



1 **On**  
2 **A different vision of CAP: building food and farming systems that are fair,**  
3 **environmentally aware, healthy and caring across Europe and the world**  
4

5 With 40% of the EU budget allocated to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), decisions made as  
6 to which farming systems and practices to promote, directly shape the EU's food systems. The  
7 way we conduct agriculture has a major impact on both society and the environment. The CAP  
8 policy has been driven mainly by a production paradigm, corresponding to exigencies inherited  
9 from post-World War II, but totally obsolete today. This is why we urge that a different vision of  
10 CAP is adopted.

11 In our vision, the key challenges for future food policy include:

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- 13 - Supporting public health through adequate nutritious quality food for all;
- 14 - Ensuring fair incomes for farmers;
- 15 - Mitigating climate change;
- 16 - Ensuring animal welfare and reducing meat consumption;
- 17 - Guaranteeing the sustainable use of natural resources;
- 18 - Tackling biodiversity loss;
- 19 - Avoiding food waste;
- 20 - Guaranteeing food sovereignty;
- 21 - Establishing lively rural environments;
- 22 - Supporting a healthy European primary sector;
- 23 - Guaranteeing coherence with Sustainable Development Goals;
- 24 - Ensuring land is available and affordable for small farmers.
- 25

26 Agriculture must not become polarised by dividing land into perceived productive and unproductive  
27 areas. Instead, we must maintain a cohesive food system that redresses imbalances and  
28 distributes productivity outside the most-favoured areas.

29

30 Under the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework, €408.31 billion is earmarked for the CAP,  
31 the largest part of which is allocated to the first pillar, to directly support farmer incomes.  
32 Unfortunately, subsidies are granted to all farmers, whatever the nature of their activities. Less  
33 than 30% of EU agriculture spending goes to environmental and climate actions. Investments in  
34 sustainable farming systems account for a mere 1.5%<sup>1</sup>.

35

36 The European agriculture model has a major impact on our environment: currently, European  
37 agriculture contributes 10.35% to the EU's total greenhouse gas emissions, while 44% of total EU  
38 water extraction is used for agriculture. Pollution from pesticides and fertilisers used in agriculture  
39 are a major cause of poor water quality. Over the last 100 years, some 75% of plant genetic  
40 diversity has been lost by abandoning multiple local varieties in favour of genetically uniform ones.

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<sup>1</sup> Stolze, M. et al., (2016): Organic farming and the prospects for stimulating public goods under the CAP 2014-2020. IFOAM EU, Brussels. Available at: [www.ifoam-eu.org/sites/default/files/ifoameu\\_study\\_organic\\_farming\\_cap\\_2014\\_2020\\_final.pdf](http://www.ifoam-eu.org/sites/default/files/ifoameu_study_organic_farming_cap_2014_2020_final.pdf)



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41 Today, 75% of the world's food production is generated from only 12 crops and five animal  
42 species. By clearing natural habitats for intensive monoculture, Europe loses 970 million tonnes of  
43 soil every year. The EU currently wastes around 20% of total annual food production, costing an  
44 estimated €143 billion.

45  
46 European agriculture also has a major impact on our society. Due to market deregulation, farmers  
47 are exposed to market volatility. In the EU, one in every four farms disappeared between 2003 and  
48 2013. This trend has been exacerbated by the CAP promoting ever-larger and more specialised  
49 farms. Employment opportunities in the sector are declining. At the same time, 43 million EU  
50 citizens (8.5%) could not afford a quality meal every second day in 2015. Pesticide contamination,  
51 the large use of antibiotics in animal farming and unbalanced nutritional values result in additional  
52 healthcare costs for European citizens.

53  
54 If Europe does not make a determined step to create a sustainable food system, the cost to the  
55 European citizen will continue to increase. The new CAP must meet both current and future  
56 challenges.

57  
58 We demand transparent and ambitious negotiations on CAP reform, ensuring strong political  
59 mandates and commitments for the co-legislators. The influence of agribusiness and multinational  
60 chemical companies must be limited. Negotiations must be done in the public interest resulting in  
61 a positive vision which is profitable for farming communities rather than a handful of private  
62 interests. Finally, we urge Europe to retake control of its food sovereignty, endangered by free trade  
63 agreements implemented under the influence of the neoliberal economic agenda.

64  
65 Moreover, while CAP reform is needed, we think that reforming the agricultural sector without  
66 reforming the whole food system would be ineffective. We will be unable to make a concrete shift  
67 towards sustainable agriculture unless we widen the scope from agriculture to food systems,  
68 which is why we support the idea of taking the debate beyond the CAP, towards creating a  
69 'Common Food Policy'.

70  
71 Our demands for reforming the CAP are:

72  
73 1. **Updating CAP objectives:** we demand the general objective is updated. The new CAP must  
74 guarantee good-quality sustainable and local food for all Europeans. In the long run, the  
75 goal should be 100% organic production and complete European food sovereignty based on  
76 import resilience.

77  
78 2. **Change the nature of direct payments to embrace an organic and agro-ecological model:**  
79 agro-ecology is the way to convert our agriculture in an environmentally and socially  
80 responsible sector, able to face our current challenges. Direct payments must give a clear  
81 priority to farms applying organic and agro-ecological principles (see Annex I and II).

82  
83 3. **Rebalancing Pillars 1 and 2:** transfers from Pillar 2 to Pillar 1 should be prohibited, giving a  
84 clear strategic priority to Pillar 2. Pillar 2 payments must be based on impact rather than



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- 85 specific methods. Pillar 1's territoriality must be reinforced by transferring subsidies from a  
86 hectare-based system to one that prioritises ecosystem services.  
87
- 88 4. **Making agriculture profitable:** a key demand is fair, remunerative prices for farmers that  
89 cover production costs, alongside fair retailer and supermarket contracts. Farmer autonomy  
90 and input independence should be promoted. We need to mitigate volatility through a  
91 supply management system that matches supply with EU demand. A mandatory limitation  
92 on production must be applied when the market is unbalanced. We demand the status of  
93 women is reinforced and special incentives for young farmers.  
94
- 95 5. **Shorter food chains:** local food should be given a special facilitation. Production for local  
96 consumption should have a better direct payments margin. Legislation should help small  
97 farmers to produce, process and sell directly.  
98
- 99 6. **A 'do no harm' policy:** external effects of the CAP on developing countries should be  
100 significantly cut and monitored. European production for domestic consumption must be  
101 favoured over exportation.  
102
- 103 7. **Reduce EU protein dependency:** EU vegetable protein production through CAP incentives  
104 must be increased. We request implementation of a protein strategy that replaces imported  
105 soya with home-grown leguminous crops as part of a longer rotation on all arable land,  
106 stimulating local and regional feed markets.  
107
- 108 8. **Apply the precautionary principle:** apply the precautionary principle (art. 191 TFUE)  
109 regarding chemical products used in agriculture to substances that risk endangering human  
110 health and ecosystems; ecological taxation by reducing CAP aid for mineral fertilisers and  
111 pesticides; and no subsidies to GMOs and animals fed with GMOs.  
112
- 113 9. **Production standards:** set more coherent production standards in terms of sustainability,  
114 local traditions and animal welfare goals, and promote standards that favour small agro-  
115 ecological farms over industrial farming.  
116
- 117 10. **Support small farms:** protect farmers from unfair competition imposed by international  
118 trade policy; mandatory higher payment rates for the first hectares/acres of land (according  
119 to the national average).  
120
- 121 11. **Exercise caution with precision farming, big data and big machinery lobbies:** whilst there is  
122 considerable scope for technologies, such as predictive models to forecast extreme  
123 weather/pest outbreaks, to plan farm work and interventions accordingly, we must beware  
124 of the not-so-hidden agenda of the 'innovation' and 'big data' lobbies. Low-tech methods  
125 can be equally or more effective, are certainly more appropriate for smaller or remote  
126 upland farms, and engender less debt or input dependency.  
127
- 128 12. **Research and training:** teaching agro-ecological practices must be mandatory in  
129 professional agricultural training. The EU should put in place a strategy to facilitate



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- 130 knowledge transfer via farmer-to-farmer and through publicly funded farmer advisory  
131 systems and participatory research. Using European Innovation Partnerships, which bring  
132 together researchers, farmers and other practitioners, test and spread agro-ecological  
133 practices via a participatory, community-based approach.  
134
- 135 13. **Finance the transition:** farmers who decide to move towards an agro-ecological transition  
136 should be eligible to get easy terms on EU loans.  
137
- 138 14. **Ensure the CAP is coherent with other policies:** CAP policy objectives must be coordinated  
139 with rural development, regional development and other related programmes.  
140
- 141 15. **Promote local seed use and exchange:** promoting local seeds and facilitating their  
142 exchange and circulation is essential. Incentives to local, established seeds, appropriate for  
143 the soil type, must be created through Pillar 2.  
144
- 145 16. **Animal welfare:** stricter standards for animal farms must be applied to be eligible for CAP  
146 subsidies. Animal transportation must be restricted and bodies violating this rule penalised  
147 by suspending CAP aid. The absolute maximum distance from farm to slaughterhouse  
148 must be fixed at 300 km (4 hours travelling). Grassland livestock must be prioritised  
149 through better direct payments. Antibiotics must be strictly regulated and be a condition of  
150 CAP aid.  
151
- 152 17. **Subsidy ceiling:** a €50,000 ceiling on subsidies must be implemented. This can only be  
153 exceeded if the farm employs a large number of workers or has a significant social and  
154 environmental performance. Appropriate measures should be implemented to avoid  
155 contravening this measure (e.g. splitting the land to comply with the law).  
156
- 157 18. **Simplification:** we are in favour of simplifying the CAP although not in the Commission's  
158 understanding of the word. We are against renationalising the CAP which would only  
159 exacerbate a growing feeling of unfair competition among EU farmers. Instead, we demand  
160 a reduction in bureaucracy and greater clarity and transparency of CAP procedures. The  
161 amount of farmers' money spent on administration for CAP subsidies must be reduced.  
162
- 163 19. **More funds for monitoring:** to verify that the conditionality of CAP aids proposed in this  
164 resolution is applied, we demand the creation of a European monitoring system (at the EU  
165 level) for farms and producers receiving EU aid. A European research team should also be  
166 set up to monitor the effectiveness of environmental measures.



## **ANNEX I**

The five principles that characterise an agro-ecological system (Altieri, 2002):

1. Recycling biomass and balancing nutrient flows and availability;
2. Securing favourable soil conditions for plant growth by enhancing organic matter;
3. Minimising losses of solar radiation, water and nutrients by managing microclimate and soil cover, and practising water harvesting;
4. Enhancing biological and genetic diversification on cropland;
5. Enhancing beneficial biological interactions and minimising the use of pesticides.

## **ANNEX II**

Organic agricultural land-management principles listed by IFOAM:

### **Environmental aspects**

- Good water and air quality – reducing stocking rates, managing manure and only using substances that have a limited impact on the agro-ecosystem;
- High on-farm biodiversity – conserving a high level of biological diversity to support a proper functioning agro-ecosystem and ecosystem services;
- Long-term stable soils – building and managing soil fertility and soil biological activity whilst maximising the recycling of nutrients and organic matter;
- Climate-change mitigation and adaptation – contributing to carbon sequestration, reducing energy use, optimised crop rotation and agroforestry.

### **Socio-economic aspects**

- Agricultural system diversity– preserving and developing farm genetic resources through the use of a diverse range of crop varieties and animal species;
- High animal welfare – providing farm animals with diets and living conditions which reflect their ecological role and allow them to express their natural behaviour;
- Aesthetic and resilient landscapes – ensuring the protection, enhancement and public accessibility to culturally and biologically diverse landscapes and features;
- Social capital – contributing to employment and the rural economy and interacting with the local community.