

EPP Agriculture Ministers Guideline:

Navigating for the CAP 2027 and beyond

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Collection of contributions

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is a success story that has been able to ensure food production in the entire territory of the European Union already for decades. In the era of war, crisis and conflicts, this feature of CAP is more valuable than ever. Moving towards the next CAP reform, post 2027, we need to make sure the aspects of security and preparedness as well as innovations, investments and competitiveness are acknowledged. Even more, it is essential that European farmers are on board in the reform. It is only together with them that we can succeed.

Guiding principles for the CAP

- Acknowledge **CAP** as a **strategic European Policy**.
- To strengthen the entire agriculture sector **to ensure food security** and to **foster food sovereignty** as part of the strategic autonomy of the EU.
- To continue keeping the **high standards of European agriculture** in terms of environment, climate, food safety and animal welfare.
- To continue **market-oriented agriculture** with common European rules and standards, while securing the sector's **competitiveness** at international and global level.
- To provide **comprehensive rural development** as a key driver for jobs, economy and for attractive rural areas.
- To foster fair **income for farmers** and **to maintain and provide high quality and healthy food for European citizens**.
- To ensure a **productive, competitive and sustainable agriculture based on family farms** in the entire EU territory.
- To provide **vital, economically viable, livable and attractive rural areas**.
- To ensure **fair social conditions** for farmers.
- To contribute to **access to quality food for all**.
- To ensure **adequate funding for the future CAP**, including direct income support for farmers as well as incentives to maintain EU high standards
- To provide a real **simplification of CAP implementation**, both for farmers and national administrations.
- To ensure **a fair operation of the food chain** guaranteeing the farmers an adequate share of the value added created.

Main 10 priorities for CAP Post 2027

1. Coherence between EU Policies

- To define CAP as common policy.
- To conduct a comprehensive impact assessment and stock-taking exercise on the Green Deal legislation, with the aim of identifying conflicts of objectives that may detriment the competitiveness and viability of EU agriculture.
- To ensure consistency between the divergent objectives of the CAP and other EU policies, which have impact on the agri-food sector.
- To provide a stable and predictable policy framework which enables investments.
- To increase political coordination between MEP's, Ministers and Commissioners.
- To ensure the stability and implementation of the CAP after 2027; a transparent, regular structured dialogue with the social partners in the AGRI sector at EU level is needed.
- To create strong synergies and complementarity, both between the interventions of the different European funding sources and national, regional, and local sources.

2. Continuation of the two pillars structure of the CAP

- To further strengthen the two Pillar structure and a more simplified and flexible delivery model while providing adequate funding for both pillars.
- To maintain the performance-based delivery model while simplifying and accelerating the administrative processes for the implementation of the CAP Strategic Plans.
- To adjust the CAP funding due to the negative impact of inflation.
- To maintain existing safety nets for market disruptions. The agricultural reserve should continue to serve as an instrument for classic market disruptions. Financing directly from the EU budget (no reduction in direct payments).
- To provide a mechanism to compensate farmers affected by catastrophic events due to the climate crisis.
- To maintain the possibility of supporting sensitive sectors.
- To work on improving animal welfare in all member states and encourage farmers reaching towards higher standards.

3. Simplification and Flexibility

- To create effective tools that help farmers and national administrations and cut administrative burden.
- To make conditionality standards more flexible and adapted to local circumstances.
- To provide much faster response to emerging crises.
- To continue efforts to reduce the administrative burden of reporting and data collection.
- To further simplify performance reporting.
- To reduce the control frequency of statutory management requirements (SMRs)

- To have an option to use part of the national envelope in the CAP Strategic Plan budget to deal with extreme weather events without the need of amendment adoption of CAP Strategic Plans from DG AGRI.
- To retain a possibility of transferring resources between the two Pillars of the CAP between years and within the same year, and especially between environment and climate interventions.
- To grant flexibility to Member States to amend financial tables, annual reports, unit costs and relevant indicators of CAP Strategic Plan on the basis of actual needs.
- To respect Member States competence on forestry and limit accordingly the EU's involvement in forest related policies.
- To simplify the new CAP delivery model and make Strategic Plans less complex and detailed, while focusing on their strategic nature allowing for a swift adoption and response in order to adequately address the specific needs and changing circumstances.
- To further integrate digitization in control procedures for compliance with farmers' commitments.
- To strengthen the ability of farmers and processors to implement investments for green and digital transition with sufficient time.
- To reduce the number of objectives and secondary objectives of the National Strategic Plans (NSPs).
- To consider a simplified version of the NSPs for Member States with a small budget allocation, and to simplify the implementation of small support schemes within CAP plans.
- Next to the result based approach, it is important to focus on goals instead of measures to achieve specific goals.

4. Support for Young Farmers

- To provide direct support for young farmers.
- To guarantee installation, investment and innovation aid for young farmers.
- To support a stronger emphasis on apprenticeships in the agricultural sector and investment in training programmes at third level.
- To facilitate a structured transition for young people into farming.
- To accelerate access to land for young farmers.
- To support innovative ways of transferring farms, such as land mobility projects, expertise centres for young farmers, etc.
- To promote the exchange of experience and good practice for young farmers at EU level by funding cooperation and partnership projects for associations of young farmers in the Member States (for example, the EPP Young Farmers Competition project)
- To work diligently towards a profitable and functional agri-food chain that offers a positive prospect for young people considering farming as their career.

5. Targeting Active Farming

- To preserve a positive environment for maintaining and developing family-run farms that are passed from one generation to another
- To provide a safety net for family-run and especially small farms, particularly in the event of major market price fluctuations or crop failures due to climate change, with the precondition that the differences between the agriculture sector in individual Member States are taken into account.
- To draft a different definition of “active farmer” that aligns most effectively with the country/region’s needs.
- The CAP must continue to finance the activities of genuine, active farmers, who are producing food, feed and energy; the common EU definition must also correspond to the conditions of Member States.
- To avoid increasing concentration of production and land holding by ensuring transparency of ownership.

6. Developing Eco Schemes and Environmental Standards and nutrient recycling

- To improve the framework for the implementation of Eco-Schemes with the possibility of greater flexibility for Member States for changes without the requirement of a prior amendment of the CAP Strategic Plan; the latter applies equally well for the existing agri-environmental scheme.
- To support agri-environmental programs in pillar II as the core element for sustainability and multifunctionality of farming.
- To safeguard agricultural production in mountainous, northern and other disadvantaged areas and outermost regions, and to continue the POSEI programme.
- To undertake environmental and climate actions while focusing on effective incentives rather than regulatory obligations.
- To secure the farmers’ interest when designing new financial concepts related to climate actions.
- To support adaptive measures related to water drainage, storage, distribution and efficient management that encourage private and public investments, as well as the appropriate farming practices.
- To prevent front-running farmers who adopt environmentally friendly practices from being financially disadvantaged.
- To recognise the sectors natural limits in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the fact that agricultural emissions arise from natural processes of food production.
- To recognise the primacy of food security, and simultaneously acknowledging that only a competitive sector can secure food and contribute to other societal demands.
- To ensure flexibility in state aid rules to be able to fund biogas farm investments from the CAP even if some of the produced biogas would be sold outside of the farm.
- To promote the full utilization of manure's bioenergy and nutrient potential by supporting the transport of manure and the nutrient-rich digestate.

- To ensure the supply of fertilizer phosphorus as part of the security of supply and self-sufficiency goals of the entire EU by including it in the European Critical Raw Materials Act.
- To make sure that manure will not be a prohibited source of recycled nutrients.

7. Need for Investments, Innovation and Research

- To ensure a sound legislative framework for research and innovation that guarantees the Union's competitiveness.
- To advocate for funding opportunities for the agricultural sector in research and innovation programmes.
- To support innovative solutions for food security.
- To offer substantial possibilities for farmers to innovate within the Pillar II through supporting both the costs of innovation and by facilitating on-farm development innovation and risk-guaranteeing.
- To expand CAP financial tools supporting farmers' access to credit for investments.
- To promote modern and sustainable agricultural practices and high-tech in agriculture to optimally manage and conserve natural resources and to improve competitiveness.
- To support moon-shot for precision agriculture, integrated pest management, closing the nutrients cycle, and the use of robotics.
- To accelerate the take-up of new technologies.
- To improve digital connectivity, to enhance digital skills and guarantee fair terms of participation in digital transition for all farmers.
- To include funds for agricultural research, focusing on climate adaptation and agricultural pests, into research program Horizon Europe.
- To fund knowledge exchange and advisory services.
- To support innovation through cross-sectoral collaboration.
- To encourage farmers' groups and organizations, as a mean to strengthen their ability to invest in innovative green and digital technologies, as well as to improve their position in the agrifood value chain.

8. A fair agri-food chain

- To ensure a fair operation of the food chain to ensure that all parties of the chain receive a just share of the added value created.
- To increase transparency and tackle the unfair trading practices.
- To provide robust and resilient food chains that strengthen the position and bargaining power of farmers as the weakest link in the supply chain.

9. Building Security of Supply and Resilience

- To ensure the CAP budget matches its key role in providing the EU's food security and resilience and in tackling environmental, climate and geopolitical challenges.
- To ensure geographically decentralized food production as well as maintaining agricultural activity in the entire EU territory, particularly in areas with natural constraints.
- To prioritize preventive measures over reactive crisis support.
- To offer more flexible and effective risk management mechanisms.
- To establish a European guarantee for agricultural insurance.
- To increase the agriculture reserve budget, by, for example, allowing carry over of unused funds.

10. Prepare to the Impact of Enlargement

- To conduct a thorough impact assessment ahead of time regarding the future enlargement of the EU, taking into account different impacts on the agricultural sector in different Member States.
- To gradually integrate new member states into the CAP in a balanced approach to guarantee integrity of the internal market.
- To ensure stability and security for the family farm based European agriculture model during the enlargement process.

Start of the new programming period:

- We will not have the necessary hindsight and experience before 2027 at the earliest to evaluate the 2021-2027 CAP. It may therefore be necessary to consider an extension of the current CAP framework beyond 2027, especially if the negotiations on the next MFF are delayed. It is crucial to provide sufficient time for discussion and subsequent implementation of the new legislation.



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