

Four solutions from Dutch farmers and growers to make your vision on agriculture a reality

Recommendations for Commissioner for Agriculture and Food Christophe Hansen from LTO Nederland, the Dutch agricultural and horticultural organization.

On behalf of over 35.000 Dutch farmers and growers, we look forward to work with you to enable our members to continue to do what they can do best: produce healthy, safe and sustainable agricultural products for everyone to enjoy. In a fast changing world with geopolitical tensions, we believe it is of utmost importance to invest in sustainable European food production for our strategic autonomy. Dutch farmers and growers are ready to step up. We have solutions that can secure production while meeting societal demands. However, we can not do this alone. European policy should put farmers in a position to use the solutions they have readily available. A level playing field is also very important, avoiding unfair competition on production-restricting rules and policies.

1. Enable sustainable nutrient management

By handling limited nutrient resources carefully, nutrient leakages to the environment can be prevented and less chemical fertilizer is needed in the long term. However, the Nitrates Directive is preventing farmers and growers to take the next step in closing their nutrient loops, mainly because it prioritizes the use of chemical fertilizers over the use of animal manure.

Farmers and growers have the solution:

They are eager to reduce their dependency on chemical fertilizer and limit nutrient leaking by utilizing the sources of nutrients that are naturally available.

You can help:

We call on you work with Member States to swiftly adopt the proposal to enable the use of RENURE fertilizers. In the long term, we ask you to revise the Nitrates Directive to align with current scientific knowledge and best practices.

2. Enable sustainable crop protection

Sustainable crop protection remains a challenge for the future, due to climate change and changing pressure from pests and diseases. Despite that many active substances have been taken off the market, the access of safe, effective and economically viable alternatives is limited.

Farmers and growers have the solution:

They want to work towards resilient crop production, by investing in precision agriculture and using more low-risk alternatives for plant protection products.

You can help:

We call on you to propose concrete measures to improve access to new plant protection products by amending Regulation 1107/2009 and to invest in the development of IPM technologies such as camera systems and crop modelling.

3. Benchmarking and lower administrative burden

Farmers and growers are dealing with regulation from European, national and local level. Without proper coordination of policy objectives, they have to pursue goals that are often conflicting, resulting in heavy administrative burdens.

Farmers and growers have the solution:

They have experience with managing their farms in an integral manner, and already have management tools in place to balance different policy objectives.

You can help:

We call on you to work towards a farm-based EU-wide benchmarking system in the agri-food sector, that sets targets based on results instead of measures.

4. A future proof Common Agricultural Policy

The CAP remains key in securing food production in Europe and farm income. Past reforms however have focused on how the funding of the CAP can also be used to reach environmental goals, without additional funding being added. Conditionality requirements have forced farmers and growers into a measure-based approach, which is often not effective on a local level.

Farmers and growers have the solution:

They are willing to take additional steps for the environment, as long as there is room for local interpretation and they are adequately rewarded financially.

You can help:

We call on you to re-assess the CAP conditionality requirements and to assess how state aid rules can be amended to allow farmers to receive payments that go beyond compensation for costs and income forgone. We also request you to look for funding possibilities outside of the CAP to ensure farmers so payments can incentivize a green business model.