



Terms of Reference for a Fifth Mandate

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1. Mission

The CWG SAP provides advice on the coordination of research and innovation for the development of more sustainable animal production systems in Europe to the SCAR, Member States, Associated Countries and to the European Commission.

Support of the livestock sector's important role has become particularly relevant in the light of unforeseen crises/shocks to the agri-food system, in combination with the need to design and pursue necessary long-term strategies.

The CWG SAP's mission is to provide and work with a holistic view on livestock farming and the livestock sector. This not only requires an integration of different research areas like animal nutrition, breeding and genetics, housing, and health & welfare. Also, it directly interrelates with topics like food and nutrition security and safety, resource utilisation, emissions (including GHG emissions), biodiversity, and farm economy. This approach, which is based on systems thinking, characterises the CWG SAP. At the same time, it demands exchange with initiatives working in related fields like animal health & welfare, food systems, agroecology and/or bioeconomy.

Last but not least, differences and commonalities between regions and stakeholders play an essential role in finding solutions for sustainable livestock production systems.

2. Background

The Standing Committee on Agricultural Research (SCAR) plays an important role in coupling research and innovation and in removing barriers to innovation. The SCAR aims to make it easier for public-public and public-private sectors to work together in delivering innovation that tackles the challenges faced in the Bioeconomy area.

In order to fulfil its advisory function towards the European Commission and the Member States, SCAR relies on the activities of the Collaborative and Strategic Working Groups (CWGs & SWGs) and the Foresight Group. Since the renewal of SCAR in 2005, it initiated a number of WGs in a variety of areas, like the Collaborative Working Group on Sustainable Animal Production (CWG SAP) in 2014.

The conditions for livestock farming are changing in several aspects, for instance, through climate change, Russia's war on Ukraine, society's expectations regarding animal husbandry, and producer income as well as consumer prices. These are complex challenges that cannot be met by limited ad hoc solutions, particularly not when considering Europe's regional diversity. Instead, it requires enduring dedication and a focused strategy.

3. History

From its establishment in 2014, the CWG SAP has taken a systematic and coherent approach to contribute to the development of sustainable livestock production. A number of tasks were accomplished. Some were completed by establishing the ERA-NET SusAn, while others continued the coordination and alignment of national programs and elaborated and provided strategical advice:

- » CWG SAP defines sustainable animal production as “economically viable, socially acceptable, with minimal impact on the environment”. It could potentially also be the 3-P-approach: people, planet, profit.
- » In 2015, CWG SAP delivered a Country Report “Survey & Analysis” which
 - › gives an overview of the different livestock systems in CWG SAP member countries and the status of national animal production
 - › identifies and discusses priority topics for R&I in the field of sustainable animal production
- » In 2019, the CWG SAP carried out a study analysing the development of the EU livestock sector during the last 60 years. The study identifies the main “drivers of change” for livestock farmers. The study was conducted under the Support Action to a “Common Agricultural and wider bioeconomy reSearch Agenda” (CASA).
- » CWG SAP recommended and prepared the establishment of the European Research Area on Sustainable Animal Production Systems (ERA-NET SusAn, 2016-2022). SusAn produced a SRIA and (co-)initiated and significantly contributed to three successful calls, resulting in 31 European research projects (45 million EUR). The 2018 joint SusAn/ERA-GAS/ICT-Agri2 call, and the 2021 joint SusAn/ERA-GAS/ICT-AgriFood/SusCrop call were unprecedented collaborations between ERA-NETs that linked the topics Livestock production, GHG mitigation, ICT and robotics, and Crop production, including areas like circularity and agroecology.
- » In October 2022, the CWG SAP conducted an expert workshop on the future of livestock farming. Aim of the workshop was to contribute to a common future vision.

Key topics of the workshop were Diversity, Consumption, Circularity, Resilience, Animal Health & Welfare, Greenhouse Gases, Organic Production, and Economy.

- » In January 2023, a policy brief on the services provided by livestock was published.
- » In 2023 the CWG SAP conducted a portfolio analysis to identify EU-funded R&I projects of the past ten years, related to improving the sustainability of animal production. Ten project cases were selected according to the CWG's main interests. An in-depth thematic analysis resulted in a synthesis of relevant R&I needs.
- » In December 2023, the CWG SAP conducted a second expert workshop on the future of livestock farming. Four livestock farming systems from different European regions were each presented by a scientist and a farmer. Discussions dealt with the sustainability of the presented systems and whether they could contribute to a common future vision of livestock farming.
- » In November 2024, a third workshop with the aim to contribute to a common future vision was conducted. Different national vision papers were presented with the aim to identify commonalities between them and among CWG SAP members. Topics discussed were climate change, biodiversity, circularity and resilience.
- » CWG SAP has been interacting with a number of stakeholders, some of which are observers to the CWG SAP, like the Collaborative Working Group of Animal Health and Welfare (CWG AHW), the Animal Task Force (ATF), DG AGRI and COPA COGECA.
The RISE Foundation, the German Animal Breeders Association, modernAKIS and the EU projects PATHWAYS, Re-Livestock and STEP UP provided additional input.
- » Since January 2024, BLE is partner in the Horizon Europe project STEP UP (Sustainable Livestock Systems Transition and Evidence Platform for Upgrading Policies). As BLE also hosts the CWG SAP secretariat, it can facilitate an exchange between the CWG SAP and STEP UP.
- » At its July 2024 General Meeting the CWG SAP members were unanimously in favour of a continuation of the CWG SAP beyond 2024, and to continue the work on a common vision.

4. Scope

In Europe, the livestock sector forms an important part of agriculture's economy, and plays an essential role in the provision of Europe's citizens with healthy and safe food. In 2020, the European Green Deal (EGD) was approved, including, among others, the Farm to Fork Strategy (F2F), the Biodiversity Strategy, and the aim to reach climate neutrality by 2050.

At the same time, COVID19 showed the vulnerability of our food system to external shocks, followed directly by the Russian war on Ukraine. Both crises placed the awareness of external dependencies (e.g. face masks, fertilizer) and the importance of resilience (e.g. production and logistic chains, inflation) high on the agenda.

European challenges are intertwined with global challenges, and urgently needed short-term solutions need to be balanced with long-term strategies (e.g. enhancing resilience, action on climate change).

Global meat consumption has more than tripled over the past 50 years, and is estimated by the FAO to increase by about 70 percent between 2010 and 2050; and dairy consumption

is predicted to grow about 60 percent.

The CWG SAP also refers to two global agreements endorsed by UN Member States:

- a) The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its SDGs (2015) and
- b) The Paris Agreement on Climate Change (2015), confirmed at the COP26 Summit in Dublin 2021.

The EU played a leading role in the processes that led to the agreements above, and food production, including livestock, plays a pivotal role within the SDGs.

The SDGs and the EGD underline the importance of achieving a balance between the three dimensions of sustainability (ecological, economic and social), but also between short-term and long-term challenges.

This is the approach of the CWG SAP. It means that the challenges for sustainable animal production can only be tackled by using a **systems approach** and by taking into account all actors of the value chain (multi-actor approach). This approach will further be supported by cooperation with other groups under the SCAR.

The CWG SAP acknowledges the three development paths described in the 5th SCAR Foresight Report from 2020: diversity, circularity, nutrition. And it will closely follow the 6th Foresight Exercise.

In the future, livestock production will be increasingly affected by competition for natural resources, particularly land and water, by the need to reduce fossil energy dependency and environmental impact, and by societal concerns, for instance regarding animal welfare. These challenges can be intensified by external “shocks” to the European and global food system. The livestock sector is embedded in this context. With the right strategies, livestock’s strong ties to food security, public health, resource utilisation, biodiversity, economy and rural development, to name only a few areas, can have highly beneficial effects. Livestock will be a part of the solution to challenges that the European agri-food system is facing today. Future European livestock production should be widely accepted and balanced, without losing the global competitiveness of the sector.

The scope of the CWG-SAP covers the entire production chain, with a main focus here on “pre-farm gate” activity, i.e., production of primary products (e.g. finished livestock, milk and eggs), on-farm management and husbandry interventions that have impacts either up- or down-stream of the entire supply chain (e.g. land use change, product quality, processing costs, waste, and consumer behaviour).

The scope of the CWG SAP also includes a perspective that lies outside the on-farm system, i.e. beyond farm gate. This covers areas like the role of livestock in circular agri-food systems or the contribution of livestock to ecosystem services.

The scope of CWG-SAP includes all major terrestrial species like beef and dairy cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and poultry and other livestock like rabbits, reindeer, farmed game and bees.

The scope does not include fish and other aquaculture species, and also not animals that are bred and raised on fur farms, like fox, mink or chinchilla.

Even though feed production is an essential component of sustainable animal production systems, the disciplinary agronomic aspects of crop and forage production are outside the scope.

5. Objectives and future actions

The Working Group will build on the previous steps taken, particularly the 2015 country report, the 2019 analysis on drivers of change, the recent successful finalisation of the ERA-NET SusAn in 2022, including its SRIA, and the 2022, 2023 and 2024 expert workshops on a common future vision.

The following main objectives shall be tackled during the next mandate:

5.1 Facilitate and stimulate collaboration and networking

The CWG SAP sees collaboration at European level as an efficient and necessary way to contribute to shape the future research and innovation in livestock production.

Collaboration at European level will create the necessary critical mass and focus to deliver research needs (e.g. for Horizon Europe) and policy advice to the SCAR, the European Commission and the Member States.

Actions

- » CWG SAP identifies barriers and explores opportunities for involvement of countries not yet represented as members, thereby also engaging members with restricted budget and/or limited personnel capacities. (supported by RefreSCAR)
- » CWG SAP continues dialogue with DG RTD & DG AGRI and extends contacts to other relevant DGs like DG ENV, DG SANTE or DG CLIMA.
- » CWG SAP identifies relevant stakeholders including farmers associations, consumer organisations, European Innovation Partnerships (EU CAP Network) and the private sector (SMEs/Living Labs) and seeks dialogue on closing the gap between research and innovation.
- » CWG SAP will continue to exchange with the CWG AHW and the SCAR Foresight Group. New collaboration will be explored, for example, with the SWGs AKIS, FOOD SYSTEMS, AGROECOCLOGY, ARCH, and BIOECONOMY, and with the Protein Task Force. CWG SAP will actively contribute to the SCAR WG Chairs forum.
- » CWG SAP will explore relations with the European Partnerships “Animal Health and Welfare”, “Sustainable Food Systems”, “Agriculture of Data”, “Agroecology” and “Blue Economy”.
- » CWG SAP identifies relevant international initiatives and seeks dialogue on common topics and/or actions.

Expected results

- » CWG SAP maintains or extends its list of members and observers.
- » CWG SAP is the internationally renowned contact point for sustainable animal production
 - › CWG SAP is the international gateway for status quo of sustainable animal production from European to national level and can provide a common plus the individual MS inside view.
 - › CWG SAP is the link to national actors and stakeholders.
- » CWG SAP is a knowledge platform for members on know-how, research efforts, research and innovation results and strategies.
- » CWG SAP is the European Think Tank that brings together different stakeholders in the sector, developing new approaches to implement changes towards a more sustainable animal production in Europe.

- » CWG SAP is the European platform to improve representation of the animal production sector and increase research and innovation funding for short-term and long-term research needs on sustainable animal production.
- » CWG SAP also is a forum for small countries, which can achieve more with the collaborative effort than on national level alone.

5.2 Contribute to a shared perspective and common vision

Among others, the CWG SAP is acting as a think tank, with a focus on contributing to a shared perspective on and common vision of future livestock farming in Europe (‘From a joint European vision to joint action’, see scar-europe.org). Thereby, the group is aware of the wide spectrum of conditions and production systems in its member countries.

Knowledge gaps and research needs will be identified along the way.

Action

- » CWG SAP members provide updated information on national initiatives and developments regarding the livestock sector, including national research and innovation.
- » CWG SAP exploits outcomes of ERA-NET SusAn, in particular analysis of projects resulting from the three calls, the mapping exercise and gap analysis, and the SRIA.
- » CWG SAP continues to work on common perceptions and goals, and needs or gaps in animal production research and innovation.
- » At least one further workshop on the future of livestock farming will be carried out. The event will build on the 2022, 2023 and 2024 workshops and will be prepared by at least two meetings of the CWG SAP members.
- » CWG SAP continues to coordinate research and innovation in the livestock sector in future under Horizon Europe including transition of project results to the livestock sector.

Expected results

- » Based on the 2022, 2023 and 2024 workshops, research themes and recommendations on prioritisation of research and innovation for a more sustainable animal production in Europe in the future will be developed.
- » CWG SAP provides advice for policy makers (Member States and European Commission) based on scientific evidence regarding regulations for the development of a more sustainable livestock production in Europe.
- » CWG SAP provides at least one policy brief (in different EU languages) taking into consideration, for instance:
 - › Concepts and strategies, e.g. One Health, or Circular Bioeconomy
 - › Digitalisation in research and innovation and guidance to policy makers
 - › Acknowledge regional differences in livestock farming
 - › Regard other key points for livestock farmers like marketing, transport, logistics, qualified employees
 - › Balance different areas (environment, economy, society), synergies and trade-offs, short-term and long-term needs

5.3 Support investment in research & innovation

The Working Group's perspective is that both, Research & Innovation and public policy have strongly contributed to the development of Europe's livestock sector. Members of CWG SAP believe, that both factors will continue to play a major role also in the future.

Action

- » CWG SAP translates identified challenges into operational instruments while avoiding overlaps with past and current, national and international initiatives. This helps to optimise investment of funding resources
- » CWG SAP gathers information on research and innovation actions and outcomes of other relevant flagship projects and initiatives.
- » CWG SAP maintains and seeks dialogue with SCAR including on bilateral country level to ensure that livestock is recognised in accordance with its importance for the wider bioeconomy research and innovation context.
- » CWG SAP supports the SCAR Foresight Process.
- » CWG SAP identifies challenges for sustainable animal production in Europe.
- » CWG SAP agrees on priority research and innovation areas and identifies opportunities for cooperation.

Expected results

- » CWG SAP is the European platform to discuss developments on European level along with Horizon Europe. It thereby particularly collaborates with the Horizon Europe project 'STEP UP' (Sustainable Livestock Systems Transition and Evidence Platform for Upgrading Policies).
- » CWG SAP provides input to the Horizon Europe Work Programmes.
- » CWG SAP develops a strategic approach for the adaptation of joint priority areas into national programmes and/or activities.

6. Expected outcome/deliverables of the fifth CWG SAP mandate

- » Providing suggestions for the HORIZON Work Programme, based on the SusAn SRIA and the CWG SAP 2022 – 2024 workshops
- » Conducting at least one more workshop on European livestock production
- » Organising at least two meetings of the CWG SAP members per year
- » Producing a report with main conclusions from the 2023 and 2024 workshops, and from the workshop from the next mandate 2025-26, and a policy brief or reflection paper, contributing to shape the future of livestock farming in Europe
- » Providing input to the SCAR Foresight activities (upon request)

7. CWG SAP structure and network

CWG SAP structure

At present 21 EU Member States plus Turkey and Norway are members of the CWG SAP. The group is chaired by BMEL, Germany and INIA, Spain (deputy). The CWG SAP is open for representatives of all EU member states and associated countries. Participation is voluntary.

CWG SAP network

The work of the CWG SAP relies on contacts with a range of stakeholders. Until now, this have mainly been European Technology Platforms dealing with livestock production, COPA-COGECA and CEJA as the farmer organizations and cooperatives representative organization at EU level, and the Animal Task Force (ATF), a European Public-Private Partnership. Network and collaboration shall be cultivated.

8. Annex: Current Members and Observers

As per September 2024, the following countries participated in the CWG SAP:

- » Austria
- » Belgium
- » Czech Republic
- » Denmark
- » Estonia
- » Finland
- » France
- » Germany
- » Greece
- » Ireland
- » Italy
- » Lithuania
- » Luxemburg
- » Netherlands
- » Norway
- » Poland
- » Portugal
- » Slovakia
- » Slovenia
- » Spain
- » Sweden
- » Turkey
- » United Kingdom

As per September 2024, the following observers are represented in CWG SAP:

- » ATF – Animal Task Force
- » COPA-COGECA – Committee of Professional Agricultural Organisations & General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives
- » CWG-AHW – Collaborative Working Group on Animal Health and Welfare
- » European Commission DG AGRI & DG RTD
- » FACCE JPI – Joint Programming Initiative on Agriculture, Food Security and Climate Change