

Meeting the *challenges facing French livestock farming* to ensure its long-term future

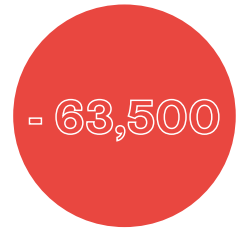
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An age-old activity whose primary purpose is to provide food, livestock farming is now faced with climate change and new societal expectations. Agriculture is the second largest source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, accounting for 19% of the national total. Livestock farming accounts for 80% of this. It has also been singled out for its responsibility for nitrate pollution of water, ammonia pollution of the air and deforestation due to the cultivation of crops for animal feed. In addition, certain types of livestock farming raise questions about animal welfare.

These questions and criticisms, combined with reduced purchasing power and changing lifestyles, are leading consumers to adapt their eating habits. Over the past 25 years, per capita meat consumption has fallen, consumption of milk and dairy products has fallen and egg consumption has risen.

Finally, French livestock farming faces a major challenge: the renewal of its workforce. The constraints of the profession, its arduous nature and the sometimes low incomes on some farms are all obstacles to new farmers setting up in the sector. Over the past 10 years, livestock farming has accounted for two-thirds of farm closures in France.

And yet, livestock farming offers benefits and solutions. It enables carbon to be captured and stored, with the soil of meadows and the hedges of grassland systems acting as “carbon sinks” and providing shelter for biodiversity. Finally, livestock farming provides 700,000 direct and indirect jobs, making up a significant proportion of national employment.



livestock farms
between 2010
and 2020



- 800 million
the trade balance
of the livestock
sector will become
negative in 2022
due to the rise
in imports

→ *How can French livestock farming meet these challenges to ensure its transition and its future?*

Three priority areas for an appropriate *agricultural transition*

1 STRENGTHEN, REDIRECT AND BETTER DISSEMINATE RESEARCH WORK

- Summarise existing research, experimentation and work in order to **build a major research programme aimed at meeting the challenges facing livestock farming.**
→ *Why?* Because livestock farming needs the innovations that France's world-renowned agronomic and veterinary research can provide, and whose work must be aimed at shared objectives that meet current challenges.
- **Enable breeders to become innovative breeders**, by involving them in research work and rewarding this risk-taking with a tax incentive such as the research tax credit. → *Why?* To take account of the solutions already implemented by farmers and compare them with those proposed by researchers, to ensure that they are more widely shared and better adapted to different areas.
- **Develop a methodology for obtaining a scientific and technical diagnosis of a farm.**
→ *Why?* So that farmers can be sure, when they set up and throughout their career, that their business is not only economically sustainable, but also viable from a social and environmental perspective.

2 MOBILISE PUBLIC POLICIES AT ALL LEVELS

- **Prepare the new CAP for 2027 on the basis of an assessment of current measures and their consequences for livestock farming, to provide more effective support for transition, and by building a multi-stakeholder approach at regional level.** → *Why?* Because the

Common Agricultural Policy, adopted at European level but allowing for adjustments at national and regional level, must better support and accompany mixed farming and the various sectors so that they can make the necessary transitions.

- **Implement a major investment and transformation plan for each region.**
→ *Why?* Because it is at local level that action must be taken and available resources mobilised, to maintain or restore local livestock sectors, in particular by encouraging the setting up and passing on of farms.

3 PROVIDE CONSUMERS WITH INFORMATION AND RAISE THEIR AWARENESS OF THE ISSUES SURROUNDING LIVESTOCK FARMING

- **Carry out communication initiatives** (school programmes and social networks for younger children, farm visits, etc.) **tailored to different audiences to explain the realities and positive impacts of the most virtuous livestock farming models.**
→ *Why?* Because the challenges and contributions of livestock farming are often misunderstood and the sector suffers from a simplistic image conveyed by the media and advertising.
- **Enforce the obligation to indicate the national origin of meat and dairy products**, while promoting its implementation through consultation between all stakeholders. → *Why?* To help consumers make the right choices, so that they can support the French meat industry in the face of an increase in meat produced under conditions that do not always meet the same high standards.

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