



## 50 NGOs call on the European Commission to stop the promotion of meat and dairy

We call on the European Commission to take into account the adverse effects of the current levels of meat and dairy production and consumption on the climate, biodiversity, and public health, and to revise the EU's agricultural promotion policy according to the ambitions laid out in its Farm to Fork Strategy and Europe's Beating Cancer Plan. We therefore ask the European Commission to **stop the promotion of meat and dairy** and instead **promote plant-based foods**.

Dear Mr Wojciechowski,

Dear Ms Gerstgrasser,

We welcome the Commission's aim to undertake a review of the agricultural promotion policy "with a view to enhancing its contribution to sustainable production and consumption, and in line with the shift to a more plant-based diet, with less red and processed meat and more fruit and vegetables", as emphasised in both the Farm to Fork Strategy and Europe's Beating Cancer Plan.

Between 2016 and 2020, the European Commission spent 32% of its €776.7-million farm-product promotion budget on advertising campaigns for meat and dairy and 28% on the promotion of mixed "baskets" of products, almost all of which included meat and dairy products.<sup>1</sup> Campaigns such as 'Milky is great'<sup>2</sup> and 'Let's talk about pork'<sup>3</sup> aim at reversing declines in or maintaining the growth of meat and dairy consumption in Europe. These objectives are at odds with environmental and public-health research, noting that Europeans are heavily overconsuming animal-based products and calling for a significant reduction of the consumption of meat and dairy.

Over 9 billion land animals are slaughtered in the EU every year,<sup>4</sup> over 72% of whom are reared on very large farms.<sup>5</sup> In the EU, the livestock sector is responsible for up to 17% of anthropogenic Greenhouse gas emissions<sup>6</sup>, while intensive agriculture is the largest contributor to biodiversity loss, and animal farming accounts for 78% of agriculture's negative impact on biodiversity.<sup>7</sup> Several national dietary guidelines have recommended consumers limit their consumption of (especially red and processed) meat. Recent reviews have also highlighted the need to shift towards plant-based diets as a mitigation strategy against future zoonotic pandemics.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.greenpeace.org/static/planet4-eu-unit-stateless/2021/04/20210408-Greenpeace-report-Marketing-Meat.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>

<https://ec.europa.eu/chafea/agri/en/campaigns/information-and-promotion-program-milk-products-%E2%80%9Cmilky-great%E2%80%9D>

<sup>3</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/chafea/agri/en/campaigns/letstalkaboutpork>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/QL>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.foodandwatereurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Factoryfarms\\_110920\\_web.pdf](https://www.foodandwatereurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Factoryfarms_110920_web.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1365-2486.2012.02786.x>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.ec.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/AP19\\_09/AP\\_BIODIVERSITY\\_EN.pdf](https://www.ec.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/AP19_09/AP_BIODIVERSITY_EN.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <https://ipbes.net/pandemics>

While reviewing the public consultation, we urge the Commission to take into account that it **'needs to support the public interest'** and thus promote foods that lead to sustainable lifestyles. A large majority of European citizens (79%) already agrees that "marketing and advertising that do not contribute to healthy, sustainable diets should be restricted".<sup>9</sup> They have also clearly pointed out their willingness to cut back on (red) meat, but face challenges in doing so.<sup>10</sup> This indicates that the responsibility should not be shifted completely to the consumer. The Commission needs to create systemic changes which support consumers in making healthy and sustainable diet choices. This can only be achieved if the Commission decides to **stop the promotion of meat and dairy** and instead **shifts the promotion to plant-based foods**.

Plant-based foods deserve wider promotion to benefit public health, the environment, and farmers. However, a shift towards a more plant-based diet can only be achieved if, in addition, the plant-based sector receives sufficient support to grow and to produce alternatives that can adequately mimic the texture, taste, and price of conventional meat and dairy products.<sup>11</sup> As such, it is of key importance:

- to adopt a delegated act extending the list of eligible products and schemes in Annex I to Regulation 1144/2014 by including a broader variety of plant-based alternatives to meat, dairy, eggs, and seafood.
- to ensure that organisations active in the plant-based sector can qualify as 'proposing organisations'.

**We call on the European Commission to honour the scientific consensus on the environmental and health impact of meat and dairy, stop the promotion of these products, and instead shift the promotion to plant-based foods.**

We thank the European Commission for considering these proposals for a better and more resilient food system promotion policy. We would be delighted to provide further evidence in a meeting or electronically.

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<sup>9</sup><https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2241>

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.beuc.eu/publications/beuc-x-2020-042\\_consumers\\_and\\_the\\_transition\\_to\\_sustainable\\_food.pdf](https://www.beuc.eu/publications/beuc-x-2020-042_consumers_and_the_transition_to_sustainable_food.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0950329310001990>

## **Yours truly**

Anima Naturalis  
Associaçao Vegetariana Portuguesa  
Association Végétarienne de France  
Azyl dla Świń "Chrumkowo"  
Beyond Carnism  
CAAI  
Ceska Veganska Spolecnost  
Compassion in World Farming  
Deutscher Tierschutzbund  
Dier & Recht  
Djurens Rätt  
Equalia  
Essere Animali  
Eurogroup for Animals  
European Vegetarian Union  
Fada  
Foodsharing  
Four Paws  
Fundación Franz Weber  
Fundación Ochotumbao  
Fundacja Dzika Polska  
Fundacja Ekologiczna „Zielona Akcja”  
Fundacja Międzynarodowy Ruch Na Rzecz  
Zwierząt Viva!  
Fundacja Prosiaczka Eugeniusza  
"Gieniutkowo"  
Fundacji Klub Myśli Ekologicznej  
GAIA  
Greenpeace  
Green Rev Institute  
Humane Society International Europe  
Jemprezem  
Justicia Alimentaria  
Klub Gaja  
L214  
LAV  
Lever Foundation  
Menú por el Planeta  
Polish Society for Lifestyle Medicine  
Polski Klub Ekologiczny Okręg Mazowiecki  
ProVeg International  
Rodzice dla Klimatu  
Společnost pro zvířata  
Stowarzyszenie Otwarte Klatki  
Stowarzyszenie Otwarte Ramiona  
Strefa Zieleni  
The Vegan Society  
Varkens in Nood  
Vegane Gesellschaft Österreich  
Vegetarierbond  
Wakker Dier  
World Animal Protection