



Warsaw, 28 June 2025

## Governance Affairs Office, United Nations Environment Programme

### *Inclusion of Animal Agriculture and Food Systems in UNEA-7 Ministerial Declaration*

We, the undersigned members of the Board of the Green REV Institute, express our deep concern that the First Draft Ministerial Declaration of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-7) fails to explicitly address the role of animal agriculture and animal-based food systems as major drivers of environmental and climate degradation.

This omission runs counter to the consensus of the global scientific community and undermines the UN's own frameworks, including the Sustainable Development Goals and the European Green Deal's "Farm to Fork" Strategy.

### **1. Scientific Consensus on the Food System's Role in the Climate and Biodiversity Crises**

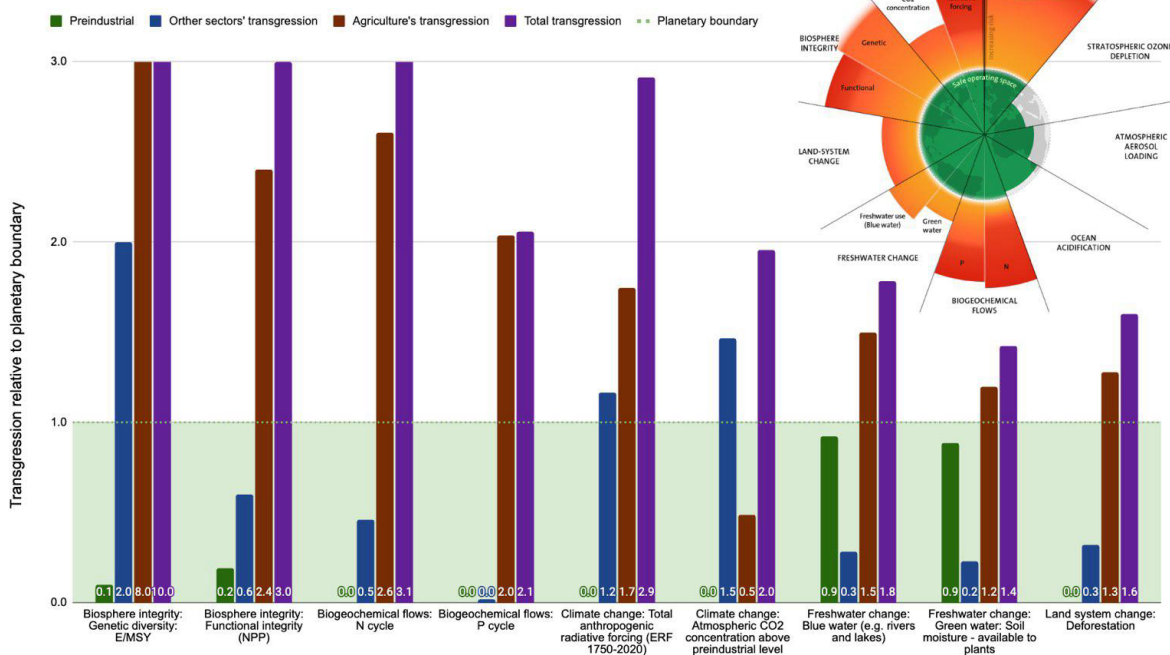
According to the **IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land (2019)**, food systems contribute approximately **21–37% of total anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions**, with animal agriculture as a leading source, particularly through **methane and nitrous oxide** emissions. The **WHO (2023)** states that:

*“Red meat and dairy together account for 55% of global agricultural emissions. Animal-sourced food generates 72–78% of agricultural emissions, with cattle alone responsible for 80% of ruminant emissions.”*  
(WHO, 2023: Red and processed meat in the context of health and the environment)

The **IPBES Global Assessment (2019)** further affirms that industrial animal farming is among the main causes of biodiversity loss, due to habitat destruction, deforestation, and overuse of water and soil resources.

A recent visualization **“Planetary boundaries transgressed by agriculture”** by Emil Ingemann Berg Nielsen (2025) clearly illustrates how agriculture exceeds multiple planetary boundaries, including nitrogen and phosphorus cycles, freshwater use, and land-system change (see attached figure).

Planetary boundaries transgressed by agriculture



Source: Planetary boundaries transgressed by agriculture (Emil Ingemann Berg Nielsen, 2025)



## 2. Impact of Animal Agriculture on Ecosystems and Human Rights

As outlined in the white paper "Smród, krew i łzy" ("Stench, Blood, and Tears") by **Dr. Sylwia Spurek**, animal farming in Europe is responsible for:

- **78% of terrestrial biodiversity loss**
- **80% of soil acidification and air pollution** (ammonia and nitrogen oxide emissions)
- **73% of water pollution** (nitrates and phosphorus)

Animal agriculture contributes not only to climate change but also undermines **human rights**, particularly the right to health and a clean environment. Studies and civil society reports highlight severe impacts on people living near factory farms, including:

- Increased respiratory illnesses
- Psychological distress from odor and noise
- Antibiotic resistance due to the excessive and uncontrolled use of antimicrobials in animal farming

(Source: White Paper "Smród, krew i łzy" – Dr. Sylwia Spurek, 2022)

## 3. EU and UN Policy Alignment Requires Urgent Integration of the Food System

The **European Commission** itself acknowledges that:

*"Emissions from agriculture account for around 10% of the EU's total greenhouse gas emissions, about two-thirds of which come from livestock."*  
(European Commission, GHG Inventory 2023)

The **Farm to Fork Strategy** sets critical targets for 2030:

- 50% reduction in antibiotic use in livestock
- 20% reduction in fertilizer use



- 25% of farmland under organic farming

However, due to lack of enforcement and systemic resistance, **progress has stalled**. Without addressing the **demand side**—namely, the overproduction and overconsumption of animal-based foods—these goals will not be met.

#### 4. The Ministerial Declaration Must Acknowledge Animal Agriculture

The current **First Draft of the UNEA-7 Declaration** contains general references to sustainable food systems and biodiversity, but **nowhere does it specifically name animal agriculture, meat production, or animal farming** as critical contributors to the crises it aims to solve.

This is an unacceptable oversight in light of:

- IPCC data on emissions and land use
- IPBES warnings on biodiversity collapse
- EU climate and agricultural reporting
- Civil society and scientific consensus on the environmental cost of animal production

#### 5. Our Recommendations

To ensure the UNEA-7 Declaration aligns with science and justice, we urge the inclusion of the following:

1. **Explicit recognition** of animal agriculture as a primary driver of GHG emissions, biodiversity loss, land degradation, and water pollution.
2. **Commitment to promote sustainable diets**, including plant-based transitions, as recommended by the IPCC, WHO, UNEP-Chatham House (2021), and EAT-Lancet Commission.
3. **Adoption of a just transition framework** that includes workers, farmers, consumers, and communities affected by industrial food systems.



4. **Integration of food systems into climate action**, biodiversity restoration, and public health policies, with legally binding obligations.
5. **Stronger regulation of antibiotic use, emissions from manure, and environmental impacts of animal feed production**, especially soy imports linked to deforestation.

A sustainable, just, and resilient planet **cannot be achieved without transforming the way we produce and consume food**. This transformation must begin with **naming the problem**—animal agriculture—and implementing policies that center the health of ecosystems, people, and animals.

We call to uphold science, justice, and transparency by ensuring the final declaration reflects the true drivers of climate and environmental collapse.

Sincerely,

Green REV Institute