

Stella Kyriakides
Commissioner for Health
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Brussels, 13 March 2020

Subject: Consultation on Farm to Fork Strategy

Dear Commissioner Kyriakides,

On behalf of the Agri-Food Chain Coalition (AFCC) composed of 12 leading organisations across the agri-food chain, I forward you our common reply to the consultation.

The European agriculture and food sector is facing important challenges and the agri-food chain coalition is committed to provide solutions. This reply should be seen as our contribution to sustainable, solution-orientated and innovative policies that benefit the EU.

I thank you in advance for your interest.

Yours sincerely,

Jacob Hansen
*Director General of Fertilizers Europe
Chair of the Agri-Food Chain Coalition*

Copy: Giorgos Rossides, Head of Cabinet
Anne Bucher, Director General
Sabine Juelicher, Director

Agri-Food Chain Coalition – Members:



THE AGRI-FOOD CHAIN COALITION CALLS FOR A BALANCED & AMBITIOUS FARM TO FORK STRATEGY

Agri-Food Chain Coalition – What do we stand for:

The Agri-Food Chain Coalition is a joint initiative of 12 leading associations across the agri-food chain, united in their call for sustainable, solution-orientated and innovative policy that benefits the EU citizens and economy. <https://agrifoodchaincoalition.eu/>

The Agri-food Chain Coalition (AFCC) takes note of the ambitious targets the European Commission seeks to set for the Union in the Green Deal, as these will contribute to a better environment, while shaping not only our future production practices and the competitiveness of our sectors, but also of the entire economy.

The AFCC can play an active role in the implementation of the upcoming Farm to Fork Strategy. Considering the contribution their respective sectors can have on achieving the targets set out in the Green Deal, the AFCC calls on the European Commission to adopt a balanced Farm to Fork strategy based on the following recommendations:

1. Tackling Climate Change and environment related challenges

The European Green Deal aims at transforming the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gasses in 2050, where economic growth is decoupled from resource use and where Farm to Fork will contribute to achieving a circular economy.

AFCC Role:

Between 1990 and 2016, greenhouse gas emissions from EU agriculture fell by 22%. Partners along the Agri-food chain can contribute not only by further reducing emissions (both in agriculture and in other sectors) but also by applying mitigation technologies.

The agri-food systems are ideally placed to improve current circularities and create new resource loops.

The agriculture sector can act as a carbon sink through better soil and nutrient management, by producing the increased amount of biomass needed as well as by reducing production losses and waste along the chain.

AFCC's call:

Ensure that the EU retains a leading role in innovation along the agri-food value chain, taking into consideration our specific conditions.

Ensure that the EU acts as a champion of resource-efficient and sustainable production in circular processes.

Support the development of technologies and methods that drive the move towards a competitive low carbon economy both in crop and animal derived food systems.

Promote the creation of new links and loops to increase the share of circular economy and bioeconomy in sustainable development.

Encourage integrated nutrient management and the use of innovative solutions, which aims at reducing excessive nutrient losses in plant and in animal farming inspired by a circular approach.

2. Being an integrated part UN's 2030 Agenda and the sustainable development Goals (SDGs)

The Commission is committed to put sustainability and the well-being of citizens at the centre of economic policy and the SDGs at the heart of the EU's policy making and action.

AFCC Role:

Sustainability is a common effort towards shared goals. The entire EU agri-food system continuously fosters collaboration and generates successful efforts and initiatives supporting the SDGs implementation. In particular, the agriculture sector already contributes to 13 of the 17 SDGs.

The challenge is to identify and implement practices accepted by the society to boost sustainability and provide consumers with safe, nutritious, affordable and high-quality food.

AFCC's call :

Include agri-food systems in strategies that further contribute to deliver on the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Integrate the needs of agri-food businesses and rural areas (e.g. agronomics, engineering) under the curricula of the education system for the new generations.

Provide all those working in the sector access to the necessary knowledge, skills & innovation and technology to improve practices and efficiency all along the agri-food chain.

Promote the creation and maintenance of jobs in the agri-food sector, with particular focus on attracting the younger generations and securing skilled and qualified workforce.

Improve farmers' income and their living standards to secure a sustained generation renewal of the sector.

Enhance the role of women in EU farming by facilitating access to education, vocational training and financing.

3. Ensuring the availability of new technologies, sustainable solutions and disruptive innovation to achieve the objectives of the European Green Deal

The Commission states that there are new opportunities for all operators in the food value chain and that new technologies and scientific discoveries, combined with increasing public awareness and demand for sustainable food, will benefit all stakeholders.

AFCC Role:

The use of ICT (and the data generated) has grown immensely in agriculture, and especially in precision farming, plant and animal breeding, feeding, the monitoring of plant and animal health. Further developments will follow, making agriculture and farming more modern, smarter and innovative, thus, leading to a more efficient and sustainable use of resources – using the right product, in the right amount, in the right place and at the right time.

The challenge is to offer all relevant actors the necessary tools to support the uptake of new techniques and technologies, modern agricultural machinery and IT-systems and to further improve farm advisory services to that effect.

Innovative technologies, satellite technology, digital farming and big data applied from breeding to harvesting both in plant and in livestock production can play a pivotal role in enabling the most efficient, sustainable and socially acceptable use of natural resources.

AFCC's call:

Ensure a science and evidence-based approach all along the agri-food systems to guarantee food safety and drive innovation.

Position research aimed to spur innovation in agri-food systems at the core of EU policies.

Encourage and promote the further uptake of the latest technologies (including latest breeding methods, fermentation technologies and digital farming technologies) in the European agri-food chain.

Promote knowledge transfer and farm advisory services, especially in the context of nutrient management, that can contribute to the uptake of innovative technologies and solutions as well as promoting new business opportunities.

Establish robust infrastructures to ensure reliable broadband access across the EU territory (in particular in rural areas) as a driver to promote the use and uptake of ICT and satellite technologies.

Establish and **promote** Digital Innovation Hubs to act as one-stop-shops enabling any business to access the latest technology, expertise and technology for testing and experimenting with digital innovations.

Provide cross sectorial integrated decision-making systems delivering real value.

Stimulate the use of decision-support tools at farm level, which deliver both for the environment and the economics of the farms.



Foster data governance and data sharing by implementing the **EU code of conduct on agricultural data sharing**

Support the concept of smart villages and promote vibrant rural areas, ensuring stronger synergies between urban and rural areas in order to close its development gap

Build a strong and modern EU legal framework to boost innovation and competitiveness of the agri-food sector.