

Symposium of the Animal Task Force & EAAP Commissions on “Livestock Farming Systems” and “Sheep & Goat”:

European resilient livestock farming systems in a continuously changing world



Exploring the missing middle

FROM POLARIZATION TO SYSTEMIC
RESPONSIBILITY IN EUROPE'S PROTEIN
TRANSITION

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Two legitimate demands can still leave the system unchanged



THREE SYSTEM TRAPS

01 Substitution

protein source changes;
overconsumption remains

02 Rebound

per-unit impacts fall; total scale
can grow

03 Leakage

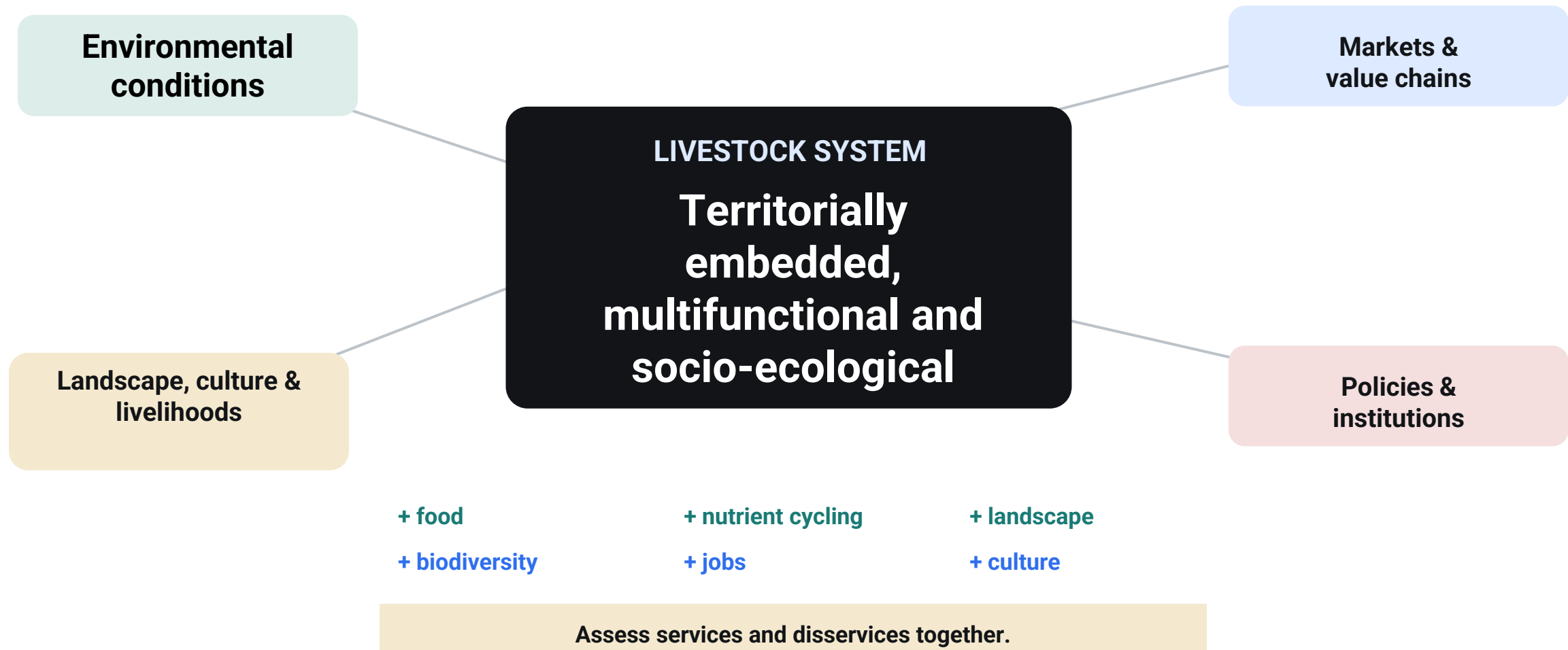
EU pressure falls; impacts move
through trade

The missing middle

Changing endpoints is not enough if markets, incentives and production logics remain untouched.

Ask whether the transition changes the system — not only the protein source.

The relevant unit is the livestock system in its territory



Efficiency is necessary — but not sufficient

PER KG PRODUCT

Efficiency First

Can reduce emissions, feed use or costs per unit of output.

Risk: rebound, scale and territorial externalities remain hidden.

PER HECTARE · PER PERSON · WHOLE SYSTEM

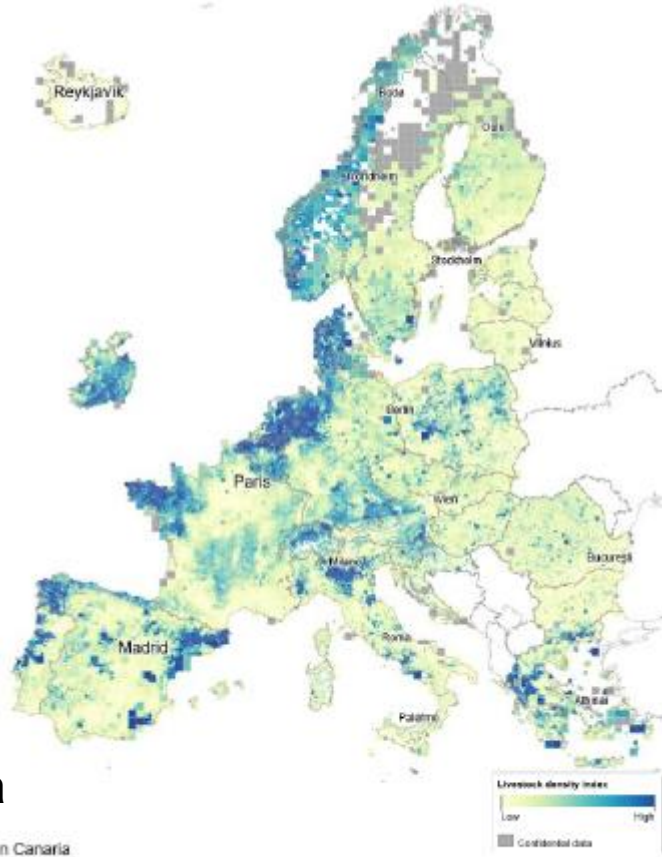
System performance

Changes when land capability, circularity, diet adequacy, nutrient flows and public goods enter the frame.

Optimise the system, not only the product.



Livestock transition must be territorially differentiated



EU average 0.7 LU/ha

Canaria
<https://ec.europa.eu/assets/estat/E/E4/gisco/farmstatistics/index.html>

REDUCE

where nutrient surplus or density exceeds carrying capacity

REDESIGN

where linear flows and market structures drive impacts

MAINTAIN

where grazing and rural functions lack credible substitutes

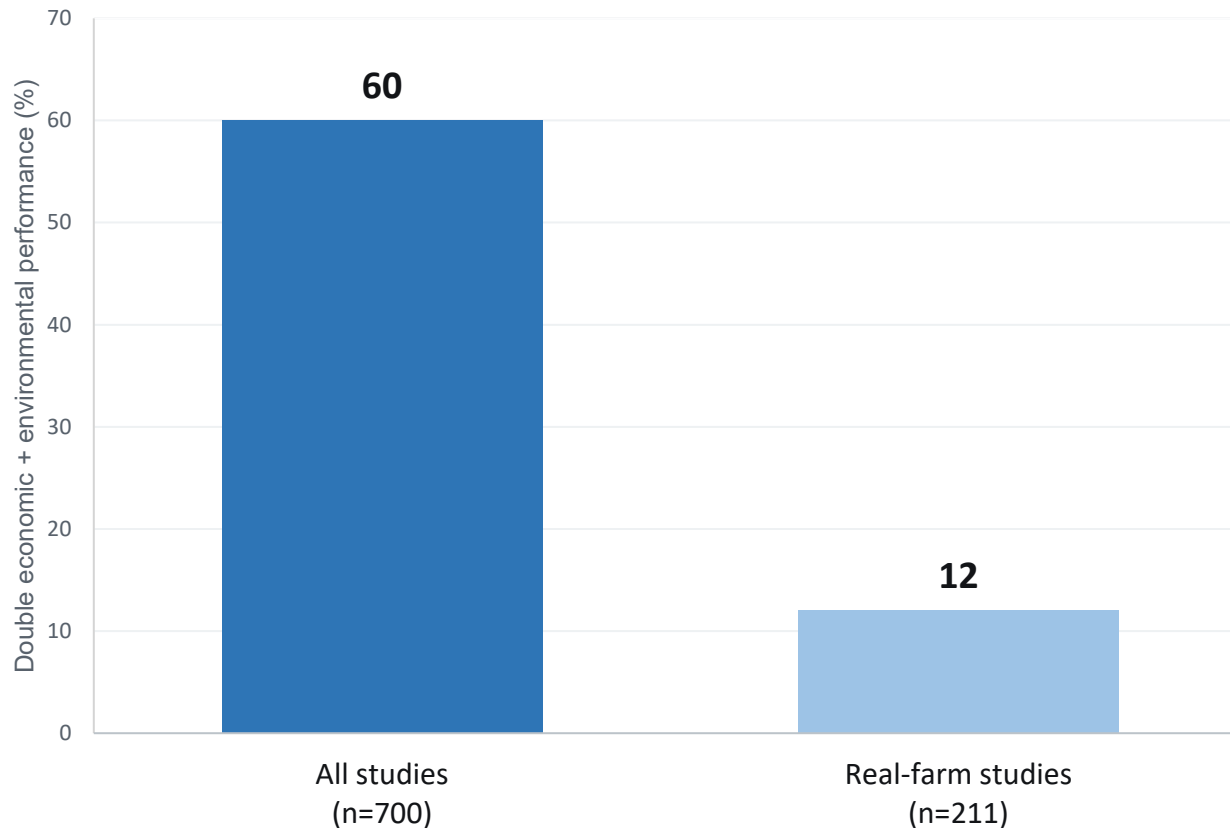
11% of EU agricultural land may be at risk of abandonment by 2030.

No pathway maximises every outcome

PATHWAY	WHAT IT PRIVILEGES	SYSTEM TENSION
Efficiency First	Per-kg performance	Investment, rebound, intensification
Feed No Food	Circularity	Diet shifts and market redesign
High Animal Welfare	Ethical legitimacy	Affordability and value-chain adaptation
Rural Renaissance	Public goods and vitality	Competitiveness and differentiated markets
Stock-free Europe	Boundary conditions	Nutrients, land, jobs and rural functions

The governance question is which trade-offs are acceptable – where, and for whom.

Promising in models does not mean workable in territories



60%

of all studies report double performance

95%

of positive evidence comes from experiments or simulations

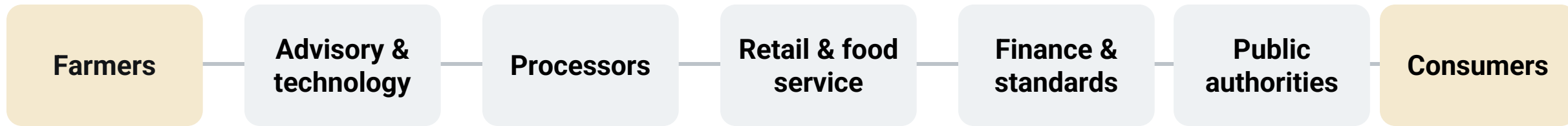
Implementation adds learning, labour, coordination and transaction costs.

Responsibility cannot stop at the farm gate or shopping basket

Today's story

'Farmers must become efficient'

'Consumers must choose better'



We cannot ask the endpoints to carry a transition produced by the whole food system.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY



Re-Livestock
RESILIENT FARMING SYSTEMS



Pathways
FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD

Policy coherence is the operating infrastructure of transition

SECTORAL	→	COHERENT	Align CAP, climate, biodiversity, food, health, cohesion and trade.
EFFICIENCY	→	SYSTEM PERFORMANCE	Reward public goods and account for externalities across scales.
UNIFORM	→	TERRITORIAL	Differentiate reduce / redesign / maintain strategies by context.
INDIVIDUAL	→	SHARED	Distribute costs, benefits and responsibility across actors and levels.

A holistic, coherent and cross-policy approach



The Strategy makes the missing middle actionable

01

DIFFERENTIATE

Europe does not need one livestock transition model.

Use territorial evidence to decide what to reduce, redesign or sustain.

02

REDISTRIBUTE

Farmers and consumers cannot carry the transition alone.

Move costs, incentives and responsibility across processing, retail, finance and public policy.

03

REVALUE

Efficiency per unit is no longer an adequate performance test.

Combine emissions and nutrients with welfare, ecosystem services, resilience and territorial vitality.

Implementation should decide what to reduce, redesign and sustain — and how costs and benefits are shared.



Re-Livestock
RESILIENT FARMING SYSTEMS



Pathways
FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD

Implementation must answer four governance questions

01 · TERRITORIAL RULE

Where should livestock be reduced, redesigned or maintained?

02 · VALUATION RULE

How will GHG, nutrients, welfare and ecosystem services be weighted?

03 · DISTRIBUTION RULE

Who pays for adjustment — and who captures the value created?

04 · COHERENCE RULE

How will demand, trade and CAP prevent leakage and conflicting incentives?



The future of European livestock is not simply 'more or less'

- 01 Which livestock?
- 02 Where?
- 03 For which functions?
- 04 At what environmental and social cost?
- 05 And who should carry that cost?

**The Livestock Strategy opens the missing middle.
Its implementation will determine whether Europe can govern it.**



**Thanks for
your
attention**



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