



European Plant Science Organisation

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Statement

Farm to Fork Strategy by the European Commission

Brussels, 2.6.2020

EPSO welcomes the EC Farm to Fork Strategy and offers to collaborate with the European Commission, the Member States and stakeholders to implement it.

EPSO appreciates that the strategy links Food and Nutritional Security, environmental sustainability and human health. EPSO urges to apply this approach across the strategy as a whole.

Concepts like diverse crops for diverse diets and human and resilient production, as well as combined approaches on crop improvement, crop management and crop processing, will enable interdisciplinary approaches with co-benefits in Europe and beyond.

EC rightly defines the goals and should lead the process to achieve these – based on open and transparent approaches ranging from research to innovation, public procurement to legislation.

We provide further insight on how these concepts can benefit the implementation of the strategy and how plant scientists can contribute to this in the Annex.

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Useful links

- EPSO www.epsoweb.org
- [R1 NS] EPSO: [Contributions from plant science towards Nutritional Security and human health](#), Draft Statement, 11.5.2020
- [R2 HE] EPSO [Statement on the Horizon Europe Strategic Plan](#), 18.2.2020
- [R3 Diverse crops] EPSO [Submission to the EC consultation on EU research and innovation missions \(FP9\)](#), 30.3.2018, incl. 1001 Crops – diverse crops for diverse diets and human health and sustainable production.
- [R4 NGT] EPSO [Statement on the EC study on New Genomic Techniques \(NGTs\)](#), 27.5.2020
- [R5 Feed] Plant ETP and ATF: Policy Brief Research and Innovation towards a more sustainable and circular European agriculture: [Exploring synergies between livestock and crop sectors](#), 18.5.2020
- [R6] EPSO [submission on orientation towards strategic programming](#), 20.12.2019 (17.11.2019 Contribution ID 666b7610-ddca-4262-b4be-dc125b7ec2cf) to the EC
- [R7 GE] EPSO [Genome editing – improving legislation and starting flagships to better address climate, environmental, food and health challenges](#), 4.11.2019
- [R8 MiBi] EPSO [Implementing a Plants and Microbiomes Strategy in Europe – Recommendations](#), 18.10.2019

[R9 F2F] EC: [Farm to Fork Strategy](#), 20.5.2020
[R10 Biodiv] EC: [Biodiversity Strategy for 2030](#), 20.5.2020
[R11 Green Deal] EC: [A European Green Deal](#), 11.12.2019

About EPSO

EPSO, the European Plant Science Organisation, is an independent academic organisation that represents more than 200 research institutes, departments and universities from 31 countries, mainly from Europe, and 2.700 individuals Personal Members, representing over 26 000 people working in plant science. EPSO's mission is to improve the impact and visibility of plant science in Europe, to provide authoritative source of independent information on plant science including science advice to policy, and to promote training of plant scientists to meet the 21st century challenges in breeding, agriculture, horticulture, forestry, plant ecology and sectors related to plant science. <https://epsoweb.org> | EU Transparency Register Number 38511867304-09

Annex: EPSO suggestions for the implementation of the EC Farm to Fork Strategy

The Farm to Fork (F2F) Strategy – hereafter you find an extract of the content *to which EPSO makes ► suggestions for the implementation and offers to get involved, referring to previous publications [R1-7 listed above]:*

1. Need for action

- F2F at heart of [European Green Deal](#) and central to EC agenda to achieve the UN's [SDGs](#)
- Just transition: shift to sustainable food systems + environmental, health and social benefits, economy gains, recovery from COVID-19 crisis onto sustainability path.
- F2F strategy = new comprehensive approach to [how Europeans value food sustainability](#):
 - Opportunity to improve lifestyles, health and the environment; societies want food that is fresh, less processed and sustainably sourced; shorter supply chains
 - European food is already the global standard for safe, plentiful, nutritious, high quality food; it should become the global standard for sustainability
 - *EPSO: ► Further increase [nutritional](#) quality of food AND environmental sustainability AND human health [R1 NS, R2 HE, R3 Diverse crops, R4 NGT]*
 - Food production has a profound impact on [biodiversity](#)...climate change and environmental degradation. Need to reduce dependency on pesticides and antimicrobials, excess fertilisation, increase organic farming, improve animal welfare, reverse biodiversity loss
 - *EPSO: welcome ► Encourage contributions not only from organic farming, but from the plant R&I sector at large [R1 NS; R3 Diverse crops; R4 NGT]; Add need to improve Food and Nutritional Security (FNS) under biodiversity as well to encourage underutilised crops which already have a good nutritional quality and can be further improved in this respect [R1 NS; R3 Diverse crops; R4 NGT].*
- European diets are not in line with national dietary recommendations (& food environment not healthy option as easy option); if they were in line with dietary recommendations, the env. footprint of food systems would be significantly reduced
 - *EPSO: ► Most welcome addressing FNS and environmental sustainability as co-benefits [R1 NS, R2 HE], ► e.g. with as diverse crops for diverse diets and human health and resilient production [R3 diverse crops]*

2. Building the food chain that works for consumers, producers, climate and the environment

EU goals for EU food system: ↓ environmental and climate footprint, ↑resilience, global transition, new opportunities:

- Ensure food chain has a [neutral or positive environmental impact](#)
 - *EPSO: most welcome ► see concept diverse crops [R3] addressing FNS and environmental sustainability and human health*

- Ensure food security, nutrition and public health – everyone has access to sufficient, nutritious, sustainable food
 - EPSO: most welcome ► see concept diverse crops [R3] addressing FNS and environmental sustainability and human health
- Ensure most sustainable food also becomes the most affordable
 - EPSO: most welcome ► add nutritional quality (FNS) ► see concept diverse crops [R3] addressing FNS and environmental sustainability and human health, see use of New Genomic Techniques [R4 NGT]
- ♦EC legislative proposal for a ‘framework for a sustainable food system, before end 2023
 - EPSO: ► Offer to contribute

2.1. Ensuring sustainable food production

- The use of chemical pesticides: ♦EC will revise the ‘Sustainable use of Pesticides’ Directive, enhance provisions on Integrated Pest management (IPM), promote greater use of safe alternative ways protecting harvests from pests and diseases. (♦EC will develop with MSs an ‘integrated nutrient action plan’ for the livestock sector)
 - EPSO: ► Include improving crops in IPM (in addition to crop management) [R3 HE; R4 NGT]
- The excess of nutrients (especially N, P): to reduce nutrient losses by at least 50% without reducing soil fertility, this will reduce use of fertilisers by at least 20% by 2030. By applying balanced fertilisation, sustainable nutrient management, managing N and P better throughout their lifecycle
 - EPSO: ► Include improving crops (in addition to crop management) [R3 HE; R4 NGT]
- Reduce EU's GHG emissions: 10.3 % come from agriculture, nearly 70% of those from the animal sector. Incl.: Facilitate sustainable feed additives; Fostering EU-grown plant proteins, alternative feed materials & by-products from bio-economy
 - EPSO: welcome ► Include improving crops for protein production [R1 NS, R5 feed]
- Reduce antimicrobial resistance (AMR): reduce antimicrobials for farmed animals and in aquaculture by 50% by 2030. Promote one health.
 - EPSO: welcome; ► Include improving crops for healthy feed and for secondary metabolites with antimicrobial functions [R1 NS, R4 feed]
- Improving plant health: reduce dependency on pesticides. ♦EC carries out study on request of the MSs on potential of NGTs to improve sustainability along the food supply chain. Rely on seed security and diversity: ensure farmers access to a range of quality seeds for plant varieties adapted to climate change, incl. easier market access for traditional and locally-adapted varieties
 - EPSO: welcome; ► Do not restrict to organic farming, include classical and NBTs [R2 HE, R1 NS, R3 Diverse crops; R4 NGT]
- New CAP: MSs submit draft Strategic Plans. New ‘eco-schemes’ funding to boost sustainability practices such as precision agriculture, agro-ecology (incl. org farm), carbon farming and agro-forestry. EC will ring-fence minimum budget for this. Ensure as well Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 addressed.
 - EPSO: welcome ► Focus on goal and leave path open (incl. integrated approach of crop improvement + crop management + crop processing) [R2 HE]

2.2. Ensuring food security

- ♦EC will develop contingency plan for ensuring food supply and food security to be put in place in times of crisis
 - EPSO: ► Offer to contribute

2.3. Stimulating sustainable food processing, wholesale, retail, hospitality and food service practices

- ♦EC will develop with relevant SHs an EU Code of conduct for responsible business and marketing practice. Reformulating food products for healthy, sustainable diets; lower environmental footprint and energy consumption, affordable prices, less packaging...

- *EPSO: ► Offer to contribute, including e.g. diverse crops [R3], crop improvement with management and processing [R2 HE]*
- ♦EC prepares initiative to improve the corporate governance framework, facilitate shift to healthier diets incl. by setting up nutrient profiles restricting the promotion of high fat / sugars / salty foods.
 - *EPSO: ► Offer to contribute (Nutritional Security WG)*
- ♦EC supports circular business models
 - *EPSO: welcome ► Suggest combine crop improvement with management and processing [R2 HE]*

2.4. Promoting sustainable food consumption and facilitating the shift to healthy, sustainable diets

- Food consumption patterns currently unsustainable from health & env. point of view (too high energy, red meat, sugars, salt, fats; too low whole-grain cereals, fruit and vegetables). Reverse rise of overweight and obesity rates by 2030. Moving to a more plant-based diets with less and processed meat and with more fruits and vegetables will reduce risks of life-threatening diseases and env. impact of the food system. ... EU's beating cancer plan includes promotion of healthy diets for cancer prevention.
 - *EPSO: most welcome ► contributions from the Nutritional Security WG [R1 NS; R4 NGT]*
- Empower consumers: ♦EC supports harmonising green claims to create a sustainability labelling framework that covers the nutritional, climate, env. and social aspects of food products.
 - *EPSO: most welcome – see [R2 HE, R1 NS; R4 NGT]*
- Availability and price: ♦EC support setting minimum mandatory criteria for sustainable food procurement.
 - *EPSO: welcome ► Offer to contribute: Focus on the goal, not the path (not restrict to organic farming), rather continue from 1st paragraph 2.4. before (+NS ..), include NGT [R4]*
- Tax incentives: to choose sustainable and healthy diets. VAT rates proposed (support organic fruit and vegetables)
 - *EPSO: = ► above, include other sustainable production contributors*

3. Enabling the transition

3.1. Research, innovation, technology and investments

- H20: new call for proposals for Green Deal priorities in 2020 for Σ 1 Bill €
- HE: - for all: *EPSO ► Offers to get involved*
 - Proposed 10 Bill € for the food cluster. Incl. e.g. microbiome, food from oceans, urban food systems, alternative proteins (plant / microbial / marine / insect proteins; meat substitutes)
 - Soil health and food mission
 - Agro-ecology living labs partnership
 - Safe and sustainable food systems partnership: co-benefits for nutrition, food quality, climate, circularity, communities
 - EIP-AGRI
 - Eur. Regional Development Fund (ERDF)

3.2. Advisory services, data and knowledge-sharing, and skills

- ♦EC will promote effective Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) involving all food chain actors
 - *EPSO: ► Offer to contribute*
- ♦EC will convert current NW into Farm Sustainability Data Network, collecting data from F2F, Biodiversity strategies and other sustainability indicators
 - *EPSO: ► link to EPSO data Task Force*

4. Promoting the global transition

- ♦EC will develop Green Alliances on sustainable food systems – based on SDGs, international cooperation, trade policy
- ♦EC will ensure ambitious sustainability chapter in all bilateral trade agreements
 - *EPSO: welcome, ► extend to FNS as well*
- ♦EU trade policy to obtain ambitious commitments from third countries in e.g. animal welfare, pesticide use, fight antimicrobial resistance; boost cooperation to improve nutrition and to alleviate food insecurity by strengthening resilience of food systems and reducing food waste
 - *EPSO: welcome, ► Suggest e.g. Diverse crops for diverse diets and human health and resilient production [R3]*
- ♦EU will focus its international cooperation on food research and innovation with ref. to climate, agro-ecology, sustainable landscape management and land governance, biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, nutrition and healthy diets ..
 - *EPSO: welcome, ► Suggest e.g. Diverse crops for diverse diets and human health and resilient production = FNS and environmental sustainability and human health [R1 NS, R3 Diverse crops, R4 NGT]*
- ♦EC will present 2021 legislative proposal on EU's contribution to reduce global deforestation and forest degradation
 - *EPSO: ► Offer contribution from Tree biology and biotechnology WG*
- Safer plant protection products
- International standard setting bodies ...: e.g. Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the Nutrition for Growth Summit, the UN Food Systems Summit 2021
- Food information to consumers: promote higher uptake of sustainability standards
 - *EPSO: ► Offer contribution – e.g. add FNS standards*

5. Conclusions

- Aim of F2F = make the EU food system a global standard for sustainability (healthy, equitable and env.-friendly food)
 - *EPSO: ► extend to sustainability AND FNS standards*
- Implement in coherence with Biodiversity strategy 2030, new CEAP, Zero Pollution ...