International Platform of Insects for Food & Feed (IPIFF)

Rue Joseph Stevens, 7, 13th floor, 1000 Brussels

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Dannish Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Council of the European Union General Secretariat

Insects' protein for food and feed – supply, production and sustainability

IPIFF – the International Platform of Insects for Food and Feed- is the umbrella organisation of the European insect-producing sector towards European institutions. Bringing together 63 members – most of which are European insect-producing companies - IPIFF promotes the use of insects and insect-derived products as a top-tier source of nutrients for animal feed, human consumption and plant nutrition.

IPIFF welcomes the Danish Presidency's initiative to emphasise the vital role of proteins in food and feed, particularly in addressing issues related to supply, production, and sustainability.

However, we note that the preparatory note for the upcoming Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting on the 14th of July primarily centres on plant proteins, without sufficiently considering the contribution of insects or other alternative protein sources in developing a comprehensive future protein strategy.

I. Challenges and objectives

- **Recalling the EU's Dependence on Protein Imports**

The Council note highlights the EU's reliance on imported proteins, which is influenced by factors such as the limited size of European holdings, available land, crop competitiveness, and less favourable soil and climate conditions for certain crops like soybeans.

Considering the above, achieving food sovereignty and self-sufficiency requires an EU Protein Plan that considers all viable sources of protein—beyond traditional plant materials—including alternative sources such as insects, algae, yeast and microbial proteins. While currently a minor component of the overall protein supply, these sources can more efficiently meet specific nutritional needs of various animal species, complementing plant-based proteins and enhancing the resilience of our food system.

- **Nutritional and functional benefits of insect proteins**

Insect-based products boast high protein content, ranging from 40% to 75%, and are rich in essential amino acids that facilitate nutrient absorption. They have demonstrated promising results in improving animal growth performance, making them a valuable alternative ingredient in aquaculture and livestock feeds.

Furthermore, insect-derived foods are nutrient-dense, offering a balanced profile of proteins, essential amino acids, fatty acids, and vitamins—making them suitable to meet human dietary requirements.

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- **Enhancing resilience**

The EU's "Vision for Agriculture and Food" underscores that the current reliance on high-quality protein imports exposes the Union's food system to risks stemming from global market fluctuations and sustainability challenges.

Given the increasing uncertainties caused by geopolitical instability, trade disruptions, and climate change, IPIFF and its members urge the European Commission, the European Council and Member States to adopt a comprehensive, inclusive protein diversification strategy—one that integrates innovative and sustainable protein sources, including insects.

- **Improving Sustainability**

Insect farming within the EU—conducted in controlled environments—reduces exposure to external risks and supports local production. Moreover, insect farming can contribute to biodiversity conservation by alleviating pressure on natural ecosystems, as it requires significantly less land, water, and feed compared to traditional livestock farming.

- **Diversification of protein sources**

We draw your attention to the urgent need for a coherent policy approach, highlighting various initiatives that emphasize the importance of recognizing diverse contributors to protein source diversification:

- ✓ European Parliament Resolution'[1] highlights insects as a useful circular alternative source of protein to reducing the EU protein deficit.
- ✓ European Commission Study'[2] stresses the beneficial role of insects in diversifying protein sources for feedstock feeding.
- ✓ European Commission Aquaculture Strategic Guidelines[3] highlights the need to limiting feed producers' reliance on fish meal and fish oil taken from wild stocks (e.g. using alternative protein ingredients such as algae or insects or the waste from other industries).

Furthermore, we would like to bring to your attention several national initiatives promoting protein diversification, including those involving insect-based sources, from which we recommend EU Member States draw inspiration.

- ✓ Finland: Implementation plan to increase Finland's protein self-sufficiency, which includes insect protein production[4]
- ✓ The Netherlands: National Protein Strategy[5]
- ✓ Bulgaria- three national-level protein initiatives[6]

- **Promoting an EU Competitive Circular Economy**

Insects have the potential to support the principles of a circular economy by transforming agricultural co-products and residues into high-value, protein-rich materials—thus creating new opportunities for resource efficiency and waste reduction.

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[1] Motion for a Resolution of the European Parliament on an 'European Protein Strategy,' 19th of October 2023
[2] European Commission Study 'on feeding strategies to diversify the protein sources used in different livestock production systems in the EU, December 2023
[3] Strategic guidelines for a more sustainable and competitive EU aquaculture for the period 2021 to 2030, 12th of May 2025
[4] Study on feeding strategies to diversify protein sources used in different livestock production systems in the EU, December 2023
[5] Study on feeding strategies to diversify protein sources used in different livestock production systems in the EU
[6] Factsheet: EU countries' initiatives to a more sustainable and resilient protein-supply system? December 2023

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In this regard, we call your attention to the EU Feed Circularity Catalogue-Existing Legal Restrictions to Enhanced Animal Feed Circularity, promoted by eight EU-level organisations[7], which addresses the case study on the use of former foodstuffs containing meat and/or fish for feeding Insects[8].

Addressing the regulatory restrictions of the aforementioned case study would support the development of a circular and sustainable insect farming industry, enabling it to effectively meet the growing demand for environmentally friendly feed ingredients for both animals and aquaculture.

II- What actions should be taken at EU level to support the diversification of protein sources for food and feed?

A) Policy-based incentives to scale-up alternative protein sources

To promote the scale-up of different innovative and sustainable protein sources at the EU level, we recommend the European Commission to set sustainability standards in animal and aquaculture feed, through the establishment of obligatory minimum incorporation rate of sustainable protein sources such as insects. To successful achieve such a strategy, we further recommend the inclusion of measurable targets for the gradual incorporation rate of sustainable protein sources- 5% in 2027, 10% in 2030, 30% in 2050.

B) Future proof policies for the period Post 2027

Moreover, we strongly urge that the ongoing discussions on the Common Agricultural Policy Post-2027 explicitly include tools and mechanisms to support the development of alternative protein sources—such as insects—within National Strategic Plans, similar to the existing support for protein crops.

Furthermore, we call on the EU and Member States to ensure that the current revision of the Common Fisheries Policy Regulation and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) incorporates targeted financial support measures under Objective 2.1—Promotion of Sustainable Aquaculture. Such measures should specifically aim to foster the development of alternative, sustainable aquafeed ingredients like insect proteins. This would create a more level playing field for insect aquafeed producers and is essential to achieving a truly sustainable and competitive aquaculture sector across the EU.

Lastly, we would like to highlight various European Commission policy initiatives, including the 'EU Bioeconomy Strategy,' the 'EU Life Sciences Strategy,' and the 'Scale-up and Start-up Strategy.' When applied to the agrifood sector, these initiatives—by supporting innovative and sustainable protein sources such as insects—could enhance the EU's agrifood resilience and sustainability. Additionally, they could foster social and economic development in rural and coastal regions across the EU by creating thousands of green jobs.

Conclusion

Replacing a portion of traditional livestock and aquaculture proteins with sources like insect protein can significantly enhance food security by increasing the availability of food and feed products.

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[7] CEFIC-the European Chemical Industry Council, EFFOP- the European Fishmeal and Fish oil Producers, EFFPA- the European Former Foodstuff Processors Association, EFPRA- the European Fat Processors and Renderers Association, ESPP- the European Sustainable Phosphorus Platform, FEDIAF, the European Pet Food Association, FEFAC- the European Feed Manufacturers' Federation and IPIFF-the International Platform of Insects for Food and Feed,

[8] Current EU legislation, notably Annex X, Chapter II, Section 10 of Regulation (EU) No 142/2011, restricts the use of animal-origin foodstuffs (excluding fur animals) as feed for farmed animals, including insects. We propose revising this regulation to allow controlled use of processed, pathogen-inactivated animal by-products in insect feed, under strict safety and traceability conditions.

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Insects exhibit highly efficient feed-to-meat conversion rates, making them a valuable component of a resilient, sustainable EU food system.

We call upon the EU and Member States to recognise the insect-producing sector as a vital contributor to a diversified protein strategy. This includes supporting its growth through targeted inclusion in CAP and CFP reforms, as well as providing financial support to scale up production and meet the increasing demand for animal and aquafeed ingredients.

Thank you for your attention.

We remain at your disposal for any further information or discussions regarding these proposals.

Adriana Casillas,

IPIFF President