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MARKETING MEAT



**HOW EU PROMOTIONAL FUNDS
FAVOUR MEAT AND DAIRY**

IMPRINT

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Key findings

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In the period 2016–2020, the EU spent **€252.4 million** to exclusively promote European meat and dairy products, **32%** of the overall **€776.7 million** spending on the promotion of agricultural products in the EU and abroad.

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€214.7 million, 28% of the funding in 2016–2020, was spent on promotion of mixed “baskets” of products, almost all of which included meat and dairy products.

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Funding for campaigns promoting fruit and vegetables, or more plant-based diets, has been smaller. Over the years 2016–2020, fruits and vegetables were promoted with only **€146.4 million, 19%** of the budget.

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Promotion of organic animal products was only a small fraction of the funding. Only four projects, worth **€6.2 million**, promoted organic animal products (all of which were meat), making up only **3%** of all the promotional funding for animal products during 2016–2019.

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Promotional projects that included some organic food (but didn’t necessarily promote exclusively organic products) covered only **9%** of all the EU funding in 2016–2019.

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The **objectives** in the approved funding applications of several meat and dairy promotional campaigns funded by the EU explicitly state they aim to **reverse declines in, or maintain the growth of, meat and dairy consumption** in Europe – even if this **reduction is much needed** according to health and environmental research.

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Introduction

We are facing multiple crises. Greenhouse gas emissions are setting us on track for several degrees of global heating, and climate breakdown. Countless species are at risk of extinction. There are global health emergencies, even beyond COVID19. How we produce and consume food in Europe is inextricably linked to all of these problems, and a major transition is needed.

In Europe's food system, one of the biggest changes needed is the reduction in consumption and production of animal products like meat, dairy and eggs – together with a transition to more fruits and vegetables and ecologically and ethically produced animal products. At the moment, over 70% of the farmland in the EU is used to raise livestock or produce animal feed. [Two thirds of EU farm subsidies](#) currently end up supporting the production of animal products, directly and indirectly, including by supporting feed production.

Europeans [consume around twice as much](#) meat as the global average, and about three times as much dairy. To protect public health and nature, and to tackle the climate emergency, scientists are recommending a reduction of European meat and dairy consumption by [at least by 70 % by 2030](#).

“We know food choices are very personal, and that behaviour change can be difficult to encourage, but the evidence is now unequivocal – we need to change our diets if we are to have a sustainable future. The fact that it will also make us healthier makes it a no-brainer.”

Prof Peter Smith at the University of Aberdeen, IPCC Lead Author, [The Guardian](#)

Nevertheless, national and EU politicians have so far lacked the courage to tackle industrial animal farming, despite warnings from scientists on the disastrous impacts it has [on nature](#), [the climate](#) and [public health](#). We have heard excuses appealing to ‘consumer choice’, and that politicians should not tell people what to eat. **But the reality is that existing policies already dictate what food is available, affordable and encouraged.**

Taxpayer money is used not only to fund the overproduction of meat and dairy, but is also used to fund promotional campaigns with the objective of increasing the consumption of European animal products. This is despite the fact that 79% of respondents in a [recent Eurobarometer poll](#) said they consider that marketing and advertising that do not contribute to healthy, sustainable diets should be restricted.

We analysed all EU spending on promotional campaigns for agricultural products for the years 2016–2020, and looked at 146 detailed projects approved in eight EU countries during 2018–2019¹.

The imbalance of promotional funding in favour of animal products reveals a prioritisation of some of the most environmentally damaging food production. Over the years examined, 32% of the funding went to promotional campaigns exclusively for meat and dairy, and a further 28% went to campaigns of mixed baskets of products, almost all of which included some meat or dairy, compared to only 19% for exclusive promotion of fruit and vegetables. In addition to this, many of the funded campaigns state that it is their objective to reverse trends of falling meat or dairy consumption, or to stop the growth of consumption from slowing. Only 9% of the promotional funding went to projects that included organic produce.

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1 At the time of conducting the research only aggregated EU-level data for 2020 was available. More detailed data on each project funded that year was not yet published.

“The objective is to increase consumer demand and thereby halt an otherwise forecasted continued decline.”

Objective of the “LovePork” campaign funded by the EU

Promotion of European agricultural products without due consideration of environmental and health impacts of those products cannot continue. To tackle the ecological, climate and public health crises, meat and dairy consumption must fall.

In its planned spending on farm product promotion in 2021, the [Commission has said it intends](#) to increase funding for organic products as well as for fruits and vegetables, but has so far refrained from committing to scaling down the promotion of meat and dairy products.

As the European Commission starts the review of its promotion policy for farm products and its objectives in 2021, Greenpeace is demanding that funding is aligned with the urgent need to shift European diets to protect public health, nature and the climate. This means an end to public funding for promotion projects that aim to increase the consumption of meat and dairy products. Europe must produce and consume less and better meat and dairy, and the EU’s promotional spending must not work against that.



Proud of beef campaign, with €3.6 million of EU funding, promotes the idea of becoming a “beefatarian” supposedly to promote “balanced, healthy diets”. The campaign fails to make any reference to the widely recognised health risks or environmental damage associated with red and processed meat.

2

What is the EU's agricultural promotion program?

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Promotion and marketing of European agricultural products is part of the EU's farming policy, the common agricultural policy (the CAP), which accounts [a third of the EU's](#) overall budget. According to [its basis in law](#), the policy for the promotion of EU farm products aims to “enhance the competitiveness of the Union's agricultural sector” as well as to “increase the competitiveness and consumption of Union agricultural products”.

[Last reviewed in 2014](#), the policy's objectives include no reference to advancing healthier diets among consumers, nor to promoting farming methods with less harmful impacts on nature and the climate. The stated intention is clear: to improve the image of European food and “to increase consumers' awareness of the merits of the Union's agricultural products and production methods”, with a view to increasing consumption and sales.

The annual budget allocated by the EU to promotional campaigns increased steeply over the last years from [€111 million in 2016](#) to [€200.9 million in 2020](#). The money is part of the so-called ‘market intervention measures’ funded through the [European agricultural guarantee fund](#), one of the major funds in the [EU's budget](#).

The organisations applying for promotional funds are required to provide some co-financing for the promotional campaigns, with the EU covering [70–85 % of the costs](#). Prior to the 2014 policy reform, the promotional campaigns were often co-financed by national governments, but the review of the policy [aimed to put an end](#) to this as it was perceived to lead to “distortions of competition due to diverging financing rates” by member states. However, based on Greenpeace's investigations, some national governments are still supporting these kinds of promotional campaigns with their own public money, in addition to the EU funds (see section 5).

The current format of the programme has been running since early 2016. The funding is handed out based on [annual work programmes](#) from the European Commission, which allocate the funding to specific thematic priorities, including to specific regions in the EU's internal market and overseas markets. Final decisions on the selected projects are [published by the European Commission](#) every year. The programme is administered by the Commission's Consumer, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency, [CHAFEA](#), and partly by national authorities.

The approved projects run from one to three years and include billboard campaigns; events, exhibitions and fairs; online and social media campaigning with specific target groups like the youth, as well as communicating through “influencers” (see section 6. Campaign messaging).

Most agricultural products produced in Europe [are eligible for promotion with the funding](#), even alcohol with “geographic indication”, as well as some fisheries products. Only [tobacco](#) is specifically excluded from accessing funds for promotional campaigns. All the funded campaigns should be recognisable by the Commission's [“Enjoy! It's from Europe” logo](#) on their materials.

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trylamblovelamb If we had a quid for every lamb shank blog that included the words 'tender' and 'fall-off-the-bone' we would be richer than the guy who invented bitcoin. So we teamed up with the brilliant @christophertaylorofficial for an even more brilliant lamb shank recipe sans shanky-buzzwords. 😊

Enjoy!

Ingredients 🛒

- 1 x lamb shank
- 3 x mixed chillis
- 3 x garlic cloves
- 1 x tsp hot paprika
- 1 x tsp ground cumin

603 likes

MARCH 8

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Many campaigns are using influencers as a key tactic to reach their young target groups. The EU Lamb campaign with €8.2 million of EU funding for example pays social media influencers and chefs to increase consumption of lamb.

3

Who benefits?

Applications for funding [are restricted to](#) organisations representing agricultural producers, the food industry and trade organisations or bodies “involved in a mission of public interest in charge of promotion”. For example, private companies or civil society organisations do not tend to qualify.

The [conditions are also very restrictive](#) in the sense that only the nationally, regionally or sectorially dominant producer or trade organisations can qualify. Eligible organisations need to be “deemed representative” of at least 50% of their sector, calculated by market share or the number of producers. This means it is more difficult for smaller organisations and producers to access the funding, and so harder for them to break into markets with new products that might challenge the existing, dominant players.

This study analysed in detail projects funded by the EU in 8 countries from the period 2016–2019. The beneficiaries of the funding were typically consortiums or cooperatives of producers of products like meat or cheese in a specific region, national level industry representatives such as the Danish Dairy Board or the Polish Beef Association, or partnerships of organic producers across product categories. EU funding for projects investigated in this study ranged from €1 million to €3 million for most projects, which ran from one year to three years.

In addition to the funding applied for by these organisations, part of the annual budget of the promotion programme is also dedicated to “measures on the initiative of the Commission” which include Commission-led missions to target countries for EU exports, and appearances at trade fairs. Since 2017, the annual allocated funding for these kinds of measures has been €9.5 million.

This Commission-led funding has for example covered tours around the world led by previous EU agriculture commissioner Phil Hogan, who toured [countries like](#) Colombia, Mexico, China, Japan, Vietnam and Indonesia, Iran and Saudi Arabia in 2016 and 2017, accompanied by extensive business delegations from the EU agri-food sector. A trip to Canada in 2017 [was boasted to include](#) a “60-member business delegation of European food and beverage companies and associations”.

Farm products promoted by the EU

4

This study looked at the publicly available data from the Commission’s agency for Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency (CHAFEA) that manages the funding programme for promotional campaigns for farm products. CHAFEA [maintains a full list of all the campaigns funded](#) since 2014, including their objectives, organisations and budgets, and also [publishes annual statistics](#) of the project proposals submitted and selected for funding.

The research covered both projects in the ‘SIMPLE’ programme, those run by one or more sectoral organisations in one country, and in the ‘MULTI’ programme, those in at least two countries, run by several organisations. For the full methodology, see [the annex of this report](#). At the time of writing, full data for each EU funded project was available since the beginning of the new programme period in 2016 until 2019. For 2020 aggregated EU level data was also available.

Information on spending on “measures on the initiative of the Commission” is less easily available and is therefore not the focus of this study.

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2016–2020	
Animal products	30,100,000 €	63,900,000 €	65,400,000 €	54,600,000 €	38,400,000 €	252,400,000 €	32 %
Fresh fruits and vegetables	29,600,000 €	23,500,000 €	43,800,000 €	26,700,000 €	22,800,000 €	146,400,000 €	19 %
Alcohol	8,100,000 €	1,700,000 €	21,300,000 €	22,500,000 €	10,900,000 €	64,500,000 €	8 %
Mixed product baskets	30,400,000 €	17,700,000 €	32,400,000 €	41,200,000 €	93,000,000 €	214,700,000 €	28 %
Other	12,700,000 €	25,600,000 €	12,400,000 €	23,700,000 €	24,300,000 €	98,800,000 €	13 %
Total	111,000,000 €	132,400,000 €	175,300,000 €	168,700,000 €	189,400,000 €	776,700,000 €	100 %

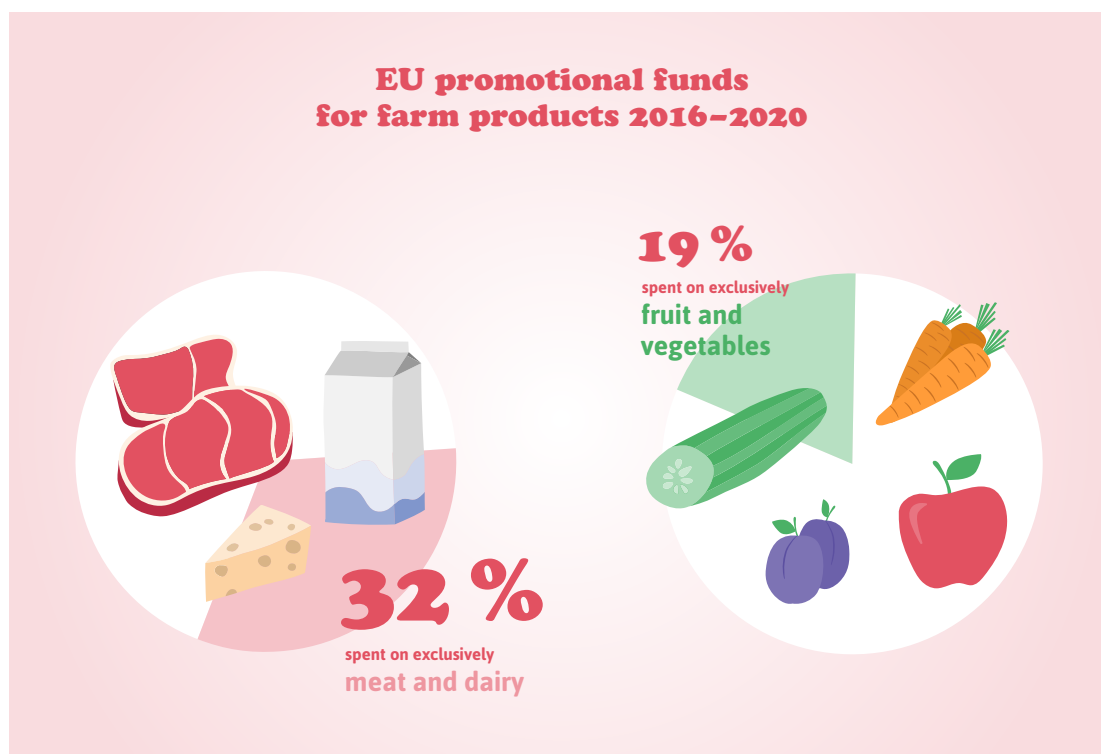
Table 1. All EU funding granted for promotion projects in 2016–2020 according to the product category

In the period 2016–2020 (see Table 1), the EU spent €252.4 million to exclusively promote meat and dairy products, some 32% of the overall spending of €776.7 million for the promotion of European farm products in that period. Dairy products and meat products each got about half of the funding granted for the promotion of animal products.²

In addition to this, a further €214.7 million, or 28% of the funding in the period 2016–2020, was spent on promotion projects for mixed “baskets” of products, the vast majority of which included meat and/or dairy products. Out of the 56 projects granted funding between 2016–2020 to promote “baskets” of products through the ‘SIMPLE’ programme, all but one contained animal products. Out of the projects funded through the ‘MULTI’ programme during the same time period, nine out of 21 “basket” promotional campaigns included animal products.

2 This study found that projects promoting explicitly meat products in 2016–2019 added up to €118.4 million. However, this might be a slight underestimate as, in a [response to a written question by Sylwia Spurek MEP](#), the Commission has confirmed that “Between 2016 and 2019, EUR 138.7 million (24% of the total) were allocated to campaigns promoting meat and meat products selected under the said Regulation.” Details on how this number has been calculated have not been published.

By comparison, the promotion of fresh fruits and vegetables is of lower priority. In the period 2016–2020, promotional campaigns for fresh fruits and vegetables received only €146.4 million, or 19% of the budget.



Roughly 8% of the budget over the five years, €64.5 million, was used to promote alcoholic drinks, mainly European wines and spirits. Other promotional campaigns for products including cereals and bakery products, oils, horticulture products and honey, received €98.8 million, 13% of the overall budget for the period.

The vast majority of the funding for the promotion of animal products went to campaigns for standard European meat and dairy products, without any specific qualifications of organic or ecological production. Data available for 2016–2019 shows that only four projects, worth €6.2 million, promoted exclusively organic meat, making up only 3% of all the funding exclusively promoting animal products (see Table 2). In other words, the EU spent almost 35 times more money promoting “business as usual” animal products in Europe that are increasingly leaning towards industrial production practices, rather than more ecologically produced organic meat.

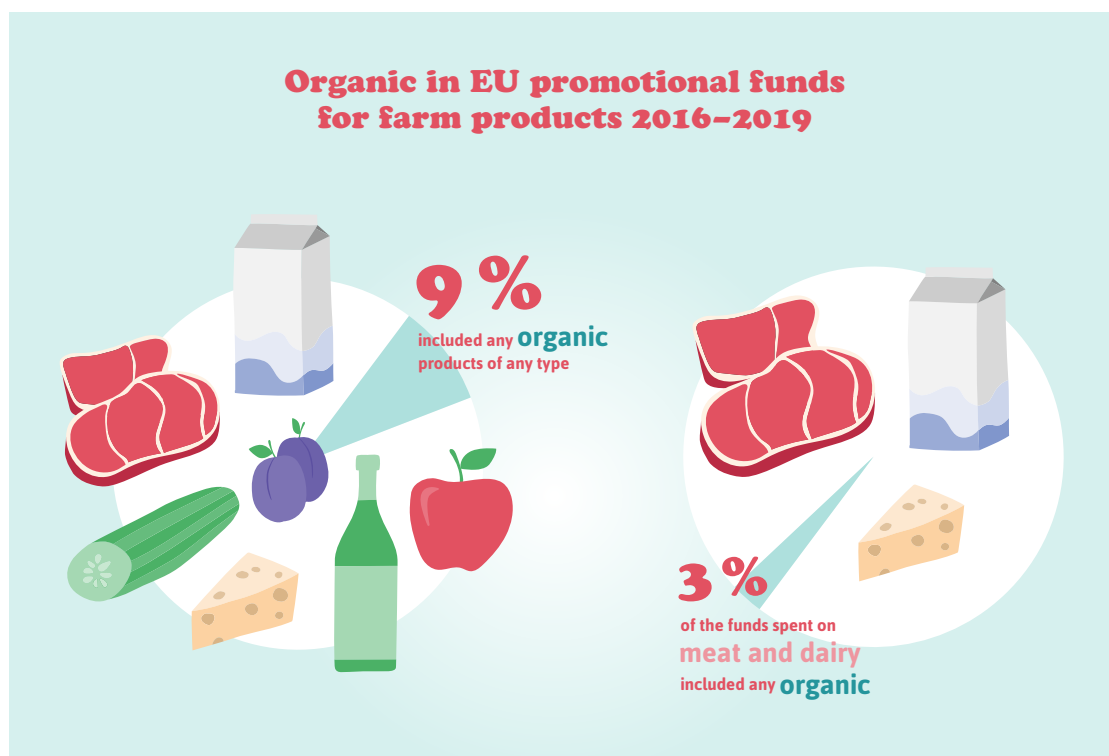
The share of funding for organic products was bigger in campaigns specifically promoting fruits and vegetables, making up 20% of the EU funding for fruit and vegetable promotion in the period 2016–2019.

25% of all projects promoting organic produce were focused on promoting alcoholic drinks like wine.

Share of organic funding out of all projects	All EU funding	Funding for organic	% of organic
Projects promoting exclusively animal products	214,000,000 €	6,243,265 €	3%
Projects promoting exclusively fruits and vegetables	123,600,000 €	24,836,115 €	20%
Projects promoting alcoholic drinks	53,646,300 €	12,931,006 €	24%
All projects	587,383,538 €	52,679,074 €	9%

Table 2. EU spending 2016–2019 on promotion of organic products

These results show that political promises to be promoting more “balanced and healthier diets”,³ and increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables across the EU’s food and farming policies, are yet to materialise in actual spending.



Since 2016, the promotion of farm products has increasingly focused on boosting EU exports, with about two thirds of the funding allocated to promotion of EU products in potential export markets. The geographical priorities for each year are indicated in the [annual work programmes](#). For example, the 2020 work programme focuses on campaigns aimed at non-EU countries with “the highest potential for growth such as Canada, China, Japan, Mexico and the United States” but campaigns are also run in “developing” markets.

For example, projects are funded to reach new consumers for European pork and beef in countries like [The Ivory Coast and Ghana](#), European “high quality” fruit juices in [Kenya and Uganda](#) and to target middle and upper class consumers in [West Africa](#) in order to promote European dairy products.

Not surprisingly, these promotion measures have raised some question marks with even the [Commission’s own evaluation report](#) noting that there might be tensions between the promotion policies and EU development policies as “it was not possible to rule out adverse impacts on local production ecosystems.”

3 One of the objectives of the European Commission’s [Farm to Fork strategy](#) is “Promoting sustainable food consumption and facilitating the shift to healthy, sustainable diets” and the strategy further notes that “While in the EU, average intakes of energy, red meat, sugars, salt and fats continue to exceed recommendations, consumption of whole-grain cereals, fruit and vegetables, legumes and nuts is insufficient.”

5

Promotion campaigns in selected member states

A closer look at funding for the promotion of farm products in member states reveals that, while there are some differences from country to country, the overall picture remains the same. Much more funding is being used to exclusively promote meat and dairy products than is used to promote fruits and vegetables.

This report looked at campaigns in Denmark, Germany, Italy, Austria, Poland, Spain, France and Ireland, which jointly cover almost two thirds of the projects approved between 2016 and 2019⁴, with France, Italy and Spain being the top beneficiaries of the promotion programme.

Table 3. provides country-specific numbers according to the nationality of the organisations applying for funding for the promotion of either meat and dairy products, or for the promotion of fruits and vegetables. These numbers are compared to the overall amount of funding organisations in a country have received.

	EU funding all projects	Meat and dairy products		Fruits and vegetables	
Austria	6,027,752 €	2,728,000 €	45 %	1,199,752 €	20 %
Denmark	14,469,272 €	10,146,643 €	70 %	1,737,917 €	12 %
France	125,234,996 €	67,906,145 €	54 %	17,234,311 €	14 %
Germany	14,961,586 €	4,877,583 €	33 %	2,809,105 €	19 %
Ireland	13,430,714 €	10,454,358 €	78 %	1,417,500 €	11 %
Italy	124,774,573 €	45,508,710 €	36 %	21,190,621 €	17 %
Poland	20,156,261 €	11,901,139 €	59 %	5,583,978 €	28 %
Spain	90,550,366 €	29,951,058 €	33 %	23,589,922 €	26 %

Table 3. EU funding (2016–2019) for promotion of animal products vs. promotion of fruits and vegetables, and their share of the overall project funding received by organisations in selected EU countries

The 146 projects analysed in the eight countries showed that spending on the promotion of animal products was clearly more than on the promotion of fresh fruit and vegetables. Especially in Ireland and Denmark, promotion of meat and dairy products took up 78 % and 70 % respectively of the overall EU funding used for promotion of farm products in the countries. In France and Poland, a bit more than half of the funding was spent on meat and dairy promotion. **In none of the 8 countries analysed did the spending on promotion of fruits and vegetables reach even a third of the overall funding.**

4 Project specific data per country was not yet available for 2020 when conducting this study

Table 4. shows that the other projects largely focused on promoting conventionally produced agricultural products, with organic production receiving only a minor share of the funding or nothing at all, as is the case in Ireland and Spain. Smaller countries with fewer projects like Denmark and Austria had one project each for the promotion of organic food which covered roughly a third of all the project funding received from the EU. Only one project out of the 146 projects analysed focused exclusively on organic meat and dairy products, this project was in Germany.

	Number of all approved projects	All EU funding	Funding for organic	% of organic
Austria	4	6,027,752 €	2,100,000 €	35 %
Denmark	9	14,469,272 €	4,322,630 €	30 %
France	69	125,234,996 €	4,508,698 €	4 %
Germany	10	14,961,586 €	1,107,841 €	7 %
Ireland	9	13,430,714 €	0 €	0 %
Italy	65	124,774,573 €	7,751,411 €	6 %
Poland	12	20,156,261 €	2,575,753 €	13 %
Spain	41	90,550,366 €	0 €	0 %

Table 4. EU spending in 2016–2019 on promotion of organic products in 8 different EU countries, compared to the overall spending of farm products in those countries

Italy



Italy is one of the member states with the highest number of approved projects for EU-funded agri-food promotional campaigns, totalling 65 projects in the period 2016–2019. More than a third of them focused on the promotion of meat and dairy products (see Table 4). In addition, Italy's national government contributed additional public funding to campaigns from the national budget.

Similarly to the EU funds, producer organisations can apply for funding from the Ministry of Agriculture (MIPAAF) for projects [with stated objectives like](#) to “make families aware of the opportunity of using animal proteins for growing kids” or “to value lifestyles and correct diets, promoting the use of animal proteins or meat”. The amount of overall national funding, from the Ministry of Agriculture or other national public institutions, for these kinds of promotional campaigns is not publicly reported.

One of these campaigns is [La stellina della carne bovina](#) (“The beef starlet”), which advertised with TV spots, radio ads, on social media and in traditional media outlets in 2018–2019, and still has an online presence with a dedicated webpage. The campaign, carried out by Assocarni (Italian Association of Meat and Livestock Industry and Commerce), had the objective [“to make consumers aware of the importance of Italian beef in a balanced diet”](#). Even if Italy currently supplies around [80 kg of meat per person](#) every year according to the FAO, which is clearly above what is [recommended](#) from a health and environmental perspective (24kg per person per year by 2030), the campaigns failed to mention that “balanced diets” require a reduction of meat consumption.

The videos and webpages of the “Beef Starlet” campaign also [promoted cherry-picked claims](#) like “Where there is cattle there are the roots and values of our farming tradition, which contributes to the protection of the territory, the landscape, biodiversity and soil fertility”. These claims completely ignore the many negative environmental impacts that animal farming and their feed production have, from [local air and water pollution](#) to [global deforestation](#).



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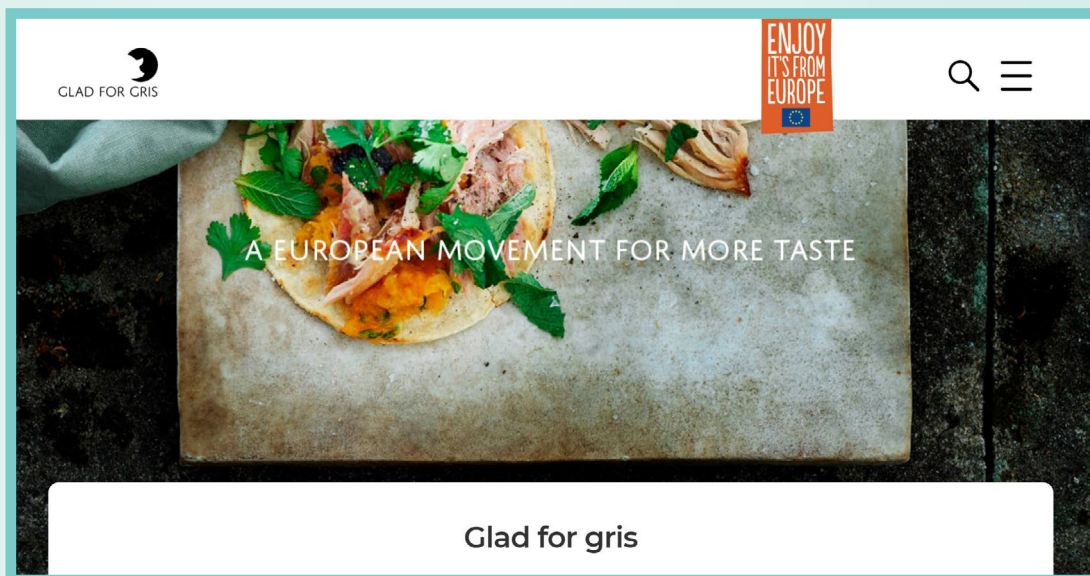


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Denmark



The [“Glad for gris” campaign is the Danish strand](#) of the EU-funded [Love Pork](#) campaign that runs from 2018–21, targetting young people to increase their consumption of pork. In addition to receiving funding from the EU agri-food promotion programme, the campaign is funded with Danish public money through a fund under the administration of the Danish Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

The campaign has a total budget of €3.06 million in Denmark, of which the EU is contributing €2.45 million and the ‘Danish Pig Tax Fund’, under the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, contributing the remaining 20%. This was confirmed by reply [to a parliamentary question](#) by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

The [Danish Pig Tax Fund](#) is a fund regulated by law and overseen by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture with a mission to *“strengthen the development opportunities and competitiveness of the whole pork sector”*.

Their motive of the “Glad for gris” campaign has been stated to be *“to strengthen the sale of pork in Denmark by contributing to an improvement in the perceived value of pork through a digital consumer campaign, targeted at young people (18–29 years)”*. The campaign is run by Landbrug & Fodevarer FMBA, an organisation representing the Danish food and agricultural industries.

Promotional campaign messaging

The objectives and messaging of the EU-funded promotional programmes revolve around the supposed excellency of European products. All the funded campaigns should be recognisable by the Commission's "[Enjoy! It's from Europe](#)" logo, which already captures one of the main messages of the programme.

However, the campaigns receiving EU funding increasingly attempt to counteract concerns about the environmental impacts of certain products and their role in "healthy diets". Dietary guidelines, backed by overwhelming scientific evidence, are clear that Europeans should be eating much less meat and dairy due to the related health and environmental concerns. Thankfully, moderate declines in the consumption of some meat products are already happening and further declines [have been projected](#). This trend has sparked worry among the animal farming industries, which are applying for, and getting granted, funding to fight this trend.

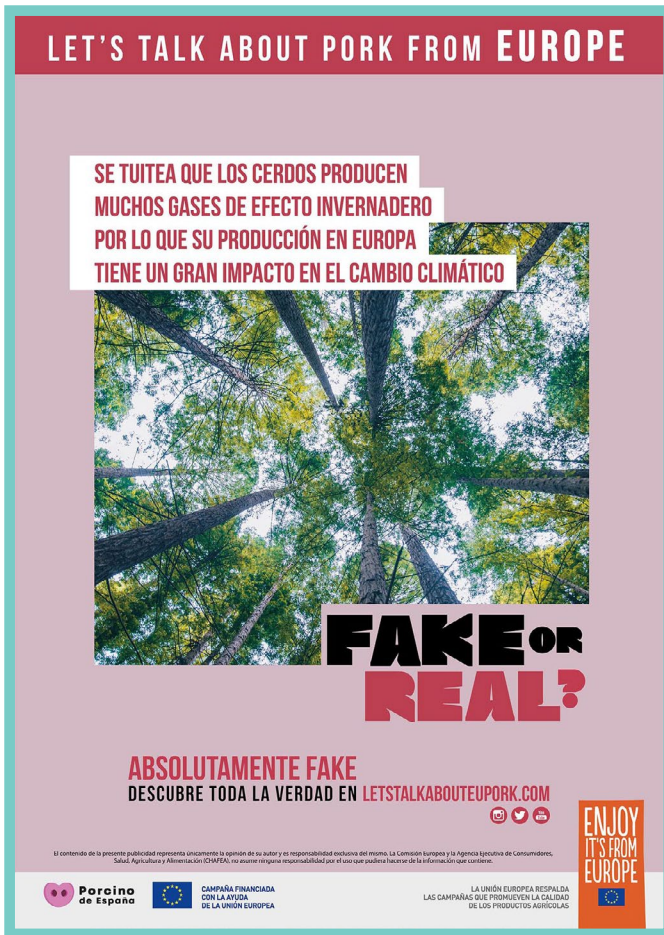
The objectives in the approved funding applications of several meat and dairy promotional campaigns funded by the European Commission **explicitly state they aim to reverse declines or slow downs in the growth of meat and dairy consumption in Europe.**

“Pork is the most consumed meat in all Europe. Despite that, its consumption decreased, which is the midpoint for all stakeholders in the industry. The factors that led to this decrease are several but mainly relate to controversies on the sustainability of pork meat and animal welfare. The project aims to inform the consumer about the reality of production in the entire pork chain.”

[LetsTalkAboutPork](#) campaign promoting pork in France, Spain and Portugal
with EU funding of €6,055,449 for 2019–2021

“EU poultry consumption in the European Union is still increasing but at a slower pace, as more and more consumers are mistrustful regarding the poultry meat production. [...] The program also aims to maintain the same consumption growth rate during 2020 and 2021 and to avoid the predicted drop down for these two years.”

[EU Poultry](#) campaign, promoting poultry in BE, FR, DE, IT, NL and PL
with EU funding of €4,400,002 for 2019–2022



LetsTalkAboutPork campaign, with over €6 million of EU funding, supposedly tells French, Spanish and Portuguese consumers what is real and what is fake about the climate impacts of the pork industry. The advertisement says that it is untrue that pigs produce a lot of greenhouse gases and therefore drive climate change, ignoring the climate impact of the production for feed for the pigs.



The Quero Mais Leite campaign in Portugal has the stated aim of addressing a “milk reputation crisis” it says was sparked by Harvard University recommending “more moderate milk ingestion”. The campaign has used endorsements from a nutritionist. It continued after the EU funding period when, at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, it associated drinking milk with a strengthened immune system in “times of uncertainty”, and used images of medical professionals to reinforce this link.

“The milk market is today facing a lasting crisis due to a continuing decrease in milk consumption and a deterioration of its image in public opinion. In order to enhance the competitiveness of European agriculture, the objectives for this action are to reverse the trend by stopping the decrease of consumption of milk and to restore its image by helping consumers to reconnect with milk and spoonable milk products.”

[EMF Milk](#) campaign, promoting dairy products in BE, DK, FR, IE and NL
with EU funding of €9,900,000 for 2018–2020

“Pork is no longer a natural part of the young Scandinavians’ diet. They tend to eat less meat in general and to avoid pork in particular. The objective is to increase consumer demand and thereby halt an otherwise forecasted continued decline.”

[LovePork](#) campaign, promoting pork in Sweden and Denmark
with EU funding of €2,548,420 for 2018–2020

Other communications objectives of several campaigns explicitly included **counteracting the public’s environmental and health concerns about meat and dairy**. Aided by EU funds, campaigns publish “myth busting” campaigns to polish their environmental image or even to counteract new scientific information about the negative climate impacts of the industries.

“We are experiencing the largest milk reputation crisis in living memory. All this negative word of mouth started in 2011 when Harvard University presented “Healthy Eating Plate” that recommends a more moderate milk ingestion, one or two “doses/glasses daily” and suggested that collards, bok choy, fortified soy milk, and baked beans are safer choices than dairy for obtaining calcium. [...] This became the worst media crisis, with a dangerous impact on consumer attitudes and consumption.”

[Milk reputation programme](#), promoting dairy in Portugal
with EU funding of €731,174 for 2016–2019

“Over the last decade throughout Europe the fresh meat consumption has faced constat [sic] decrease. The aim of this campaign is to incite the consumers not to have a stereotyped idea about red meat and to enable them to be again confident about their consumption decision.”

[Proud of beef](#) campaign, promoting bovine meat in BE, FR, DE, PT and ES
with EU funding of €3,605,271 for 2019–2021

“The dairy sector still benefits from a positive image in the consumer’s mind. However, doubt and confusion is increasing very fast due to the dissemination of inaccurate facts and figures regarding the environmental impact of dairy production.”

[EMF Climate](#) campaign, promoting dairy in BE, DK, IE, FR, NL, UK
with EU funding of €2,880,000 for 2017–2019

Industry associations have identified younger consumers as having concerns about the environmental impacts of meat and dairy products. **Youth, and even children, are target groups of these campaigns, aiming to reach them through influencers, social media and targeted messaging.**

“The slogan of the campaign will be “let’s talk about pork”, which will target young people up to 35 years old. This campaign will be based on true and false messages that will sparkle interest among the young people about the reality of the pork line.”

[LetsTalkAboutPork](#) campaign promoting pork in France, Spain and Portugal
with EU funding of €6,055,449 for 2019–2021

“The action targets families with young children and young millennial adults pre-children, with a core target aged 20–35 years old, who are a market to win back and who will eventually pass on their eating habits to their children.”

[EMF Milk](#) campaign, promoting dairy products in BE, DK, FR, IE and NL
with EU funding of €9,900,000 for 2018–2020

“The Danish Dairy Board and the School Milk Scheme has long seen a drop in the number of students who drink school milk and a decreasing number of schools offering school milk. School milk programmes suffer from a lack of legitimacy in the schools and parents are unsure about their children’s needs to drink school milk.”

[Project Sund Skole](#) campaign promoting dairy in Danish schools
with EU funding of €333,792 for 2016–2018.

Conclusions

7

The EU's promotional spending reveals its current priorities in the agri-food sector. European diets are heavily unbalanced towards excessive consumption of animal products like meat and dairy and still, 32% of the funding goes to the exclusive promotion of these products while only 19% is used to promote diets with more fruits and vegetables.

Science tells us that to restore nature, avoid the worst of climate breakdown and protect public health, we must produce and consume much less meat and dairy. The EU's promotional programme is actively pushing consumption in the wrong direction.

A recent study estimates that 5 million deaths [could be avoided globally](#), per year in 2050, by adopting healthier diets with less meat and more vegetables, fruits, legumes and nuts. It seems that Europeans are listening to the experts, as in an [EU-wide opinion poll](#) 68% said they would be prepared to reduce their meat consumption, or were already eating less meat. But EU funding is granted to promotion campaigns aiming to reverse this trend, as healthier and more sustainable diets are perceived as a threat by the traditional meat and dairy industries.

In its Farm to Fork strategy, the European Commission committed to reviewing its promotional policy for European farm products in 2021. So far, the scrutiny on the programme has been limited to [some critical media coverage](#) of meat promotion campaigns and [outcries from the European Parliament](#), as well as warnings from [health authorities](#) on promotion campaigns on alcohol.

The industry pressure seems to be mounting on decision-makers, however, as shown by last-minute changes to the Commission's high priority strategies on food and health: the [Farm to Fork](#) strategy published in 2020 and the [Beating Cancer Plan](#) in 2021. **Leaked versions of both strategies contained wording that suggested the European Commission intended to end the funding of the promotion of red and processed meat, but the final versions of both strategies had been amended with more vague wording on promoting healthier diets.**

The new 2021 work plan for the promotion programme does include [headline commitments](#) to increase funding for organic products and for fruits and vegetables, in line with the Commission's European Green Deal. On the other hand, [evaluations of the existing programme](#) (2016–2019), carried out by the Commission, say there is no need to reconsider the objectives of the programme and see no contradictions.



The EU must move beyond lip service, and start a real shift towards an ecological food system and healthier diets. **Greenpeace is calling on the EU and national governments to:**

- Acknowledge the scientific evidence of the detrimental impacts of the current levels of consumption and production of meat and dairy in the EU, and set clear political targets for their reduction. Meat and dairy consumption should be reduced to at least 70% by 2030 and 80% by 2050 compared to current levels.
- End public funding for projects aiming to promote and increase the consumption of meat and dairy products, and shift funding to promote more fruit, vegetables and plant-based diets.
- Assess and put forward a comprehensive set of measures to shift consumption to more plant-rich diets, with a transition to ecologically produced animal products, including marketing and procurement policies as well as dietary guidelines and fairer pricing schemes.
- End public subsidies for industrial animal farming, including feed production, and use public funds to encourage farmers to transition away from industrial meat, dairy and egg production.

Annex: Methodology

This research covers approved EU funding in the period 2016–2020 for EU level figures. Figures per country or per production method such as organic only cover 2016–2019, as comprehensive reporting was available for these years only. All projects from both ‘SIMPLE’ and ‘MULTI’ programmes, targeting both internal and external markets, were included in the research, but all the figures in this report cover only the EU-funded part of the projects, excluding the co-financing by proposing organisations.

Data presented in **Table 1**. “All EU funding granted for promotion projects in 2016–2020 according to the product category” are based on the [Commission decisions](#) of approved projects the “Statistics on submitted and adopted programmes” available [on the CHAFEA website](#), separately for ‘SIMPLE’ and ‘MULTI’ programmes. The research is based on “accepted proposals by products” as reported in these documents.

Category “basket of products” in **Table 1**. is a product category in the programme statistics that includes projects with several products, brought together by other factors such as region, quality scheme etc. Whether a basket of products included animal products, was determined based on the information in the ‘lists of selected programmes’ documents [on the CHAFEA website](#).

Category ‘alcohol’ in **Table 1**. includes product categories “spirits, liqueurs and vermouth” and “wine, cider and vinegar”. Category ‘other’ in the table includes all other product categories in the programme statistics including (with variance between years) “beverages made from plant extracts”, “bread, pastry, cakes, confectionery, biscuits and other baker’s wares”, “cut flowers and plants, bulbs roots and live plants”, “honey and beekeeping products”, “olive oil”, “other vegetable oils” and “other eligible products”. Category “organic products” in Table 1. is based on Table 2.

Data presented in **Table 2**. “EU spending 2016–2019 on promotion of organic products” was compiled by reviewing projects in the [CHAFEA project database](#) that have been funded as part of the ‘organic’ quality scheme, or could be found by searching the database with the keyword ‘organic’. This approach means that not all of the projects included in the listing promoted exclusively organic products, with many promoting a mixture of organic and conventionally farmed products.

Data in **Table 3**. on EU funding (2016–2019) for promotion programmes in selected EU countries was compiled by reviewing projects in the [CHAFEA project database](#) according to the “proposing country” of the project for Denmark, Germany, Italy, Austria, Poland, Spain, France and Ireland. The amount of projects found were checked [against annual lists of approved projects](#). Projects promoting exclusively either meat and dairy products or fruits and vegetables were listed per country. Projects for meat and dairy included all those linked to the following product sectors in the database: sheep/goat meat, pork meat, poultry, bovine, meat preparations, cheese and dairy (excluding cheese). Projects for fruits and vegetables included all those linked to the following product sectors in the database: preparations of vegetables, fruits or nuts, vegetables, vegetables excluding sweetcorn and fruits.

The overall amount of all projects and amount of funding per country in 2016–2018 was drawn from [CHAFEA’s annual statistics](#) but were not fully available for 2019. For 2019 the amount of funding per country was compiled from the lists of approved projects, both for [SIMPLE](#) and [MULTI](#) projects and compared to the number of approved projects as documented in the [annual statistics](#) and the [CHAFEA project database](#). For MULTI projects funding for both coordinating and co-applicant organisations per country was included. Some inconsistencies between these different sources however indicated that the database didn’t seem to include all projects funded in 2019 for example. In this case, annual lists of approved projects were used as the ultimate source.

Table 4. on EU spending in 2016–2019 on promotion of organic products in 8 different EU countries was compiled by putting together data in table 2 and 3, with their respective methodologies.





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