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COVER NOTE

From: Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Ms Martine DEPREZ, Director

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To: Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union

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Subject: ANNEX to the COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS EU strategy on livestock

Delegations will find attached document COM(2026) 576 annex.

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ANNEX

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to the

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

EU strategy on livestock

{SWD(2026) 576 final}

ANNEX: Commission key actions

For a successful strategy on livestock, the Commission will deliver on the following **key actions**. The **livestock workstream** will accompany the implementation of the strategy, continuing to act as a forum for exchanging ideas and best practices.

For the strategy to be fully realised, Member States will need to take steps to offer the relevant tools, and stakeholders will have to seize the opportunities offered. **Member States and stakeholders need to continue investing for making the livestock sector resilient, competitive, sustainable, territorially fitting and delivering on excellence.**

Actions for a resilient livestock sector that withstands crisis

1. Work with financial institutions, including the European Investment Bank, for exploring the possibility of **developing a dedicated risk-management financial scheme under the post-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework**, covering climate-related insurance and reinsurance needs and extending support to risks linked to animal diseases.
2. Include relevant risk management aspects and needs in the **CAP recommendations** to Member States for their National and Regional Partnership Plans.
3. Ensure adequate financing of **prevention, surveillance**, control and **eradication** of animal diseases and zoonoses, **especially for emergency measures** in case of major outbreaks.
4. Prepare a **manual with practical orientations to Member States on risk management**, drawing on EU and international expertise. Through a Livestock Platform, promote **exchange of good practices** to facilitate dialogue and dissemination of lessons learned across Member States.
5. **Review** whether the **current animal disease categorisation system** remains fit for purpose and whether the **disease categorisation criteria** adequately address specific challenges. Propose updates to legislation in line with the latest scientific developments and international standards as laid down by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) and adopt implementing rules to clarify roles and responsibilities.
6. Support a **wider and science-based use of preventive vaccination** and assess whether the current vaccination rules and principles remain appropriate. Develop **guidance on the application of vaccination** coupled with regionalisation and compartmentalisation, while continuing to **advocate recognition of the EU's regionalisation approach with trading partners**.
7. **Explore ways to improve and finance early-warning systems**, digital detection tools and farmer information channels.
8. **Support research, innovation, and knowledge exchange** to accelerate the deployment of resilient farming solutions. Cover livestock-related needs in the communication "New strategic approach to research and innovation Agri2040 and Food 2040".

Actions for a competitive livestock sector at EU and global level

9. Consider a **potential dedicated financial instrument** for the livestock sector to bridge the financing gap for investments in the transition to **higher levels of sustainability and animal welfare**.
10. Explore with the European Investment Bank **preferential access to loans for farmers engaged in a transition to cage-free systems**.
11. Continue facilitation of **permitting procedures** at EU and national level, including for enabling the phasing-out of cages.
12. Support and facilitate circularity, bioeconomy and biomass valorisation. Assess how transparency on farmers' remuneration for bioeconomy activities and by-product valorisation can be integrated in the work of the **EU agri-food chain Observatory**.
13. Pursue alignment of standards for imported products for animal welfare and ensure strict enforcement of EU food safety rules. Engage in a **dedicated agri-food diplomacy**, enhance **high-level missions** and **promotion measures** to open new market opportunities for European exports.
14. Pursue further simplification of agri-food legislation and make **better use of existing flexibility provisions**, including on animal by-products legislation and EU hygiene framework. Hold an **implementation dialogue** in Q4 2026 on the feed legal framework.

Actions for a sustainable livestock sector

15. **Promote value chain sustainability cooperation across the food chain** to support sustainability and socio-economic objectives.
16. By the end of 2026, propose a **targeted revision of animal welfare rules for laying hens and broilers**, focusing on the phasing-out of cages, practical on-farm welfare indicators, ending the systematic killing of male chicks and introducing WTO-compliant equivalent import requirements.
17. By Q2 of 2027, propose a **targeted revision of animal welfare rules for pigs**, including the transition from crates to pen systems, practical on-farm welfare indicators, and introducing WTO-compliant equivalent import requirements.
18. Closely exchange with relevant stakeholders, civil society and destination third countries and, depending on the outcome of these exchanges, consider further steps, including possible alternatives to **the export of animals for slaughter from the EU to third countries**, while maintaining the market positions of European livestock producers.
19. Develop a **harmonised methodology for livestock GHG emissions at farm level** and promote monitoring tools that better reflect measures implemented at farm level and are more adapted to the needs of EU livestock sector. In addition, exchange on **measurement and mitigation practices with global partners** through the **Global Methane Pledge** and related initiatives. Assess the inclusion of livestock emission reductions in the Carbon Removal and Carbon Farming regulation.

20. When issuing the future CAP recommendations, ask Member States to support the reduction of environmental pressure including from nutrients in areas with high livestock concentrations.
21. Build a **Livestock Platform with a comprehensive repository of proven solutions** for climate, environment and animal welfare by 2027.
22. In September 2026, launch a process to **identify best practice and simplification potential** in the implementation of the Nitrates Directive, notably on calendar farming practices, certain sustainable livestock practices and nutrient management at farm level, adapted to local circumstances. In the context of the future CAP, the Member States are invited to make use of the tools available to support farmers to reduce pressure from nutrients on the environment in areas with high concentration of livestock.
23. By the end of 2026, publish a report **stress-testing the rules of the Birds and Habitats Directives**.
24. By Q3 2026, present the first assessment of the action to **extend the RENURE act** for certain types of liquid digestates based on manure with appropriate environmental safeguards.
25. Develop a dedicated roadmap to **enable a more efficient and sustainable circulation of nutrients across the EU**.

Actions for a livestock sector fitting European territorial diversity
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26. Develop a plan on how to **address the specific needs of regions at risk of abandonment** with the aim to **bring back sustainable livestock production, in conjunction with the work on the Land Observatory**.
27. Develop a **roadmap on slaughterhouses**, examining how to **foster their presence in rural areas**.

Actions to foster excellence in livestock production

28. **Strengthen the role of EU origin information** in livestock marketing standards and labelling.
29. Develop European Excellence scheme to **valorise the higher standards** and specific characteristics of EU livestock production **through optional reserved terms** under the Common Market Organisation, including criteria for **recognising low-carbon, environmentally friendly, locally sourced and high-welfare livestock production systems**.
30. Explore ways to **better recognise and communicate livestock quality attributes** beyond current carcass-classification criteria.
31. Consider a special window under the EU promotion policy to **highlight the quality, sustainability, high welfare standards and territorial anchoring of EU livestock products** in both internal and external markets.

32. Continue supporting the **uptake, promotion, and protection of geographical indications and organic production**. Review the **EU organic action plan and the Geographical Indications action plan**.