



# Five policy priorities for the EU's sustainable food system initiative

Position Paper  
October 2022



## Introduction

The Framework Sustainable Food System law can, potentially, be the game changer that makes the EU's agricultural and food sectors positive contributors to fighting climate change and ensuring food security.

The framework law must, therefore, be given the capacity to transform the entire food system to make healthy, sustainable food the central objective of all agri-food policy and legislation.

Eurogroup for Animals has identified five policy priorities that need to be addressed by the framework for the sustainable transformation of the EU's food system.

1. The framework needs to **facilitate** a move to more plant-based dietary patterns by setting time-bound, quantitative EU targets to keep the food system within planetary boundaries.

The European Union has set itself ambitious targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Agriculture is a major contributor to EU emissions and, predominantly, production of meat, fish and dairy. In its communication on Stepping up Europe's 2030 climate ambition - investing in a climate-neutral future for the benefit of our people, the Commission notes that "A strong decrease of consumption of animal products for nutrition could potentially reduce emissions by more than 30 million tonnes by 2030".

Novelties, such as insect farming, that promise proteins at lower environmental costs than traditional animal farming should be approached with caution. The insect production industry is primarily and mainly a feed industry, its development is linked to increased meat consumption from intensive animal farming facilities.

The framework, therefore, should facilitate the transition to a sustainable food system aligned with planetary boundaries by setting EU-wide quantitative targets for the reduction of animal product consumption and a move towards more plant-based diets.

2. The framework needs to **recognise** the importance of animal welfare in a sustainable food system as it is intrinsically linked to all three pillars of sustainability.

Animal welfare has a cross-cutting impact on all three pillars of sustainability: environmental, social and economic. The definition of a sustainable food system must, therefore, include animal welfare and recognise the significant positive impact of the shift from intensive animal agriculture to agroecology with high levels of animal welfare as the starting point.

3. The framework needs to **cover** all actors and stages of the food system in its scope and steer all other agri-food policies, such as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

There is currently no holistic approach to the food system. The new framework is the opportunity to create an umbrella law that covers all other agri-food policies, including the CAP and the CFP.

Through binding rules, the framework can align the food system with the planetary boundaries and ensure fair competition. To ensure that the SFS remains fit-for-purpose and future proof, the framework should be agile, allowing it to cover new and revised legislation.

Imported agricultural and food products must also be covered by EU animal welfare standards, to avoid bringing in through the backdoor unsustainable low animal welfare practices the EU has closed its front door to.

4. The framework needs to **incentivise** the necessary move away from intensive animal agriculture towards agroecological farming with high levels of animal welfare.

The framework should set up a new incentives regime to support a change in farming, processing, sales and export practices towards increased plant-based production and cellular agriculture.

Initially outside of the current Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), these incentive schemes should become part of the agricultural and fisheries policies at their next revision.

5. The framework needs to **drive** enabling food environments that make the healthy, sustainable choice the easy one with primarily plant-based food and high animal welfare as the starting point.

A crucial aspect in shifting food consumption patterns is understanding that consumers make dietary choices within a food environment that shapes and determines available options. The framework can drive a positive food environment that favours a more plant-based diet and animal products from high-animal welfare farming.

Marketing and advertising have a significant impact on consumer choices. The framework can be used to promote food products that are in line with the food system transformation while restricting marketing that does not contribute to healthy and sustainable diets.

Public procurement is key in driving an enabling food environment by setting mandatory minimum criteria that align public procurement with the planetary boundaries. This will lead to larger shares of plant-based food and higher welfare criteria for animal products in public canteens.

In line with European consumers' demands, food products should include clear labels with information on animal welfare. A harmonised and mandatory EU-wide label that combines information on sustainability with animal welfare method of production (MOP+) can help drive both consumers and agri-food investors towards sustainable products.



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