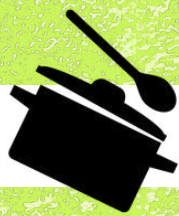


GOOD FOOD



GOOD FARMING

EUROPEAN DAYS OF ACTION

CAMPAIGN MESSAGING AND KEY NARRATIVES

This guide provides orientation for partners, organisers and communicators. You can use and adapt this content across websites, newsletters, press materials, presentations, speeches, and social media.

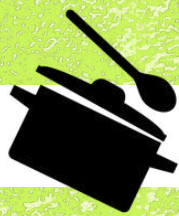


TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. [Campaign Approach](#)
2. [Campaign Narrative](#)
3. [Campaign Rationale](#)
4. [Campaign Evidence](#)
5. [Communication Principles](#)



1 Campaign Approach

Europe's food system is entering one of its most important political moments in recent years. As the European Union begins shaping the next Common Agricultural Policy, a broader political agenda centred on **competitiveness, simplification and deregulation** is reshaping the rules governing food and farming.

Through the Omnibus packages and wider legislative reforms, **environmental protections, social safeguards and sustainability requirements are increasingly being weakened**. These discussions are often presented as technical reforms or administrative simplification, but they raise much bigger questions about the future of food and farming in Europe.

What happens when the rules change? Who benefits when environmental and social protections are weakened, and who bears the costs? What does this mean for farmers trying to make a living, communities trying to access healthy food, biodiversity, public health and the future of Europe's food system?

Europe continues to lose farms. A new generation struggles to access land. Healthy food remains inaccessible to many communities. Power continues to concentrate along the food chain, while local initiatives already demonstrating fairer and more resilient ways of producing and sharing food receive only a fraction of the attention and support they deserve.

The 2026 European Days of Action respond to this political moment by inviting people to look beyond the headlines. Rather than asking whether one policy proposal is simply good or bad, **the campaign explores the gap between political headlines and everyday life**.

The aim is not to provide one answer. It is to **equip people with the evidence, stories and examples** needed to understand the wider picture, question dominant narratives and discover the alternatives already growing in their communities.



2 Campaign Narrative

The Campaign in One Sentence

Every year, the European Days of Action create spaces where people can explore the stories behind our food, question the system we have, and discover the people already building the solutions we need.

The Underlying Narrative

The 2026 European Days of Action are built around a simple idea: The biggest stories shaping our food system are often the ones we do not hear.

Discussions about food frequently begin with headlines: rising food prices, farmer protests, new environmental rules, trade agreements, supermarket prices or extreme weather.

These stories matter, but they rarely explain the wider political, economic and social systems shaping them. The campaign invites people to pause before accepting simple explanations and ask a second question: **What part of the story is missing?**

Rather than presenting food systems as abstract policy debates, the campaign starts from current developments and works backwards to reveal the structures behind them. Campaign resources will help audiences connect a headline to the broader choices, power relationships and public decisions shaping Europe's food system.

At the same time, communications should not leave audiences with a sense of inevitability or despair. **Every story should also point towards existing alternatives** and show that communities across Europe are already building fairer food systems.

This creates a **consistent narrative** across the campaign:

A current development → The wider story behind it → Existing alternatives → An invitation to participate

This structure should guide all campaign communications, including the website, investigative video series, newsletters, social media, press work, local events and the shared participatory action.



3 Campaign Rationale

Why food?

Food is one of the few issues that connects us all. Every meal links us to farmers, workers, nature, public policy and one another. Talking about food opens the door to conversations about climate, biodiversity, health, livelihoods and democracy through something everyone experiences every day.

Why local action?

The future of our food system will not be built in Brussels alone. It is already being shaped in farms, schools, markets, kitchens and communities across Europe. Local events make these stories visible, bring people together and show that change begins where people meet.

Why Europe?

Food systems do not stop at national borders. Many of the decisions affecting farmers, consumers and our environment are shared across Europe, and many of the solutions are too. By acting together on the same days, hundreds of local stories become one European story.

Why this campaign?

Changing the food system starts with changing the conversation. The European Days of Action create opportunities for people to discover how the food system works, question what they take for granted and meet the people already building the solutions we need. Together, these conversations create the momentum needed for wider change.

What makes this campaign different?

The European Days of Action is not a campaign that asks people to support a message. They invite people to shape it. Every event, story and conversation becomes part of a shared European narrative that is created collectively.

Why organise an event?

Every event adds a new perspective to the campaign. Whether it is a farm visit, community meal, workshop or public action, your event creates space for new conversations and helps others discover the people already building the solutions we need.



4 Campaign Evidence

Investigation 1: The Food System Is Controlled by a Few Hands

Why this story matters

The people growing and producing our food often have the least influence over the system surrounding it. Across seeds, pesticides, machinery, processing, global trade and retail, control is concentrated among a small number of companies.

This market power also creates political power. Large corporations can shape research, regulation and public policy through lobbying, industry associations and privileged access to decision-makers. Farmers, workers, smaller food businesses and communities are left with fewer choices and less influence.

Seeds are part of this struggle. They are not simply agricultural inputs, but the result of generations of selection and adaptation. Rules governing who may breed, reproduce, exchange and patent seeds shape farmers' autonomy, agricultural biodiversity and the resilience of Europe's food supply.

Key evidence

- Six companies control 58% of the global commercial seed market. The same six control 78% of the agrochemical market. (IPES-Food 2023)
- Four companies control between 70% and 90% of global grain trade. (IPES-Food 2023)
- Four retail groups dominate almost the entire German grocery market. (Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung et al. 2026)
- In the banana supply chain, supermarkets receive 41% of the value. Plantation workers receive 7%. (Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung et al. 2026)
- Almost four out of every five organisations lobbying EU decision-makers during a major agricultural policy process represented agribusiness. Farmers, consumer groups, health organisations and environmental organisations competed for the remaining space. (Good Food Good Farming 2026)
- Corporate concentration affects more than prices. It can also mean fewer local shops, lower regional wages, weaker labour standards and higher barriers for new businesses. (IPES-Food 2023)
- EU trade rules allow some imported food to be produced under standards weaker than those required of European farmers. Research documents these double standards across apples, beef, rapeseed, rice, soy and sheep in six European countries. (Mirror Measures Coalition 2024)



- The EU still allows the production and export of some pesticides that are banned for use within the EU. (Mirror Measures Coalition 2024)
- Rules governing new genomic techniques could weaken traceability and labelling requirements while increasing uncertainty around patents and farmers' access to plant material. (Corporate Europe Observatory 2026a; Slow Food 2026a)
- European seed rules can favour uniform commercial varieties over diverse and locally adapted seeds, even though this diversity is essential for climate resilience and regional food cultures. (Slow Food 2025a)

What this looks like in practice

- Farmers tied to packages of seeds, pesticides, machinery or digital services.
- Farmers uncertain whether the seeds and plant traits they use are covered by patents.
- Producers unable to negotiate fair prices with dominant processors and retailers.
- Independent retailers, bakeries and processors disappearing as large chains expand.
- European farmers meeting standards that do not always apply to competing imports.
- Corporate representatives gaining more access to decision-makers than farmers, workers and communities.
- Local seed varieties struggling to enter markets designed around uniform industrial seeds.
- Seed networks, cooperatives, independent processors and direct sales creating alternatives to concentrated supply chains.

Investigation 2: The Next Generation Wants to Farm. The System Says No.

Why this story matters

Europe needs new farmers, but the route into farming is narrowing. Land is increasingly treated as a financial asset, farm incomes remain insecure and succession often favours people who already own property or come from farming families.

New farmers need more than land. They also need secure leases, housing, training, machinery, processing infrastructure, markets and enough income to build a life. Women, migrants, first-generation farmers and people entering farming outside traditional family succession face additional barriers that agricultural policy often overlooks.



When a farm disappears, Europe loses more than one business. It can also lose knowledge about soils, landscapes, varieties, breeds, processing techniques and regional food cultures.

Key evidence

- In most of the ten European countries studied, fewer than half of farms had identified a successor. (Access to Land Network 2026)
- Only 36% of farms in Germany, 25% in France and 45.4% in the United Kingdom had identified successors. Flanders reported potential successors for 57% of farmers over 55. (Access to Land Network 2025)
- Since 2007, the EU has lost almost two million commercial farms, most of them small-scale. Over the same period, the number of mega-farms increased by more than half. (Greenpeace European Unit 2024)
- High land prices, speculative investment, competing land uses and hectare-based subsidies are pushing farmland into fewer hands. (Access to Land Network 2026)
- Women tend to manage smaller farms. Because most CAP payments are based on hectares, smaller farms receive less support, making area-based subsidies a gender issue as well as an economic one. (SWIFT Project 2025a)
- Women, gender-diverse people and migrant workers make essential contributions to European agriculture that remain largely invisible in policy and public debate. (SWIFT Project 2025a; Oxfam 2024)
- Between 1989 and 2020, 164 villages in Bulgaria disappeared, showing the link between farm consolidation, youth migration and rural decline. (Access to Land Network 2025)
- The number of German food-craft businesses fell from 57,668 in 1998 to 32,248 in the first half of 2025, a decline of 44.1%. (Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung et al. 2026)
- When farms and food businesses disappear, local varieties, breeds, products and processing knowledge can disappear with them. (Slow Food 2026b)

What this looks like in practice

- New and first-generation farmers searching for suitable land for years.
- Farmland going to investors or the highest bidder rather than someone who intends to farm it.
- New farmers unable to access affordable housing near the land they work.



- Short leases preventing investment in soil, trees and water systems.
- Older farmers unable to find or finance a successor.
- Women carrying out essential farm work without equal ownership or access to subsidies.
- Migrant and seasonal workers sustaining farms while remaining absent from public narratives.
- Local varieties, breeds, products and processing skills disappearing when farms and food businesses close.
- Farm incubators allowing new entrants to test a business before taking on the full cost and risk of a farm.
- Community land organisations and cooperatives keeping land in agricultural use.

Investigation 3: Nature Protects Farming. Industrial Food Systems Are Destroying Nature.

Why this story matters

Farming depends on living systems. Healthy soils retain water and nutrients. Diverse landscapes support pollinators and natural pest control. Wetlands, hedgerows, grasslands and trees make farms more resilient to drought, flooding and extreme temperatures.

Yet industrial food production continues to damage many of the systems agriculture needs to survive. Intensive monocultures, heavy pesticide and fertiliser use, drained soils and imported animal feed contribute to climate change, water pollution and biodiversity loss. Agroecology offers a different approach. It combines ecological diversity, local knowledge, farmer autonomy and fair livelihoods rather than reducing sustainability to one technology or one soil indicator.

Key evidence

- Food and agriculture generate roughly one third of global greenhouse-gas emissions. (FAO 2023)
- Drained organic soils cover less than 2% of EU agricultural land but produce around 20% of the sector's greenhouse-gas emissions. (European Court of Auditors 2021)
- Rewetting a relatively small share of agricultural peatland could deliver major emissions reductions while improving water retention and biodiversity. (Greifswald Mire Centre 2024)
- A large share of arable crops is fed to animals rather than eaten directly by people, creating major losses of food, land and resources across the supply chain. (Compassion in World Farming 2025)
- Farms across Europe are already reducing or eliminating pesticides while maintaining production through agroecological practices. (Friends of the Earth Europe 2025)



Investigation 4: Europe Produces Enough Food. Millions Still Cannot Afford It.

Why this story matters

Food insecurity is not simply the result of producing too little. Whether people can eat well depends on income, housing and energy costs, working conditions, social protection, public services and the food available where they live.

Access also means more than obtaining enough calories. People need nutritious and culturally appropriate food that supports health, dignity and participation in community life. Food should therefore be treated as a right and a public responsibility, not simply as a commodity or an act of charity.

At the same time, farmers can struggle to survive, consumers can face rising prices and large companies can continue profiting from both ends of the supply chain.

Key evidence

- In 2024, 8.5% of the EU population could not afford a meal containing meat, fish or a vegetarian equivalent every second day. (Eurostat 2025)
- This statistic measures severe material deprivation. It does not capture everyone who struggles to afford a complete, healthy and sustainable diet. (Eurostat 2025)
- Housing, energy, transport and household income all determine whether someone can afford good food. Food prices alone do not tell the whole story. (European Commission DG AGRI 2025)
- Meat prices rose by as much as 56% over five years in the countries examined, widening the price gap between meat and plant proteins. (Madre Brava 2026)
- The right to food requires governments to protect people's ability to access adequate food. It treats hunger as a question of rights and public responsibility, not charity. (FAO 2024)
- Public procurement, retail policy, advertising rules and public catering can change what food is available, affordable and considered normal. (Food Voices Coalition 2025)
- Research across eleven European countries documents public catering, procurement and food strategies that support healthier and more sustainable diets. (Agora Agriculture and IDDRI 2024)
- Public kitchens can connect farms directly with schools, hospitals and canteens, creating reliable demand for regional food while improving what is served. (Slow Food 2026c)



- The term “regenerative agriculture” has no single agreed definition. It can be used without clear requirements on pesticides, biodiversity, workers’ rights or social justice. (Agroecology Europe 2026)
- Unregulated regenerative labels can give products an environmental image without transparent standards or independent verification. (Friends of the Earth US 2026)
- Formal CAP coverage does not guarantee that soil-protection measures are effectively implemented on farms. (EU CAP Network 2025)
- EU farmers can be required to meet pesticide and environmental standards while competing with imports produced under weaker rules. (Mirror Measures Coalition 2024)
- Agricultural biodiversity gives farmers more options when facing drought, pests, disease and changing climatic conditions. (Slow Food 2026b)
- Europe’s dependence on synthetic fertilisers, imported feed and fossil fuels leaves farmers exposed to volatile global prices and geopolitical shocks. (IPES-Food 2026)
- Industrial breeding has prioritised tomato traits such as thicker skins and longer shelf life for global transport, showing how food quality can be reshaped around supply-chain needs. (Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung and AFSA 2022)

What this looks like in practice

- Soils unable to absorb water during droughts or heavy rainfall.
- Farms facing rising fertiliser, feed, fuel and energy costs.
- Farming landscapes with fewer insects, birds, hedgerows and wild plants.
- Fertile land being used to produce feed for intensive livestock systems rather than food for people.
- Local varieties being replaced by a narrow range of uniform commercial crops.
- Sustainability labels appearing without clear standards behind them.
- Environmental protections being weakened in the name of competitiveness.
- Agroecological farms rebuilding soil through rotations, mixed farming, composting and agroforestry.
- Farmers reducing pesticide use through ecological pest management.
- Farmers conserving seeds and breeds suited to local soils and climates.



- Public meals can connect health, education, agriculture, social inclusion and regional development rather than being treated as catering alone. (Slow Food 2026c)
- Access to good food should include food that is nutritious, culturally appropriate and connected to community life. (FAO 2024; Slow Food 2026c)

What this looks like in practice

- People skipping meals or reducing food quality because rent and energy bills take priority.
- Healthy, fresh or culturally familiar food being unavailable in particular neighbourhoods.
- Farmers receiving too little while consumers pay more.
- Families depending on food banks while edible food is wasted elsewhere.
- Children's access to good food depending on the quality and affordability of school meals.
- Public kitchens buying the cheapest food because procurement rules reward price over wider public value.
- Local producers unable to bid for contracts designed around large volumes and centralised suppliers.
- Municipalities redesigning procurement so smaller and regional producers can participate.
- Food councils bringing residents, farmers and public institutions together to shape local food policy.
- Food Social Security experiments treating access to adequate food as a shared public responsibility.

Investigation 5: Solutions Already Exist. They Need Room to Grow.

Why this story matters

The alternatives are not theoretical. Farmers, schools, municipalities, food workers, cooks, cooperatives and communities are already developing ways of producing and sharing food that protect nature, retain more value locally and strengthen relationships between people and places. These initiatives are often described as isolated “alternatives”, even though the dominant system depends on extensive public subsidies, infrastructure and political support. The real difference is not that one model receives support and the other does not. It is that support is distributed unequally.



Territorial food systems connect farms, processors, schools, markets, public kitchens, local authorities and communities within a place. They keep more value, knowledge and decision-making within regions and reduce dependence on distant companies and fragile supply chains. The challenge is not a shortage of ideas. It is ensuring that successful approaches receive the land, infrastructure, investment and political support needed to become normal rather than exceptional.

Key evidence

- Research across eleven European countries documents public catering, procurement, national food strategies and other policies supporting healthier and more sustainable diets. (Agora Agriculture and IDDRI 2024)
- Farms across Europe have reduced or eliminated pesticide use while maintaining production through agroecological practices. (Friends of the Earth Europe 2025)
- Public procurement, retail strategies, advertising rules and public catering can change what food is available and affordable. (Food Voices Coalition 2025)
- Public procurement can create stable markets for regional producers by connecting farms directly with schools, hospitals, universities and canteens. (Slow Food 2026c)
- Community-supported agriculture allows farmers and eaters to share risks, costs and harvests rather than leaving farmers to absorb market volatility alone. (European CSA Research Group 2024)
- Community land organisations and farm incubators reduce barriers to entering farming by providing access to land, equipment, mentoring and business support. (Access to Land Network 2026)
- Seed networks and community seed banks keep locally adapted varieties and breeding knowledge in common use. (Slow Food 2025a)
- Food councils give farmers, residents and public institutions a shared role in shaping local food policy. (Food Voices Coalition 2025)
- Cooperative processing facilities and food hubs allow smaller farms to store, process and distribute food without depending entirely on large companies. (Agora Agriculture and IDDRI 2024)
- The main financial barrier to agroecological transformation is not simply a shortage of money. It is where money flows, who controls it and what it is expected to deliver. (Pimbert et al. 2025)
- Long-term, locally rooted and public-interest investment is better suited to agroecological transformation than finance seeking quick returns. (Pimbert et al. 2025)



- Mirror measures would require imported food to meet equivalent production standards, regardless of where it was produced. (Mirror Measures Coalition 2024)
- Local projects become transformative when they are supported by alliances, public institutions and structural reform rather than being expected to compensate for the wider system alone. (Food First 2010)
- Territorial food systems can keep more value, infrastructure and decision-making within a region while strengthening links between producers, public institutions and communities. (Slow Food 2026b; Pimbert et al. 2025)

What this looks like in practice

- Community-supported farms sharing risks and harvests with members.
- Community land organisations keeping farmland in long-term agricultural use.
- Farm incubators giving new farmers access to land, equipment and mentoring.
- Farmers reducing pesticide use through rotations, mixed farming and ecological pest management.
- Seed networks maintaining locally adapted plant varieties.
- Producers, cooks and communities keeping regional products and food skills alive.
- Cooperative processing facilities allowing small farms to add value locally.
- Public kitchens sourcing seasonal food from regional producers.
- Procurement contracts divided into smaller lots so local farms can participate.
- Food councils giving farmers, residents and public institutions a shared role in food policy.
- Community kitchens and food hubs creating shared infrastructure.
- Farmer-to-farmer learning making transition practical and rooted in experience.
- Municipal strategies connecting agriculture with health, climate, biodiversity, education, culture and regional development.
- Local initiatives cooperating across Europe so successful approaches can be adapted rather than repeatedly reinvented.

Join us!



6 Communications Principles: the dos and don'ts

The communications around the European Days of Action 2026 should:

Begin with everyday experiences before introducing wider political contexts.

Use clear and accessible language rather than technical policy terminology.

Reveal systems and power relationships without presenting farmers or farming itself as the problem.

Name corporate food production, industrial food systems, and big agribusiness when they are responsible for harmful practices.

Use verified facts and concrete examples rather than vague claims.

Make evidence memorable, visual and easy to communicate.

Connect European decisions **with local** experiences.

Combine problems with existing solutions and possible action.

Use humour to expose genuine contradictions rather than inventing or exaggerating them.

Avoid repeating misinformation, even to correct it.

Leave audiences with curiosity, agency and a reason to participate.

Show people what they can do next. Every communication should end with a clear invitation to participate.



Terminology for public communications

Instead of: The food system is broken

Prefer: The food system is designed / The food system is broken by design / on purpose

Instead of: Raise awareness

Prefer: Reveal, uncover, help people understand

Instead of: Stakeholders

Prefer: Farmers, organisers, communities, consumers, citizens, voters, activists, people, neighbours

Instead of: Transform the food system

Prefer: Change the conversation about food

Instead of: Best practice

Prefer: Real examples, local initiatives, existing solutions

Instead of: Mobilise

Prefer: Invite people to join, take part, investigate

Active framing

Instead of: Biodiversity is under pressure.

Prefer: Nature protects farming. People are destroying nature.

Instead of: Young farmers face barriers.

Prefer: The next generation wants to farm. The system says no.

Instead of: Food poverty is increasing.

Prefer: Europe produces enough food. Millions still can't afford it.

Instead of: Corporate concentration is a challenge.

Prefer: A few hands control the food system.