



For immediate release

Farm to Fork & Biodiversity strategies – NGOs welcome progress but demand action on animal welfare, biodiversity and climate

Brussels, 20 May 2020 – Today, the EU Commission released two long-awaited strategies to overhaul its food and farming policy, as well as to mitigate the biodiversity crisis – the “Farm to Fork” and Biodiversity Strategies.

Compassion in World Farming, FOUR PAWS and World Animal Protection welcome these Strategies and call for ambition on key areas such as animal welfare, biodiversity and climate. We want to see action to bring an end to the commercial trade in wild animals, the use of cages for farmed animals, and our overconsumption of animal products. We are especially disappointed to see last minute changes that deleted measures to stop the promotion or stimulating of the production of meat, as well as links between animal welfare and the CAP strategic plans, which were also deleted. The current COVID-19 pandemic has only reinforced the need for sustainable agriculture in the EU and protections for wild animals.

Pointing to the importance of animal welfare, the Animal Welfare NGOs pointed out that the Strategies need to be more ambitious and follow-through in key areas that affect animal welfare. 94% of citizens agree with the importance of animal welfare and recently the ‘End the Cage Age’ European Citizens Initiative saw over a million people across Europe calling for an end to cages in farming and stronger farm animal welfare laws.

Biodiversity and climate

As the Farm to Fork strategy says, agriculture is responsible for 10.3% of the EU’s GHG emissions and nearly 70% of those come from the animal sector. The three organisations say that more ambition is needed to ensure farming was contributing to greenhouse gas reduction, pointing to the absence of a target for the contribution of Europe’s agriculture to carbon reduction. The biggest polluters are often industrial farming models that damage local communities through pollution and run-off into the local environment and water supplies.

EU Adviser for World Animal Protection, David Garrahy says “the agribusiness lobby has consolidated in recent years and small farmers have been crowded out. The result is an unnatural industrial scale food production system where high carbon emissions, pollution, routine antibiotic use and animal cruelty are ignored. One example is soya, 90% of which is used for animal feed, creating biodiversity challenges globally”.

End cages in farming and reduce meat consumption

The EU Commission has committed via the “Farm to Fork” Strategy to “revise the animal welfare legislation” and to establish “minimum mandatory criteria for sustainable food procurement”. The three NGOs welcome these developments, yet we regret the timid approach followed by the EU Commission. While we welcome commitments to review laws regarding transport and slaughter of animals, there is still no specific mention of a phase out of caged farming or protecting fish welfare.

Moreover, ambitions to curb meat consumption remain low. In an earlier [leaked](#) version of the 'Farm to Fork' strategy, the EU Commission seemed more ambitious and visionary by referring to its intention to 'stop stimulating the production or the consumption of meat'. The previous version was also much more ambitious about reforming the EU farming subsidies, to better align them with the 'Farm to Fork' strategy. It had stated that "the Commission will work with the co-legislators to ensure that the Green Deal ambition is fully reflected in the new CAP legislation." Now in the final version, this reference no longer appears. The agribusiness lobby appears to have been able to successfully push for last-minute changes to the detriment of human and animal well-being.

Head of Compassion in World Farming EU, Olga Kikou, says: "It is great to see a desire for change. While it was disappointing to see ambitious elements of the Farm to Fork strategy being deleted due to meat industry pressure at the last minute, we are hopeful that the EU will eventually push for the much-needed food revolution. We cannot continue with business as usual. For the sake of preventing our food system from collapsing, the EU must end factory farming. It must take a two-pronged approach – improving animal welfare and reducing meat production and consumption. First, the EU must destroy the symbol of the factory farm – THE CAGE. Cages lead to tremendous animal suffering, facilitate the intensification process and agri-business consolidation, thereby leading to further destruction of the environment. Second, the EU must set ambitious targets to reduce the production and consumption of animal products. It must stop promoting meat and subsidising factory farming. We hope that the EU Parliament will stand up to the challenge now and push for a revolution in our food system."

Wildlife

The Animal Welfare organisations also welcome the Biodiversity Strategy which recognises the close link between illegal live animal trade and the emergence of zoonotic diseases. We are also encouraged that the Commission will take a number of steps to combat illegal wildlife trade and that the Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking will be renewed in 2021. However, we point out that the legal trade also plays a significant role and still needs to be addressed. In recent years, the EU has seen an increasing trend in the private keeping and commercial trade of wild animals which has subsequently, increased the likelihood of zoonotic diseases. The commercial trade of wild animals is detrimental due to its adverse effects on biodiversity, sustainable development, animal welfare and it provides a cover for the illegal trade of wildlife. This has been documented in Europe many times with recent seizures of tigers in the Czech Republic and parrot smuggling in Germany.

Pierre Sultana, Director of the European Policy Office of FOUR PAWS says that "COVID-19 represents an unparalleled opportunity to end the sale of live wild animals in open markets. It is essential that the European Commission takes immediate action to address the growing challenges faced by wild animals such as tigers. The Biodiversity Strategy should incorporate stricter measures on the trade of wildlife and ban the commercial trade in wild animals, like tigers and tiger products".

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Notes to editors:

1. Surveys show 94% of EU citizens think that protecting the welfare of farm animals is important (Eurobarometer, 2016).
2. **Compassion in World Farming** has campaigned for farm animal welfare and sustainable food and farming for over 50 years. We have over one million supporters and representations in eleven European countries, the US, China, and South Africa. For more information, please visit [our website](#).

In our [contribution](#) to the public consultation for the 'Farm To Fork' strategy, we call for a significant reduction in the production and the consumption of animal products, including fish, as well as a drastic increase in plant-rich foods. We also call for legislation to end the use of cages for farm animals by 2027.

3. **FOUR PAWS** is an international animal welfare organisation with headquarters in Vienna, Austria. Founded by Heli Dungler in 1988, the organisation strives to help animals in need with sustainable campaigns and projects. The work is based on substantiated research and scientific expertise as well as intensive national and international lobbying. FOUR PAWS focuses on animals that are directly under human influence: stray dogs and stray cats, farm animals, companion animals and wild animals including bears, big cats and orang-utans kept in inappropriate conditions. With offices in Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, Kosovo, Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, United Kingdom, USA and Vietnam, FOUR PAWS aims to help animals in need directly and quickly. www.four-paws.org
4. **World Animal Protection** has moved the world to protect animals for more than 50 years. World Animal Protection works to give animals a better life. The organisation's activities include working with companies to ensure high standards of welfare for the animals in their care; working with governments and other stakeholders to prevent wild animals being cruelly traded, trapped or killed; and saving the lives of animals and the livelihoods of the people who depend on them in disaster situations. World Animal Protection influences decision-makers to put animals on the global agenda and inspires people to change animals' lives for the better. To learn more about World Animal Protection campaigns, our news and successes, and how you can take action for animals, visit: www.worldanimalprotection.org