



Warsaw, 18 October 2024.

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Green REV Institute, a green think tank from Poland, operator and initiator of the largest coalition for a just transition of the food system Future Food 4 Climate, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations to the Draft Food and Agribusiness Strategy 2025.

At the outset, we would like to point out that the events of 2024 have made it emphatically clear that, in the context of threats to agriculture, food security, climate change and society, all actors, including financial institutions, must reform their actions so as not to harm, amplify the climate crisis and support polluters. There is an urgent need to redesign the food and agriculture system.

Professor Piotr Skubala, Green REV Institute expert, biologist, member of the State Environmental Council of the Ministry of Climate and Environment in his introduction to the report Safe and Just. Plant Based Treaty (2023), he pointed out: "In 2009, Earth system and environmental scientists put forward the concept of planetary boundaries, which quite precisely defines a 'safe operating space for humanity'." The researchers, led by Johan Rockström of the Stockholm Resilience Centre and Will Steffen of the Australian National University, set out nine 'Earth's resilience boundaries', crucial for the duration of life on Earth. They point out that crossing even one of them can trigger sudden, non-linear and irreversible environmental change on a global scale. When the authors put forward the concept with policymakers and all of us in mind, the safety thresholds were exceeded for three factors. At the end of 2023, an update of the planetary boundaries was published and six of the nine boundaries were found to have been exceeded. Biosphere integrity (loss of biodiversity), disruption of biogeochemical cycles and



new substances in the environment are in the so-called red zone (high-risk zone), three more: climate change, change of terrestrial ecosystems (deforestation) and freshwater resources are in the yellow zone (uncertainty zone). Professor Johan Rockström commented on the findings as follows: "If transformation does not occur in time, irreversible tipping points and widespread impacts on human well-being are most likely unavoidable. Avoiding this scenario is of paramount importance, provided we want to ensure a safe and just future for current and future generations." (...) In another 2019 warning, signed by nearly 13,000 researchers, scientists from around the world are calling for a declaration of a climate emergency. In the appeal, entitled 'World Scientists' Warning of a Climate Emergency', its authors devote much attention to the need to change the food system. They write, among other things: "A predominantly plant-based diet and a concomitant reduction in global consumption of animal products (...) especially from ruminants (...) can improve human health and significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions (including methane)". They emphasise that this will increase the area of land for growing much-needed plant food for humans (instead of feed for animals), while at the same time some of the land allocated for grazing can be used to introduce natural climate solutions. They also draw attention to solutions such as minimum tillage, with limited impact on the soil, which increases the carbon content of the soil.

Never in the history of mankind have we as a species been at such a time and place. Never before in our time on this planet have we faced such a challenge. How many more warnings, letters, analyses will it take from global science for politicians and business to finally take action to give us a chance to continue to exist safely on Earth? Will reforming the food system towards a plant-based diet be among them?"

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development has a special role in the climate transition and in setting the course for change. The world, including Europe, is today facing enormous challenges related to the climate crisis, its consequences for people, the environment, economies and security.



We note that the EBRD's 2025 strategy identifies some steps towards sustainability, but these are insufficient and hardly address the biggest polluter - the animal agriculture sector, meat, dairy and egg industries. The Bank does not declare a shift away from financing the animal agriculture sector to investments related to plant proteins for humans. The EBRD's 2025 strategy declares support for sustainable development and is expected to promote alternative proteins, but does not exclude funding for livestock projects.

The EBRD has invested heavily in the agribusiness sector over the years, including animal agriculture, meat and dairy production, as well as food processing. In 2023, the EBRD has committed a record EUR 13.1 billion to various projects, a significant portion of which has been directed to the development of the agribusiness sector, which includes animal based farming. In addition, the bank is actively investing in modernising and improving agricultural productivity in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as in Central Asia, which includes projects related to the meat and dairy industries. **Supporting the animal agriculture sector means supporting a sector that, alongside the fossil fuel sector, is on the frontline of a climate, health, environmental disaster.**

Recommendations

1. EBRD support for the plant protein sector

In 2023, the 'What's cooking' report of the United Nations Environment Programme was published. Although a great many UN reports and analyses, including the last one on hunger and malnutrition, the UN usually avoids making reference to the animal agriculture sector and the costs of animal based production. The 'What's cooking' report identifies not only key findings but also good practices and concrete recommendations for countries and international organisations.



Key findings:

"Globally, food systems account for about 30 per cent of current anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions that drive climate change. Animal products - including zoonotic emissions, feed, land-use change and energy-intensive global supply chains - account for almost 60 per cent of food-related emissions, totalling 14.5-20 per cent of global emissions.

The impact of the growing demand for Animal Sourced Food takes place in the context of unsustainable farming methods and over-consumption, especially in middle- and high-income countries. Both production and consumption contribute significantly to climate change, air and water pollution, biodiversity loss and land degradation.

Although animal products are an important source of nutrients, high consumption of red and processed meat is associated with an increased risk of non-communicable diseases. Animal production is also associated with public health risks, such as zoonoses and antimicrobial resistance, as well as animal welfare concerns.

New products, such as plant-based meat, laboratory-reared meat and fermentation-derived foods, show the potential to reduce environmental impacts compared to many conventional products. They also show promise for reducing the risk of zoonoses and antimicrobial resistance, and can significantly reduce animal welfare concerns associated with conventional animal agriculture.

Further research is needed to understand the potential socio-economic and nutritional implications of new alternatives. Policy makers could also help maximise beneficial outcomes by taking steps to protect food security, jobs, livelihoods, social and gender equity and cultural heritage.



The degree of adoption of these new alternatives is likely to depend on their cost, taste, social and cultural acceptability and how they are regulated.

Governments have a range of policy options to explore and support the potential of new alternatives, including support for research (with open access) and commercialisation and just transition policies.

If supported by appropriate regulatory regimes and management instruments, the new alternatives can play an important role, with likely regional differences, in the transition to more sustainable, healthier and less animal-damaging food systems."

Supporting the development of the human plant food sector is crucial for public health, environmental protection and emissions reduction.

The report Reducing food's environmental impacts through producers and consumers clearly identifies the benefits of a plant-based diet for people, the planet and the environment. "A vegan diet may be the 'biggest single way' to reduce one's environmental impact on Earth. Researchers at Oxford University have found that giving up meat and dairy products in the diet can reduce the carbon footprint associated with food by up to 73 per cent. If all humans stopped consuming these products, the area of global agricultural land could be reduced by 75 per cent, equivalent to an area the size of the United States, China, Australia and the European Union combined. Not only would this lead to a significant decrease in greenhouse gas emissions, but it would also free up wild land lost to agriculture, which is one of the main causes of the mass extinction of wildlife. Analysis shows that meat and dairy production accounts for 60 per cent of agricultural greenhouse gas emissions, while the products themselves provide only 18 per cent of the world's calories and 37 per cent of its protein. Lead author Dr Joseph Poore said: "A vegan diet is probably the biggest single way to reduce your impact on planet Earth, not just in terms of greenhouse gases, but also global acidification, eutrophication, land use and water consumption.



This is a much bigger action than reducing flights or buying an electric car. Avoiding the consumption of animal products has much better environmental benefits than trying to buy sustainable meat and dairy."

Financial and legislative support for the plant food sector is support for a green, just transition. It is worth pointing out that the plant-based food sector has a very high development potential, but there is a lack of support for research and development, investment. "Plant-based food is the future. If we want to reduce the carbon footprint of the agricultural sector, we all need to eat more plant-based food - in line with the Official Dietary Guidelines. When the agreement on the green transformation of the agricultural sector (Agricultural Agreement) was signed on 4 October 2021 between the former government (Social Democratic Party), the Danish Liberal Party, the Danish People's Party, the Green Left, Danish Social Liberal Party, the Red-Green Alliance, the People's Conservative Party, the New Right, the Liberal Alliance and the Christian Democrats, a decision was made to develop a **Danish Action Plan for Food of Plant Origin**.

Denmark - like the rest of the world - has faced several major crises in recent years that have affected our health, environment, climate and food supply. The population continues to grow on a planet where climate change is putting pressure on our society. Demand for food is huge, especially in times of crisis, as the war in Ukraine has shown us. The earth has to perform many functions: provide a clean water environment, develop renewable energy sources, increase biodiversity and nature, provide crops for food and feed production, and significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Added to this is the impact of poor eating habits on nutrition and health. Increasing the production and consumption of plant-based food will help solve these challenges.

The Danish government wants to strengthen the Danish plant-based food sector. This will be achieved through a number of initiatives to support the value chain. The action plan is intended to inspire everyone who works in our food systems and influences our daily food choices: from



the farmer and food producer, to the retailer, the canteen food supplier, the export markets - and of course the consumer during the daily supermarket shopping."

These are the words of Jacob Jensen, Minister of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries of Denmark, presented as an introduction to the Danish Action Plan for Plant-Based Food, a Plan to support the plant-based sector. Included in the plan are, among other things, funding for research and development, a change in the Vegetables, Fruit and School Milk Programme to support plant-based substitutes for animal milk, an action plan for food chains, and actions related to public procurement reform. Denmark is not isolated in its efforts to strengthen the plant-based food and plant protein sector for humans. Countries and corporations are working on the transition to the plant protein sector, due to greenhouse gas emissions, climate commitments, public health, challenges and costs of the animal agriculture sector. At the European Vegan Summit, investor Sebastiano Cossia Castiglioni said that plant proteins will become a cornerstone of agriculture and the food system due to dwindling water resources. The biggest challenge today is funding, Heather Courtney (Alwyn Capital), at the European Vegan Summit highlighted the inequalities in funding for animal agriculture foods and foods based on plant proteins.

In Poland alone, sales of plant-based protein foods increased by 109% between 2020 and 2022, with value sales of plant-based alternatives in Poland increasing by 54% to PLN 729 million in 2022. The potential for transition is huge. According to various forecasts, the global market for meat and dairy substitutes is expected to grow at double-digit rates annually and reach billions of dollars over the next few years. One example is a report by Grand View Research, which predicts that the meat substitute market will reach more than US\$24 billion by 2030. It is worth noting that equity investors and venture capital funds also see potential in the plant-based alternatives market. The sector attracted billions of dollars of investment in 2020, with companies such as Impossible Foods and Beyond Meat attracting the attention of consumers and investors alike.



We undoubtedly need support and a strategy for plant protein development in Europe and globally. The EBRD's actions should guide the transition to non-polluting and non-polluting investments that respond to social, health and climate challenges.

2. Completion of funding for the animal agriculture sector, meat, dairy and egg industries.

At the 2021 Finance in Common summit, public development banks committed in a Joint Declaration of all public development banks worldwide to revise their investment strategies and operations to be consistent with and supportive of the goals of the Paris Agreement. Despite this commitment, multilateral development banks continue to invest in the global expansion of industrial breeding. Today, in the face of climate challenges and the reality of climate catastrophe, the banks must be leaders of change and end their support for the animal agriculture sector. There are a great many risks and threats within the contemporary food system, which are caused by inefficient and unfair actions of the actors in charge of food for many groups of society, and which include, among others: antibiotic resistance; decline in biodiversity; threats to food safety and food security, civilisation diseases, diet-related diseases, inefficient direct subsidies, e.g. under the European Union's largest policy, the Common Agricultural Policy; increased emissions from the agricultural sector, particularly emissions from animal husbandry; subsidised policies to promote unhealthy and environmentally damaging foods; increasing malnutrition, hunger and food poverty, both qualitatively as well as quantitative, the intensification of production and the disproportionate increase in the power of a few or a dozen corporations, the decline in the quality of life of people living near large-scale farms and the effects of animal farms on local communities, the increase in violent weather events such as droughts, floods, resulting in risks and challenges for farm management, the strengthening activities of interest groups of large companies in the meat, dairy, egg and animal agriculture sectors, violations of the labour rights of people working in agriculture, climate migration due to the intensifying crisis

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and climate pressures, food waste, pandemics and zoonoses, lack of regulation of the food environment resulting in the consumer being confronted with advertising, promotion, lack of information and buying unhealthy, unethical food, lack of access to healthy local food, inefficient and inequitable use of agricultural land.

As the EIT Food Protein Diversification Think Tank report, Accelerating Protein Diversification for Europe (2023) points out: *"Currently, the food system contributes an alarming 26%-34% of greenhouse gas emissions and 78% of global ocean and freshwater eutrophication. However, there is an opportunity for change in the realm of food systems. By diversifying protein sources, we can not only strengthen our food systems, but also align with the EU's goals for a healthier, more sustainable, resilient and equitable food system with minimised environmental consequences. Diversifying protein sources entails re-evaluating and changing our production and consumption of protein sources, moving from a heavy reliance on resource-intensive animal-based proteins to more sustainable protein sources."*

Financial support for the animal agriculture sector is support for a climate catastrophe. The report Safe and Just. Plant Based Treaty (2023) points out that:

"Dietary choices are shaped by many external factors, including prices (Darmon and Drewnowski, 2015), especially at a time when many countries are experiencing record inflation. Currently, animal-derived foods are extremely heavily subsidised, artificially lowering the price of animal-derived foods and making it difficult to switch to a plant-based diet. Therefore, there is an urgent need to redirect harmful subsidies and taxes in favour of plant-based foods with a lower environmental impact, in order to make them more affordable and accessible to the general public."

Rockström's article 'Planet-proofing the Global Food System', published in Nature Food in 2020, states: "A recent assessment indicates that the 'hidden costs' of global food systems and land use are \$12 trillion, compared to a market value of the global food system of \$10 trillion. If current trends continue, these hidden costs could rise to more than \$13 trillion"



a year by 2030. Not only is the planet subsidising the global food system at a level that probably exceeds its global market value, but the food system also receives huge direct subsidies from governments around the world" (Rockström et al., 2020). One Earth's 2023 study which analysed major EU and US agricultural policies between 2014 and 2020, found that only USD 41 million of public funds were spent on plant-based alternatives (0.1%) compared to USD 43 billion spent on meat and dairy (Vallone and Lambin, 2023 and Carrington, 2023). Cow farmers in the EU received at least 50 per cent of their income from direct subsidies. Animal agriculture farmers in the EU received 1,200 times more public funding and in the US 800 times more than groups producing plant-based meat substitutes and cellular meat.

Nearly \$23 million per minute is spent on subsidies worldwide in animal agriculture and the fossil fuel industry, two major drivers of the climate crisis. The World Bank's 2023 report, Detox Development, says that trillions of dollars a year in fossil fuel, agriculture and fisheries subsidies are causing "environmental havoc", severely damaging the planet and "driving the degradation of the world's essential natural resources - clean air, land and oceans". According to the report, fisheries subsidies of \$118 billion a year are a key factor in the exploitation of marine life, which has led the oceans into a "collective state of crisis". In addition, farm subsidies have been responsible for the destruction of 2.2 million hectares (5.4 million acres) of forest annually. Another FAO, UNDP and UNEP report found that 87% of global food subsidies are harmful to the environment and human health (FAO, UNDP and UNEP, 2021)."

Supporting the animal agriculture sector means supporting antibiotic resistance and violating the right to safe food. When pointing out the violation of the consumer's rights to safety and health protection, it is worth detailing a few facts:

1. In the European Union there is an excessive consumption of meat;



2. Obesity, which is the other side of the coin known as food poverty, is a risk factor for many types of cancer, such as colorectal cancer, kidney cancer or breast cancer, among others;
3. Eating a healthy diet, maintaining a healthy weight throughout life and being regularly active can protect against a number of cancers, including: a 69% reduction in the risk of oesophageal cancer, 63% reduction in cancers of the mouth, throat and larynx, 59% reduction in uterine cancer, 50% reduction in colorectal cancer, 47% reduction in stomach cancer and 38% reduction in breast cancer;
4. The consumption of meat, dairy and eggs is one of the main causes of disease. Animal agriculture is responsible for high levels of red and processed meat consumption and contributes to heart disease, obesity, diabetes and cancer (Friel et al, 2009; Aston et al, 2012; Anand et al, 2015).
5. In 2015, the World Health Organisation stated that all processed meats are carcinogenic. This includes bacon, hot dogs, sausages, ham, and all processed meats. Studies have linked dairy to prostate cancer and increased risk of lung, breast and ovarian cancer in people with lactose intolerance. Studies have long shown that vegans are less likely to suffer from certain types of cancer.
6. Less than 10 % of the world's population lives in Europe, but it accounts for a quarter of all cancer cases, cancer is the second leading cause of death in Europe, the leading cause of death from disease in children over one year of age;
7. The number of diagnosed cases is increasing, mainly due to increased life expectancy resulting in an ageing population;
8. Cancer highlights social injustice and inequality in healthcare, as differences in cancer survival rates between EU Member States exceed 25 %;
9. EU citizens have unequal access to prevention, protection from risk factors, education on healthy habits and resources to protect themselves from misleading information;



10. After recovery or in remission, EU citizens have unequal opportunities to return to work, to be financially independent and to return to a harmonious family, social and emotional life;
11. Class and gender are important factors and causes of inequality and injustice at all stages of the disease.

According to the World Health Organisation:

"(...) Antibiotic Microbial Resistance (AMR) threatens the effective prevention and treatment of an increasing number of infections caused by bacteria, parasites, viruses and fungi.

Antimicrobial resistance occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites change over time and no longer respond to drugs, making it difficult to treat the infection and increasing the risk of the spread of disease, severe illness and death. As a result, drugs become ineffective and infections persist in the body, increasing the risk of spreading to others.

Antimicrobials - including antibiotics, antivirals, antifungals and antiparasitics - are drugs used to prevent and treat infections in humans, animals and plants. Microorganisms that develop resistance to antimicrobials are sometimes referred to as 'superbugs'.

Unfortunately, the problem is usually overlooked in the public debate and we very rarely hear about the risks of antibiotic resistance in the context of food safety.

Antibiotic resistance data show how important the topic of AMR is to the health debate.



The World Health Organisation indicates that:

- . Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is one of the biggest global threats to public health and development. AMR in bacteria is estimated to have been directly responsible for 1.27 million deaths globally in 2019 and contributed to 4.95 million deaths;
- . The inappropriate and excessive use of antimicrobials in humans, animals and plants is a major factor in the development of drug-resistant pathogens.
- . AMR affects countries in all regions and at all income levels. Its drivers and consequences are compounded **by poverty and inequality**, with low- and middle-income countries being the most affected.
- . Antimicrobial resistance threatens many of the achievements of modern medicine. It makes treatment of infections more difficult and makes other medical procedures and treatments - such as surgery, caesarean sections and cancer chemotherapy - much riskier.
- . The world is facing a crisis in access to antibiotics. With increasing levels of antibiotic resistance, research and development is inadequate and additional resources are urgently needed to ensure equitable access to new and existing vaccines, diagnostics and medicines.
- . In addition to death and disability, antimicrobial resistance has significant economic costs. The World Bank estimates that AMR **could result in additional healthcare costs of US\$1 trillion by 2050 and gross domestic product (GDP) losses of US\$1 trillion to US\$3.4 trillion per year by 2030.**
- . Priorities in the fight against antimicrobial resistance in human health include preventing any infections that may result in the inappropriate use of antimicrobials; ensuring universal access to high-quality diagnostics and appropriate treatment of infections; and strategic information and innovation, for example surveillance of antimicrobial resistance and antimicrobial consumption/use, and research and development of new vaccines, diagnostics and medicines.



In July 2022. The European Commission, together with Member States, identified AMR **as one of the three most serious health threats in the EU** It is estimated that more than 35,000 people in the EU/EEA and more than 1.2 million people worldwide die each year as a direct result of infection with antibiotic-resistant bacteria. If authorities and countries do not take further action, the number of AMR deaths worldwide could reach more than 10 million per year by 2050, more than the expected number of deaths from cancer and diabetes combined, which could cause economic damage as catastrophic as the global financial crisis of 2008-2009.

"In Poland in 2019, there were 5 600 deaths attributed to antimicrobial resistance and 24 100 deaths related to antimicrobial resistance. Poland has the 46th lowest age-standardised mortality rate per 100 000 population attributable to antimicrobial resistance in 204 countries. The number of deaths due to AMR in Poland is higher than the number of deaths due to neurological diseases, digestive diseases, diabetes and kidney diseases, respiratory infections and tuberculosis and chronic respiratory diseases." We will give the example of Poland, a country where we are seeing an intensification of animal agriculture and a steady increase in the number of large-scale farms. Poland is using more and more antibiotics in animal production, while the rest of the European Union countries are limiting them. In 2022, Poland's antibiotic consumption per kilogram of body weight (mg/CPU), was 196 mg, up 55 per cent from 2011 levels. Meanwhile, in Europe's largest meat producer, Spain, consumption was 127 mg, down by as much as 65 per cent. The Netherlands started from a similar level of antibiotic consumption to Poland (113 mg), but reduced it by 67 per cent to 37 mg. Germany, also a major animal agriculture producer, reduced its use of medicines by 64 per cent from 211 mg to 70 mg. The Czechs had already outperformed Poland a decade ago(83 mg), but still reduced their use by almost half, to 46 mg. France, the third largest livestock producer in Europe, started with a score of 114 mg to reduce antibiotic use in animal husbandry by 65 per cent, to 38 mg/PCU.



In 2017. The Supreme Audit Office audited the use of antibiotics in animal husbandry in the Lubuskie region.

"The results of the NIK audit indicate that antibiotics are widely used in animal farms. They were used by as many as 70 per cent of animal breeders in the Lubuskie region covered by water and feed monitoring. In turkey and slaughter chicken farms, the percentage was even higher, exceeding 80 per cent. In every case examined, the use of antibiotics was justified on therapeutic grounds. However, the gaps in supervision of this market are so serious that the official picture may not correspond to reality. Therefore, the NIK - without prejudging the legitimacy of the administration of antibiotics to animals on farms, or deciding whether the preparations were administered prophylactically or in justified therapeutic cases - points out that the scale and extent of their use raises legitimate concerns about the effects this may have now and in the future."

Even then, the NIK indicated that:

- *"Precise data on the use of antibiotics in animal husbandry is not available to the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry only has data (provided by pharmaceutical wholesalers) on sales of veterinary medicinal products (including antimicrobial substances, i.e. antibiotics, among others). These data show that sales of veterinary antibiotics have steadily increased in recent years (from 475 tonnes in 2011 to 582.5 tonnes in 2015), and that more than 70 per cent of veterinary antibiotics sold in Poland during this period were, as in other EU countries, older generation antibiotics (tetracyclines, penicillins and sulphonamides)."*
- *"Reliable data on the scale, scope and type of antibiotics used in animal production were also not available to the inspected Inspection Authorities, and fragmentary information in this respect was only revealed in documentation from individual inspections. This situation was influenced by conditions essentially beyond the control of the inspected inspection bodies, i.e.: the lack of a nationwide platform/database on the use of*



antibiotics or the obligation to report the use of antibiotics to the supervisory authorities."

Factory farms have a significant negative impact on building the resilience of the food system. Farms release large amounts of pollutants into ground and surface water, emit significant amounts of greenhouse gases such as methane and carbon dioxide, and lead to soil degradation. These negative environmental impacts undermine natural life-support systems and reduce the long-term resilience of food systems.

Factory farms often specialise in the production of one type of animal or plant, which can lead to a lack of biodiversity. Monocultures are more vulnerable to hazards such as diseases or pests, leading to significant losses in food production and reducing the overall resilience of the food system. Intensive animal production on industrial farms leads to health problems in both animals and humans. The use of antibiotics in breeding to prevent disease or accelerate growth leads to the development of antibiotic resistance, which poses a serious threat to public health. Factory farms negatively affect local farming communities by displacing smaller, local farms and leading to a concentration of land ownership. Such concentration reduces farm diversity, limits local agricultural knowledge and reduces local resilience to economic change. Industrial food production focuses on quantity rather than quality. As a result, products from industrial farms are expected to have lower nutritional value compared to those from more sustainable production systems. This affects the health of consumers and reduces overall population resilience to disease.

The White Paper: Stench, Blood and Tears by Dr Sylwia Spurek, is the only comprehensive study to date to show the facts and comments of expert persons on the impact of animal agriculture production on human health and life, among other things.



"Farms have a negative impact on human health - both globally and locally. People living near them are at risk of developing a variety of health problems, which can be attributed to the following effects of farms: elevated levels of PM2.5; the spread of zoonoses (through direct contact with infected animals or indirectly through the environment); the burden of diseases such as asthma, pneumonia, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), antibiotic resistance (antibiotic-resistant and mutant antibiotic-resistant bacterial strains and antibiotic resistance genes), and the psychosomatic and irritant effects of odours and noise. To this set of local problems must be added the risk, also relevant globally, of the emergence of further zoonoses caused by disease agents that are new or existing, which will develop additional characteristics after a change of host or area of distribution. Examples of such diseases are Q fever, which has appeared in the Netherlands in a human population living around a goat farm, and avian influenza, which experts believe will sooner or later trigger an epidemic of a scale that is difficult to predict. According to the One Health concept, promoted by, among others, the European Commission, human health is closely linked to animal health and the state of the environment. This approach aims to ensure the long-term sustainable use of the Earth's resources, the need to provide wholesome and healthy food for people and to protect the health and welfare of animals, especially so-called farmed animals. Its practical application implies the need to design and implement programmes, policies, legislation and research based on collaboration between many sectors to achieve better public health outcomes. The concept is implemented to varying degrees at local, national and global levels. It has been gaining popularity in recent years due to the increasing epidemic threat from diseases of animal origin."

In June 2022. Ministry of Health, in a letter summarising the analyses carried out in Wielkopolska, indicated:



"Animal agriculture is undoubtedly not without its health implications for both those working on industrial farms and those living in the vicinity. In addition to chemical and physical hazards, harmful factors of biological origin are a threat, which include micro- and macro-organisms (bacteria, viruses, actinomycetes, fungi) and the structures and substances they produce, which have an adverse effect on humans and can cause ailments and diseases of, among other things, occupational origin. In a rural environment, the sources of harmful biological agents (SCBs) are infected humans and animals, sewage, waste, animal and plant products, dust, human and animal excretions, clinical material, soil, water, aerosols. SCBs are most commonly transmitted by the air-droplet route, air-dust route, through the skin and mucous membranes, and by the bite of arthropods (ticks, fleas). Based on the type of effect on the human body, harmful biological agents can be divided into those that cause zoonoses (zoonotic diseases) or are characterised by allergenic and immunotoxic effects. One of the most serious risks for workers on industrial farms are bioaerosols, which may include particles whose source is mainly animal agriculture (secretions, excretions, epidermal fragments, feathers, etc.). In Poland, there are no binding standards for permissible concentrations of bacteria, thermophilic actinomycetes, fungi and bacterial endotoxin in the air at given workplaces, while there are proposals of the Expert Group on Biological Factors for permissible concentrations of the above-mentioned factors in workplaces contaminated with organic dust. Difficulties with the introduction of legally binding standards are due, among other things, to the limitations of scientific research on bioaerosols on factory farms. Private entrepreneurs are reluctant to agree to air sampling for fear that such activities may have a stressful effect on the animals."

Support for the animal agriculture sector is about strengthening violations of the right to healthy, safe food and living in a clean environment.



As the authors and contributors to the Options for the Paris - Compliant Animal Agriculture Sector report (Harvard 2024) point out:

"All aspects of society need to be radically transformed to fit into the global temperature limits set by the Paris Agreement. Most policy action has focused on the energy transition, however, a transition in the food system is also needed - particularly for carbon-intensive agricultural products from animal based production. For the first time, we identify a potential Paris Agreement-compliant emissions trajectory for the livestock sector by obtaining responses from more than 200 climate scientists and sustainable food/agriculture experts from 48 countries. More than 90% of the respondents focused mainly (51%) or partly (40%) on their research on the causes, impacts or mitigation of climate change, and most had 11 or more years of experience in their field. The majority of experts (92%) agree that reducing emissions from the animal agriculture sector is important to limit temperatures to a maximum of 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and that emissions from the animal agriculture sector should be reduced as much as possible to reduce the risk of exceeding temperatures by 1.5°C (87%) or 2°C (85%). The largest number of experts agree that emissions from the animal agriculture sector must peak before 2025 in developed (35%) and middle-income countries (30%), and globally (28%). The largest number of experts agree that emissions from animal based production must peak after 2030 in low-income countries (30%). In addition, 78% of respondents believe it is important that absolute animals numbers also peak globally by 2025."

The United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) What's Cooking (2023) report indicated that:

"Globally, food systems are responsible for about 30 per cent of current anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. Animal products - including emissions from animal agriculture, feed crops, land-use



change and energy-intensive global supply chains - account for almost 60 per cent of food-related emissions, bringing the total to between 14.5 and 20 per cent of global emissions. The impacts of increasing demand for animal products (ASF) occur in the context of unsustainable farming methods and over-consumption, particularly in middle- and high-income countries. Overall, production and consumption contribute significantly to climate change, air and water pollution, biodiversity loss and land degradation. Although animal products are an important source of nutrition, high consumption of red meat and processed meat is associated with an increased risk of non-communicable diseases. The production of animal products is also linked to public health risks, such as animal-borne diseases and antibiotic resistance, and animal welfare concerns. Novel plant-based meat, cell-cultured meat and fermented products show the potential to reduce environmental impacts compared to many conventional animal products. They also hold the promise of reducing the risk of animal-borne diseases and antibiotic resistance, and can significantly reduce animal welfare concerns associated with conventional animal agriculture. Policymakers and politicians can also help by taking steps to protect food security, jobs, livelihoods, social and gender equality and culture. Governments have numerous policy options to explore and support the potential of alternatives, including support for (open access) research and commercialisation and equitable transition policies.

Supported by appropriate legislation and management instruments, animal product alternatives can play an important role in transforming food systems to be more sustainable, healthier and less harmful to animals."

Food security as well as food safety today depends on the openness and preparedness of Member States and EU authorities to move towards sustainable systems and a consistent shift away from animal agriculture production, which, on the one hand, makes the EU independent from the supply of plant protein for animal agriculture, on the other hand, builds local food systems based



on plant protein for humans, strengthens public health and reduces the risks of antibiotic resistance, diet-related diseases and builds a food system that is able to limit damage to the climate, environment and biodiversity.

The transition will not take place without supporting the transition of farms to plant-based systems for people and supporting plant-based food producers. The first and necessary step is to abandon support for the livestock sector.

Summary

In the paper, we made recommendations on the need for a rapid transition of the food and agriculture system towards sustainability and the EBRD's role in this process. A key challenge is to redesign the food system to be fair, equitable and inclusive. The EBRD's 2025 strategy, despite some steps towards sustainability, does not sufficiently address the costs generated by the animal agriculture sector to people, the planet, economies and animals.

Our recommendations indicate that a key element of the future of agriculture should be to completely shift investment away from the livestock sector and redirect support towards the development of plant-based proteins for humans. In the face of climate change, land degradation and the health risks associated with over-consumption of animal products, the EBRD has a unique opportunity to play a key role in transforming the food system.

The vision for the future of agriculture is to develop agriculture that works for nature, public health and the protection of biodiversity. Transforming the food system into a more equitable and sustainable one requires investment in research, innovation and support for plant-based food producers.

Key recommendations:

- Ending funding for the animal agriculture sector - meat, dairy, eggs and investment in plant proteins for humans.



- Promoting a plant-based diet as a response to the climate and health crisis.
- Support innovation and research into meat and dairy alternatives that have a lower impact on the environment, economies, public health, indigenous peoples.

The EBRD, through appropriate investment decisions, can lead the green transformation in the agricultural sector, setting a new standard for food systems in Europe and the world.

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The statement is supported by:

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8. DalEKOwzroczne
9. Daniel Petryczkiewicz
10. DiversityPL
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15. Fashion Revolution Poland
16. Federacja Wegan dla Zwierząt
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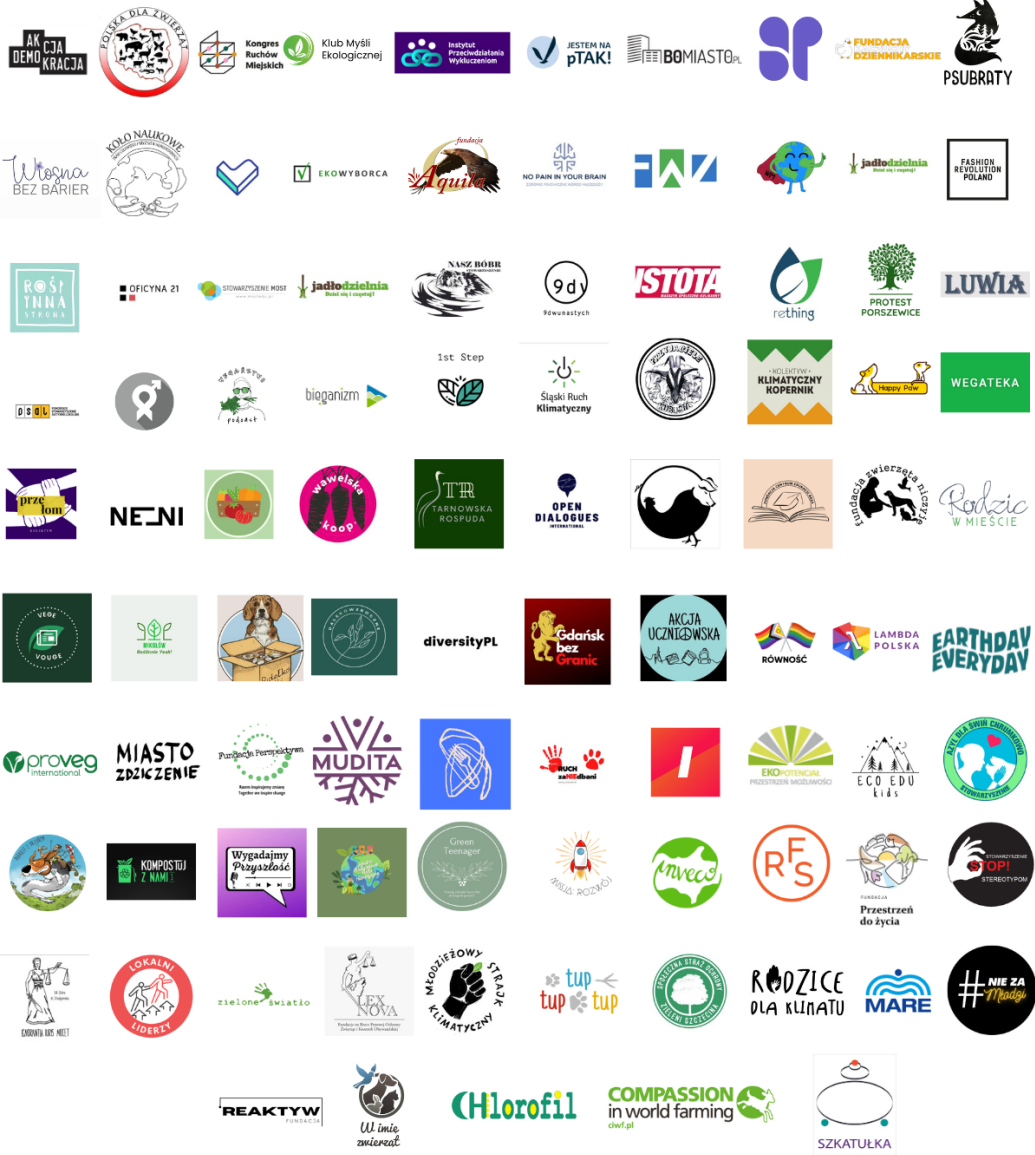
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