

The way forward: livestock and proteins in the EU

July 2026

Livestock farming is inseparable from Europe's landscapes, diets, rural communities and cultural heritage. The **Livestock Strategy sets the direction to ensure Europe's valuable livestock sector remains strong and resilient.**

EU livestock farming

amounts to almost
40%
of EU agricultural added
value

generates
**€ 400
billion**
in annual turnover

represents the
day-to-day work of
4 million
farms

employs
7 million
people

The EU livestock sector plays a crucial role in:

- food security by providing high-quality protein,
- maintaining a positive EU trade balance,
- meeting growing demand for EU products thanks to world-leading production standards

Yet, livestock numbers have declined since 2005:

- **10% fewer bovines**
- **15% fewer pigs**
- **25% fewer sheep and goats**

The strategy includes measures to create:

A **resilient**
livestock sector
prepared for
crisis

A **competitive**
livestock sector
in the EU and
globally

A **sustainable**
livestock sector
with high animal
welfare

A livestock sector
**fit for all farms
and regions**

Excellence
in livestock
production

Stronger protection against animal diseases and progress on animal welfare

A prevention-first approach

COOPERATION

Stronger cross-border cooperation on animal health risks

FINANCING

Enhanced financing for prevention and disease response

VACCINATION RULES

Review based on latest scientific advice and international standards

REINFORCING ANIMAL WELFARE

Poultry → by end 2026
Pig → 2027

A shared ambition

Together, the **Livestock Strategy** and the **Protein Action Plan** will reduce strategic dependencies, reinforce European food security and contribute to a stronger, more resilient and more strategic European agri-food system.

Protein Action Plan

The EU livestock sector uses
74 million
of tonnes of protein
as animal feed per year

Europe already produces around
67 million
tonnes of the protein
used in animal feed, with roughage
and cereals as the main sources,
of which 9% is exported

However, around
13.4 million
tonnes of protein are imported
each year as high-protein feed
materials



By 2035

the EU aims to raise the share of protein from
EU-grown oilseeds and protein crops used in
animal feed

from **25% to 35%**

The Protein Action Plan will support:

- the production of protein-rich crops in Europe
- the diversification of feed imports through strategic partnerships in the EU neighborhoods
- the reinforcement of European plant-protein value chains from farm to processing
- the creation of new opportunities for EU-produced plant proteins in both feed and food markets.



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