



## Language Version

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## Project of the month



## Enhancing hedgerows' carbon capture capacity

**Hedgerow management and hedgerow certification were the focus of a Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) project in France which was implemented using cooperation techniques and created new jobs as well as provided farmers with new sustainable income sources.**

In many Member States, hedgerows form part of the green infrastructure and field hedges can provide valuable [carbon farming](#) functions by capturing CO<sub>2</sub> above and below ground. France's [hedgerow certification project](#) helped to boost these climate mitigation benefits by demonstrating the economic potential of certified, sustainable, and quality hedgerow harvests. This [CAP good practice project](#) holds useful demonstration value for other parts of rural Europe which was recognised in it being nominated for a [Rural Inspiration Award](#).

## News



## New ENRD Thematic Groups

**Three new Thematic Groups (TGs) are being established by the ENRD and DG AGRI to help support Members States and stakeholders' interests in carbon farming, sustainability agreements in the agri-food chain, and LEADER.**

Our [Carbon Farming TG](#) will gather carbon capture expertise from around Europe to share knowledge and develop new proposals for upscaling a wide range of carbon farming practices through the CAP. Our TG on [Sustainability Agreements in the agri-food supply chain](#) will focus on a new EU initiative that can provide sustainability incentives for organisations undertaking different types of collective actions. [LEADER's TG](#) members will meet on [10 March](#) to start their involvement in improving understanding about making the seven LEADER principles work in practice for all Local Action Groups under the CAP Strategic Plans.



## CAP Strategic Plans online

**Members States have been submitting their CAP Strategic Plans (CSPs) and these are being made available on the European Commission website.**

Published in their national languages, [23 CSPs](#) are currently online and this preliminary list will be updated accordingly with the publication of each national CSP.



## CAP commended by the UN European Commission on Agriculture

**The EU's Farm to Fork strategy and LEADER were highlighted during a keynote meeting of the European Commission on Agriculture organised by the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).**

Budapest was the host city for the [virtual event](#) of FAO's European Commission on Agriculture which meets every two years. Pandemic-related matters and Sustainable Development Goals concerning European food systems were among the core agenda items. Nutrition was a prominent topic due to its scope for simultaneously improving health and climate resilience through low-fat, plant-based diets. [Farm to Fork's](#) holistic approach to directing continental food systems sustainably was referenced for its role in supporting [Better production to increase access to diverse and nutritious food](#), while [LEADER](#) was spotlighted as an effective tool for [Territorial approaches and community development to drive local change and prevent all forms of malnutrition](#).



## Network to innovate

**National Rural Networks of Estonia and Finland are organising a series of four online thematic workshops called [Network to innovate](#). These events will showcase and network good practice examples in agriculture, social innovation, circular economy, and farm data.**

Running from February to May this year, the workshops are designed to provide opportunities for rural stakeholders to meet, share knowledge and possibly form new partnerships. The projects and enterprises presented are from the Nordic-Baltic region and the first workshop takes place on 15 February examining [plant proteins and new food products](#).



## EU increases the availability of biological pesticides

**EU farmers will be provided with additional options to substitute chemical plant protection products as part of the EU's transition to sustainable food systems.**

Biological products can protect crops with less risk to human health or the environment. New rules have now been approved that will help to facilitate use of micro-organisms as active substances in plant protection products. Once these new rules apply, expected by November, the approval of micro-organisms and the authorisation of biological plant protection products containing them will be significantly faster. Find out more from a [dedicated Q&A page](#) on this important Farm to Fork topic.

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## Committee of the Regions: draft opinion on Europe's long-term rural vision

**The European Committee of the Regions ([CoR](#)) commented in January that the Long-term vision for the future of rural areas is a promising start but making it a reality will require political will from every level of government, stakeholders and citizens alike.**

The CoR represents more than a million local and regional politicians across the EU. These will be significant actors in ensuring the success of the [Long-term vision](#) and its related [Rural Pact](#). CoR Rapporteur and President of Andalusia, Juan Manuel Moreno Bonilla, highlighted the urgency of putting in place concrete proposals for immediate action accompanied by resources and quantitative targets to support the Long-term vision and ensure its effective implementation.

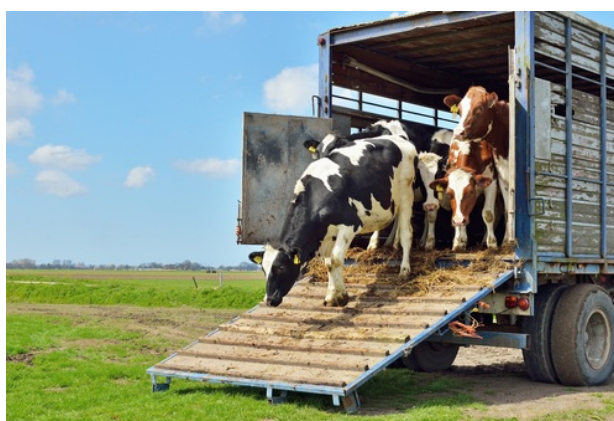
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## Survey on agri-food sustainable innovation and innovative practices

**The EU's Joint Research Centre (JRC) has launched an IN-PACT questionnaire to assess product innovation in agri-food chain businesses.**

[Information is sought](#) concerning innovative business practices that move towards more sustainable food production and marketing. The JRC [survey](#) is also exploring how this is happening, what are the drivers and barriers, and to what extent regulation could be needed. Survey outcomes will provide knowledge and evidence for policy formulation within the European Commission in the context of the [European Green Deal](#) and the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#).



## Animal welfare protection during livestock transport

**Members of the European Parliament are seeking improved protection for transported animals following an [18 month fact-finding](#) investigation about the application of [EU rules](#) on this matter.**

Animal welfare is an integral part of the [Farm to Fork Strategy's](#) promotion of sustainable food production. The CAP provides support encouraging high standards of livestock welfare as part of its sustainability drive. Each year, millions of live animals are transported by road, sea, rail, and air within and outside the EU for slaughter, fattening or breeding. Their wellbeing during these journeys should be ensured by welfare protection measures. [Parliament's inquiry](#), set up in June 2020 to investigate alleged violations of EU animal transport rules, concluded that EU provisions in this area are not always complied with in Member States and do not fully consider the different needs of animals.



## State aid rules for agriculture, forestry and fishery sectors

**The European Commission is inviting all interested parties to comment on proposed revised State aid rules for the [agricultural, forestry](#) and [fishery](#) sectors. The purpose of the proposed revision is to align State aid rules with the current EU strategic priorities regarding the CAP, Common Fisheries Policy, as well as the European Green Deal.**

Proposals for revised State aid rules aim to help enable Member States' advance with the [CAP Strategic Plans regulation](#). In this context, the adoption of the revised rules is planned for the end of 2022. Executive Vice-President Margrethe Vestager, in charge of EU competition policy, [explained](#) that the proposals seek to: "ensure that our rules on State aid for the agricultural, forestry and fishery sectors are fit for the green transition. The revised rules will also make it easier and faster for Member States to provide funding, without causing undue distortions of competition in the Single Market. We encourage all interested parties to share their views." Member States and other interested parties can respond to the consultation until 13 March 2022.



## Questionnaire to suppliers in the agri-food chain on unfair trading practices - deadline extended

**ENRD stakeholders are invited to participate in a baseline survey, carried out by the Joint Research Centre and the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development of the European Commission, to inform the introduction of the EU Directive on unfair trading practices (UTP) in business-to-business relationships in the agricultural and food supply chain.**

Survey results will help assess the effectiveness of measures taken by Member States in the context of this [UTP Directive \(2019/633\)](#). The aim is to capture the existing state of play of UTP practices. [Responses to the questionnaire are encouraged by suppliers covered by the Directive](#) from all the different stages of the agricultural and food supply

chain. The survey will be open until Tuesday, 15 March 2022.

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## Trade standards and reciprocity high on agricultural ministers' agenda

January's [AGRIFISH Council meeting of the EU-27 ministers for agriculture](#) discussed the importance of promoting high standards for agri-food products in trade agreements and during negotiations.

The CAP and Farm to Fork Strategy encourage Europe's agri-food sector to maintain high standards in areas such as food safety and sustainability. EU Commissioner for Agriculture Wojciechowski raised awareness at the [AGRIFISH meeting](#) press conference about how EU standards can provide advantages for Member States agri-food business and that: "it will be an even bigger advantage if we will have the principle of reciprocity". He acknowledged that it will be necessary to: "convince EU trading partners that it is worthwhile to pay attention to the quality of food's high standards".

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## Restricting harmful pesticides

As part of its commitments linked to the Farm to Fork strategy and the [Biodiversity strategy](#), the Commission reiterates its request to the Member States to support its proposal, aimed at limiting the use of the pesticide Sulfoxaflor to permanent greenhouses, in order to protect pollinators.

Commissioner in charge on Health and Food safety, Stella Kyriakides, [said](#): "Scientific findings from the European Food Safety Authority show that using Sulfoxaflor outdoors may be harmful to bumblebees and solitary bees. It is our responsibility and of utmost importance to protect our pollinators and our biodiversity for present and future generations."

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## Algae production possibilities accelerate

**The Farm to Fork strategy includes an ambition for algae to “become an important source of alternative protein for a sustainable food system and global food security”. To support this aim, the European Commission in partnership with experts in algae production are launching a European algae stakeholder platform, called EU4Algae.**

The aim of the platform is to accelerate the development of a European algae industry and promote algae for nutrition and other uses among consumers and businesses in the EU. By the end of 2022, the Commission will release an EU Algae initiative accompanied by an Action plan to promote algae in Europe. The [EU4Algae platform](#) will draft recommendations to those initiatives and support their implementation.



## DYK: Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems

**Did you know that Europe is home to seven of the world’s Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS)? These feature natural landscapes and agricultural practices that create livelihoods in rural areas while combining rich ecosystems with unique tradition and innovation.**

Italy, Spain, and Portugal host the current [GIAHS network in Europe](#) covering olive groves, vine landscapes, pastoral systems, and even irrigation systems. Each of the sites have been designated for their resilience in maintaining farmland biodiversity, traditional knowledge, unique cultures, and landscapes, sustainably managed by farmers, herders, fishers, and foresters in ways that contribute to their livelihoods and food security. Find out more about the [GIAHS designation process](#).





## Local sustainable energy production in the Alpine area

The **ALPGRIDS** project, supported by **Interreg Alpine Space programme**, is developing **microgrids**, which enable villages in the Alpine region to produce energy locally.

This allows Alpine areas in five Member States to be better protected from possible blackouts and also reduces energy volatility in the energy bills for citizens. [Have a look](#) at how this European project is ensuring energy supply at a farm in the isolated Alpine area in France, in the latest episode of Smart regions by Euronews in cooperation with DG REGIO.

## Publications

**Helping rural Europe become Fit for 55**

The EU's Fit for 55 package is helping Member States significantly cut greenhouse gas emissions by 2035. The ENRD has produced a wide range of useful information about climate action that can help rural Europe achieve climate-neutral ambitions.

Launched in July 2021 as a European Green Deal initiative, the Fit for 55 Package is a high-level strategic reform aimed at cutting greenhouse gas emissions in the EU by at least 55% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels. It focuses on meeting EU policies covering land use, energy, transport, and taxation.

EU policies in these areas will be strengthened through the Fit for 55 package, focusing on reforming legislation and establishing new provisions. These measures are backed by expert assessment, analysis and proposals – a careful balance between pricing, targets, standards and support measures (see table).

Pricing	Target	Standards
New Carbon Border adjustment Mechanism	Reformed Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry Regulation	Revised CO <sub>2</sub> performance for cars and vans
Strengthened Emissions Trading System	Reformed Renewable Energy Directive	New requirements for Alternative Fuels
Reformed Energy Taxation Directive	Reformed Energy Efficiency Directive	Closer maritime rules
Stricter Emissions Trading to maritime and transport sub-sectors	Reformed Effort-Sharing Regulation	Revised set of sustainable aviation rules

**Support Measures**

A new Social Climate Fund combined with updates to the Microbusiness Fund and Innovation Fund complemented the expanded range of support measures available from other EU sources, including the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), Cohesion Policy, Maritime Policy, Programme LIFE, and European Investment Bank Group, to help rural Europe cut energy and transport emissions.

## New: ENRD Policy insights

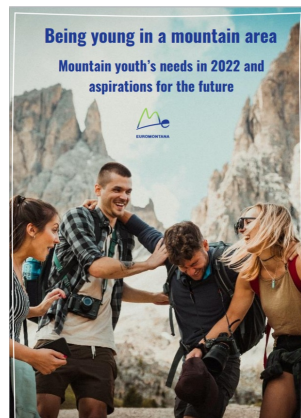
Discover out new ENRD e-publication series of informative and short-read articles featuring topical stories about CAP and rural Europe. Our first article explains the [EU's Fit for 55 package](#) and how CAP can contribute to this ambitious climate action plan.

**International Transport Forum**

**Innovations for Better Rural Mobility**

## Rural mobility innovations

Over 80 rural mobility case studies are featured in a new publication released by the International Transport Forum and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development. European issues and good practices are highlighted in this [report](#) which provides information on a broad range of rural mobility initiatives that can be adopted and adapted to local circumstances.



## Rural youth: mountain perspectives

Celebrating the start of the European Year of Youth, Euromontana has published a new report aimed at better understanding the needs and aspirations of young people in Europe's mountainous regions. The publication [Being young in a mountain area](#) shares long-term visions that young people have of mountain territories and it also analyses trends regarding the attractiveness of mountains for young people.



## European agriculture: 'a just transition'

This new [paper](#) from the Institute for European Environmental Policy examines how a 'just transition' model could be applied to European agriculture and how the CAP could make a significant contribution. It proposes an initial list of policy components to include in a focused EU plan for addressing multiple challenges, including greenhouse gas emission reductions, nature recovery, sustainable resource use, dietary shift and food security.

## Past Events

### ENRD TG: Rural Proofing first meeting

Our first meeting of the [Rural Proofing TG](#) took place in January to start the TG's work supporting the design and implementation of rural proofing mechanisms within Member States at different administrative levels (national, regional and local). The meeting set the scene on rural proofing and provided a space for sharing knowledge and experience on what should be considered when designing rural proofing mechanisms and applying them in practice.

### Sustainable Carbon Cycle

### Rural infrastructure financial instruments

The European Commission's fi-compass initiative held a workshop at the end of 2021 dedicated to discussing key findings from a study [exploring opportunities for financial instruments in rural infrastructure](#). CAP co-finance can be used by Member States for investing in rural infrastructure projects and portfolios that create savings and/or generate profits. Managing authorities, financial intermediaries and other relevant stakeholders from Bulgaria, Poland, Romania and Spain networked insights during the [workshop](#) sharing their expertise of using financial instruments to help promotion of rural infrastructure.

## conference

The European Commission [conference on Sustainable Carbon Cycles](#) at the end of January brought together decision makers and experts from different backgrounds to network their experiences regarding the upcoming EU regulatory initiative on the certification of carbon removals. It relates to [the Communication on Sustainable Carbon Cycles](#) that outlines EU-wide actions to scale up carbon farming initiatives and industrial solutions in order to sustainably capture, store and recycle carbon.

## Events

26 February - 6  
March 2022

**Salon International de  
l'Agriculture 2022**

**Organiser:**  
Paris

[Find out more](#)

7-8 March 2022

**European Seminar on  
LEADER**

**Organiser:**  
LEADER France

[Find out more](#)

10 March 2022

**1st meeting of the ENRD  
Thematic Group on Making  
the seven LEADER principles  
work in practice for all LAGs  
under the CAP Strategic  
Plans**

**Organiser:**  
ENRD

[Find out more](#)

10 March 2022

**21st meeting of the  
Subgroup on Innovation for  
agricultural productivity and  
sustainability**

**Organiser:**  
DG AGRI

[Find out more](#)

15 March 2022

**Network to innovate: Social  
innovation**

**Organiser:**  
National Rural Networks of  
Estonia and Finland

[Find out more](#)

15 March 2022

**Annual conference**

**Organiser:**  
Forum for the future of  
agriculture

[Find out more](#)

15 - 16 March 2022

**1st meeting of EIP-AGRI  
Focus Group: Digital tools for  
sustainable nutrient  
management**

**Organiser:**  
EIP-AGRI

[Find out more](#)

17 March 2022

**1st meeting of the ENRD  
Thematic Group on  
Sustainability Agreements in  
the agri-food supply chain**

**Organiser:**  
ENRD

[Find out more](#)

22 - 23 March 2022

**1st meeting of EIP-AGRI  
Focus Group: Nature-Based  
Solutions for water  
management under climate  
change**

**Organiser:**  
EIP-AGRI

[Find out more](#)

**23 - 24 March 2022**

**1st meeting of EIP-AGRI Focus Group: Sustainable ways to reduce the use of pesticides in pome and stone fruit production**

**Organiser:**  
EIP-AGRI

[Find out more](#)

**24 March 2022**

**1st meeting of the ENRD Thematic Group on Carbon Farming**

**Organiser:**  
ENRD

[Find out more](#)

**29 March 2022**

**Seminar on Plant-Based Veterinary Medicines**

**Organiser:**  
French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety

[Find out more](#)

**31 March 2022**

**2nd meeting of the ENRD Thematic Group on Rural Revitalisation**

**Organiser:**  
ENRD

[Find out more](#)

**6-7 April 2022**

**Meeting of the Advisory Forum of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)**

**Organiser:**  
French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES)

[Find out more](#)

**12 April 2022**

**Network to innovate: Waste management and circular economy**

**Organiser:**  
National Rural Networks of Estonia and Finland

[Find out more](#)

**10-14 April 2022**

**European Farming Systems conference**

**Organiser:**  
The Mediterranean Institute for Agriculture, Environment and Development (MED)

[Find out more](#)

**12 May 2022**

**International congress of mountain and steep slopes viticulture**

**Organiser:**  
Center for Research, Environmental Sustainability and Advancement of Mountain Viticulture

[Find out more](#)

**10-13 May 2022**

**Regional Conference for Europe**

**Organiser:**  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

[Find out more](#)

**17 May 2022**

**Network to innovate: Farm data and IT solutions**

**Organiser:**  
National Rural Networks of Estonia and Finland

[Find out more](#)

**25-27 October 2022**

**12th European mountain convention**

**Organiser:**  
Sila National Natural Park

[Find out more](#)

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