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DRAFT REPORT

on how to secure a sustainable future for the EU livestock sector in light of the need to ensure food security, farmers' resilience and the challenges posed by animal diseases?
(2025/2053(INI))

Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on how to secure a sustainable future for the EU livestock sector in light of the need to ensure food security, farmers' resilience and the challenges posed by animal diseases? (2025/2053(INI))

The European Parliament,

– having regard to Articles 38 and 39 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) establishing the common agricultural policy (CAP) and its objectives,

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/2115 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 establishing rules on support for strategic plans to be drawn up by Member States under the common agricultural policy (CAP Strategic Plans) and financed by the European Agricultural Guarantee Fund (EAGF) and by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1305/2013 and (EU) No 1307/2013[1],

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/2116 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013[2],

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/2117 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2 December 2021 amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products, (EU) No 1151/2012 on quality schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs, (EU) No 251/2014 on the definition, description, presentation, labelling and the protection of geographical indications of aromatised wine products and (EU) No 228/2013 laying down specific measures for agriculture in the outermost regions of the Union[3],

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2024/1468 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 amending Regulations (EU) 2021/2115 and (EU) 2021/2116 as regards good agricultural and environmental condition standards, schemes for climate, environment and animal welfare, amendment of the CAP Strategic Plans, review of the CAP Strategic Plans and exemptions from controls and penalties[4],

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2024/3012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 November 2024 establishing a Union certification framework for permanent carbon removals, carbon farming and carbon storage in products[5],

– having regard to the Commission communication of 19 February 2025 entitled 'A Vision for Agriculture and Food – Shaping together an attractive farming and agri-food sector for future generations' (COM(2025)0075),

[1] OJ L 435, 6.12.2021, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/2115/oj.
[2] OJ L 435, 6.12.2021, p. 187, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/2116/oj.
[3] OJ L 435, 6.12.2021, p. 262, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/2117/oj.
[4] OJ L, 2024/1468, 24.5.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1468/oj.
[5] OJ L, 2024/3012, 6.12.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/3012/oj.

– having regard to the final report of the Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture entitled ‘A shared prospect for farming and food in Europe’, published on 4 September 2024[6],

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on transmissible animal diseases and amending and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health (‘Animal Health Law’)[7],

– having regard to Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/2002 of 7 December 2020 laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council with regard to Union notification and Union reporting of listed diseases, to formats and procedures for submission and reporting of Union surveillance programmes and of eradication programmes and for application for recognition of disease-free status, and to the computerised information system[8],

– having regard to Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/689 of 17 December 2019 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards rules for surveillance, eradication programmes, and disease-free status for certain listed and emerging diseases[9],

– having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1069/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 October 2009 laying down health rules as regards animal by-products and derived products not intended for human consumption and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1774/2002 (Animal by-products Regulation)[10],

– having regard to Directive 2003/99/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 November 2003 on the monitoring of zoonoses and zoonotic agents, amending Council Decision 90/424/EEC and repealing Council Directive 92/117/EEC[11],

– having regard to Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/687 of 17 December 2019 supplementing Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and the Council, as regards rules for the prevention and control of certain listed diseases[12],

– having regard to Council Directive 98/58/EC of 20 July 1998 concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes[13],

– having regard to Regulation (EU) 2019/6 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on veterinary medicinal products and repealing Directive 2001/82/EC[14],

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[6] Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture, https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/document/download/171329ff-0f50-4fa5-946f-aea11032172e_en?filename=strategic-dialogue-report-2024_en.pdf.
[7] OJ L 84, 31.3.2016, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/429/oj.
[8] OJ L 412, 8.12.2020, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_impl/2020/2002/oj.
[9] OJ L 174, 3.6.2020, p. 211, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2020/689/oj.
[10] OJ L 300, 14.11.2009, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2009/1069/oj.
[11] OJ L 325, 12.12.2003, p. 31, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2003/99/oj.
[12] OJ L 174, 3.6.2020, p. 64, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg_del/2020/687/oj.
[13] OJ L 221, 8.8.1998, p. 23, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/1998/58/oj.
[14] OJ L 4, 7.1.2019, p. 43, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/6/oj.

– having regard to the Council Recommendation of 13 June 2023 on stepping up EU actions to combat antimicrobial resistance in a One Health approach (2023/C 220/01)[15],

– having regard to Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2020/1729 of 17 November 2020 on the monitoring and reporting of antimicrobial resistance in zoonotic and commensal bacteria and repealing Implementing Decision 2013/652/EU[16],

– having regard to the Commission notice entitled 'Guidelines for the prudent use of antimicrobials in veterinary medicine', published on 11 September 2015[17],

– having regard to the recommendations of the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU, following the Ministerial Conference on animal diseases held on 24 January 2024, which state that biosecurity and vaccination should become the pillars of alternative strategies to mass slaughter in the management of infectious epidemics on farms,

– having regard to the Commission communication of 15 November 2011 entitled 'Action plan against the rising threats from Antimicrobial Resistance' (COM(2011)0748),

– having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December 2004 on the protection of animals during transport and related operations and amending Directives 64/432/EEC and 93/119/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1255/97[18],

– having regard to its resolution of 19 October 2023 on generational renewal in the EU farms of the future[19],

– having regard to its resolution of 14 June 2023 on ensuring food security and long-term resilience of the EU agriculture[20],

– having regard to its resolution of 13 December 2022 on a long-term vision for the EU's rural areas – Towards stronger, connected, resilient and prosperous rural areas by 2040[21],

– having regard to its resolution of 24 November 2022 on the protection of livestock farming and large carnivores in Europe[22],

– having regard to its resolution of 16 February 2022 on the implementation report on on-farm animal welfare[23],

– having regard to its recommendation of 20 January 2022 to the Council and the Commission following the investigation of alleged contraventions and

[15] OJ C 220, 22.6.2023, p. 1.
[16] OJ L 387, 19.11.2020, p. 8, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2020/1729/oj.
[17] OJ C 299, 11.9.2015, p. 7.
[18] OJ L 3, 5.1.2005, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2005/1/oj.
[19] OJ C, C/2024/2658, 29.4.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/2658/oj.
[20] OJ C, C/2024/483, 23.1.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/C/2024/483/oj.
[21] OJ C 177, 17.5.2023, p. 35.
[22] OJ C 167, 11.5.2023, p. 77.
[23] OJ C 342, 6.9.2022, p. 45.

maladministration in the application of Union law in relation to the protection of animals during transport within and outside the Union[24],

– having regard to the final report of 14 December 2021 of the Committee of Inquiry on the Protection of Animals during Transport within and outside the Union[25],

– having regard to its resolution of 10 February 2021 on the New Circular Economy Action Plan[26],

– having regard to the standards of the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), as established in the Terrestrial Animal Health Code,

– having regard to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report entitled 'Contribution of terrestrial animal source food to healthy diets for improved nutrition and health outcomes – An evidence and policy overview on the state of knowledge and gaps', published in 2023,

– having regard to the information report of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) entitled 'Benefits of extensive livestock farming and organic fertilizers in the context of the European Green Deal', adopted on 8 December 2021[27],

– having regard to Rule 55 of its Rules of Procedure,

– having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (A10-0000/2025),

A. whereas the livestock sector contributes substantially to the EU's economy, as the value of livestock production and products equalled EUR 214.3 billion in 2023, representing 40 % of the total output of EU agriculture that year;

B. whereas livestock farming is of crucial importance for many European regions, and 58 % of European farms keep animals; whereas European livestock farms employ around 4 million people (salaried and non-salaried);

C. whereas livestock systems, notably grassland-based systems, provide climate and environmental benefits by sequestering carbon, regulating water flows and improving water quality, protecting biodiversity, and maintaining diversified and open landscapes, particularly in mountain areas;

D. whereas the EU is the world's second-largest producer of meat, behind China but ahead of the United States;

[24] OJ C 336, 2.9.2022, p. 20.
[25] Investigation of alleged contraventions and maladministration in the application of Union law in relation to the protection of animals during transport within and outside the Union (A9-0350/2021).
[26] OJ C 465, 17.11.2021, p. 11.
[27] EESC, 'Benefits of extensive livestock farming and organic fertilizers in the context of the European Green Deal (information report)', https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/our-work/opinions-information-reports/information-reports/benefits-extensive-livestock-farming-and-organic-fertilizers-context-european-green-deal-egd-ir-information-report.

E. whereas in 2023, the EU had 133 million pigs, 74 million bovine animals, 58 million sheep, 11 million goats and an estimated 1.63 billion poultry birds;

F. whereas the EU produced 40.7 million tonnes of meat in 2023, comprised of pork (50 %), poultry (32 %), beef (15 %) and sheep and goat meat (1 %);

G. whereas the EU is the world's largest producer of cow's milk, accounting for over 20 % of global milk supply, and holds a leading position in international dairy trade, representing more than 30 % of global dairy exports;

H. whereas EU net exports of animal products have risen more than threefold since 2000 and reached EUR 37.8 billion in 2024 (excluding intra-community trade) in a context where global demand for meat, dairy products and eggs is expected to increase by 25 to 50 % by 2050, according to the latest FAO scenarios[28];

I. whereas the processing industry linked to animal production (milk and meat processing, animal feed, animal by-products) is a key manufacturing sector in the EU in terms of turnover and employment;

J. whereas products of animal origin with geographical indications (GIs) account for nearly 20 % of all EU GIs and represent significant added value for rural economies;

K. whereas non-price competitiveness linked to product safety, traceability and quality is a key feature of EU livestock production, and incurs higher costs and product prices compared to the EU's trading partners;

L. whereas the EU's agricultural promotion policy plays a key role in increasing the visibility and competitiveness of high-quality European agri-food products, including animal products;

M. whereas the number of farm animals, the farm and herd size, the degree of sectoral specialisation, the intensity of production measured by the number of livestock units per hectare and the proportion of grassland in the utilised agricultural area (UAA) vary greatly from one Member State to another and, within Member States, from one region to another;

N. whereas livestock farming is currently facing several economic, environmental and social challenges;

O. whereas, over the past decade, all livestock populations have declined – bovine animal populations in the EU have decreased by 5 % since 2013, while pig numbers have decreased by 6 %, and sheep and goat numbers are down 9 % and 15 % respectively;

P. whereas animal products contribute to a balanced and nutritious diet by providing a stable source of essential nutrients, such as high-quality proteins, vitamins and minerals, that are very difficult to obtain in sufficient amounts from plant-based foods, and which are particularly vital during key life stages such as pregnancy and lactation, childhood, adolescence and older age;

[28] FAO, 'The future of food and agriculture – Alternative pathways to 2050', https://www.fao.org/global-perspectives-studies/resources/detail/en/c/1157074/.

Q. whereas over the next 30 years, global animal protein consumption is expected to grow, which, combined with an increase in the world's population, will result in a significant rise in production levels;

R. whereas the number of livestock farmers is decreasing rapidly due to economic difficulties, the sector's lack of attractiveness and insufficient generational renewal;

S. whereas the share of direct payments and total subsidies in net farm income is significant for livestock and mixed farming;

T. whereas sustainability concerns look set to take a more prominent role in shaping production and consumption patterns for meat and dairy products in the EU;

U. whereas animal welfare is key to the future of livestock farming, which must evolve to improve farm animals' living conditions; whereas consumer expectations regarding animal welfare and a change in attitude towards close-confinement housing systems may provide incentives to switch to less intensive farming systems;

V. whereas demands to lessen livestock farming's impact on the environment, especially greenhouse gas emissions, to enhance animal welfare and to shift towards less intensive production need to be balanced with the need for stable production levels and a good income for farmers;

W. whereas livestock farming is an essential component of the circular economy, serving Europe's energy and ecological transitions; whereas European livestock systems therefore need to be able to provide a complementary range of products and services that go beyond meat production alone;

X. whereas the diversity of European farming systems is an asset for the EU's energy and ecological transitions; whereas livestock farming can play a key role in achieving the decarbonisation objectives of the European energy mix, as livestock farms produce manure that is used to supply organic matter and nutrients to the soil and can also be converted into biogas via methanisation facilities, thus avoiding the use of fossil fuels; whereas beyond its potential for energy production, methanisation also produces digestate, which is used as a natural fertiliser by farmers;

Y. whereas changing consumption patterns, in a context of a difficult market situation, make it necessary to act swiftly to secure protection at EU level for names used to designate food of animal origin;

Z. whereas in many parts of Europe, certain large predators, particularly wolves and bears, are expanding their territory or recolonising areas, which brings them into conflict with human activities, especially extensive sheep and cattle grazing; whereas pastoralists bear significant costs as a result of predation on their herds and the great disparity between Member States and regions in terms of measures to support farmers – with such measures being entirely absent in some cases – and the public funds made available for compensation and adaptation;

AA. whereas animal diseases, and in particular transmissible diseases and those transmissible to humans ('zoonoses') can cause serious social, economic and environmental damage and, in some cases, threaten human health;

AB. whereas climate change is likely to influence the emergence of new animal diseases and the prevalence of existing diseases and their geographical distribution;

AC. whereas recent outbreaks (African swine fever, avian influenza, foot-and-mouth disease, epizootic haemorrhagic disease) have demonstrated that animal diseases can have a devastating impact on production levels, and that their prevention is essential to reduce the need for unavoidable drastic control measures such as mass culling;

AD. whereas the threats posed by animal diseases are of major importance for the international trade of EU animals and animal products and make it necessary for the EU's trading partners to recognise the EU's system of regionalisation, established in line with the WOAH standards and World Trade Organization (WTO) principles to control diseases and/or maintain safe trade by restricting trade from areas affected by disease, while avoiding trade disruptions in goods from unaffected areas;

AE. whereas the EU's holistic approach to the control of animal diseases is made up of several components, namely the specific control measures in place for the surveillance of each disease, the EU's financial contribution, the notification system, the EU's emergency team, the traceability system and the EU reference laboratories for selected diseases;

AF. whereas antimicrobial resistance, a One Health issue encompassing human health, animal health, plant health and the environment, is one of the top three priority health threats identified by the Commission in July 2022 and has a major socio-economic impact on the agricultural sector, as it leads to increased morbidity and mortality in animals and endangers animal health and welfare and, in turn, animal productivity; whereas a target of a 50 % reduction in overall EU sales of antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture by 2030 has been included in the Farm to Fork strategy and the reduced use of antimicrobials in farmed animals should be monitored through CAP support measures;

AG. whereas the EU Animal Health Law establishes a legal framework to harmonise rules across the sector applying to intra-EU trade, the entry into the EU of animals and products, disease eradication, veterinary controls, notification of diseases, and financial support in relation to different animal species;

AH. whereas the existing legislation on transmissible animal diseases includes a comprehensive set of provisions concerning surveillance, eradication programmes and disease-free status, and requires Member States to establish and maintain an up-to-date list of their territories or zones with disease-free status, and of their regions with disease-free status;

AI. whereas preventive and control measures for each animal disease should be tailored to its epidemiological profile, its consequences and its geographical distribution within the EU;

AJ. whereas early detection and a clear chain of disease notification and reporting are crucial for effective control; whereas Member States should ensure that the competent authority is immediately notified of any suspicion or confirmation of an outbreak;

AK. whereas it is of crucial importance to ensure uniform conditions for EU disease notification and reporting to maintain a level playing field between Member States and avoid the distortion of competition; whereas the Commission is empowered to establish a list of diseases that are subject to EU notification and reporting as well as the necessary procedures and format for disease notification and reporting through the Animal Disease Information System (ADIS);

General remarks

1. Welcomes and supports the Commission's initiative, in its 'Vision for Agriculture and Food', to set up a work stream on livestock to develop appropriate policy pathways to support livestock farming;

2. Calls on the Commission, as part of this work stream, to establish a high-level group on livestock modelled on the high-level group on wine policy; believes that by bringing Member States and stakeholders together, this forum will prove useful in addressing the challenges faced by the sector and exploring possible solutions;

3. Stresses that the specific challenges affecting the sector call for a multidimensional policy response to take into account the economic, environmental and social importance of livestock farming in the EU;

4. Points out that improving the sustainability of livestock farming depends on a range of factors, including price and non-price competitiveness, adaptation to climate change, enhanced ecosystem services, animal welfare, increased innovation and improved quality of life for livestock farmers;

5. Insists that this holistic approach should, in particular, address the challenges to the sector's resilience posed by climate-related extreme weather events and the increasing emergence of animal diseases and the recurrence of major transboundary animal diseases, as their consequences can have ripple effects on food supply, trade and human health;

6. Underlines that there cannot be a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to the livestock sector, as the diversity of livestock production and the disparities between local conditions require solutions tailored to a national, regional or sub-regional scale;

7. Highlights that the diversity of European livestock farming systems, from free-range farming in mountain areas to large-scale specialised farms, allows them to provide a range of complementary goods and services, and thereby improves the resilience of the whole livestock sector while satisfying a wide range of consumer demands; calls, therefore, on the Commission to promote the diversity of production systems;

Economic sustainability and food security

8. Underlines that improving productivity and efficiency in the EU livestock sector is essential to increase the domestic supply of high-quality proteins and strengthen food security, particularly in the context of global market volatility, geopolitical tensions and the expected rise in global demand for animal proteins over the next 30 years;

9. Calls for a balanced approach that recognises the essential role of livestock-derived products in global nutrition while simultaneously addressing the impact of production systems on the environment and animal welfare;

10. Notes that maintaining a thriving livestock sector in the EU will benefit global food security, strengthen the EU's food sovereignty and contribute to balanced European diets through meat products of high nutritional quality that are a unique source of several micronutrients and bioactive compounds;

11. Recalls that providing livestock farmers with more stable incomes and better working conditions is key to the economic sustainability of the livestock sector;

12. Underlines that livestock farming is essential for the socio-economic vitality of mountain and disadvantaged areas, such as permanent grasslands and peatlands, where it sustains rural employment, prevents depopulation and preserves cultural heritage;

13. Calls for production and emissions to be optimised by launching a plan for genetic herd improvement and the dissemination of good practices, rather than imposing brutal restructuring measures that would reduce European food sovereignty;

14. Welcomes the proposal by the Commission, in its 'Vision for Agriculture and Food', to better target direct support; notes, in this respect, that the lack of economic viability of numerous livestock holdings, especially ruminant farming systems, requires special attention;

15. Underlines the need to stop and reverse the trend of decapitalisation, and to ensure effective protection of the EU market and full reciprocity of EU standards for imported products; stresses the importance of maintaining the CAP budget in real terms by taking inflation into account, securing coupled support for ruminant livestock production without additional environmental conditionalities, and adapting market interventions by updating the reference prices for the safeguard clauses, taking into account the new market values and management tools;

16. Underlines the urgent need to promote research, innovation and the adoption of evidence-based practices that improve livestock sustainability across environmental, social and economic dimensions, while promoting high animal welfare standards and fostering integrated and resilient livestock supply chains, including fair pricing mechanisms for farmers;

17. Notes that livestock farming systems could,in particular, take advantage of practices and technologies that can be used to achieve efficiency gains, including, for instance, precision livestock farming and animal breeding, and make use of new digital technologies that can improve animal and system management, data processing, transparency along the food chain, and traceability; requests that the Commission report on best practices in livestock sustainability and propose measures that support innovation and resilience in the sector;

18. Encourages the development of policies that support family farmers and rural communities in maintaining sustainable livestock production as a means of livelihood and food security;

19. Highlights the necessity of global cooperation and knowledge transfer in supporting sustainable livestock systems, particularly in regions facing rapid population growth and urbanisation;

20. Urges the Member States to invest in education, training and infrastructure that enable farmers to implement more sustainable, efficient and animal-welfare-friendly livestock production practices, including training on innovative tools and technologies for the early detection and prevention of epizootic diseases, such as health monitoring systems for livestock;

21. Underlines that the livestock and mixed farming sectors are major beneficiaries of the CAP under pillar one (direct payments, coupled payments for beef, veal, sheep and goat) and pillar two, notably through support for investments, payments for natural or other area-specific constraints and agri-environment-climate commitments; stresses the role of the CAP in shaping livestock farming systems;

22. Calls on the Commission to build on the existing support measures under the CAP when addressing the sustainability challenges posed by livestock systems; insists that CAP subsidy payments are vital to livestock farmers' incomes, particularly for holdings specialising in beef, dairy, sheep and goat production, and that a transitional period is therefore necessary to allow farmers sufficient time to adapt in the event that new support schemes are introduced in the post-2027 CAP;

23. Calls on the Commission to recognise the specific needs and challenges faced by livestock farmers in mountain and disadvantaged areas and to ensure adequate support through the CAP, including coupled support and targeted rural development measures;

24. Points out that, with only 12 % of farm holdings in the EU run by people under the age of 40, the lack of young farmers threatens the economic viability of the European livestock sector; urges the Commission, therefore, to improve the effectiveness of start-up support in overcoming entry barriers to the livestock sector, which suffers from a lack of attractiveness, and to take into account the increasing number of women working on livestock farms by promoting gender-inclusive measures and opportunities;

25. Invites the Commission, in the upcoming EU bioeconomy strategy, to recognise the role of livestock farming in circularity and to fully unlock the potential of livestock by-products through the rendering sector to provide additional sources of income for livestock farmers;

26. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to identify adequate and long-term funding opportunities for appropriate preventive measures and adequate compensation for farmers, not only for any losses suffered and costs incurred as a result of large carnivore attacks, but also for the mitigation measures implemented;

27. Highlights that the targeted amendment of the Habitats Directive[29] to align EU legislation with the revised protection level of the wolf from 'strictly protected' to 'protected' in the updated Bern Convention aims to provide more flexibility in managing wolf populations across the EU, in order to improve coexistence and

[29] Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora, (OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/1992/43/oj).

minimise the impact of the growing wolf population, including the related socio-economic challenges;

Environmental sustainability

28. Acknowledges the essential role of livestock farming, notably grassland-based systems, in maintaining circular agricultural systems, enhancing ecosystem services and providing climate and environmental services by sequestering carbon, improving water quality, protecting biodiversity and maintaining diversified and open landscapes;

29. Stresses the importance of integrating livestock into sustainable agricultural models, ensuring balanced nutrient flows and minimising resource competition;

30. Underlines that maintaining livestock farming in remote and less favoured areas contributes to environmental sustainability by preventing land abandonment, supporting biodiversity and preserving traditional landscapes;

31. Stresses the importance for farming systems of integrating crop production with animal husbandry in order to facilitate the recycling of nutrients by favouring organic fertilisers over synthetic ones, to reduce the consumption of chemicals and to enhance soil fertility and biodiversity;

32. Calls on the Commission to accelerate the approval and uptake of alternative fertilising products, such as digestate and RENURE materials, to enhance nutrient recycling, reduce dependency on synthetic fertilisers and promote circularity within livestock systems; stresses the urgent need to revise the Nitrates Directive[30], which does not reflect the latest scientific advancements and innovative fertilisation practices;

33. Calls on the Commission to ensure fair prices or due compensation for breeders, given the increasing cost of fertilisers;

34. Notes that enhancing the use of both digestate and RENURE contributes not only to the circular economy, but also to the decarbonisation of the EU economy by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting the production of renewable energy;

35. Calls on the Commission to invest in innovation and infrastructure that enable the broader use of manure-derived fertilisers and biogas from livestock farming, in line with the EU's climate and energy objectives;

36. Underlines the need for better recognition of the contribution of livestock farming to the bioeconomy through a more comprehensive approach to the nutrient and carbon cycles across all food and non-food uses;

37. Warns against 'one-size-fits-all' policies aimed at large-scale reductions in livestock populations, which could exacerbate environmental degradation and threaten the resilience of the food system; notes, in particular, that reducing ruminant numbers could

[30] Council Directive 91/676/EEC of 12 December 1991 concerning the protection of waters against pollution caused by nitrates from agricultural sources, (OJ L 375, 31.12.1991, p. 1, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/1991/676/oj).

lead to land-use change with negative effects, including land abandonment, forest development, a loss of biodiversity and increased risk of fire;

38. Calls for increased investment in research and innovation to optimise livestock management practices and reduce the ecological footprint of livestock, including breeding, feeding, grazing and manure management techniques that enhance sustainability outcomes;

39. Urges the Commission and the Member States to ensure that regulatory frameworks related to livestock are developed transparently, based on sound science, and with full stakeholder engagement;

40. Invites the Commission to propose tools to enhance the role of livestock production in maintaining grasslands important for the environment and climate stability through more extensive farming systems, and to improve the sustainability of intensive systems;

Social dimension of livestock farming and sector-specific challenges

41. Stresses that the development of livestock policies must be firmly grounded in the highest scientific standards, ensuring a balanced and comprehensive understanding of the contributions and challenges associated with animal agriculture;

42. Underlines the importance of transparent, accessible and evidence-based scientific communication to counteract misinformation and ideological bias in public debates on livestock and meat consumption;

43. Calls on the Commission to reopen the issue of meat denominations to protect animal products, provide real transparency for consumers and promote the quality of EU animal products, including by highlighting their recognised labels and short supply chains;

44. Urges policymakers at all levels to uphold evidence-based standards in the development of dietary guidelines, fully recognising the nutritional, cultural and economic importance of meat, dairy and eggs;

45. Warns against the uncritical promotion of nutritionally inadequate food substitutes as replacements for traditional animal-sourced foods;

46. Demands that the scientific method, rigorous peer-reviewed research, and transparent evidence evaluation remain the cornerstones of food policy development;

47. Highlights that the scientific evidence, production scalability and consumer acceptance needed to support cellular agriculture as a viable alternative to traditional livestock farming are currently lacking; warns against its overhyped promotion as a solution to global food challenges and stresses the importance of rigorous safety, environmental and market assessments; emphasises the ecological role of ruminants and the nutritional value of natural meat, and calls on the Commission to ensure that regulatory frameworks for emerging food technologies are transparent and evidence-based and protect both consumers and the environment;

48. Stresses the essential role of the livestock sector in ensuring food security, job creation and economic stability across the EU, particularly in vulnerable regions such as remote, mountainous and outermost areas; recognises livestock more broadly not only as a provider of food and environmental services, but also as a driver of social responsibility, decent working conditions and rural development; underlines the importance of the CAP result indicator (I.24) on ‘Contributing to jobs in rural areas’ in focusing attention on the role of livestock farming, especially family-run and small-scale holdings, in preserving local employment;

Animal diseases

49. Stresses that animal diseases have significant socio-economic consequences at farm, sub-national, national and regional level; highlights that their impact on livestock production will be further exacerbated by the rise in temperatures and wind speeds, which must be addressed;

50. Stresses that, in the EU, any failure to prevent or control animal diseases in one Member State can have immediate repercussions for the others, and requires a coordinated response; highlights, therefore, the importance and cost-effectiveness of prevention, early detection and preparedness;

51. Stresses the importance of developing advanced diagnostic tools, predictive modelling and decontamination techniques; calls for the introduction of strict EU-level animal health standards to safeguard livestock farming, including provisions for the reduction or exclusion of wild animal populations that pose infectious disease risks and for the targeted vaccination of animals, where necessary;

52. Calls on the Commission to improve the monitoring and reporting of these costs, both direct and indirect, to increase the effectiveness and speed of EU and Member State support measures; notes, in this respect, that the FAO has developed a new tool, known as OutCosT (OUTbreak COSting Tool), that enables countries to assess the financial burden associated with animal disease outbreaks and measures to control them;

53. Supports the call on the Commission by a group of Member States to adapt the EU’s approach to tackling animal diseases by using vaccination as a preventive measure; stresses, however, that vaccination itself is even more effective if complemented by biosecurity and surveillance measures; underlines that efforts in this area must be intensified and supported through additional funding;

54. Calls on the Commission to strengthen animal health measures in the EU agricultural sector by coordinating the research, purchase and supply of veterinary vaccines at EU level through a preparedness and early detection mechanism, and by fostering the development of these vaccines in the EU; emphasises the urgent need to establish a centralised and harmonised data banking system for animal vaccinations across the Member States; points out that such a system would enhance traceability, improve disease surveillance, support a timely response to outbreaks and contribute to the overall effectiveness of the EU’s animal health and food safety policies; notes that a comprehensive vaccination data bank would facilitate cross-border cooperation, ensure compliance with EU standards and provide valuable insights for policy development, research and the sustainable management of livestock health;

55. Supports research into new technologies for inactivating viruses in food products, such as high-pressure processing, which has shown promise as a method for preserving food safety and quality; underlines the importance of specific animal diets and feed formulations in preventing the spread of certain diseases and improving overall animal health and resilience;

56. Urges the Member States to support and work with the regions in developing and implementing prevention, vaccination and mitigation plans for these diseases;

57. Calls for greater collaboration between the EU, industry stakeholders and international partners, ensuring that resources are allocated effectively and that knowledge is shared to enhance disease management and prevention;

58. Recommends establishing comprehensive economic support systems, including compensation schemes that cover the entire supply chain to ensure that all affected parties, including downstream operators, receive adequate assistance; stresses that, in cases of serious animal disease outbreaks that incur significant economic losses, accelerated financial aid must be made available to reduce uncertainty and maintain economic continuity; calls on the Member States to streamline the assessment of support applications, eliminate unnecessary administrative barriers and set clear deadlines for aid disbursement to help farmers better plan and stabilise their operations;

59. Welcomes the Commission's proposal, in its 2025 CAP simplification and competitiveness package, to boost the CAP's capacity to provide support to farmers affected by natural disasters, adverse climate-related weather events or animal diseases by introducing two additional crisis payments that Member States could mobilise under direct payments or rural development funds; invites the Member States to complement this initiative by further developing risk management schemes, including insurance schemes and mutual funds, adapted to crisis situations linked to animal diseases; calls for the definition of a reinsurance instrument to cover risks related to new epizootics and to ensure that all agricultural businesses, including those located in risk areas, can take out insurance contracts to protect against epizootics;

60. Urges the Commission to engage with international trading partners to ensure that regionalised trade bans and recognised inactivation treatments, such as cooking and long curing, are accepted, reducing unnecessary economic harm to the EU livestock industry;

Trade aspects

61. Underlines that the EU livestock sector is particularly vulnerable to diverse shocks and global competition;

62. Points out that, in a context where EU consumption of animal products and meat in particular is – at best – stagnating, but global demand for animal protein is increasing, the economic importance of exports in world markets should be acknowledged;

63. Regrets that the EU's ambitious health, animal welfare, environmental and other sustainability standards and objectives are not always reciprocated by our trading

partners; insists that EU livestock farmers are therefore competing on an uneven playing field with non-EU producers, in both international markets and the EU internal market;

64. Notes that, while all food imports placed on the EU market must comply with the relevant and high EU standards relating to the end products, which are applicable irrespective of whether the product is produced domestically or imported, production requirements (referred to as ‘process and production methods’) are usually not imposed on imported products;

65. Insists that, in line with the Commission conclusions on the application of EU health and environmental standards to imported agricultural and agri-food products, there is policy space to pursue the application of health and environmental (including animal welfare) requirements on process and production methods to imported products in a manner compatible with WTO rules; acknowledges that before applying production standards to imports, it is always essential to make a case-by-case assessment, as stated in the Commission report;

66. Calls on the Commission to include the reciprocity of environmental and animal health standards in all negotiated trade agreements and to ensure due control on imports to protect domestic producers;

67. Calls on the Commission to strengthen its promotion policy, increasing its budget for EU agricultural products, including animal-based products, and to ensure continued support for GIs in international trade as a key pillar of quality, traceability and rural development; underlines the importance of clear and accurate labelling to enhance product traceability and protect consumers from misleading marketing practices, both outside and within the EU, such as the use of ‘European-sounding’ or lookalike names that falsely suggest that products are of EU or local origin or quality;

68. Calls on the Commission to further support farmers in their efforts to comply with EU standards in order to avoid a loss of competitiveness and a subsequent relocation of EU production to non-EU countries with lower standards;

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69. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The rapporteur underscores the livestock sector as a cornerstone of the EU economy and food security, contributing significantly to agricultural output, employment, and rural vitality. Beyond its economic role, livestock farming provides essential environmental services such as landscape management, carbon sequestration, and water regulation. As the world's second largest meat producer and leading milk producer, the EU maintains a strong global position, with livestock playing a vital role in supplying high-quality protein and nutrients for balanced diets. Global demand for animal protein is expected to rise significantly by 2050, reinforcing the sector's long-term relevance.

Despite this, the EU livestock sector faces mounting economic, environmental, and social pressures. Livestock populations are declining, as are meat and dairy consumption levels—except poultry. Many farmers are exiting the sector due to economic difficulties, a lack of generational renewal, and insufficient attractiveness. High production costs and rising regulatory demands on emissions and animal welfare further strain competitiveness. Meanwhile, consumers increasingly demand higher welfare standards, contributing to a shift toward less intensive models. Animal diseases such as African swine fever and avian influenza, exacerbated by climate change, present severe risks. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is also a growing concern, while the expansion of large carnivores imposes costs on pastoralism and threatens coexistence.

To address these challenges, the rapporteur welcomes the Commission's "Vision for Agriculture and Food" and proposes establishing a High Level Group on livestock to develop a coordinated, multidimensional response. Recognising the diversity of EU livestock systems—from small-scale free-range farms to large specialised operations—tailored policy approaches are needed. This diversity strengthens resilience and should be actively promoted.

Boosting productivity and efficiency is essential for food sovereignty and meeting future protein demands. Stable incomes and better working conditions are critical to sustaining the sector, especially in mountain and disadvantaged areas where livestock farming supports employment and preserves cultural heritage. The rapporteur rejects drastic restructuring and instead advocates optimizing production and emissions through genetic improvements and best practices.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) remains central to supporting livestock. The rapporteur calls for maintaining the CAP budget in real terms, ensuring continued coupled support for ruminants without extra environmental conditions, and updating reference prices for market interventions. Recognising the importance of CAP subsidies to livestock incomes, especially in beef and dairy farming, the rapporteur insists on a transitional period for any new support schemes post-2027. Start-up support for young farmers, gender-inclusive measures, and improved access to land and finance are essential to attract new entrants. The forthcoming EU bio-economy strategy should recognise the circular role of livestock and promote by-product use through rendering. Compensation and long-term funding are needed for farmers affected by large carnivore attacks, while amending the Habitats Directive to manage wolf populations is encouraged.

Grassland-based systems are central to circular agriculture, contributing to ecosystem services such as biodiversity, water quality, and carbon storage. Integrating crop and livestock production enhances nutrient recycling and soil health. The rapporteur urges faster approval

of alternative fertilisers like digestate and RENURE, and revision of the Nitrates Directive to reflect scientific progress. Investment in manure-based fertilizers and biogas infrastructure is critical for climate and energy goals. One-size-fits-all livestock reduction strategies risk environmental degradation, land abandonment, and biodiversity loss, and must be avoided.

Science-based policymaking is essential. The rapporteur stresses the need for transparent, evidence-based communication to counter misinformation and ensure a balanced view of livestock's contributions and challenges. EU dietary guidelines must remain grounded in science, recognising the nutritional, cultural, and economic role of meat, dairy, and eggs, and avoiding the blanket promotion of nutritionally inferior substitutes. New food technologies like cellular agriculture must undergo rigorous safety, environmental, and market assessments to ensure they do not undermine traditional systems.

Animal diseases continue to carry severe socio-economic impacts. The rapporteur calls for improved monitoring and faster support mechanisms, integrating prevention, early detection, vaccination, and enhanced biosecurity. Collaboration among EU institutions, industry, and global partners is essential. Compensation schemes and financial support across the supply chain during outbreaks are vital. The rapporteur welcomes the Commission's CAP simplification package proposal to reinforce crisis payments and encourages Member States to develop further risk management tools like insurance and mutual funds. High EU level animal health standards, including for wild animal vectors, must be upheld.

Facing tough global competition, the rapporteur highlights that EU producers are often held to higher environmental and animal welfare standards than their international counterparts. Ensuring reciprocity in trade agreements is essential. The rapporteur urges robust enforcement of import controls and inclusion of equivalent standards in all trade deals. Strengthening EU promotion policies for agricultural products, including animal-based goods, and supporting geographical indications (GIs) are key to ensuring quality, traceability, and rural development. Accurate labelling is critical to prevent consumer deception through "European-sounding" branding and to enhance transparency throughout the supply chain.

Lastly, the rapporteur stresses the need for continued support to help farmers meet EU standards and avoid production relocation to countries with weaker environmental and welfare regulations. A strong, sustainable EU livestock sector is indispensable for food security, rural livelihoods, and environmental stewardship in the years ahead.

ANNEX: ENTITIES OR PERSONS
FROM WHOM THE RAPPORTEUR HAS RECEIVED INPUT

Pursuant to Article 8 of Annex I to the Rules of Procedure, the rapporteur declares that he received input from the following entities or persons in the preparation of the draft report:

Entity and/or person
COPA- Cogeca
Farm Europe
Eat Europe
ASSICA
MSD Animal Health
KWS

The list above is drawn up under the exclusive responsibility of the rapporteur.

Where natural persons are identified in the list by their name, by their function or by both, the rapporteur declares that he has submitted to the natural persons concerned the European Parliament's Data Protection Notice No 484 (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/data-protect/index.do), which sets out the conditions applicable to the processing of their personal data and the rights linked to that processing.