



New opportunities for health in European food & agricultural policies

Background brief

3 new opportunities for health in European food and agricultural policies

1. The **EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)** will for the first time ever **include a specific objective on health**.
2. Each EU country will have to prepare a national **CAP strategic plan** explaining how the CAP's objectives, including on health, will be implemented. **Health actors should be involved** in the preparation of this national CAP strategy.
3. The **'Farm to Fork' Strategy for sustainable food**, to be published in spring 2020, will guide the national implementation of the CAP. The 'Farm to Fork' Strategy aims to design a **fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system**.



What is the Common Agricultural Policy?

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is the European Union's (EU) oldest and largest policy.

The CAP impacts on many public health dimensions, including food security, nutrition, air quality, antimicrobial resistance, climate change, agrochemicals use, biodiversity and multiple socio-economic dimensions (see e.g. [CAP4Health](#)).

Currently, the CAP is being revised. In its [next seven-year period](#), the CAP will **distribute at least 365 billion EUR, or nearly 30% of the EU budget**. The new CAP will give large flexibility to national governments to set rules on how this money is spent, which will shape the human and environmental health impacts of the policy.





Ensure sufficient, safe and nutritious food



Create a policy framework for impact and inclusion



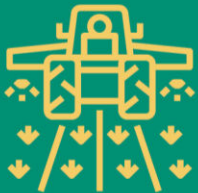
Minimise antibiotics use



Contribute to clean air



Support healthy diets



Limit pesticides use



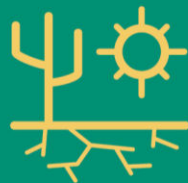
Phase out health-incompatible subsidies



Advance the planet's health



Address socio-economic inequalities



Contribute to climate change mitigation



Promote safe and decent work

CAP: 11 ways to deliver for better health

How the CAP can contribute to human and planetary health

[EPHA \(2019\) CAP 11 Ways to Deliver for Better Health](#)



1. A new CAP objective on health...

In its 2018 proposal to revise the CAP, the European Commission proposes nine new objectives for the policy. One of these is an **objective on health**:

“improve the response of EU agriculture to societal demands on food and health, including safe, nutritious and sustainable food, food waste, as well as animal welfare.”

[Article 6 \(i\) CAP Strategic Plans Regulation](#)

This means that **for the first time in its history, the CAP will have to pursue health as one of its specific objectives.**



... and other health-relevant objectives

At the same time, different other CAP objectives, such as on environment, climate and social cohesion, can also deliver important health co-benefits if ambitiously pursued.



2. The CAP strategic plan...

The revised CAP will have a new way of working. Governments will need to **design a national “CAP strategic plan”**: a comprehensive and consistent national CAP implementation strategy, based on an assessment of needs and sound scientific analysis.

This national “CAP strategic plan” should set **specific targets** and include a strategy to achieve these targets, including for the objective on food and health, but also other (environmental) health objectives.

[Article 95 and further CAP Strategic Plans Regulation](#)



...should involve health actors

Crucially, **national health authorities and civil society organisations will need to be involved in the preparation of CAP implementation plans.**

Governments need to “*organise a partnership*” with “*relevant public authorities*” and “*relevant bodies representing civil society*”.

[Article 94 CAP Strategic Plans Regulation](#)



3. The Farm to Fork Strategy...

The EU Farm to Fork Strategy for sustainable food is expected to be published in Spring 2020. This strategy **aims to design a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system.**

It will among others: *“strive to stimulate sustainable food consumption and promote affordable healthy food for all”*.

[European Commission, European Green Deal](#)



...will set the tone for the CAP?

Among its functions, the Farm to Fork Strategy is meant to **shape the preparation and implementation of national CAP strategic plans**.

The Strategy should help ensure that *“from the outset the national strategic plans for agriculture fully reflect the ambition of the Green Deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy”*.

[European Commission, European Green Deal](#)



**Health is more present
than ever in European
food & agricultural
policies.**



The engagement of health actors will be critical to ensure these policies deliver for human and planetary health.



Therefore, this survey seeks to:

- 1) Sample the level of awareness among actors in public health of the developments in food and agricultural policies.
- 2) Sample whether health actors are being involved in the preparation of national CAP strategic plans.

Results will be used to recommend improved strategies for the involvement of key stakeholders in both EU and national policy processes, especially with a view on the preparation of CAP strategic plans.



For any questions, please refer to nikolai@epha.org

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