

To: Agriculture Ministers of EU Member States

Cc: Commissioners for Agriculture and Food, for Health and Animal Welfare, and for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy

Input to the EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council Meeting, Brussels, 13th July 2026

Brussels, 9th July 2026

Dear Minister,

On behalf of the European Environmental Bureau, I am writing to share our views on some of the points on the agenda of the forthcoming Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting on 13th July 2026. We invite you to take our concerns into account during the final preparations as well as at the Council meeting itself.

Irish Presidency work programme

We welcome the Irish Presidency's focus on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the long-term resilience of the agri-food and fisheries sectors, and the need to support farmers and rural communities. However, with negotiations on the post-2027 CAP, the EU's post-2030 climate framework, the recently published Livestock Strategy and Protein Action Plan, and key animal welfare reforms all advancing during its Presidency, Ireland must ensure these discussions deliver the level of ambition needed to address the intertwined climate, biodiversity, pollution and public health crises.

The Strategic Dialogue on the Future of Agriculture provides an unprecedented consensus and a clear roadmap for a fair and sustainable transition. The AGRIFISH Council should build on this by championing a performance-based CAP that rewards public goods, ambitious climate and biodiversity action, a just transition for the animal farming sector, stronger animal welfare legislation, and more inclusive, evidence-based policymaking that fully engages environmental stakeholders alongside farmers and other actors. All these points align with the recommendations included in our [Memorandum to the Irish Presidency of the Council](#), published last week.

Livestock Strategy

The recently published Livestock Strategy doesn't deliver a credible plan for a sustainable and fair transition of the animal farming sector. It unfortunately echoes misleading industry-driven narratives depicting environmental legislation as burdensome, instead of focusing on real issues of policy fragmentation and poor implementation, notably signalling further weakening of the EU's Nitrates, Nature and Water laws.

On the CAP, the Strategy relies largely on voluntary measures without dedicated funding. The proposal for the post-2027 CAP gives Member States broad flexibility on environmental schemes while guaranteeing only untargeted income support. Stronger, dedicated support will be needed to deliver the Strategy's objectives.

Additionally, while the Strategy recognises the need to reduce emissions and improve monitoring, it does not set the ambition for adequate climate action and nature-friendly farming but instead puts

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forward partial technical fixes to manage impacts rather than addressing issues at their root. It also gives limited attention to animal farming's contribution to air pollution and the wider impacts of methane-driven ozone pollution. Addressing these issues would strengthen the Strategy and support benefits for both citizens and farmers.

While the Strategy reaffirms the commitment to phase out cages, it suggests longer transition periods and limits the scope to chickens and pigs, falling short of the demands of the 1.4 million citizens who called to "End the Cage Age". Although a commitment is finally made to put an end to the routine culling of male chicks in the egg industry, other major animal welfare concerns, including cruel practices and high stocking densities, remain unaddressed.

Finally, on consumption, the Strategy fails to identify the relevance and potential of consumption-side policies to address the current unsustainable overconsumption of animal products, which would in turn relieve the sector of pressures to overproduce.

Protein Plan

The Protein Plan recognises the health and environmental benefits of diets with a higher share of plant-based food and the role of nitrogen-fixing protein crops in reducing dependence on fertilisers. However, it sets no demand side measures for animal-sourced proteins and relies on an incentive-based approach without the ambition needed to drive real dietary change.

We therefore call upon the Agriculture and Fisheries Council to:

1. **Reject further deregulation and weakening of essential protections** by safeguarding EU environmental, hygiene, feed additive, and animal by-product rules, as well as the **Nitrates, Nature and Water laws**.
2. **Deliver a properly funded transition of the animal farming sector** through the post-2027 CAP, supported by ringfenced funding for mandatory measures to support environmental and animal welfare improvements in the sector through extensification of production, and putting an end to harmful subsidies, such as coupled income support for intensive rearing.
3. Support a clear and ambitious pathway towards **cage-free farming for all species**.
4. **Support ambitious binding emission reduction targets for the agricultural sector** as part of the climate policy architecture to achieve the EU's 2040 climate target, fully recognising the sector's contribution to climate change.
5. **Support a shift towards healthier and more sustainable diets** by addressing the overconsumption of animal products and introducing concrete consumption-side measures to strengthen demand of domestic plant-based proteins, e.g. through clear targets for public procurement and promotion.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of these points, they directly affect citizens' health and well-being, farmers' future, as well as their confidence in policymaking.

Yours sincerely,



Patrick ten Brink,
Secretary General of the European Environmental Bureau

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