
Position Paper of the Animal Task Force with regards to the European Framework Programme 9 (FP9)

March 21st, 2018

Introduction

The Commission is working on a proposal for the framework programme that will succeed Horizon 2020. This will be done in the context of the EU's proposal for the next 7-year EU budget, the Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF). The Commission's proposal will be shaped upon the recommendations from several reports available on the Commission's website [-link](#).

This paper is a **position paper for a research and innovation (R&I) Framework Programme 9 (FP9) supporting a sustainable and competitive livestock production sector in Europe.**

1. Endorsement of European policies and initiatives

The Animal Task Force endorses several priorities of EU research and innovation policy for sustainable farming and food systems:

- **Report on interim evaluation of Horizon 2020, Lamy report of the High-Level Group on maximising the impact of EU research and innovation programmes;**
- The **Strategic approach to EU agricultural research and innovation** (DG Agriculture and Rural Development, 2016);
- The **FOOD2030 initiative** (DG Research and Innovation, 2017), a policy framework to better organise and scale-up research and innovation for sustainable food system in Europe;
- The **EU Strategy on Innovating for Sustainable Growth** (and Review of the EU Bioeconomy Strategy and Action Plan, 2017);
- The **Smart Specialisation of regions** under the structural funds;
- The concepts for implementing the **European Innovation Partnership** on Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability;
- The completion of the **European Research Area**.

2. The essential role of R&I in agriculture (including livestock) in the development of sustainable food systems

The Animal Task Force highlights the essential role of R&I in agriculture (including livestock) in the development of sustainable food systems. A well-functioning food system is even more important nowadays, given the needs of the growing world population and the effects of climate change. Today, the double burden of growing obesity and malnourishment and its consequences on a societal level, needs further attention. In addition, we need to reduce food waste and improve food safety and nutrients security. In tackling all these challenges, R&I is needed. It should be acknowledged that food consumption, and therefore the entire food chain, is heavily depending on the basic crop, livestock and aquaculture production. **Overall, FP9 should include a good balance in funding R&I in both the upstream and downstream parts of the food chain.**

3. The importance of supporting R&I for the improvement of a wide diversity of livestock systems

Livestock is present in almost all regions in Europe across a wide diversity of production systems in terms of local, economic, geographical & sociological contexts: intensive systems, traditional systems, low input systems, organic and agro-ecological systems, etc. This diversity of production systems, combined with a diversity of species, gives resilience to the entire sector and all systems are needed and useful. Therefore, there is a need to identify and implement solutions to improve the sustainability of

every production system, meaning there is no “one size fits all” optimal solution. Meeting the challenges requires developing synergies between different research groups and facilities across Europe with the aim of providing knowledge and innovation to make European farming and food systems as sustainable as possible whilst ensuring food security.

4. The importance of supporting R&I for the development of a sustainable and competitive livestock production in the EU

Research and innovation have contributed substantially to make Europe’s livestock sector as competitive and efficient as it is today while producing a diversity of safe and nutritious food. In the future European integrated food system, an evolution in the role of livestock is foreseen. It has potential to take an active and central role in a biobased circular economy, to contribute to the provision of nutritious, safe and healthy food in a way that also fits the societal demand for reduced environmental impacts of food systems. It has also a key role in providing services for the societies, like contributing to maintain a diversity of landscapes, and to contribute to the economic and social development of many regions in Europe. For the sector, this implies to further “reuse, reduce, recycle” in order to optimise resource use. To accommodate this paradigm shift requires coordinated and integrated interdisciplinary research and effective, proactive translation into practice and policy making. **Continued support for research and innovation in the livestock sector is needed to meet these challenges.**

5. A broad understanding of innovation

Generic knowledge should be developed to support livestock production, as well as tailor made solutions better suited to different specific contexts with the relevant stakeholders. Several areas of innovation are important: technological innovation, food chain innovation and social innovation.

6. The importance of increasing impacts of R&I

The Animal Task Force strongly recommends allocating a substantial budget for R&I for the livestock sector in FP9 in relation to its role in the European circular bioeconomy and food systems as well as to the benefits it delivers to society. There is a need to better substantiate the role and benefits of innovations in the livestock sector on animal health and welfare, environmental sustainability, resource efficiency, economics and value creation.

The Animal Task Force **encourages a more implementing innovation role of the European Innovation Partnership.** European support is needed for the implementation of developed innovations in a variety of farming systems, to promote sector adaptations towards a higher contribution to a more efficient agriculture and competitiveness on global markets. The European Innovation Partnership should increase its role in the implementation of innovation rather than on just developing innovation.

The Animal Task Force recommends that FP9 calls should be very clear about the desired impact from projects, such as basic versus applied research, long term versus short term impact, innovation driven versus policy driven impact, etc. It should also be made clear why a specific instrument (e.g. RIA or IA) is chosen.

7. The need for systemic approaches

The Animal Task Force encourages the future development of livestock production systems using holistic agriculture approaches to optimise synergies in production systems. Integration of livestock and plant sectors could help to maximise circularity in production ecosystems, evaluate and protect the properties of agro-ecosystems (like land/soil characteristics), optimise the use of biomass, minimize damage to the environment, improve the efficiency of livestock production and provide ecosystem services (e.g. services linked to the vitality of territories, employment in rural areas, landscape and biodiversity preservation and cultural heritage)... **These approaches could improve consumers' global health by integrating considerations related to healthy soils, healthy plants and healthy animals in the food production system.** Bringing together research groups with complementary expertise (feeding, animal breeding, reproduction, nutrition, physiology and health, new technologies (incl. ICT, -omics approaches and New Breeding Techniques, food evaluation, modelling, economics, sociology, multi-

criteria evaluation, etc.) is necessary to address the complexity of issues related to societal challenges and to consider the huge diversity of production systems and various scales.

8. Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI)

The Animal Task Force supports the Responsible Research and Innovation approach (open science) that aims to foster the engagement of societal actors in the design and implementation of relevant research projects, in order to facilitate uptake of results by end-users and social acceptance of solutions. Research and innovation projects should include participatory approaches -like “multi-actor approaches in H2020”, that involve all actors of the agri-food chain (farmers, advisory services and agro-supply industry, machinery and robotics, processing and retail industries, including consumers, citizens and public policies...) across diverse territories with the objective to improve all systems of production. The proposed societal challenges approaches should be open for collaborations at low Technology Readiness Levels (TRL).

Sufficient time and funding should be provided for participatory approaches. Attention should be paid to younger people and an urban population who are more and more disconnected from food production. Modern communication tools will help to reconnect people to food systems. Data and scientific knowledge resulting from European funded projects should be widely shared. Incentives and facilitation from social sciences should be found for a better data sharing that is not yet fully implemented. Sufficient funding should be provided to stimulate entrepreneurship development via medium scale enterprises based on technology transfer strategies. Attention should be paid to the rural areas to offer job opportunities to young people so preventing emigration to industrialized regions.

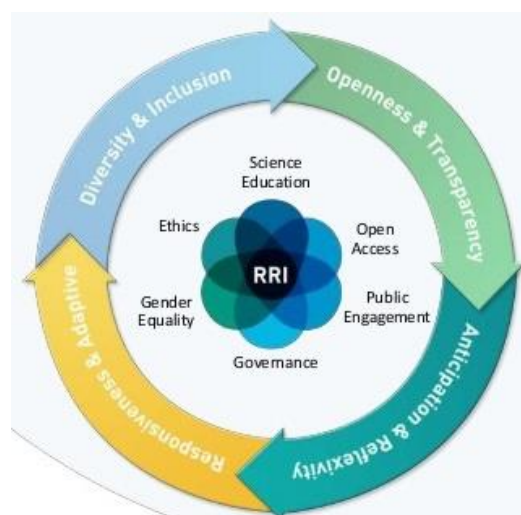


Figure 5: RRI Tools designed by RRI EC-FP7 project

9. Better involvement of stakeholders to support multi-actor approach

The Animal Task Force asks **for greater flexibility to support the integration of stakeholders**. To further stimulate stakeholder involvement, a financial incentive could be granted for all proposals passing the 1st stage of a 2-stage proposal. Stakeholders must be implicated as full partners in the consortium, or at least paid for their participation and this should be taken into consideration for the final evaluation of the projects.

10. Excellent science

The Animal Task Force also supports funding of “Excellent Science”. Not all research questions need a multi-stakeholder and holistic approach. There should be room for fundamental investment in “Excellent Science” research projects and bottom-up initiatives that can be relatively small in scope but create large benefits for society. This can ultimately feed holistic approaches with basic knowledge on biological or social mechanisms. Relevant scientific challenges include biotechnologies, predictive biology, microbiome, etc.

The Animal Task Force (ATF) is a leading body of expertise linking European industry and research providers for developing innovation in the livestock sector.

Our members are research providers from 18 Member States of the EU (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, UK), plus Norway, Switzerland and Serbia, and industry representative bodies that support the interests of Europe’s livestock industries (AnimalHealth Europe, FABRE-TP, FEFAC, FEFANA, ECIP, EU PiG).

We work together to identify actions that are needed to foster knowledge development and innovation for a sustainable and competitive livestock sector in Europe.

For more information, please visit: www.animaltaskforce.eu

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