

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. 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 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, while responding to 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 defend the CAP. We will evaluate the current policy and seek to improve it where necessary in the interest of farmers and society. We will pay close attention to measures supporting **young farmers** as they are the key to maintaining 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, across the EU Institutions, insist on a strong budget for the CAP, which takes inflation into account. 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.
- We understand that farmers would gladly use less **inputs** such as pesticides, fertilisers and antibiotics if they could and we believe that the CAP, through its eco-schemes, agri-environmental programmes and farm advisory system, should 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. 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 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.

- We believe that **research and innovation** offer better pathways 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. 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.
- EU farmers delivered for us during the COVID pandemic 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 intensify our 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.