

Europe should become a world leader in plant-based and cultivated meat

We welcome the roadmap for the Farm-to-Fork (F2F) Strategy for Sustainable Food and applaud the European Commission's efforts to create a more healthy and sustainable food system.

As the Commission has acknowledged, Europe needs a dietary shift away from conventional meat produced through industrial animal agriculture. For that shift to succeed at the scale we need and with the urgency we face, Europe should make the development of plant-based and cultivated (cell-cultured) meat, eggs, dairy, and seafood a priority. These products are better for the environment, public health, and animal welfare than their animal-based counterparts. The EU should heavily invest in research and innovation to make them equally delicious, price-competitive, and convenient for consumers.

Plant-based and cultivated meat are crucial components to create a healthy and sustainable food system and deliver on the objectives of the F2F strategy by:

- **Mitigating climate change:** Plant-based meat products create 30-90% less greenhouse gas emissions than their conventional meat counterparts. Shifting to more plant-based meat would thus help Europe to fulfil its obligations under the Paris Agreement.
- **Fighting Biodiversity loss:** Plant-based and cultivated meat products require just a fraction of the crops that are needed for conventional meat production. Relieving pressure on forests and other habitats that are under threat of destruction for growing animal feed crops would preserve or even increase biodiversity.
- **Limiting antimicrobial resistance:** Plant-based meat requires no antibiotics and therefore does not drive the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

In these weeks in March 2020, Europe and the world are gripped by the novel Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) that is threatening public health and disrupting the everyday lives of hundreds of millions of citizens. [Experts believe](#) that this Coronavirus likely originated in animal markets in China. In the past, farm animal diseases, such as avian influenza, have repeatedly threatened the food supply. And food safety scandals, such as the Fipronil incident in 2017, have undermined the public trust in the safety of animal products and the institutions tasked to protect the public. It is thus crucial for Europe to become a leader in developing the next generation of safe and sustainable food technology that will allow us to move away from animal-based food.

This is why in August 2019, we sent [a letter](#) to then-President Juncker – signed by more than 20 organisations from civil society, academia, and industry – urging the Commission to make alternative proteins a cornerstone of Horizon Europe, the EU’s next multi-annual research funding framework. We are pleased by the [Commission’s response](#), acknowledging the unsustainability of animal-based diets in the context of a growing world population and the important role research and innovation can play in developing plant-based and cultivated food products as alternatives to animal-based food. Now is the time to go further.

The opportunity is now

Until recently, meat replacements have been often been simplistic offerings such as tofu and black bean burgers that don’t satisfactorily replicate the organoleptic experience of animal-based products. Recent technological advancements and a greater understanding of the biological components of food have resulted in a new capability to biomimic simple animal-based products. This is a step-change and opens up a range of new possibilities.

We thus urge the Commission to include strong provisions in the Farm-to-Fork Strategy that spell out the need for innovation and the development of plant-based and cultivated (cell-cultured) meat, eggs, dairy, and seafood. Progress in the development of these products is necessary to deliver nutritious, safe, and affordable alternatives to conventional animal-based food.

Thank you for considering this submission. For more detailed information, please reach out to Alexander Holst, European Policy Manager at the Good Food Institute Europe, at alexh@gfi.org. Thank you!