

# European Farmers' Deal

## EPP Vision for Agriculture in Europe



The EPP is and will continue to be the voice and defender of European farmers and our rural communities. We see agriculture as a strategic sector, delivering food security in Europe and beyond as much as it plays a crucial role for the vitality of rural communities and economic viability of rural areas. The COVID-19 pandemic and the illegal invasion of Ukraine by Russia reminded EU citizens that we cannot take food for granted. We stand for multifunctional agriculture, supported by our Common Agricultural Policy and centred primarily on family farms across Europe that enables active farmers to do what they do best: produce the excellent products that we are famous for. Our party stands for a sustainable, future-orientated, innovative and competitive sector that produces safe, high-quality food in sufficient quantities, and sustainable energy like biomass as ensured by the Renewable Energy Directive (RED), while responding to challenges and societal concerns about the environment, climate change and animal welfare.

- » Those elected in 2024 will decide the next CAP for the period after 2027. We believe in the need for a strong CAP. We will evaluate the current policy and seek to improve it where necessary in the interest of farmers and society. We will advocate for measures supporting young farmers, as generational renewal should be a priority to maintain agricultural activity, which ensures both food security and vibrant rural communities. Boosting measures to support women in agriculture is also central to this as well as securing generational renewal and preventing land abandonment. In line with the EU's long-term vision on rural areas we support rural communities to become inclusive, resilient and well connected areas that provide secure, high quality products and services for the wider society.
- » We will need a stronger CAP to ensure European and international food security. We know that a strong CAP, equipped with the necessary budget, is a key driver in ensuring the sustainability of European agriculture from the economic, environmental and social perspectives, while ensuring a decent income for farmers.
- » We should support farmers to use less inputs such as pesticides, fertilisers and antibiotics and we believe that the CAP, through its eco-schemes, agri-environmental programmes that boost innovation, and farm advisory system, must support them in this. We fully support the objective of reducing the use of such inputs in agriculture as it is a win for the environment, consumers and farmers alike. Precision-farming and data-driven efficiency gains can contribute to that. However, now is not the time to endanger food security in Europe. Therefore, we reject the proposal on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides as the reduction targets chosen are simply not feasible and the proposal does not offer farmers viable alternatives.
- » Equally, we reject the proposed Nature Restoration Law. In too many regions or Member States the implementation of existing nature legislation has led to a bureaucratic nightmare and planning deadlock, endangering the economic viability in rural areas, food security, renewable energy production, crucial infrastructure etc. The Commission should urgently help Member States break this deadlock first. Furthermore, its retroactive application is a direct assault on private property rights. And we firmly reject its aim of taking 10% of farmland out of production, as this would be irresponsible in the current context! Moreover, we believe that the existing derogations to the CAP conditionality regime should be extended so as to allow more land to be used for productive purposes to tackle potential shortages.
- » We urge for a huge investment package for research and innovation that will be the only pathway towards a more sustainable and resilient agricultural sector. We see, for example, great potential in the use of New Breeding Techniques to develop more resistant plants that require less pesticides, less fertiliser and less water. We demand a new legislative framework to ensure that this innovative technology can be used in the EU and this would also stimulate research, investment and jobs. Benefits and risks of these techniques, besides their sound scientific basis, ought to be assessed in a transparent way.

- » We also see great potential for farmers to diversify their income and deliver environmental benefits through voluntary, market-based carbon farming initiatives. We commit to ensuring that such schemes are supported with as little red-tape for farmers as possible.
- » We strongly support traditional agro-pastoral farming and other outdoor livestock systems, recognising their role in biodiversity conservation and in maintaining agricultural activity across Europe. This is why we insist on the urgent need to ensure that farming and tourism remain possible in these areas in light of the challenges posed by a growing population of large carnivores. It is time for a balanced approach in which reconsidering the protection status of the wolf is no longer a taboo.
- » EU farmers delivered for us during past decades and are delivering for us again amid the shock to the global food system triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Yet farmers are still not receiving a fair share from the value chain. We will do our utmost efforts to ensure that farmers are able to earn a decent income, building on the work we have done in the CAP and in adopting a directive aimed at rooting out unfair trading practices in the food supply chain.

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**If you have any question you would like to ask please contact us.**