PRESS RELEASE

LIVESTOCK-BASED FOOD SYSTEMS NEED TO BECOME MORE SUSTAINABLE

Horizon 2020 project PATHWAYS will develop sustainable food systems to support Europe's Farm-to-Fork strategy

Uppsala, 15 September 2021 – Transforming Europe's food system to meet the EU Green Deal goal of becoming the first carbon-neutral continent by 2050 is no small task. Globally, agriculture causes about one-third of all greenhouse gases (GHG). In Europe, nearly 70% of all EU agricultural GHG emissions come from livestock-based farming; therefore, production and supply chains must undergo radical change to become more sustainable.

PATHWAYS, a Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Action project, has received €9 million with the aim to make this a reality. The project will contribute to the EU's Farm-to-Fork strategy, which is at the heart of the EU Green Deal, by designing transition pathways that address societal demands for the provision of resilient, safe, nutritious and affordable livestock-based food, while reducing environmental impacts and furthering the sustainability of the European livestock sector.

Coordinated by the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), PATHWAYS will run for five years (2021-2026), with 29 partners from 12 countries including universities, research institutes, NGOs, think tanks, SMEs, industry associations, and multi-nationals – mobilising stakeholders along every step of the food value chain.

"Clearly, livestock system redesign is required at all levels to stay within planetary boundaries whilst supporting the needs of growing populations. PATHWAYS will support this transition by demonstrating best practice, and providing smart tools, levers, and metrics. We bring together leading experts in food systems research and innovation, to develop timely and effective recommendations for policy and practice."

– *Prof. Harry Blokhuis and Dr. Laurence Smith, PATHWAYS Project Coordinators, SLU*

The project's innovative practice hubs and living labs will cover dairy, pork, beef, poultry, and sheep and goat livestock sectors. Employing a holistic sustainability assessment framework, PATHWAYS will help gain a better understanding of key performance indicators including impacts on productivity, biodiversity, health and welfare, GHG emissions, human nutrition, trade and economics, and ecosystem services.

As sustainability concerns could influence markets for livestock-based products in the coming decades, PATHWAYS will inform policy and industry to support a circular bioeconomy with animal products playing a part in future diets. Its interactive, online platform and policy toolkit will provide user-friendly instruments for a range of stakeholders including consumers. PATHWAYS will drive forward the global competitiveness of Europe in climate action by improving the sustainability of its production and value chains to inspire other regions around the world.

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Keywords

Husbandry for sustainability, animal welfare, sustainability assessment, livestock, participatory, bioeconomy, food systems, biodiversity, human nutrition, greenhouse gases, scenarios, circular economy, ecosystem services

About PATHWAYS

With the aim of reducing environmental impacts while addressing societal demands for safe, nutritious and affordable meat and dairy products, PATHWAYS is about identifying and increasing sustainable practices along the supply and production chains of the European livestock sector. Coordinated by the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) and comprising 28 partners from 12 countries, this 5-year (2021-2026) €9 million Horizon 2020 project contributes to the EU Farm-to-Fork Strategy which is at the heart of the EU Green Deal.

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