

Copa-Cogeca's Working Party on Research & Innovation and ETP "Food for Life"

Joint strategic priorities for research and innovation

1. **Climate change mitigation and adaptation:** this is a key priority that has a huge impact on the future of the agricultural sector and the availability of food, feed and other products and services that are critical for a sustainable society. Research and innovation should address both mitigation and adaptation and take into account the whole agri-food sector, including consumers. For example, solutions are needed for a more climate-smart and robust agri-food sector focused on water and energy efficiency, with innovative technologies, digital tools and plant and animal breeding techniques that provide the sector with the means to tackle climate change and its effects. Only with a more integrated approach can we meet our international commitments, EU targets and take consumers with us as we stand up to face this challenge.
2. **Circular bio-economy:** improving resource efficiency through the application of circular and bio-based approaches is key for the EU agri-food sector. This will enhance the environmental and economic sustainability of the entire agri-food sector and create new business and employment opportunities. A crucial element that needs to be addressed is mobilising all actors across the agri-food sector, including consumers, to prevent losses/waste and an improved use of residues, by-products and co-products.
3. **Vital rural areas for a dynamic society:** Reversing depopulation of rural areas and creating the conditions for generational renewal are of crucial importance both for the EU agri-food sector and for the Union in a wider sense. If we want rural areas to be more connected as well as fair, sustainable and competitive value chains, it is essential that we enhance the sustainability of existing businesses and promote new business models, which needs to be supported by education and training, infrastructures and services. This will help the EU preserve its diversity of traditions in food, diets and landscapes and ensure that it can continue to produce the food it needs.
4. **Co-creation and co-development of ideas and approaches across the agri-food chain:** new tools and models are needed to enable more successful innovations and a better connection between the consumer and farming and agri-food practices. This will help build more trust and appreciation (mutual understanding) across the whole value chain.
5. **The development and uptake of new technologies** by the agri-food sector must be addressed by future research and calls for innovation. Examples include new breeding techniques, digitization, satellite and sensor technologies as well as artificial intelligence. New technologies and their adoption and use will have a positive impact on the agri-food sector's contribution to the SDGs and to food safety and security. An accelerated uptake of digital technologies will help enhance transparency and trust within the agri-food sector, including consumers, and will enhance its sustainability and competitiveness. Transforming the sector into a connected one will help improve logistics (e.g. prevent losses of fresh produce) and promote collaboration with other sectors like the bio-based industry.