

Brussels, 20 December 2024

Dear Commissioner Hansen,

As stakeholders along the **animal agriculture and aquaculture value chain** we'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment as Commissioner for Agriculture and Food.

Like you, we recognise that cooperation and dialogue across the food value chain are essential for the future success of our production and for thriving rural and coastal communities across Europe. It is important also to recognise that the contributions of the animal sector extend far beyond food production alone. As such, we have come together to propose **five recommendations** for you to take into consideration during your mandate, and more immediately for the Vision for the Future of EU Agriculture:

- 1) Develop an EU Strategy for a sustainable animal value chain:** We would be pleased to contribute to the development of an EU Strategy that sets out a clear vision for a sustainable value chain to ensure the necessary investment and support needed are fully predictable. As part of this strategy there must be consensus-led clear and coherent definitions, based on science, for the concept of sustainability in the broadest sense. A long-term vision set out in a framework plan that can be adapted as the latest science and tools for improvement become available is needed to move forward as one and avoid further polarisation. On top of this, to ensure coherence with this and the following recommendations, regular collaboration with the Commissioner for Fisheries would be beneficial.
- 2) Recognise and promote the value of input sectors:** We agree that the EU is a world leader in the transition towards more sustainable animal agriculture and aquaculture. This would not have been possible without advances in animal breeding, animal health and animal nutrition solutions, so we call on you to promote greater access to such necessary tools and innovations in these fields. We also count on you to support training for farmers on how best to make use of these inputs. We believe that the input sectors for animal farming should play an important role in your Vision for Agriculture and in the above-mentioned EU Strategy.
- 3) Support socio-economic analysis as fundamental for policymaking:** Impact assessments should become a critical first step, hand-in-hand with any strategy proposal. Such assessments will help ensure future legislations are more balanced from an environmental, social and economic perspective and that 'no one is left behind'. This will ultimately guarantee that any new legislation does not undermine European food sovereignty by jeopardising EU farms and other agri-food operators' viability or that solutions can be foreseen to counteract negative impacts. Prefacing the animal welfare legislation to be revised by 2026 by a socio-economic analysis is a welcome step forward in this respect. As such, we welcome the initiatives across the College of Commissioners and Commission DGs to simplify the EU's legislative requirements. We count on

you to support these objectives for farmers, and for the other sectors of the livestock value chain.

- 4) Reconnect urban and rural and coastal Europe:** Dedicated measures to address the growing divide between urban and rural communities, with a strategic focus on education could play a central role in ending polarisation. Integrating comprehensive agricultural curricula into schools, more information in public restaurants and canteens, organising farm visits, and leveraging social media campaigns can foster a deeper understanding of all farming practices, including aquaculture. Rather than diverting resources solely to alternatives like plant-based diets, prioritising education can reshape perceptions and contribute to a more informed society, perhaps more willing to pay for better quality products.
- 5) Ensure a nutrition-centric focus for dietary recommendations:** Dietary recommendations should be targeted at the concept of achieving a healthy and balanced diet for people, covering the main food groups that provide the essential nutrients in their most bio-available form. Many people do not yet achieve their individual needs for micronutrients; this is a gap to be closed. We call on you to prevent generalised recommendations against foods of animal origin as this would diminish the importance of certain highly nutritious and healthy foods.

We look forward to working with you over the next five years and would like to request a meeting to discuss with you jointly how the animal agriculture value chain can contribute to a more sustainable future for Europe.

Signatories

European Livestock Voice Partners



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