

Recommendations for MEPs working on the Own Initiative Report on the EU Farm to Fork Strategy

The EU Farm to Fork Strategy is a first step for a strong EU leadership on a shift to a new food paradigm, which no longer looks like the status quo but is more respectful of animals and the planet, as well as people. The document includes many positive elements, like the revision, expansion and better enforcement of farm animal welfare legislation, the revision of the marketing standards and a new framework for a sustainable food system. Moreover, this strategy and the Biodiversity strategy have also set a threshold to transform at least 25% of the EU's agricultural land under organic farming by 2030. However, to ensure the effective implementation of the Strategy, the definition of further concrete actions is necessary.

We urge the Members of the European Parliament to call for:

- **A revision, improvement and expansion of the Slaughter and Transport regulations and other Animal Welfare EU Directives, based on science and that addresses citizens' concerns.**
 - Through the revision of the EU Regulation 1/2005 (Transport Regulation), the EU Commission should:
 - (i) set species-specific journey times within a maximum travel time of 8 hours;
 - (ii) favour the intra- and extra-EU transport of meat and carcasses as well as genetic material by developing a EU strategy to support the shift to such a trade;
 - (iii) set a harmonised EU sanctions system;
 - (iv) improve conditions for remaining transports (within the maximum journey times set in point (i)); and
 - (v) enlarge its scope by including technical scientific-based requirements for the transport of fish and companion animals.
 - Through the Revision of the EU Regulation 1099/2009 (Slaughter Regulation) the EU Commission is invited to get rid of the derogation to mandatory stunning, currently included under Article 4.4. Other than that, major welfare problems have been detected concerning the application of CO₂ stunning for pigs, the water-bath stunning for poultry, and the lack of effective stunning of fish: we urge the EU Commission to find economically viable and animal-friendly methods for these species to be inserted in the new legislative text.
 - The EU Farm-to-Fork Strategy provides the EU Commission with the opportunity to revise the other existing EU Directives on animal welfare and to align them with the latest scientific knowledge. This is crucial to enhance animal welfare and thus reduce use of medication including antimicrobials, and to meet the behavioural and physical needs of animals on farm. Within this scope, the EU Commission has the opportunity to back EU citizens' demands and to ban all kinds of cages in the EU by revising EU Directive 98/58/EC (the General Farm Directive).
 - The revision and expansion of the EU Directives on animal welfare also creates the opportunity to protect species that have not yet been covered by EU legislation, either by improving the existing directives, or by creating new species-specific Directives, such as for dairy cattle or different fish species.

- **A clear commitment to reduction of meat consumption and an increase on plant-based diets in the EU.**
 - In their communication on the Farm-to-Fork Strategy, the European Commission acknowledged the need to achieve a reduction in meat consumption and to replace a portion of current consumption levels with plant-based alternatives. The Commission will undertake a review of EU promotional support for agrifood products to enhance the contribution of such type of support “*to sustainable production and consumption*”. We recommend that the Commission draws conclusions from its own observations and ends the promotion of meat products. At the very least, the Commission should impose high animal welfare standards in calls for tender for funds for promotional campaigns.

- **A reduction of antimicrobials by improving the welfare of farm animals.**
 - The EU Farm-to-Fork strategy aims to reduce the sales of antimicrobials destined to farmed animals and fish in aquaculture by 50% by 2030. This is an important target, but one that should be coupled with a substantial reduction in the number of industrially-reared animals. We recommend that MEPs support a generalised transition towards higher welfare and nature-inclusive farming practices, which can deliver ecological services while also better guaranteeing animal and human health and welfare.

- **The initiative for a new framework law on sustainable food systems to transform EU food production by way of regulating food consumption.**
 - We recommend that prospective legislation pertaining to food consumption should take farm animal welfare, which represents a significant element of food sustainability, into account. Potential measures could include requiring beneficiaries of EU public funds related to food production and consumption to abide by higher animal welfare standards than provided in current law; incentives to decrease animal numbers and stocking densities as well as for the production and consumption of plant-based foods; and public health indicators to monitor reduction in meat production and consumption.

- **Using EU Aquaculture Policy to support regulatory change and drive higher welfare standards.**
 - The Commission should establish an Animal Welfare Reference Centre dedicated to farmed fish for collating knowledge, developing indicators and best practice guidance, in support of the coming Sustainable Aquaculture Guidelines and the revision of animal welfare regulations.
 - The focus on algae should be for direct human consumption as well as replacing fish meal and fish oil in animal feeds.

- **Mandatory “Method-of-production +” labelling to allow citizens to make informed choices based on animal production methods and the level of animal welfare.**

- The Commission should establish a mandatory method of labelling that informs the consumer about the methods used to farm animals (method of production) and also the level of animal welfare throughout the animal's life (+).