



Meeting of young farmers at the Four Motors for Europe

OPEN LETTER FROM THE YOUNG FARMERS OF EUROPE PROPOSALS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

Addressed to administrations, the sector and the public

From 11 to 13 March 2026, 26 young farmers from Lombardy, Baden-Württemberg, Catalonia and Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes met in Tarragona to share experiences and reflect on the challenges facing the new generation in the agricultural sector. From our collective work, there emerged five shared diagnoses—access to land, installation costs and financing, professional prestige, mentoring and bureaucracy, and the profitability of farms—and a set of specific proposals for interregional cooperation. Our aim for this open letter is to share the message we have built and convey it to public administrations, the sector itself and the citizenry.



Participants in the Young Farmers Forum Four Motors for Europe. Tarragona, March 2026

BLOCK A · PROPOSALS TO ADMINISTRATIONS

1. SIMPLIFY AND DIGITALISE AGRICULTURAL ADMINISTRATION AND IMPROVE SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Bureaucracy is one of the biggest obstacles facing young farmers in all four regions. The existence of multiple administrative bodies, duplicative documentation and the lack of regulatory flexibility generate a burden that often forces farmers to turn to external business managers and to dedicate time and resources to non-productive tasks.

Administrations should work to create a one-stop shop for all procedures for young farmers, digitalise aid application processes and eliminate paperwork redundancies between the European, state and regional levels. The young people of the Four Motors for Europe propose that regional administrations prepare a periodic report on the administrative obstacles to new farm installations and include specific recommendations.



We further call for the creation of a support network with experts in entrepreneurship and business management to advise us on all aspects that concern us in defining our project and securing its position.

We want policymakers to have in-depth knowledge of the agricultural sector to facilitate active listening and empathy when defining public policies aimed at small and medium-sized farmers.

We hold that agriculture is an overly regulated sector and that the administrative burden should be reduced and the efficiency of administrations improved so that farms can use their resources to produce quality food that has a positive impact on society and the environment.

We want small and medium-sized farmers to have reference models and support that is more in line with their management capabilities than with their profile.

We call upon all administrations to put forward proposals reflecting their experience in order to reduce bureaucracy and improve support and training for young farmers.

2. STRENGTHENING FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS FOR INSTALLATION

Aid for first installation does not guarantee the economic viability of the projects. The high initial investment, combined with an uncertain economic return and volatile markets, means that many young people perceive agriculture as an inaccessible and unattractive career option. We need a minimum of 10 years to consolidate our projects.

Administrations should increase the ceiling for installation aid in the EAFRD regulation, create new financial instruments and participatory loans through regional financial institutions and negotiate a specific guarantee framework for young farmers with the European Bank. There should be financing for the entire installation package: land, machinery, herds, production rights, working capital and administrative expenses. There is a need for financing options that have public guarantees and long-term return periods with no financing costs so that projects can firmly establish themselves. In short, it is necessary to facilitate young people's access to credit and capital, with more public support.

There must also be an awareness of the diversity of business models, which sometimes do not fit into current financing frameworks. We call for regulatory frameworks and, above all, innovative financing models that ensure the long-term viability of projects.

3. GUARANTEE STABLE POLICIES FOR ACCESS TO LAND AND TRANSFER OF HOLDINGS

Access to land is one of the main barriers blocking new generations from working in agriculture. High prices, fragmentation resulting from inheritances and the lack of available active farms severely limit the possibilities of young farmers. In addition, the process of transferring viable farms in operation is extremely complex.

Administrations should establish mechanisms that make it easier for young farmers to access land: land banks, agricultural test spaces, agricultural business incubators, and regulatory frameworks that prioritise farmers' access to land. A model for the latter is the ease that young people have with respect to other stakeholders in the Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes region or the French SAFER. Territorial planning should have an emphasis on limiting changes in land use in order to protect land for agricultural uses and its harmonisation on a European scale. Abandoned land or disused buildings should also be reclaimed for agricultural uses.

4. INCORPORATE GENERATIONAL RENEWAL AS A CROSS-CUTTING PRIORITY IN ALL POLICIES



European policies to support generational renewal are insufficiently funded and too dispersed across multiple measures. Strengthening the sector's competitiveness requires making sure that the new generation can access the profession with real guarantees of economic viability.

The young people of the Four Motors for Europe propose to public administrations that they create regulatory frameworks that integrate all packages aimed at bringing young people into the sector. This includes the provision of capital and financing, but also extends to more favourable taxation for the agricultural sector, as already happens in Italy. Each regional administration must ensure, within the framework of its PEPAC strategic plans and other policies, that generational succession is a real priority with a specific budget allocation and clear outcome indicators. The comparative experience of the regions of the Four Motors for Europe must inform the European negotiating position.

Profitability is one of the key factors for transfer. Therefore, it is necessary to temper policies that cause increased costs, and also generate instruments that reduce the uncertainties of the sector, whether due to climate or geopolitical issues.

Beyond reducing costs and being more competitive, we must work to place a higher value on products of local and European origin, improving their labelling so that consumers will recognise and value the quality of the products we produce.

BLOCK B · PROPOSALS TO THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

5. BUILD AN INTERREGIONAL NETWORK OF MENTORING AND PROFESSIONAL EXCHANGE

Practical knowledge and support from experienced farmers are crucial to the success of new installations. Interregional cooperation makes it possible for the scope of these programmes to be expanded and enriched with the diversity of European agricultural methods and environments.

We call for the launch of a mentoring and training programme that encourages exchange between the regions of the Four Motors for Europe, including visits and annual working sessions to identify good practices. The cooperative sector, through its regional federations, should play an active role in coordinating this programme.

6. IMPROVEMENT OF THE VALUE CHAIN

Most young farmers produce raw materials with the thinnest of margins, while added value is concentrated in other stages of the food value chain. Access to quality European markets is a key factor in improving the profitability of young farms.

The sector should promote direct sales and the reduction of intermediaries with the aim of having control over the final price of its products. Cooperative organisations should promote cross-public procurement, and the administrations of the four regions should give priority to products from young farmers in the network when adjudicating their public tenders.

7. LEAD INNOVATION AND TRAINING AS A FACTOR OF COMPETITIVENESS AND PRESTIGE

Modern agriculture has technological tools, business models and sustainable practices that help improve profitability, reduce environmental impact and respond to the challenges of climate change. The new generation of farmers is, in many cases, the natural bearer of this innovation.



Training and the transfer of technology and knowledge must be aimed at improving the competitiveness and sustainability of the sector. Additionally, work in this vein should generate a strong positive impact on employees in the sector and on immigrant groups who work in the sector.

The sector must highlight the essential role it plays in society and draw attention to and promote the innovations of young farmers.

BLOCK C · PROPOSALS TO THE PUBLIC

8. ASSESSING THE FARMING PROFESSION AND ITS STRATEGIC ROLE

In many regions of Europe, the farming profession continues to suffer from a negative or undervalued perception, especially in urban settings. Misinformation about the reality of the sector, a lack of awareness of the differences between industrial production and local or craft production, and the oversimplified attribution of responsibility to agriculture for environmental problems all contribute to an absence of prestige that makes generational succession difficult.

Farming is essential to guarantee food security, care for the land and keep rural landscapes alive. The young people who work the land do so with a deep commitment to nature, animals and the communities in which we live. We ask the public to acknowledge our work as a demanding, technical and strategic profession, and to reject simplistic narratives that place responsibilities upon agriculture that lie with the entire food system.

We call upon administrations and also the media to help bring these positive messages to the general public.

9. CONSCIOUS CONSUMPTION: LOCAL CONSUMPTION IS A POLITICAL ACT

The public's consumption decisions directly affect the viability of farms. Choosing local, seasonal and quality products is a direct way to support local farming and rural economies. Every euro returned to producers is an investment in the future of the territory and a show of respect for the profession.

We invite citizens to choose local and European products with knowledge of the facts, to demand more information about the origin of food products and their environmental footprint, to consume in-season items and to recognise that a fair price for food is a necessary condition for the sustainability of the people who produce it. Every consumption decision is a political, historical, cultural and identity act. Our work, as young European farmers, depends to a large extent on your daily choices.

10. BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN THE COUNTRYSIDE AND THE CITY

The distance between urban and rural life is an obstacle to mutual understanding and the social support that the agricultural sector needs. Reducing this gap is a shared responsibility: of educational systems, the media, political leaders and the public general.

We call for knowledge of the agricultural life of our regions to be included in educational centres, that visits to farms be promoted as a curricular activity, that the media reflect the diverse and complex reality of the agricultural sector, and that political leaders at all levels of government get to know first-hand the farms and rural communities over which they legislate.

This meeting of young people from the Four Motors for Europe in which we have participated is proof that young European farmers are capable of building bridges, learning from each other and speaking with one voice when necessary.



We are the future of farming in Europe

We come from four regions to tell you that we are ready to continue fighting so that we can work in the profession we love, join us!

Tarragona, 13 March 2026

Signed by the 26 participants in the Young Farmers Forum