



CAP: 11 WAYS TO DELIVER FOR BETTER HEALTH





About the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)

EPHA is a change agent
Europe's leading NGO alliance advocating for better health.

We are a dynamic member-led organisation made up of public health NGOs, patient groups, health professionals and disease groups, working together to improve health and strengthen the voice of public health in Europe.

EPHA (AISBL) is a member of, among others, the Social Platform, the Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) and the Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue (TACD). EPHA sits on various EU-level platforms, including the EU Multi-Stakeholder Platform on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the DG AGRI Civil Dialogue Groups and the Forum for a Better Functioning Food Supply Chain.

EPHA's Transparency register number is 18941013532-08

As part of its objective to advance a healthy and sustainable food system, EPHA works to reinvent the EU's common agricultural policy.

A CAP for Better Health

The reform of the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is a major opportunity to improve people's health. The CAP is set to distribute €365 billion during its next seven-year period. Such large-scale funding can, and should, be directed towards supporting public health.

Health is a core value for Europeans. Across Europe, health and social security is now the second most important national concern. Two thirds of citizens want to see more EU action on health. Providing safe, healthy and quality food is considered a main priority for the CAP.

At the same time, more than half a million people under the age of 65 die of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the EU each year. Nearly 10% of the EU's GDP is spent on healthcare. Agriculture is the main source of our food, a basic human need. However, the current food system also creates many health risks, and many of the costs to our healthcare systems can be prevented by sensible food and agricultural policies.

Health is not just the absence of disease, but a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being. The EU has a strong commitment to advance public health. The Union exists to promote "the well-being of its peoples"¹, and is mandated to ensure a "high level of human health protection" in the definition and implementation of all

its policies². The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a compass to promote well-being both within and outside the EU.

A 'performance-oriented' approach for the CAP, if well-designed and implemented, could help deliver on health and other societal challenges. Health deserves to be an explicit CAP objective. At the same time, many of the policy's other objectives can also deliver significant health co-benefits if ambitiously pursued.

Drawing on the links between public health and agriculture, this briefing identifies 11 main ways in which the CAP can leverage change for better health. The briefing aims to encourage the development of credible, meaningful and comprehensive policy responses to realise European agriculture's potential to act as a force for healthy living.

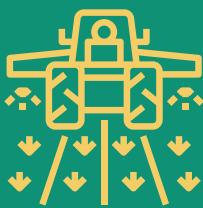
For a more specific discussion on policy options, consult the extended version of this briefing at: www.epha.org/CAP4Health.

¹ Article 3(1) Treaty on European Union

² Article 168 (1) Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union



Ensure sufficient, safe and nutritious food



Limit pesticides use



Advance the planet's health



Create a policy framework for impact and inclusion



Minimise antibiotics use



Contribute to clean air



Support healthy diets

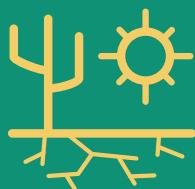
CAP: 11 ways to deliver for better health



Phase out health-incompatible subsidies



Address socio-economic inequalities



Contribute to climate change mitigation



Promote safe and decent work

CAP: 11 ways to deliver for better health

1. Minimise antibiotics use



High and persistent levels of antibiotics use in animal farming contributes to the spread of drug resistant bacteria, or antimicrobial resistance (AMR). Drug resistance implies that common infections and routine surgeries could become life-threatening, putting in peril the last century's advances in healthcare. AMR is currently responsible for well over 25.000 annual deaths in the EU and may kill some 10 million people per year globally by 2050.

CAP funds should support farmers in transitioning to low-antibiotics use, high animal welfare farming models guided by ambitious and time-bound national antibiotics use reduction targets.



2. Contribute to clean air

Agriculture accounts for over 90% of the EU's ammonia emissions. Ammonia is an air pollutant and plays a major role in the formation of Particulate Matter (PM), which is responsible for up to 400.000 premature deaths per year in the EU. According to estimates, emissions from agriculture are a leading contribution to PM formation in Europe.

CAP funds should support effective ammonia emissions reduction strategies and offer incentives to pursue more ambitious national reduction targets than those existing under current EU rules.



3. Support healthy diets

Eating well is a precondition for good health. Paradoxically, unhealthy diets are one of the main risk factors for the EU's entire burden of ill-health today. Over half the European population is overweight or obese. Dietary patterns are shaped by 'food and drink environments' – the collective physical, economic, and socio-cultural surroundings that affect what we eat. The creation of healthier food environments is an important health objective to which the CAP can contribute.



The CAP should increase funding for existing instruments, such as the distribution of fruit and vegetables in schools, and integrate new measures that stimulate both demand and supply of foods for healthy and sustainable diets, including through the creation of markets for such products and by fostering social innovation in food supply chains. It should adopt the World Health Organization consumption target of at least 400 grams of fruit and vegetables per day.

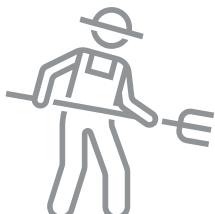
4. Phase out health-incompatible subsidies



Using public money efficiently implies the need to maximise the co-benefits from this investment, while phasing out support for activities which burden our healthcare systems. Certain products originating from agriculture, such as tobacco and alcoholic beverages, like wine, are associated with the main risk factors for non-communicable diseases (NCDs). NCDs account for the vast majority of deaths and diseases in the EU and amount to approximately €700 billion per year in healthcare costs.

The CAP should divert funding from products and activities that are inconsistent with public health objectives, while offering producers incentives to diversify into other types of production. In particular, public funding for wine promotion should be phased out.

5. Address socio-economic inequalities

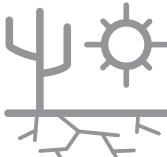


Socio-economic conditions are major determinants of health. Policies which help raise incomes and reduce the risk of social exclusion are likely to promote better health and avoid diseases. Farming is not a low-income sector in most EU countries, but significant inequalities exist, with especially smaller farms and those in 'less favoured areas' earning the lowest incomes. Pockets of rural poverty persist.

The CAP should target payments equitably to farmers who face specific socio-economic challenges, within the framework of a wider policy strategy to support fair producer prices. Programmes to improve the socio-economic fabric of rural areas should be pursued, including those enhancing access to health and social services, and promoting local employment.

6. Promote safe and decent work

Agriculture is one of the most hazardous occupations in Europe. Risks include accidents, falls, injuries and contacts with animals, including zoonoses. Conditions linked to exposure from pesticides have been recognised as occupational diseases. Many farm workers report poor levels of work-related health. Reports describe exploitative labour conditions in different European regions.



CAP funding should ensure effective and independent farm advisory services to ensure that farmers and agricultural workers have the knowledge and tools to prevent occupational risks. Observance of adequate labour and social standards for agricultural workers should be a precondition for funding.

7. Contribute to climate change mitigation

Agriculture, especially animal farming, drives climate change. Climate change is expected to result in systemic changes in ecological conditions and social dynamics with far-reaching effects on people's health. Occurrences such as heat waves, floods, storms, water shortages, changes in socio-economic status and migration are predicted to negatively affect a wide variety of health outcomes.

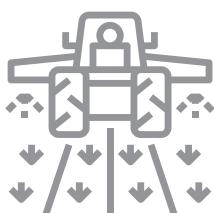
CAP funds should be dedicated to pursue effective, evidence-based and systemic strategies to reduce agriculture's climate impact and enhance its mitigation potential, including through the setting of time-bound national methane emissions reduction targets.



8. Advance the planet's health

Trends such as biodiversity loss, soil degradation, nitrogen and phosphorus overload, chemicals pollution and water depletion threaten the earth's ecological and biophysical systems which support human progress. Pollinators, vital for both food and nutrition security, are under severe pressure. Occupying over 40% of EU's land area, today agriculture is a main driver of ecosystem degradation.

CAP funds should be progressively earmarked to reward farmers who adopt farming practices and interventions which contribute to ecosystem restoration, within the framework of time-bound and specific targets on environment and biodiversity.



9. Limit pesticides use

The intensive use of pesticides in agriculture has led to widespread exposure to agrochemicals. There are mounting concerns about the impacts of low-dose exposure to pesticides, notably their endocrine-disrupting effects. The costs associated with pesticides use and the considerable potential for reduction add to the pressures to limit their use.

CAP funds should ensure farmers can make a secure and well-informed transition towards farming practices and models that limit the use of pesticides, in the framework of time-bound national reduction targets.



10. Ensure sufficient, safe and nutritious food

Access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food is a basic human need. Climate change and soil degradation may affect regional production capacity in Europe. Food-borne infections, with over 4.500 outbreaks reported in the EU in 2016, remain a concern. The nutritional value of food can be influenced by agricultural decisions, including through the choice of animal feed, crop variety and farming methods.

CAP funding should incentivise the uptake of soil conservation practices and climate-resilient farming methods. It should stimulate food production and supply chains that deliver safe, diverse and nutritionally valuable foods, with due regard to the need to prevent food waste.



11. Create a policy framework for impact and inclusion

The CAP needs a policy design that effectively links public money to the delivery of EU-wide public goods. In view of agriculture's multiple impacts, it is necessary to include stakeholders from different sectors, including health, to ensure effective policy design and implementation.

The CAP should provide an effective delivery model aimed at transitioning towards a healthy and sustainable food system, including through appropriate objectives and targets, future-oriented funding tools and a common European vision. Public health stakeholders should be meaningfully included in the design and monitoring of the CAP.

In other words, a CAP for healthy and sustainable diets

Sustainable diets, or ‘sustainable healthy diets’, refer to eating and drinking patterns “with low environmental impacts which contribute to food and nutrition security and to healthy life for present and future generations”³.

The 11 objectives above, taken together as a package, highlight how the CAP can contribute to more healthy and sustainable diets⁴.

Considering the food system’s substantial impact on our societies, a transition towards healthy and sustainable patterns of production and consumption is not a question of luxury, but of necessity. The simultaneous pursuit of multiple objectives, inherent in such transition, will at times involve accepting trade-offs. However, it also provides the opportunity to benefit from key synergies.

A shift towards more plant-rich diets, with higher consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, pulses, berries and nuts, ‘fewer but better’ animal products and lower energy intake, together with a lower use of alcohol, is increasingly recognised as a key strategy for a sustainable future, able to yield major co-benefits for our economy, climate, biodiversity, food and nutrition security and health.

However, we must look beyond the CAP to truly capitalise on the synergies from such a transition, and adequately manage the trade-offs. The pursuit of coherence across those policies that shape our food and agricultural system, including notably trade, guided by a ‘food policy’ for Europe is therefore the next frontier to be crossed.

In this light, strategic planning can be a stepping stone towards a more comprehensive, coherent and inclusive form of policy-making.

³ UN Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) & Bioversity International (2010) Sustainable Diets and Biodiversity. FAO

⁴ Above objectives cover the six main dimensions of the sustainable diets definition: health, environment, economy, social values, quality and governance, as identified in: Mason & Lang (2017) Sustainable Diets. How Ecological Nutrition Can Transform Consumption and the Food System. Routledge



Photo credit © Gabriel Jimenez

Further reading

1. Introduction

“€365 billion”: European Commission. EU budget: the Common Agricultural Policy beyond 2020

“second most important”: Eurobarometer 89 (2018) Spring 2018

“Two thirds of citizens”: Eurobarometer (2017) Two years until the 2019 European elections

“main priority for the CAP”: Special Eurobarometer 473 (2018) Europeans, Agriculture and the CAP

“half a million people” & “10% of EU’s GDP”: OECD/EU (2016) Health at a Glance: Europe 2016 – State of Health in the EU Cycle

“Many health risks”: IPES Food (2017) Unravelling the Food-Health Nexus: Addressing practices, political economy and power relations to build healthier food systems. *The Global Alliance for the Future of Food and IPES-Food*.

Hawkes & Ruel (2006) The links between agriculture and health: an intersectoral opportunity to improve the health and livelihoods of the poor. *Bull World Health Organ.*

Hawkes et al. (2012) Linking agricultural policies with obesity and non-communicable diseases: A new perspective for a globalising world. *Food Policy*

“can be prevented”: WHO Regional Office for Europe (2016) Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases in the WHO European Region 2016–2025

Masters et al. (2017) Return on investment of public health interventions: a systematic review. *BMJ Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*

“Health is”: Constitution of the World Health Organization (WHO)

Lang & Rayner (2012) Ecological public health: the 21st century’s big idea? *Essay. BMJ*.

“‘perfomance-oriented’ approach”: European Court of Auditors (2018) Briefing paper: Future of the CAP

Hart et al. (2018) Defining EU environmental objectives and monitoring systems for a results-oriented CAP post 2020. *Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP)*

“CAP objective”: Article 6(1), CAP strategic plans – Proposal for a regulation COM(2018) 392

Minimise antibiotics use

“antibiotics use in animal farming”: Review on Antimicrobial Resistance (2015) Antimicrobials in agriculture and the environment: reducing unnecessary use and waste

“25.000 annual deaths”: European Commissio. AMR: a major European and Global challenge. Factsheet

“10 million people”: Review on Antimicrobial Resistance (2016) Tackling Drug-Resistant Infections Globally: final report and recommendations

Contribute to clean air

“90% of EU’s ammonia emissions” & “400.000 premature deaths”: European Environment Agency (2017) Air quality in Europe 2017

“contribution to PM formation”: Lelieveld et al. (2015) The contribution of outdoor air pollution sources to premature mortality on a global scale. *Nature*

European Court of Auditors (2018) Special report no 23/2018: Air pollution: Our health still insufficiently protected

“current EU rules”: Directive (EU) 2016/2284 on the reduction of national emissions of certain atmospheric pollutants

Bruneekreef et al. (2015) Reducing the health effect of particles from agriculture. Comment. *The Lancet*

Support healthy diets

“unhealthy diets are main risk factors”: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation. Global Burden of Disease Compare. European Union (2016) All risk factors.

“Over half the European population”: WHO Regional Office for Europe (2018) European health report 2018: More than numbers – evidence for all

“food and drink environments”: Swinburn et al. (2015) Strengthening of accountability systems to create healthy food environments and reduce global obesity. *The Lancet*

Herforth & Ahmed (2015) The food environment, its effects on dietary consumption, and potential for measurement within agriculture-nutrition interventions. *Food Security*

“at least 400 grams”: World Health Organization. Healthy Diet Factsheet.

“social innovation in food supply chains”: Kneafsey et al. (2013) Short Food Supply Chains and Local Food Systems in the EU. A State of Play of their Socio-Economic Characteristics. *European Commission Joint Research Centre*

Phase out health-incompatible subsidies

“associated with the main risk-factors”: WHO (2013) Global action plan for the prevention and control of NCDs 2013-2020

WHO Regional Office for Europe (2018) European health report 2018: More than numbers – evidence

for all

“vast majority of deaths and diseases”: WHO Regional Office for Europe (2016) Action Plan for the Prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases in the WHO European Region 2016–2025

“€700 billion per year”: European Commission (2014) The 2014 EU Summit on Chronic Diseases: Conference Conclusions

Address socio-economic inequalities

“major determinants”: UCL Institute of Health Equity (2014) Review of social determinants and the health divide in the WHO European Region. Final report. *WHO Regional Office for Europe*

WHO Regional Office for Europe (2016) Social protection, income and health inequities. Final report of the Task Group on GDP, Taxes, Income and Welfare

“not a low-income sector”: Hill & Bradley (2015) Comparison of farmers’ incomes in EU Member States. *European Parliament Policy Studies*

“Pockets of rural poverty”: European Parliament Think Tank (2017) Rural Poverty in the European Union.

WHO Regional Office for Europe (2010) Rural poverty and health systems in the WHO European Region.

Promote safe and decent work

“hazardous occupations in Europe”: European Agency for Health and Safety at Work (2017) Protecting health and safety of workers in agriculture, livestock farming, horticulture and forestry.

“recognised as occupational diseases”: French National Research and Safety Institute for the Prevention of Occupational Accidents and Diseases. Non-Hodgkin’s malignant lymphoma & Parkinson’s disease.

“poor work-related health”: Eurofound (2014)
Agriculture sector: Working conditions and job quality

“exploitative labour conditions”: Council of Europe (2018) 7th General Report on GRETA’s Activities

Palumbo & Sciurba (2018) The vulnerability to exploitation of women migrant workers in agriculture in the EU: the need for a Human Rights and Gender based approach. *Study for the FEMM Committee in the European Parliament*

Contribute to climate change mitigation

“drives climate change”: Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centres (CGIAR). Food emissions.

Eurostat. Agri-environmental indicator – greenhouse gas emissions.

“far-reaching effects”: Nick Watts et al. (2015) Health and climate change: policy responses to protect public health. *The Lancet*

World Health Organisation. Climate change and health. Key facts

Advance the planet’s health

“support human progress”: Lancet Commission on planetary health (2015) Safeguarding human health in the Anthropocene epoch. *The Lancet*

Sutton et al. (ed) (2011) European Nitrogen Assessment. *Cambridge University Press*

Stockholm Resilience Centre. The Nine Planetary Boundaries.

“food and nutrition security”: Eilers et. al (2011) Contribution of Pollinator-Mediated Crops to Nutrients in the Human Food Supply. *Plos One*

Van Der Slujs & Vaage (2016) Pollinators and Global Food Security: the Need for Holistic Global Stewardship. *Food Ethics*

“over 40%”: Eurostat. Land cover and land use

“ecosystem degradation”: European Environment Agency (2015) The European Environment – State and outlook 2015

European Environment Agency (2018) European waters. Assessment of status and pressures 2018

Limit pesticides use

“exposure to agrochemicals” & “endocrine disrupting effects”: Hayes & Hansen (2017) From silent spring to silent night: Agrochemicals and the anthropocene. *Elem Sci Anth*

Gore et al. (2015) EDC-2: The Endocrine Society’s Second Scientific Statement on Endocrine-Disrupting Chemicals. *Endocrine reviews*

“considerable societal costs”: Bourguet & Guillemaud (2016) The Hidden and External Costs of Pesticide Use. *Sustainable Agriculture Reviews*

Trasande et al. (2016) Burden of disease and costs of exposure to endocrine disrupting chemicals in the European Union: an updated analysis. *Andrology*

“potential for reduction”: Lechenet et al. (2017) Reducing pesticide use while preserving crop productivity and profitability on arable farms. *Nature Plants*

Ensure sufficient, safe and nutritious food

“affect regional production capacity”: Berners-Lee et al. (2018) Current global food production is sufficient to meet human nutritional needs in 2050 provided there is radical societal adaptation. *Elem Sci Anth*

Hart et al. (2017) Research for the AGRI Committee – The Consequences of Climate Change for EU Agriculture: Follow-Up to the COP21 UN Paris Climate Change Conference

Berge et al. (2017) Research for AGRI Committee – Preserving agricultural soils in the EU

“Food-borne infections”: European Food Safety Authority & European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (2017) The European Union summary report on trends and sources of zoonoses, zoonotic agents and food-borne outbreaks in 2016.

“nutritional value of food”: Daley et al. (2010) A review of fatty acid profiles and antioxidant content in grass-fed and grain-fed beef. *Nutrition Journal*

Benbrook et al. (2018) Enhancing the fatty acid profile of milk through forage-based rations, with nutrition modeling of diet outcomes. *Food Science & Nutrition*

Davis (2009) Declining Fruit and Vegetable Nutrient Composition: What Is the Evidence? *HortScience*

Marles (2017) Mineral nutrient composition of vegetables, fruits and grains: The context of reports of apparent historical declines. *Journal of Food Composition and Analysis*

Barański et al. (2014) Higher antioxidant and lower cadmium concentrations and lower incidence of pesticide residues in organically grown crops: a systematic literature review and meta-analyses. *British Journal of Nutrition*

Średnicka-Tober et al. (2016) Composition differences between organic and conventional meat: a systematic literature review and meta-analysis. *British Journal of Nutrition*

Create a policy framework for impact and inclusion

“policy design”: Buckwell, A. et al. (2017) CAP – Thinking Out of the Box: Further modernisation of the CAP – why, what and how? RISE Foundation

Baldock & Mottershead (2017) Towards an integrated approach to livestock farming, sustainable diets and the environment: challenges for the Common Agricultural Policy and the UK, Institute for European Environmental Policy

A CAP for healthy and sustainable diets

“sustainable healthy diets”: Garnett (2014) What is a sustainable healthy diet? *Food Climate Research Network*

“substantial impact”: Food Climate Research Network. *Food Source*

“major co-benefits”: The EAT-Lancet Commission on Food, Planet, Health. Our Food in the Anthropocene: Healthy diets from Sustainable Food Systems.

High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security (2017) Nutrition and food systems.

Nelson et al. (2016) Alignment of Healthy Dietary Patterns and Environmental Sustainability: A Systematic Review. *Advances in Nutrition*

Aleksandrowicz et al. (2016) The Impacts of Dietary Change on Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Land Use, Water Use, and Health: A Systematic Review. *Plos One*

Springmann et al. (2016) Analysis and valuation of the health and climate change cobenefits of dietary change. *PNAS*

Birt et al. (2017) Healthy and sustainable diets for European countries. *European Public Health Association*

WHO Regional Office for Europe (2012) European action plan to reduce the harmful use of alcohol 2012–2020

“food policy for Europe”: International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES Food) EU Common Food Policy

Galli et al. (2018) A transition towards sustainable food systems in Europe. Food policy blue print scoping study. *Laboratorio di Studi Rurali Sismondi*

Fresco & Poppe (2017) Towards a Common Agricultural and Food Policy. *Wageningen University*

The Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) (2016) WRR Report no. 93: Towards a Food Policy



The European Public Health Alliance has received funding under an operating grant from the European Union's Health Programme (2014-2020). The content of this publication represents the views of the author only and is his/her sole responsibility; it cannot be considered to reflect the views of the European Commission and/or the Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency or any other body of the European Union. The European Commission and the Agency do not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

This briefing is produced with the support of Fondation Daniel & Nina Carasso. Any recommendations contained therein are solely attributable to the author (EPHA).



European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) AISBL
Rue de Trèves 49-51, 1040 Brussels (B) • +32 02 230 30 56
www.epha.org • epha@epha.org @EPHA_EU
Transparency Register Number: 18941013532-08