

## **Contribution to the EU consultation on the Farm to Fork Strategy within the framework of the European Green Deal**

- 1. Central role of the agricultural sector and the food industry**  
An independent, competitive and high-quality food production is of overriding interest to all EU citizens. In a globalised world, European food production is essential in order to maintain food supplies for the population even in times of crisis and market uncertainty. It is important to combine food production with the additional services provided by active agriculture for society and the environment. Agriculture is a central factor in developing rural areas.
- 2. Financing through additional financial resources**  
Additional challenges and tasks of the European Green Deal, especially the Farm to Fork Strategy, cannot be financed by existing CAP funds alone. For the long-term project of transitioning to a climate-neutral recycling economy, additional financial resources must be made available that guarantee the care and attention the topic deserves.
- 3. Strengthening the position of producers in the food chain**  
Farmers are often the weakest link in the food chain, and the challenges of transformation must be fairly distributed on all shoulders. This requires social education and a change in consumer attitudes. The next important step would be the introduction of a labelling system for higher standards that apply to the farmers in the European Union. In terms of competition law, the payment for these higher standards in comparison with the world market must be made possible.
- 4. A climate-neutral Europe in 2050 is only possible with agriculture and forestry**  
Agriculture can and will further reduce its emissions by further increasing its climate efficiency. Agriculture and forestry is the only economic sector that can make an active contribution to climate protection in the production process by binding CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere through plant growth. In order to increase CO<sub>2</sub> binding in agricultural soils through humus formation, support measures must be developed and the sink performance of agriculture and forestry must be credited to the greenhouse gas balance. Reduction achievements in terms of climate protection must be further increased by means of renewable energies and renewable raw materials. In order to avoid possible relocation of production to third countries due to increased climate costs, a carbon border adjustment mechanism must be introduced for agricultural products.
- 5. Chemical plant protection remains necessary to safeguard harvests**  
The use of chemical plant protection must be optimised to the necessary extent. The availability of pesticides must be adjusted in such a way that sufficient protection of the crop plants is possible, both in terms of yield and quality. A general political reduction target of x

percent is rejected as it is counterproductive. New groups of active substances are needed to ensure effective crop protection in the future, especially in view of climate change and consequently new pests. Further incentives for reduction can be created by simplifying approval conditions for innovative crop protection products and disease-resistant seed. The use of biological and mechanical crop protection products should be preferred if they have sufficient efficacy that is comparable to the level of chemical crop protection. More research results that are suitable for practical application are needed here.

6. Clearing the way for innovation

New Breeding Techniques (NBTs) have considerable potential and their availability and application must be guaranteed in the future. This also requires the creation of an appropriate legal framework from a trade and geopolitical point of view, based on scientific knowledge. Research and development in this area must be advanced. NBTs can actively contribute to achieving high environmental and climate ambitions.

7. Common origin and animal husbandry labelling in the EU

The high standard level of European agricultural products must be made visible. That is why we need a legal framework for uniform marketing standards in conjunction with compulsory origin labelling at European level. In the case of animal products, this includes compulsory husbandry labelling. For pig farming, for example, the whole chain from piglet production to pig fattening must be taken into account when labelling the farming methods and the origin. Processed products, meat products, bulk consumers and the food service industry must also be included here.

8. Harmonize animal welfare in Europe

The level of conditions under which animals are kept and raised must be standardised. This includes animal welfare indicators defined on a scientific basis. The level of hygiene and biosecurity must also be further developed. Sick animals must continue to be treated in the future; this includes the use of antibiotic agents that are effective for the respective pathogen. The development of new antibiotic agents is necessary. Another component should be animal health monitoring, whose data can be used to objectify the debate on the further development of animal husbandry conditions.

9. Expand organic farming in line with market requirements

The prerequisite for this is an adequate demand for organic food, therefore it has to be made sure that the market conditions grow as well. This can be promoted by mandatory labelling. This requires yield increases as well as new ways of plant breeding and the closing of internal nutrient cycles. Conventional agriculture can learn from the experience of organic farming, e.g. in weed control or the reduction of the use of plant protection products.

10. Focus more on the bio-economy

A successful energy system transformation can only succeed if the technology-open generation of energy from biomass is given greater weight in the areas of electricity, heat and transport. Agriculture is already making an important contribution today by providing

biomass for sustainable bioenergy. With a view to the long-term goal of 2050, agriculture and forestry can provide renewable carbon for material use.

**11. Cooperation in designing biodiversity protection**

With regard to biodiversity, the cooperative approach must be strengthened as the most promising strategy for promoting biodiversity in agricultural landscapes. Biodiversity must be integrated into productive agricultural production systems. In order to bring practical and economically viable measures for the promotion of biodiversity into broad agricultural practice, a programme is needed to remove barriers, create tolerance and flexibility and to provide appreciative, income-relevant support that is appropriate to the location and habitat. Biodiversity has to become an integral part of crop rotation and a genuine alternative source of income for farms, rather than merely compensating for disadvantages caused by less productivity. The Green Deal and the international negotiations on the Convention on Biological Diversity must lay the foundations for a strategy of cooperation and the principle of protection through use in nature and species conservation with land users.

**12. Implement environmental requirements through economic incentives**

The European Green Deal must be used to implement ecological requirements and services by farmers through economic incentives. Farmers must be given the opportunity to compensate in financial terms for economic cuts caused by higher environmental requirements. It must be prevented that agriculture is faced with further unilateral requirements. This leads, also with regard to international markets, to a negative spiral and eventually to a "relocation" of domestic food production to third countries. In the end, neither European agriculture nor the environment would benefit from this.