IPIFF POLICY PAPER

EU LIVESTOCK STRATEGY — INSECTS AS STRATEGIC ENABLERS FOR RESILIENCE, SUSTAINABILITY, AND PROTEIN DIVERSIFICATION

International Platform of Insects for Food & Feed (IPIFF)

Date: April 2026

Executive Summary

Insects present a scalable, sustainable, and circular pathway to strengthen the EU's livestock protein system and the broader food value chains.

The EU Livestock Strategy should explicitly recognise insect farming as a strategic activity within a coherent, multi-level governance framework that respects regional differences and sectoral diversity.

Regulatory clarity is essential, requiring tailored organic rules for insects, recognition of insect frass as a fertiliser and expansion of allowable substrates under traceable conditions, and efficient pathways for insect-derived feeds and foods guided by EFSA risk assessments.

The strategy must stimulate investment, innovation, market access, and consumer trust through targeted funding, procurement levers and a formal protein-diversification pathway.

Alignment with a broad policy trajectory—encompassing protein diversification, circular bioeconomy, environment and animal welfare objectives, Horizon Europe, digital agriculture, and trade—will enable timely delivery and scale. IPIFF stands ready to support the Commission and Member States in translating these principles into concrete, implementable actions.

Context and Rationale

The EU Livestock Strategy, as articulated in the ongoing Call for Evidence, seeks a long-term, crisis-resilient, globally competitive, and sustainable livestock system. It emphasizes multi-level governance, regional differentiation, data-driven monitoring, and coherence with environment, climate, research, and trade policies.

Insects offer a pragmatic avenue to advance protein diversification, circular economy objectives, and regional value chains within the livestock system.

A strategy that foregrounds insects can deliver resilience, innovation, and market-oriented growth while maintaining stringent safety and sustainability standards.

To translate ambition into action, the strategy requires concrete governance arrangements, proportionate regulatory pathways, market development tools, and robust monitoring mechanisms that reflect Europe's territorial diversity and scientific guidance.

Policy Objectives

The EU Livestock Strategy should embed several interlocking objectives.

1. First, **recognise insects as a strategic farming activity within a multi-level governance framework,** enabling regionally tailored implementation.
2. Second, **ensure regulatory clarity and safety through insect-specific pathways for organic production, fertilisers (insect frass) and new feeding substrates**, anchored in EFSA risk assessments.
3. Third, **drive protein diversification within the EU livestock system by integrating insects into a formal pathway that supports feed and aquafeed markets**, with clear labelling and provenance.
4. Fourth, **stimulate investment, innovation, and market uptake via targeted funding, public procurement levers, and market development measures**.
5. Fifth, **align the contributions of the insect sector with broader EU objectives on the circular economy, environmental performance, animal welfare, Horizon Europe, digital agriculture, and trade to ensure coherence across policies.**
6. Finally, **establish governance and monitoring arrangements to track progress, adjust policy in light of new evidence, and ensure regional relevance**.

Strategic Pillars and Recommended Actions

I. Governance, Regions, and Administrative Burden

The strategy should recognise insects as a strategic farming activity within a multi-level governance framework, accompanied by dedicated indicators and a mechanism for regional co-design.

Regions must be empowered to design and implement insect-related interventions that feed into national livestock objectives, with market access conditions that reflect regional realities.

Regulatory procedures should be simplified and harmonised for the insect sector, with risk-based, proportionate approaches to reporting, registrations for feed operators, organic certification, and fertiliser approvals.

Linkages with Horizon Europe, the EU Bioeconomy, and digital agriculture initiatives should be leveraged to maximize deployment and scale across farming systems.

A dedicated data module within the EU livestock monitoring and evaluation framework should capture insect-sector metrics, enabling evidence-based policy adjustments.

Finally, a standing IPIFF-EC stakeholder mechanism should provide ongoing engagement with insect sector actors, regions, farmers, and processors, ensuring regular policy updates as new evidence emerges. This governance architecture is essential to address regional diversity, cross-border considerations, and evolving scientific guidance.

II. Regulatory Clarity and Standards

The strategy must develop tailored EU-wide pathways for organic production, fertilisers (insect frass) and envisage the widening of the scope of authorized feeding substrates for insects, anchored in EFSA risk assessments and aligned with existing frameworks.

Regulatory delays are impeding timely deployment. These should be mitigated through clear transitional provisions and parallel EFSA risk assessments.

Proactive risk management, coupled with transparent governance, is essential to maintaining policy credibility and stakeholder trust.

Supply and quality risks can be addressed by diversifying the authorized feeding substrates for insects and establishing secure, traceable supply chains, complemented by lifecycle monitoring.

Clear streams for food, feed, and fertilizers should be guided by EFSA risk assessments to enable timely market authorisations without undue delays.

Market acceptance and labelling require robust origin labelling, credible risk communication, and targeted procurement pilots to build consumer confidence. **Sector-specific marketing standards with origin/provenance declarations for EU-produced insect products** will help build consumer trust and support traceability.

Procurement mechanisms should introduce binding criteria and targets to stimulate demand and demonstrate public market pull.

A formal protein-diversification pathway should position insects within EU-driven diversification goals for sustainable protein in animal feed and aquafeed, providing a clear policy anchor for investment and innovation.

These regulatory pathways must be proportionate, science-based, and adaptable to new evidence.

III. Insect-Driven Market Development and Public Support

The strategy should ensure insects are eligible for relevant rural development, innovation, and public-private financing streams, mobilising EU-level instruments and PPPs to scale deployment.

Small and medium-sized enterprises face financial and administrative barriers, which can be reduced through accessible financing, risk-sharing arrangements, and targeted support.

Promotion and market-access policies should be leveraged to raise awareness and uptake of insect-based products across EU markets and in external trade.

Lead markets and standards should accelerate the adoption of insect-derived ingredients across feed, food, and bio-based products for soil fertilizer, while public procurement can set binding sustainability criteria to demonstrate demand pull.

Public-private financing models and Horizon Europe collaborations should be encouraged to move R&I outcomes toward scaled production and commercial deployment, reducing barriers for SMEs and start-ups. This pillar underpins the market trajectory for insects within the broader livestock value chain.

IV. Innovation, Research & Development, and Governance

R&D funding should be aligned across CAP-like instruments, Horizon Europe, and the bioeconomy to advance breeding efficiency, feed safety, automation, frass processing, and life-cycle assessments, without mentioning the diverse set of technical applications provided by insect production.

Insect-sector indicators must be integrated into EU livestock monitoring and evaluation, with annual synopses published to inform policy updates.

The policy design must incorporate preparedness provisions that address crises (conflict, climate risks, market shocks) through scalable production paths and diversified inputs, ensuring resilience is built into the strategy from the outset.

V. Implementation Plan (Livestock Strategy Focus)

- Short Term (0–2 Years)

In the short term, the strategy should **recognise insect farming as a strategic activity** within the livestock landscape and publish clear guidance on eligibility and indicators.

Regional pilots should demonstrate integration of insect farming with broader livestock systems, while an organic-certification framework tailored to insects should be concluded.

The inclusion of insect frass under CMC 10 of the EU Fertilizing Products Regulation should be concluded immediately and sector-specific marketing standards with origin declarations should be created.

Procurement pilots with targets for insect-derived products should be initiated to demonstrate market pull and public-sector demand.

This period sets the operational base for a scalable rollout across regions and value chains.

- **Medium Term (2–5 Years)**

In the medium term, **insect farming should be fully embedded into livestock governance, with regional input feeding into national objectives.**

A formal protein-diversification pathway should recognise insects among sustainable inputs and feed materials, guiding investment and market development.

Financing should be scaled through public-private partnerships and EU-level instruments, complemented by expanded R&I pilots and demonstration farms.

Safety, traceability, and environmental standards for frass and other insect-derived inputs should be refined, and incentives for circular inputs within organic and regenerative farming schemes should be expanded.

This phase translates policy intent into measurable deployment across value chains.

Long Term (5+ Years)

The long-term objective is broad-scale integration of insect farming across livestock value chains, with measurable improvements in resilience, productivity, and environmental performance.

Regulatory and funding frameworks should be continuously updated to reflect EFSA findings, lifecycle analyses, and evolving market realities.

This horizon ensures that the strategy remains dynamic, evidence-driven, and capable of sustaining leadership in sustainable insect-based inputs and products.

Conclusion

Insects can and should be a central enabler of a resilient, sustainable EU Livestock Strategy.

By recognising insects as a strategic farming activity, enabling regionally tailored governance, while at the same time aligning regulatory pathways for widening the scope of authorized feeding substrates for insects with EFSA risk assessments, the strategy can catalyse investments, innovation, and market uptake.

The resultant gains in rural livelihoods, feed security, affordability and availability of soil fertilizer and circular economy outcomes will contribute substantially to the EU's resilience and global leadership in sustainable animal production.

IPIFF stands ready to collaborate with the European Commission, Member States, and regional authorities to refine and implement these recommendations, ensuring a timely and scalable path for insects within Europe's livestock and feed ecosystems.