

AIM welcomes the Farm to Fork Strategy proposal, a further step in the right direction

AIM welcomes the ambitions described in the Farm to Fork Strategy. They are key in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and in the implementation of a successful Green Deal. The Strategy has the potential to play an important role in the EU's Beating Cancer Plan by reducing cancer incidence through healthier foods, empowered and informed consumers, and greener environments.

The framework for sustainable food systems is a key element, and so is the international component of the Strategy. The Strategy recognizes the emergency in achieving more sustainable and resilient food systems. We look forward to the legislative proposal for framework announced for end of 2023 and hope that it will gather concrete proposals on how to achieve that ambitious goal. AIM also agrees that the EU should lead by example and aim at setting international standards. We were pleased to read that the European Commission did take into account the international dimension of its food policy.

More ambitious legislation is needed to regulate the food environment.

The strategy gives the food environment the importance it deserves. The document recognises that the healthy option is not always the easiest one and aims at making the most sustainable food become the most affordable. However, concrete actions on how to realise that objective are at times weak. We consider the proposals made by the strategy concerning responsible business and marketing practice insufficient. Non-binding instruments have proven to be inadequate in efficiently protecting consumers, particularly vulnerable groups. The proposed Code of Conduct is in our view not ambitious enough. Regulating the EU market, the reformulation of products and marketing techniques (etc.) is a powerful instrument which the EU should make use of. AIM asks to properly evaluate progress and to take stronger legislative measures.

Health and digital literacy should be a key element in the Strategy.

AIM welcomes the announcement of a proposal of harmonised mandatory front-of-pack nutrition labelling. We look forward to the announced sustainable labelling framework too, as we believe that other aspects than nutritious information should guide consumer choices, especially if sustainability is to be achieved. Other means of providing information should also be explored, including digital. However, they should not become the only way information is provided. If information is to be provided online, levels of digital literacy need to be improved. In that vein, the proposal to accelerate the roll-out of fast broadband internet in rural areas to achieve 100% access by 2025 ensures the availability of internet not its accessibility. To truly empower consumers, levels of health literacy of the population should be looked at. An aspect neglected in the strategy, but is key in leaving no one behind.

Health and environmental concerns should be at the centre of pesticides authorisation and risk assessment. The use of endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) in pesticides should be banned.

We welcome the objective to reduce the overall use and risk of chemical pesticides by 50% and to reinforce environmental risk assessment of pesticides. We hope that health concerns will also be taken into account in this assessment. Those concerns should not be bypassed if the EU is to reduce the length of the pesticides authorisation process by Member States. The precautionary principle should be followed and high levels of public health protection remain a priority in any decision taken.

In the same vein, the use of EDCs in pesticides should gradually be banned while promoting safer alternatives promoted and informing consumers with proper warning labels on products.

Cutting Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions "from farm to fork" should be a clear target of the Strategy.

Though not specifically mentioned as such in the Strategy, reducing emissions should be a transversal objective of many of the listed initiatives (e.g. Framework for Sustainable Food Systems, the Common Agricultural Policy, the Revision of the EU Promotion Programme for Agricultural Products, etc.), from agricultural and husbandry practices to the high consumption of animal products, but also the manufacturing, processing, retailing, packaging and transport of foodstuffs. We encourage the European Commission to clearly include the objective in its Strategy.