



# Agriculture & Progress's contribution to the Roadmap on the Farm-to-Fork Strategy

## *At the heart of the debate*

The agricultural community in the EU faces several challenges: produce sufficiently for a growing population, produce sustainably to address environmental and climate change issues, ensure competitiveness in a sector that is exposed to international markets and generate a decent income.

In this context, the Agriculture & Progress Platform's mission is to give the agricultural and primary food processing industry a tool to provide society and decision-makers with answers and suggestions on the needs and challenges of guaranteeing sustainable agricultural production and to highlight the important role of innovation in this context.

The Members of the Agriculture & Progress Platform would therefore like to share their common vision on the European Commission's consultation on the Farm-To-Fork Strategy.

- Agriculture & Progress welcomes the general objectives of the Farm-to-Fork towards sustainable food systems that encourage the production and marketing of European sustainable agriculture and food products.
- Agriculture & Progress acknowledges and welcomes that the Farm-to-Fork Strategy will play a pivotal role in the commitments of the European Union to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals focusing on agriculture, investing and transforming the rural sector. Thus, the UN's Resolution declaring 2020 as the International Year of Plant Health to raise global awareness on how protecting plant health can help end hunger, reduce poverty, protect the environment and boost economic development as a common goal. Indeed, protecting crops from pest and diseases in an environmentally friendly way has been at the heart of EU farmers' actions notably through the implementation of integrated pest management (i.e. different management strategies and practices to grow healthy crops while minimising the use of pesticides).
- Moving forward and towards these goals, Agriculture & Progress would nevertheless like to underline the importance of basing any upcoming decisions on sound evidence from an environmental, social but also economic point of view prior to creating targets. Conducting impact assessments is not only one of the fundamental principles of good administration and the European Commission's Better Guidelines principles, it is also the only way forward to achieving a realistic, pragmatic and applicable way forward.
- The Farm-to-Fork Strategy should therefore also not just be a source of additional constraints in future policies to be defined but it should also include transparent and appropriate indicators to assess how agricultural competitiveness, incomes and remuneration for new services are improving, as well as the overall indirect effects of this policy on the environment and food security.

- In light of the above, it is clear that the necessary means need to be provided at different levels:
  - ✓ By ensuring a sustainable marriage and coherence between the Farm-to-Fork Strategy and the different EU policies supporting an increase in environmental and climate ambitions, such as the CAP, by providing appropriate funds for their implementation to match these ambitious challenges.
  - ✓ By providing the necessary means and tools:
    - Through innovative techniques such as New Breeding Techniques, amongst others mutagenesis, which are key in meeting society's growing demand to speed up efforts to further increase sustainability and respect for the environment. However, innovation requires time and investments in terms of R&D to overcome technical barriers. The uncertainty currently generated at EU level risks preventing NBTs from becoming mainstream and a permanent part of the agricultural toolbox.
    - Through increased support of new farming technologies (robotics and digital farming) with the close cooperation between researchers, public institutions and farmers towards ground-breaking possibilities in the near future for the agricultural sector.

Without innovative techniques, it is quite clear that the farming community and its downstream users would be unable to guarantee sufficient high-quality produce for the growing world population – and as a consequence achieve all the ambitious goals foreseen in the Green Deal and Fork-to-Fork Strategy.

- Linked to this, the effects of climate change, as well as the efforts made to face them, affect all individuals and economic sectors, but in particular rural communities and agriculture. Agriculture being one of the economic sectors most strongly depending on natural conditions, the efforts required to adapt to a changing environment are particularly important for farmers. On this point – and all the ones mentioned above – the Agriculture & Progress Platform would therefore like to call upon the European Commission to not only integrate globally the challenges of agriculture in its policies but to additionally see agriculture as a mean to an end / key player for achieving them (climate change, energy transition, bio economy, ...).

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