.

In addition the Commission will ask the relevant agencies to develop a scientific framework and methodologies to support policy makers and stakeholders in assessing the sustainability of food products, processes and systems, taking into account the technical criteria developed in the context of the EU framework to facilitate sustainable investment (EU taxonomy for environmentally sustainable economic activities).

Finally, the Commission will encourage Member States to integrate food sustainability (including food waste prevention) in their national climate strategies (e.g. National Energy and Climate Plans) to support achievement of climate and energy targets.

It will also encourage Member States to review their current energy taxation levels and exemptions applicable to the agricultural sector and other links in the food supply chain as part of the broader, green fiscal reforms promoted in the Annual Sustainable Growth Survey.

3.3 Providing advisory services, sharing data and knowledge, and monitoring the progress made, including through measurement of the environmental footprint of the food value chain

Actors along the food value chain, and especially primary producers, may not always have access to the latest knowledge and advice about existing opportunities to decrease their environmental footprint while increasing the long-term sustainability of their activity. A key issue is that the same management practice can be effective to improve the environmental and climate performance in one region but not in another, due to the large variability of geographical and climatic conditions in the European Union. There is thus a need to provide **tailored advisory services** to primary producers so that they are made aware of the most sustainable management choices given the specific characteristics of their activity (AGRI to specify how).

The Commission will develop a **Farm Sustainability Data Network**, built on the current Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN), that will allow primary producers to monitor not only their economic results but also their environmental and climate performance. Advice must build on robust data and research; it is important that all information that is already made available for different uses (e.g. payment of CAP subsidies, compliance with environmental law, monitoring of climate emissions...) and from different sources (e.g. Copernicus, LUCAS, FADN...) is integrated in a spatially-explicit way and forms the basis for decision support systems that optimise the way land is used and food is produced. [CLIMA input – specific COM action to be confirmed] Closer integration of advisors in the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS) will also facilitate advice on future-oriented farming options such as algae farming.

As part of the EU Skills Agenda and the European Education Area, the Commission will also ensure equality of access to education and training for primary producers. [AGRI to specify how]. The agricultural European Innovation Partnership (EIP-AGRI) is addressing, in particular, the digital skills gap in the farming sector in order to foster competitive and sustainable farming and forestry

In instances where consumers' own behaviour counters sustainability goals (such as food waste), it is important to understand the reasons for their actions and choices and to provide consumers with practical solutions²⁹ and “nudge” behaviours that contribute to societal goals. Ensuring life-long learning opportunities—in school education, professional and on-the-job training—to build knowledge and appreciation for the value of food is a critical foundation to achieve sustainable food consumption.

4. MONITORING PROGRESS

Good policy is based on monitoring progress: it is necessary to define and collect accurate information and agree on reporting methodologies and indicators in order to monitor the progress made towards the objectives of this strategy. Particular attention should be paid to the development of a **framework to measure and monitor the environmental footprint of the food value chain**, a task that is very complex and needs further work. In this regard, the Commission will elaborate a monitoring programme, based on Life Cycle Assessment, by XX, in order to support implementation of the Farm to Fork Strategy and assess progress made in reducing the food system's overall climate and environmental impact.

Finally, the strategy will foresee a mid-term review to assess whether the actions undertaken are sufficient to reach the objective of the strategy or whether additional actions are necessary. As part of this review, the Commission may refine and/or develop new targets including one related to the environmental footprint of the EU food system.

5. DELIVERING THE FARM TO FORK STRATEGY

Achieving the transition to sustainable food systems means delivering on the actions set out in this Strategy. The attached table lists the initiatives to be developed as part of the Strategy, with a timetable for adoption. The Commission considers these actions as interlinked and consistent with the scale of ambition needed to ensure sustainability of food systems.

The Commission invites the European Parliament and Council to endorse this strategy to deliver on the transition to fair, healthy and environmentally food systems and to actively engage in its implementation.

Structured stakeholder consultation will take place as the different actions set out in this Strategy are developed. This consultation will notably involve relevant existing stakeholder groups, such as the Advisory group on the food chain, animal health and plant health, the Animal Welfare Platform, the Food Waste Platform, the Forum for a better functioning of the food supply chain, and the consultative group XXX, who will regularly discuss the relevant initiatives of this Strategy during their meetings. In addition, the Commission will organise during the current mandate a yearly stakeholder conference on the Farm to Fork Strategy at the occasion of the World Food Day on 16 October.

²⁹ EC-JRC (2019). Assessment of food waste prevention actions: development of an evaluation framework to assess performance of food waste prevention actions. JRC Technical report. Interim document prepared for DG SANTE - Limited distribution

6 February 2020

**FARM TO FORK STRATEGY ON SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS
DRAFT ACTION PLAN**

The measures presented in this action plan will all need to be taken forward in line with the better regulation principles, including evaluations and impact assessments as appropriate

| PART I – ACTIONS RELATED TO THE SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY | Timetable | N° | (Lead DG) |
|--|------------------|-----------|------------------------|
| Ensuring sustainable food production | | | |
| - Revise the Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive to reduce dependency on synthetic chemical pesticides and propose new legislation, enhancing the provisions related to Integrated Pest Management and related record keeping, while ensuring the correct enforcement of the provisions on the National Action Plan, training and certification of operators and testing of pesticides application equipment. | 2020-2022 | 1. | SANTE |
| - Improve the implementation of the Regulation on the placing of plant protection products on the market and of the Regulation on maximum residue levels of pesticides implementing the actions spelled out in the Report on the evaluation of these Regulations. This includes notably action towards a faster authorisation process to promote more expedient phasing out of high-risk pesticides from the market and faster approval of low-risk pesticides as well as enhanced environmental and bio-monitoring of pesticides use. | | | |
| - Set out a strategy to reduce the over-fertilisation of soils | | 2. | ENV/ AGRI |
| - Through the Clean Water Action Plan, reduce pressure on water resources to protect terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems | | 3. | ENV |
| - Revise the legal framework on the marketing of seeds and other plant reproductive material as well as on the marketing of forest reproductive material in order to contribute to agricultural biodiversity and climate resilience | 2020-2024 | 4. | SANTE |
| - Adopt tertiary legislation to reduce and better monitor the use of antimicrobials in livestock farming and aquaculture and contribute to the fight against antimicrobial resistance | | 5. | SANTE |
| - Evaluate the existing animal welfare legislation with a view to revise it; designate two additional EU reference centres to boost enforcement; develop a baseline and indicators on key animal welfare provisions to better monitor the implementation of EU rules | | 6. | SANTE |
| - Stimulate the production and use of sustainable and novel feed materials and food (eg: insects, algae) through the revision of Regulations on Feed Marketing, Animal By-Products and Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies and Feed Additives as well as the adoption of an Algae Strategy | | 7. | SANTE/ MARE/ ENV |
| - Revise legislation on feed labelling to ensure substantiation of environmental/sustainability claims | | | |
| - Revise the feed ban rules for non-ruminant feed and certain rules of the animal by-products Regulation to promote more circularity while guaranteeing food safety and animal health | | | |
| - Revise the marketing standards for agricultural, fishery and aquaculture products to enable the supply of sustainable products | | 8. | AGRI/ MARE |
| - Ensure that the national strategic plans under the CAP deliver on the objectives of the Farm to Fork Strategy and set ambitious targets and reporting arrangements | | 9. | AGRI/ SANTE |
| - Support conversion and maintenance of organic farming in the EU and develop a new action plan on organics (2021-2024) | | 10. | AGRI |

| | | | |
|---|-----------|-----|---------------|
| - Support primary producers in the transition by: clarifying the application of competition rules with regards to sustainability in collective actions (Guidelines and/or Commission Decisions); helping producers capture a fair share of the added value of sustainable products (how exactly needs to be described by AGRI); revising the legislative framework on geographical indications; developing an 'EU Carbon Farming manual' to quantify emission reductions and carbon removals in farms and forestry systems as a basis for payments (e.g. under CAP support) and for labelling; and reinforcing advisory services to primary producers based on a new Farm Sustainability Data Network | | 11. | COMP/ AGRI |
| - Protect plant health by harmonising plans for early detection of dangerous pests, establishing harmonised rules on post-import controls and updating rules on traceability | 2020-2024 | 12. | SANTE |
| - Assess the status of new genomic techniques under Union law and if appropriate, follow up by submitting a proposal | | 13. | SANTE |
| - Adopt a revised EU Strategy for Sustainable Aquaculture | | 14. | MARE |

Stimulate sustainable food processing, retail, hospitality and food services' practices

| | | | |
|--|------|-----|---------------|
| - Develop EU Principles and seek industry's commitments for responsible and transparent business and marketing conduct in the food supply chain: sustainable sourcing, product (re)formulation, packaging, transport, distribution, merchandising, product promotion, price setting and related communications | | 15. | GROW |
| - Support the sustainability transition of SMEs by developing a 'Sustainability Manual' for SME processors and retailers, advising on EU funding options through the Enterprise Europe Network and by scaling-up new solutions and business models through a new SME Award and the European Resource Efficiency Knowledge Centre | | 16. | GROW |
| - Reduce over-packaging and improve the sustainability of packaging by reinforcing the essential requirements in the Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive and revising the EU legislation on Food Contact Materials | 2021 | 17. | ENV/ SANTE |

Promote sustainable food consumption, facilitating the shift towards healthy, sustainable diets

| | | | |
|--|-----------|-----|---------------------------------|
| - Empower consumers to make sustainable food choices by: harmonising mandatory front-of-pack nutrition labelling; setting nutrient profiles in the context of nutrition and health claims; requiring origin indication for milk and milk and meat ingredients; considering different options for animal welfare labelling; launching studies to develop a sustainable food labelling framework; envisaging provision of some food information by digital means; and exploring labelling-related initiatives to tackle excess consumption of sugars, saturated fat and salt in the EU | | 18. | SANTE |
| - Develop EU-wide guidelines for sustainable and healthy diets and support Member States in integrating sustainability elements in national dietary advice and information and educational tools | 2021-2027 | 19. | SANTE |
| - Promote healthy and sustainable diets in institutional catering by developing guidance for sustainable food procurement | | 20. | ENV/ GROW |
| - Launch a study to quantify in economic terms, the environmental and societal (including health-related) costs associated with the production and consumption of the most consumed food products on the EU market | | 21. | ENV/ SANTE/ AGRI/ MARE |

| Reduce food loss and waste | | | |
|--|-----------|-----|-------|
| - Establish EU-level targets for food waste reduction, following implementation of EU-wide monitoring of food waste levels | 2023 | 22. | SANTE |
| - Promote better understanding and use of date marking ('use by' and 'best before' dates) by developing guidance for food business operators and control authorities and carrying out consumer research to inform possible revision of EU date marking rules | 2020-2024 | 23. | SANTE |
| - Implement the recommendations for action of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste | 2020-2024 | 24. | SANTE |

| Combat food fraud along the agri-food chain | | | |
|--|-----------|-----|-------|
| - Implement the EU Action Plan on Food fraud | 2020-2024 | 25. | SANTE |

| Promote a global transition to sustainable food systems | | | |
|--|--|-----|---------------------------|
| - Ensure the inclusion of ambitious sustainable food related provisions in all relevant EU bilateral agreements and build green alliances with non-EU countries | | 26. | SANTE/ TRADE/ AGRI |
| - Establish a High-Level Steering Group to ensure effective implementation of the agreed Action Agenda for Rural Transformation between the EU and the African Union | | 27. | SANTE/ TRADE/ DEVCO |
| - Reinforce cooperation on policies and activities to promote sustainable food systems in international fora, including standard setting organisations, use cooperation instruments announced in the Communication on 'Accelerating EU action towards food security for all and ending all forms of malnutrition' to assist developing-countries' transition to sustainable food systems | | 28. | ENV |
| - Propose new regulatory measures to minimize the risk of deforestation and forest degradation associated with food commodities/products placed on the EU market | | | |

Commented (CL1): To be reviewed after ongoing discussions

