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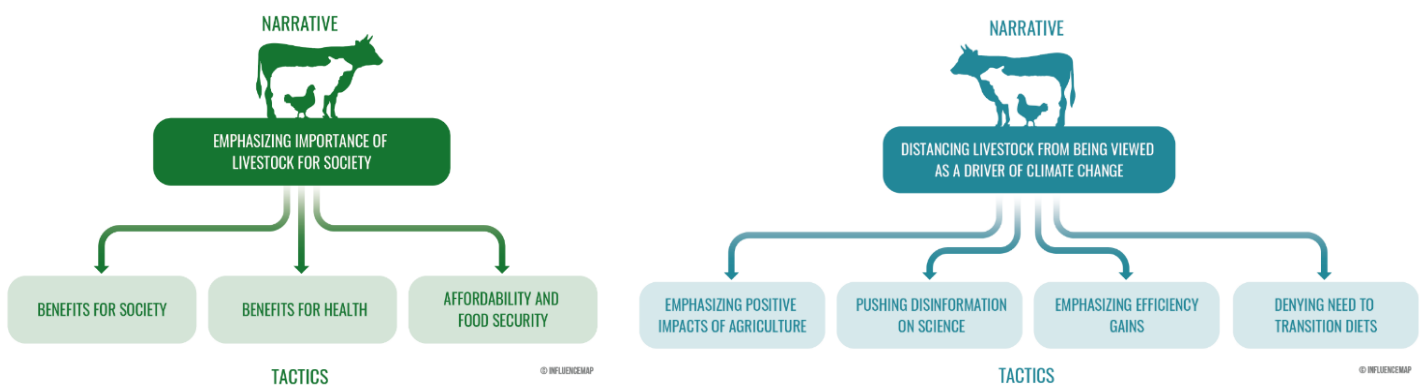
REVEALED: THE MEAT AND DAIRY INDUSTRY LOBBYING THAT IS PRESSING PAUSE ON CLIMATE LEGISLATION IN THE EU

Over the last three years the European meat and dairy industry has been successfully using tactics mirroring the fossil fuel playbook to weaken the EU’s ambitious climate policies.

A new report by InfluenceMap, released today, reveals the advocacy tactics used by the European meat and dairy industry to stall EU policies aimed at addressing livestock greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the transition to sustainable diets. The findings highlight that backsliding on climate and environmental policy in Europe cannot be explained solely by pressure from the farmers protests seen in recent months. In fact, years of the corporate meat and dairy sector’s strategic narrative building along with detailed policy engagement, both of which mirror fossil fuel industry tactics, have played a pivotal role.

The report analyzes the advocacy of the ten largest meat and dairy companies in Europe, and the five biggest industry associations, on six key EU policies aimed at tackling GHG emissions in agriculture. It finds that, following intense lobbying efforts from industry players two of the six policies were significantly weakened, and three appear to have stalled completely. These include policies such as the EU Sustainable Food Systems Framework, a ‘flagship’ policy of the Farm to Fork Strategy to transition to sustainable diets, and the revision of the Industrial Emissions Directive, which regulates pollutant emissions from European farms, including methane. The European People’s Party (EPP) appears to have adopted the sector’s narratives to oppose legislation which may have also contributed to the frustration of these policies’ success.

The report finds that key actors in the meat and dairy sector have used two key narratives in order to frame how it is perceived by consumers and policymakers. These are: emphasizing the importance of livestock for society; and distancing livestock from being viewed as a driver of climate change. InfluenceMap has previously detected similar tactics used in the fossil gas sector to maintain a role for gas in the energy mix.



These twin narratives, and their sub-narratives, appear repeatedly in consultation responses, public statements and social media produced by the meat and dairy sector – as well as in direct communication between the entities assessed in this report and the EU Agricultural Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski. They are also repeatedly used by the EPP both in the EU Commission and EU Parliament, and in public statements. This betrays the close relationship between industry and policymakers, suggesting an element of corporate capture in this space. All of the narratives used stand in contradiction to the

latest science-based recommendations by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in its 2022 and 2019 reports and the 2019 *EAT-Lancet study*, a scientific review of how to transition to sustainable and healthy diets from a sustainable food system.

- For example, the associations the **European Livestock and Meat Trades Union (UECBV)**, **European Livestock Voice** and **Copa-Cogeca** have all emphasized across multiple channels the importance of livestock consumption for human health, with meat producer company **Vion Food Group** stating that meat is “an essential food.” However, the 2019 EAT-Lancet study indicated that healthy sustainable diets consist of “low amount of animal source foods” and that adopting such a diet could avoid 11.1 million deaths per year in 2030.
- Meat producer **Tönnies Group** appeared to downplay the impact of methane emissions from agriculture, stating that the company’s food products “maintain natural cycles” and that methane emissions were part of a “continuous cycle.” This contrasts with IPCC findings in the 2021 *Climate Change Report on the Physical Science Basis* which states that methane emissions from the agricultural sector, particularly livestock, are rising and emphasizing the need to reverse this trend.

Key further findings of companies, and industry association advocacy include:

- No meat or dairy producers analyzed are aligned with the IPCC science-based policy recommendation on their policy engagement. Meat producers – particularly **Tönnies Group**, and **Vion Food Group** - tend to take more misaligned positions than dairy producers.
- The lobbying position of key industry associations appear to predominantly reflect the misaligned positions of these companies, and they are significantly more engaged than the companies they represent in negative lobbying efforts on land use-related climate policy, such as policy to transition diets. These associations appear to be the primary mechanism by which EU meat and dairy companies influence climate policies.
- Consumer goods focused companies appear to be more actively supportive of policy tackling GHG emissions from the sector, particularly brands like **Unilever** and **Nestlé**. However, they appear not to be aligned with their industry associations' positions on the policies covered in this report.

Venetia Roxburgh, EU program lead at InfluenceMap said:

“Meat and dairy producers and the industry associations representing them appear to be borrowing tactics and narratives from the fossil fuel playbook in order to hold back policies to tackle its GHG emissions. Following obstructive behavior from the industry, and the infiltration of industry narratives in the EU Parliament and EU Commission, policies that are fundamental to reducing GHG emissions in line with scientific advice have been significantly weakened or have stalled. Without science-based policies tackling the sector, it does not seem likely that European agricultural GHG emissions will reduce in line with 1.5°C.”

Full report, graphics, and quotes at this landing page.

For further information or to arrange interviews, please contact:

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About our methodology

The IPCC Report on Climate Change and Land, 2019 stated that all assessed modeled pathways which limit warming to 1.5°C or well below 2°C will require land-based mitigation and land-use change. It specifically identifies shifts to a more plant-based diet as a major opportunity for mitigating climate change. The 2019 EAT-Lancet Report corroborates this, stating that sustainable diets should consist of more fruit, vegetables and legumes, and less meat. The IPCC highlights livestock production in particular as directly and indirectly driving climate change.

About InfluenceMap

InfluenceMap is a London-based think tank providing data driven analysis to investors, corporations and the media on issues related to energy and climate change. Our metrics for measuring corporate influence over climate policy are used by investors, including the global Climate Action 100+ investor engagement process.