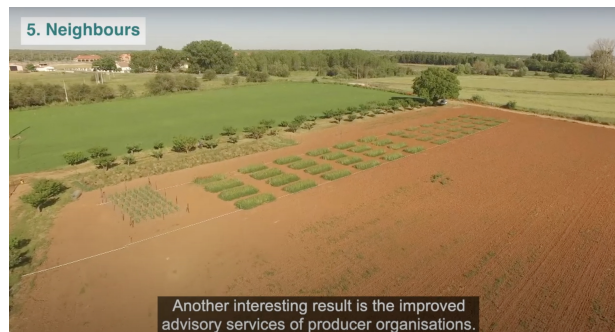




Language Version

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Project of the month



Spanish food producers organise to strengthen sustainability

Organic food systems are often associated with sustainable food systems and a multi-actor group of Spanish organisations has shown how CAP support can be used to help upscale outputs of organic food in Salamanca, Toledo and Guadalajara.

[ECOPIONET](#) is an EIP-AGRI Operational Group project that was nominated for the 2021 Rural Inspiration Awards thanks to its success in networking farmers, producer organisation's advisors, scientists, and industry representatives engaged in organic farming. Results of this cooperation between different food chain actors have improved their collective knowledge of agroecosystems, new technologies, farm management, and commercialisation of organic products. Learn more about [ECOPIONET's good practice](#) approach to supporting agricultural producer organisations and their stakeholders improve food sustainability.

News



Rural Pact launched

An EU-wide [Rural Pact](#) was launched at the end of 2021 as part of the long-term vision for the EU's rural areas. The new Pact aims to mobilise public authorities and stakeholders to act on the needs and aspirations of rural residents.

The Rural Pact will provide a common framework to engage and cooperate at EU, national, regional and local level. Vice-president Šuica, Commissioner Wojciechowski and Commissioner Ferreira extended an [open invitation](#) to join the discussion on the Rural Pact. All interested parties are invited to express their support to the goals of the vision [by completing the Rural Pact engagement form](#) and participate in the development and implementation of the Rural Pact. In June 2022 the Commission will organise a high-level Rural Pact conference which will offer the opportunity to bring all contributions together and define the actions to take.



Carbon farming challenge confirmed in the new European Commission Communication

A new [Communication on Sustainable Carbon Cycles](#) from the European Commission includes a 'Carbon farming challenge' to help achieve the EU's proposed 2030 climate target for carbon capture in the land sector.

By 2030 carbon farming initiatives should contribute 42 [Mt CO₂eq](#) of storage to Europe's natural carbon sinks according to the new Communication. Furthermore, every land manager should have access to verified emission and removal data by 2028 to enable a wide uptake of carbon farming.

Referring to the Communication's ambition, Commissioner for Agriculture Janusz Wojciechowski said: "Carbon farming will strengthen the contribution of farmers and foresters to the decarbonisation of our economy, by providing extra income for farmers, while protecting biodiversity, making farms more resilient to natural disasters and ensuring food security. Research and innovation will also contribute to this goal, providing further

solutions to farmers and foresters.”



Agricultural and rural themes for the French Presidency of the Council of the EU

Agricultural and rural themes for the French Presidency of the Council of the EU which started in January 2022 will include promotion of ecological transitions, sustainable trade, and rural matters.

[President Macron's speech introducing France's priorities for its chairing of the Council](#) of the EU highlighted the potential from common approaches by Member States to “defend at European level the excellence of our agricultural model”. European governments were seen by Macron as being able to raise standards of food quality and environmental quality overseas, “demonstrating global solidarity alongside strategic autonomy.”

Action against pesticide risks was also referenced in the President's speech and the [Programme of the Presidency \(see pages 60-61\)](#). This is expected to include delivering the Farm to Fork Action Plan's proposal for a revision of the [Sustainable Use of Pesticides Directive](#). Another Farm to Fork action due to be launched during the French Presidency is a proposal for a [Farm Sustainability Data Network](#). Its aims to contribute to a wide uptake of sustainable farming practices that will further underline the excellence of the EU's agricultural model.

The new EU Rural Pact will be complemented and promoted by the French Parliament's call for a [European rural agenda](#) to be advanced under France's EU Presidency

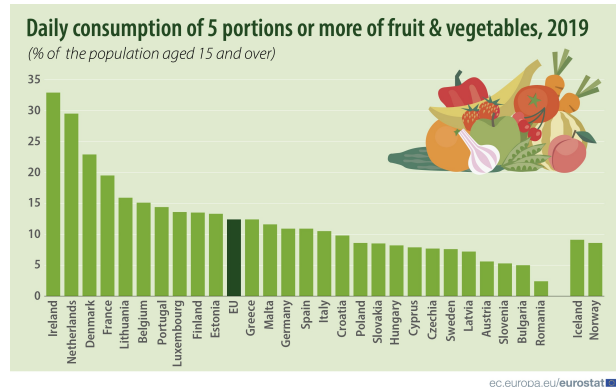


New organic legislation

The [new organic legislation entered into force on 1 January 2022](#), following the postponement of its implementation for a year. These new rules reflect the

changing nature of this rapidly growing sector and are designed to ensure fair competition for farmers whilst preventing fraud and maintaining consumer trust.

Organic certification will now be easier for small farmers thanks to a new system of group certification and certification can now cover a wider list of products (e.g., salt, cork, beeswax, maté, vine leaves, palm hearts). A more uniform approach is in place to reduce risks from pesticide contamination and additional rules apply for rearing deer, rabbits or poultry. Producers in third countries will have to comply with the same set of rules as EU-based producers and overall controls will be strengthened by tighter precautionary measures with robust checks along the entire supply chain.



EU food policy can help boost consumption of fruit and vegetables

Nutrition continues to increase in importance in EU food policy and CAP support can be used to boost both supply and demand for foods ranked high in nutritional quality - such as fruit and vegetables which EU consumers continue to shun.

Production, processing, and promotion of nutritious food is prioritised throughout the Farm to Fork strategy's push for food security and sustainable food systems. Healthy fats and plant-based diets provide nutritious options for EU citizens and these diets are also healthy for our environment because they can help reduce emissions from livestock as well as capture carbon. Despite these fundamental food facts, many EU citizens still consume low amounts of nutritious food and this can weaken society's overall resilience. New figures from Eurostat reveal that in 2019, 33% of people surveyed in the EU reported not consuming any fruit or vegetables daily and only 12% of the population consumed the recommended five portions or more daily. [See and share](#) the latest Eurostat infographics illustrating different consumption patterns for fruit and vegetables across Member States and by gender.



CAP socio-economic impacts support rural resilience

A recently released evaluation report of the European Commission considers that greater poverty, land abandonment, and rural decline would happen in the absence of the CAP. This is seen as representing important added value from a common EU-level policy in this field.

The evaluation investigated CAP contributions to rural Europe's development in terms of reducing social and economic imbalances, such as social exclusion within rural areas and between rural and surrounding areas. Evaluation findings refer to CAP's "spill-over" economic benefits and particularly for less developed regions. Find out more about CAP's socio-economic impacts supporting rural resilience from the [full evaluation report](#).



How good is your CAP knowhow?

Capacity building techniques and learning in general continue to make use of games as a fun way of encouraging knowledge development. Quizzes can be effective for this purpose and an interesting example is found in a new online quiz full of CAP facts.

Designed as part of EURACTIV's EU-funded CAP communication series, this short online quiz covers many different aspects of CAP and European agriculture. Its contents help raise awareness about CAP truths as well as correct CAP misconceptions. Whether you think you are a CAP expert or not, this new interactive game offers an enlightening opportunity to [check your European agricultural knowhow](#).



Farmers and producers benefit from EU food quality schemes

Food quality is a fundamental focus of the new CAP which can help encourage the use of quality schemes such as [Geographic Indications \(GIs\)](#) or [Traditional Specialities Guaranteed \(TSGs\)](#). These have been shown to provide a fair return and competitive advantage for food producers.

An [evaluation of GIs and TSGs published by the European Commission in December](#) reports that these schemes provide benefits for the producers although not systematically in all Member States. Main limitations are the low consumer awareness and understanding in some Member States, however the schemes do provide a clear EU added value. GIs and TSGs were assessed to be efficient, with the various benefits for producers outweighing the costs of a detailed registration procedure, and low costs for public bodies (at EU and national levels) at an estimated 0.12% of the total sales value.



Podcast: festive food sustainability

DG AGRI's latest edition of its [Food for Europe podcast series](#) looked at festive foods and farm products from the perspective of sustainability, tradition and quality.

Charente-Maritimes in France is the location for a podcast interview with an oyster farmer whose bivalves benefit from an EU Protected Geographical Indication. Other contributions come from Julia and Wesley, butchers in Brussels selling slow-growing, forage-feeding turkeys. Master chocolatier Pierre Marcolini is also featured, as well as a Christmas tree farmer from the Ardennes.



Strengthening EU-funded promotion of sustainable and nutritional agri-food products

For 2022, €185.9 million are available for the promotion of EU agri-food products. This year's [promotion policy work programme](#) focuses on products and agricultural practices that support the European Green Deal objectives, such as EU organic products, fruit and vegetables, sustainable agriculture and animal welfare.

Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski said: "Our promotion policy plays a key role in the transition towards sustainable food systems. Our aim is to increase awareness of organic

farming and more sustainable agricultural practices, coupled with the promotion of fresh fruit and vegetables, essential for healthy eating and balanced diets. Demand for these products needs to grow if we want more producers to join the green transition.”

Calls for proposals for the upcoming 2022 campaigns will be published soon. A wide range of bodies, such as trade organisations, producer organisations and agri-food groups responsible for promotion activities are eligible to apply for funding and submit their proposals.



New tools for EU biodiversity governance

Two new tools from the [EU Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity](#) are now active to help Member States and the EU track progress in implementing the [EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030](#).

An online [actions tracker](#) will provide up-to-date information on the state of implementation of the many actions of the EU Biodiversity Strategy. This is accompanied by a [targets dashboard](#) that will illustrate progress against quantified biodiversity targets set by the Strategy, both at the EU level as well as in the Member States. The dashboard is in its prototype phase, with a current set of seven indicators that will be complemented with additional ones in 2022. The Commission sees these tools as being central to enhancing the EU biodiversity governance framework due to their ability to monitor and publicise progress on commitments made.



EU farmers gain from growth in agri-food trade

Latest EU data shows that EU agri-food trade continues to show notable growth compared to 2020. Exports increased by 8% to €145.2 billion and the overall agri-food trade surplus was €51 billion which is an increase of 17% compared to the same period in 2020.

Wine, confectionary, pig meat and cereals experienced some of the highest growth in

exports to agri-food markets in countries such as China, South Korea and Switzerland. Sizeable decreases in imports from several countries occurred, with the European Commission highlighting the most notable of which was a €2.9 billion or 27% fall in the value of those from the United Kingdom. See the [full data set](#) showing key trade markets for EU agri-food products.



CAP communication and visibility rules

New guidance from the European Commission has been published on the legally binding communication and visibility rules for EU funding programmes including CAP financial support.

All recipients of EU funding have a general obligation to publicise their EU support and ensure its visibility. The new [Communication and visibility rules document](#) clarifies these legal requirements (including information about CAP funding on page 41). Further [tips on communicating and raising EU visibility](#) are also available.



News from the LEADER world

Three new LEADER cooperation factsheets are available on the [ENRD website](#) and illustrate LEADER cooperation in the French regions of Aquitaine, Limousin and Poitou-Charentes.

If you are interested in LEADER 'beyond the EU', you will find interesting updates about LEADER projects in Turkey in our document on [transnational cooperation with third countries](#).

In addition, the latest newsletter by the [Albanian Network for Rural Development](#) brings you updates from the country, including on the 3rd edition of the 'Pro Rural Women' event, the fundraising campaign 'You Are Not Forgotten!' targeting rural youth, and the meeting of Albanian LAGs.

Publications



CAP performance in the programming period 2014-2020

A fair standard of living for farmers and a safe and healthy food supply are some of the main results of the CAP over the last seven years, according to a [report to the European Parliament and Council on the CAP performance](#) adopted last month by the European Commission. The [report](#) builds on the initial report of 2018, evaluates the implementation of the common monitoring and evaluation framework (CMEF) and assesses the performance in delivery of the CAP main objectives for 2014-2020: (1) viable food production, with a focus on agricultural income, agricultural productivity and price stability; (2) sustainable management of natural resources and climate action, with a focus on greenhouse gas emissions, biodiversity, soil and water; and (3) balanced territorial development, with a focus on rural employment, promoting growth and reducing poverty in rural areas. Conclusions in the report indicate that although CAP has performed generally well in some key areas but, results in enhancing environmental protection and climate action were mixed. The report also notes that the potential of the CAP was not fully realised, and that the CAP must do more to support the sustainability of EU agriculture.



The rise and fall of monoculture farming

A new article in the European Commission's Horizon Research & Innovation Magazine looks at the topic of monoculture farming. The author, Allison Balogh, acknowledges that "by growing just one crop species in a field at a time, monocultures enable farmers to use machinery, increasing the efficiency of activities like planting and harvesting. But despite supplying the lion's share of the world's food, monocultures are amongst the most controversial features of today's agriculture." You can [read her full article](#) in the agriculture and environment section of the Horizon publication.



Evaluating CAP impacts on natural resources

CAP contributions to natural resources were the subject of an evaluation published by the European Commission in December. It points out that the CAP can provide the EU with added value by setting a higher level of ambition than might be available under a purely national approach. Other added value included supporting knowledge sharing across Member States. However, the potential of the CAP in addressing sustainable management of natural resources was not considered fully exploited during the 2014-2020 period. Member States did not allocate sufficient funding to the most targeted measures, and/or chose a minimalistic approach for cross-compliance and greening conditions. These are among the key findings from the [Evaluation of the impact of the common agricultural policy on biodiversity, soil and water \(natural resources\)](#).



New financial instrument CAP case study: Poland

A [Polish financial instrument using CAP funding](#) is the subject of a recent publication from the European Commission's fi-compass project. Information in the case study explains how this guarantee fund works with the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) to help provide new investment opportunities for Polish farms and agri-food enterprises. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the financial instrument structure was revised in 2020 to facilitate access to working capital loans supporting financial liquidity for the target groups. An interest rate subsidy to reduce the cost of working capital loans was also introduced under the instrument. The case study shows how EAFRD guarantees used in combination with grants, also in the form of interest rate subsidy, can facilitate access to funding for agriculture and agri-food enterprises.

Past Events

ENRD Rural Revitalisation Thematic Group

Rural revitalisation is a central theme for the long-term vision for rural areas. Our first meeting of the [ENRD Thematic Group \(TG\) on Rural Revitalisation](#) in December provided a space for exchange on the key enabling factors that support rural revitalisation. This paid particular attention to those rural areas affected by population loss, ageing, and a lack of economic opportunities. Presentations are available on the TG [event page](#) and a report will be available soon.

20th meeting of the Subgroup on Innovation

The [20th meeting of the Subgroup on Innovation](#) concentrated on further defining the scope and objectives of proposed activities that had been previously identified and prioritised by Subgroup members. It included information about two recent EIP-AGRI events that networked CAP stakeholders interested in [operationalising forest innovation](#), as well as how [farm data can improve farm performance](#). Updates were provided about possible future networking arrangements and establishment of [focus groups](#) concerning fruit pesticides, digital tools for nutrient management, and nature-based water management.

EIP-AGRI workshop Farm data for better farm performance

On 9-10 December 2021 the EIP-AGRI workshop [Farm data for better farm performance](#) took place. It took stock of ongoing successful projects and initiatives that collect and make use of farm generated data to improve farm performance. At the workshop the role of different stakeholders and the use of these data for agricultural production have been examined. The event included a Project Market activity where participants presented projects and ideas and met other people sharing the same interests.

EUREKA

The [Horizon-funded EUREKA project](#) is piloting an EU-level open-source knowledge platform known as the EU FARMBOOK. The EUREKA project advisory group (including DG AGRI) met in December to present and discuss progress with the platform. Discussions during the event indicate potential for the EU FARMBOOK to be used by new CAP Networks, for example to engage more with AKIS and strengthen the role of farmers in supply chains. Feedback from the meeting is informing further development work with the platform. Follow the [EUREKA project](#) to find out more about how its ongoing developments could help farmers, foresters, and other rural businesses to benefit from practical knowledge and innovative solutions that are generated by Horizon 2020 multi-actor projects.

Territorial scenarios for the Danube and Adriatic Ionian macro-regions

Territories covering the Danube and Adriatic Ionian macro-regions provided the context for an online event last month organised by the EU-funded European Spatial Planning Observation Network (ESPON). This workshop discussed [territorial dimensions of quality of life in relation to increasing demands for citizen participation in political processes](#). The Rural Pact's aim to address concerns about people feeling left behind is an example of such a political process. Hence the ESPON meeting's outcomes may be useful for ENRD stakeholders interested in how to help better measure policymaking's impact on quality of life. ESPON's approach recognises that quality of life policy perspectives can add a more personal view of territories based on how well people feel about living in a certain place, how they feel about it and experience it, and what they expect from it. More on this approach is also available in an [ESPON Policy Brief: Quality of Life for territorial and citizen-centric policies](#).

Events

27 January 2022

1st meeting of the ENRD Thematic Group on Rural Proofing

Organiser:
ENRD

[Find out more](#)

27 January 2022

Policy instruments to reach Farm to Fork targets

Organiser:
EURACTIV

[Find out more](#)

27 January 2022

Better connected rural areas: Improving rural mobility

Organiser:
Smart Rural 21

[Find out more](#)

28 January 2022

Berlin Agriculture Ministers' Conference

Organiser:
Global Forum for Food and Agriculture

[Find out more](#)

31 January 2022

Implementing the rural vision

Organiser:
SHERPA PROJECT

[Find out more](#)

7-8 February 2022

Informal Meeting of EU Agriculture Ministers

Organiser:
French Ministry of Agriculture and Food

[Find out more](#)

21 February 2022

EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council

Organiser:
Council of the EU

[Find out more](#)

22 February 2022

10th Meeting of the LEADER/CLLD Sub-group

Organiser:
DG AGRI

[Find out more](#)

26 February - 6 March 2022

Salon international de l'agriculture 2022

Organiser:
Paris

[Find out more](#)

29 March 2022

Seminar on Plant-Based Veterinary Medicines

Organiser:
French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety

[Find out more](#)

6-7 April 2022

Meeting of the Advisory Forum of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)

Organiser:
French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES)

[Find out more](#)

10-14 April 2022

European farming systems conference

Organiser:
The Mediterranean Institute for Agriculture, Environment and Development (MED)

[Find out more](#)

12-15 May 2022

10-13 May 2022

25-27 October 2022

**International congress of
mountain and steep slopes
viticulture**

Organiser:
CERVIM

[Find out more](#)

**Regional Conference for
Europe**

Organiser:
Food and Agriculture
Organization of the United
Nations (FAO)

[Find out more](#)

**12th European mountain
convention**

Organiser:
Euromontana

[Find out more](#)

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