

SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE MODELS IN THE AGRIBUSINESS SECTOR, HINTS AT THE LIVESTOCK SUPPLY CHAIN

**Anna BACCO, Independent Researcher,
chair of European Union Law,
University of Salerno, Italy**

<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-5154-1962>, annabac@hotmail.it

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Abstract. *The paper analyzes International and European documents related to Sustainable Agriculture. Among others: The FAO International Treaty on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture; The proceedings of the Rio +20 Conference (20-22 June 2012); The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with 17 SDGs is to be achieved by 2030 by the United Nations General Assembly. In it, Goal 2, ending hunger, achieving food security, improving nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture, deserves attention; The Marrakech Conference (2016) of the United Nations on Climate Change (COP22); The "New Strategic Agenda for the five years 2019 -2024. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) 2023-2027. Also mentions the National Strategy for Sustainable Development and the Reports of the Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development. Examples of sustainable agriculture are highlighted in the livestock agribusiness sector in Campania, Italy, in which several companies are showing a growing willingness toward productive modernization aimed at achieving economic, social, and environmental development with a focus on Sustainable Development. In this area, the case of a buffalo farm that ensures sustainable food production systems and applies resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and strengthen resilience to climate change is presented. Several technological innovations are taken over on the same farm, such as a buffalo milking plant, Vms (Voluntary milking systems) that enables animal welfare, is a plant for producing green energy from processing waste.*

Keywords: *sustainable agriculture innovation, sustainability, environmental protection.*

JEL: P48, Q01, Q10, Q55, Q57

UDC: 338.436.33

Introduction. Models of Sustainable Agriculture in International Documents. FAO International Treaty. In the International scenario, models of sustainable agriculture are referred to by international binding documents and Soft Law documents¹⁵ (Shelton, 2000, p. 292). These documents stem from various International Conferences promoted by the International Community starting with the documents in defense of biodiversity, where the issue of sustainable agriculture

¹⁵ Soft Law: cited in General Overview. Shelton, 2000.

<https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780199796953/obo-9780199796953-0040.xml>

has long been present starting with the FAO International Treaty¹⁶ (FAO). The FAO Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Agriculture and Food was adopted in Rome on November 3, 2001. Subsequently, it is Ratified by the Italian Parliament through Law No. 101 of April 6, 2004¹⁷ (FAO Ratification). The FAO Treaty coordinates and promotes initiatives on the management of plant genetic resources to protect biodiversity. Paragraph I of the Treaty refers to the conservation, and sustainable use of plant genetic resources for food, and agriculture and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from their utilization for the realization of sustainable agriculture.

The Use of Plastics in Agriculture. In 2021, the Food and Agriculture Organization¹⁸(FAO Agriculture) conducted a study on the benefits and challenges of plastics in agriculture¹⁹ (FAO Agriculture). The study underscored the importance of balancing the benefits and challenges, of plastics in agriculture, highlighting the urgent need for global action to improve governance, cross-sectoral collaborations, and address the issues of plastic use in agri-food systems. In this regard, FAO is working to develop a voluntary code of conduct on the sustainable use of plastics in agriculture (VCoC). The objective of the code is to provide a policy framework in support of plastics, to assist policymakers in creating actions and strategies, best practices, and recommendations useful for stakeholders along the agribusiness value chain.

Rio +20 of 2012. In international documents following the FAO Treaty period, sustainable agriculture is part of a broader scenario concerning the role agriculture is called upon to play toward the green economy. Of particular note is the Rio +20 Conference²⁰(Rio de Janeiro 2012 Conference), organized under General Assembly Resolution²¹(A/RES/64/236), named to highlight the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The Conference's outcome document "The Future We Want" notes the need to maintain the natural ecological processes that support food production systems and the need to promote sustainable agriculture. This way of farming, along with improving food security, eradicates hunger as it conserves the earth's resources and improves resilience to climate change. With this statement, sustainable agriculture becomes a key player in the process of adapting to and combating climate change²²(A/RES/66/288). Rio +20 2012 opened negotiations for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, building on the legacy of the Millennium Development Goals.

¹⁶ FAO International Treaty. <https://www.fao.org/3/i0510e/i0510e.pdf>

¹⁷ FAO Authorization for Ratification FAO Treaty, L. 2004, April 6. https://leg15.camera.it/cartellecomuni/leg14/RapportoAttivitaCommissioni/commissioni/allegati/03/03_all_legge2004101.pdf

¹⁸ FAO Agriculture: Sustainable use of plastics in agriculture. https://www.fao.org/fsnforum/call-submissions/voluntary-code-conduct-sustainable-use-plastics-agriculture#_ftn1

¹⁹ FAO Agriculture: Assessment of agricultural plastics and their sustainability. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb7856en>

²⁰ Conference Rio de Janeiro 2012: Report of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20-22 June 2012. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/737074>

²¹ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly A/RES/64/236. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N09/475/99/IMG/N0947599.pdf?OpenElement>

²² A/RES/66/288 The future we want: Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27 July 2012.

The 2030 Agenda. The 2030 Agenda emerged establishing 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), broken down into 169 targets to measure progress to be achieved on Sustainable Development by 2030²³(A/RES/70/1). The Agenda constitutes today, together with the Paris Agreement the main international legal document to transform our world. However, the Agenda, once again, has proven incapable of making necessary changes, given the deafening wake-up call of the latest (IPCC) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report²⁴ (IPCC 2021). THE Report provoked the declaration of the Code Red for Humanity²⁵ (UN 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has further contributed to procuring a worrying regression for the achievement of the SDGs, due to difficulties of the international community to address the crisis. In 2019, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the Decade of Action to achieve the SDGs, to realize the ambitious 2030 Agenda.

Goal 2 of Agenda 2030. Goal two of Agenda 2030, speaks explicitly of the need to end hunger and achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture²⁶(A/RES/70/1). This can be achieved by boosting programs for sustainable production investments and reducing the impacts of their activities to avoid environmental disasters that can affect the nutrition of the population. Countries are all called upon to strive to achieve the ambitious goals whose horizon is the pursuit of Sustainable Development.

The Marrakesh Conference. The UN Marrakesh Conference on Climate Change was the first UN climate conference since the historic Paris Agreement. At the meeting, the need to put agriculture at the center of climate action emerged. Since agriculture contributes 20 percent of greenhouse gas emissions, it is itself a key part of the solution in terms of mitigating impacts to combat climate change.

The Models of Sustainable Agriculture in Europe

New Strategic Agenda 2019-2024. In 2019, the European Council approved the New Strategic Agenda 2019-2024²⁷ (Strategic Agenda). The objective of the Agenda is to guide the work of the institutions over the next five years on four main priorities. The four priorities include building a green, fair, social, and climate-neutral Europe, as well as promoting sustainable agriculture to ensure food security for quality production. These improvements are linked to combating biodiversity loss and improving the environmental quality of the countryside, air, and water. Biodiversity loss is not only an environmental issue but also an economic and social issue. It is capable of undermining a country's economic and social development.

²³ UNGA A/RES/70/1 Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015.

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/291/89/PDF/N1529189.pdf?OpenElement>

²⁴ (IPCC) Climate Change 2021: The Physical Science Basis. Contribution of Working Group I to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-working-group-i/>

²⁵ (ONU 2021): Code red for humanity. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/08/1097362>

²⁶ UNGA A/RES/70/1 Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015, p. 15/35.

<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N15/291/89/PDF/N1529189.pdf?OpenElement>

²⁷ A NEW STRATEGIC AGENDA 2019- 2024. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/39937/a-new-strategic-agenda-2019-2024-it.pdf>

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). In December 2021, the agreement on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy²⁸ (CAP) was formally adopted. The new legislation came into effect on January 1, 2023, and paved the way for research and innovation to make explicit the multifunctional role of EU agriculture and food systems. Contributing to the Union's goals is an absolute necessity for the future of agriculture and forestry, as is improving environmental protection and climate action. The 2023 Common Agricultural Policy, aims to provide support for small farms and strengthen agriculture's contribution to the EU's environmental and climate goals. It allows member states greater flexibility in adapting measures to local conditions. The main elements of the policy concern a new green architecture based on environmental conditions, more targeted rural development interventions, and subject to strategic planning. Agriculture and rural areas are at the heart of the European Green Deal. The 2023-2027 CAP is a key tool for achieving the ambitions of a "Producer to Consumer" strategy, along with the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 and the European Green Deal.

The Producer-to-Consumer Strategy²⁹ (COM (2020)). The strategy aims to accelerate the transition to a sustainable food system. There is a pressing need to reduce dependence on pesticides and fertilizers, enhance organic farming, improve animal welfare, and reverse biodiversity loss. Creating a new global approach to the value of food sustainability. Preserve food affordability while ensuring more equitable economic returns.

The Biodiversity Strategy. The Biodiversity Strategy³⁰ (COM (2020)380 final). Aims to put European biodiversity back on the road to recovery by 2030 with specific commitments and remedial actions such as bringing nature back to farmland. Farmers are the custodians of the land whose biodiversity can provide safe, sustainable, and nutritious food. Farmers themselves are also the first to feel the loss of biodiversity and, therefore the first to benefit from its restoration. The future of the Union cannot go without European farmers, who must continue to be the social and economic hub of many of our communities.

The European Green Deal. This communication³¹(COM (2019) 640 final) reformulates the Commission's commitment to addressing climate and environmental issues on a new basis. It is a new growth strategy to transform the EU into a just, prosperous, and competitive society that will generate no greenhouse gas

²⁸ CAP: The New Legal Framework of the CAP. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R2115>

²⁹ COM. (2020). A strategy From producer to consumer. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:ea0f9f73-9ab2-11ea-9d2d-01aa75ed71a1.0009.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

³⁰ COM. (2020) EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030: 2.2.2 Bringing nature back to farmland. 380 final. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:a3c806a6-9ab3-11ea-9d2d-01aa75ed71a1.0009.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

³¹ COM. (2019) European Green Deal, Introduction. 640 final. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:b828d165-1c22-11ea-8c1f-01aa75ed71a1.0006.02/DOC_1&format=PDF

emissions in 2050. The Green Deal is an integral part of the Commission's strategy to implement the 2030 Agenda and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Report of the Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development. The 2022 Report of the Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASviS)³² (ASviS Report) examines Italy's situation concerning the implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the UN 2030 Agenda. The Report shows that Italy has seen improvements between 2010 and 2021, but also slowdowns on the path to the 2030 Agenda. About Goal (Goal 2): DISCOVER HUNGER³³, end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture, will be the subject of reflection Target 2.3, "Development of a sustainable agribusiness chain"³⁴ (TARGET 2.3). In the box on Assessing Policies to Achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the situation of the agribusiness supply chain is commented on. Currently, it is argued that the sustainable agribusiness supply chain is critical due to energy price increases the abandonment of hilly, mountainous areas, and the compression of producer prices. Loss of soil fertility is a serious problem in our country. To improve soil productivity, the EU calls for increased carbon storage. On the strengthening of the agricultural sector, supply chain contracts assume relevance. To this end, the publication of the fifth Notice for the operation of supply chain contracts is noted. Another tool is Law No. 6 of May 17, 2022, standards for the enhancement and promotion of agricultural and food products at zero kilometers and those from short supply chains. Finally, important for the future food system is the National Strategic Plan for the implementation of the CAP 2023-2027, presented by Italy in 2021 December.

Overview of the livestock supply chain.

Examples of Sustainable Agriculture are highlighted in the Livestock Agribusiness sector of Campania (Italy). Within the Campania agrifood system, the dairy chain is of particular importance. Dairy farming is widespread in almost the entire regional territory, from the coastal plain to the inland hills. Dairy farming covers an important related role, both from the possibility of active interaction with upstream and downstream sectors and from the economic and social connection with the territory in which it operates. The presence of typical and recognized productions such as Mozzarella di Bufala Campana PDO, Caciocavallo Silano PDO, and others aims at strengthening niche productions. In a globalized competitive environment, niche productions help mitigate the phenomena of demographic contraction, unemployment indices, and environmental protection³⁵ (Milk and Derivatives). In the Salerno area, there are many small-scale, family-run dairies, which are often located on the same farms. An example of a farm with a family-run dairy is found in

³² ASviS Report 2022: Italy and the Sustainable Development Goals. <https://asvis.it/rapporto-asvis-2022/>

³³ GOAL 2 DISCOVERING HUNGER.

https://asvis.it/public/asvis2/files/Rapporto_ASviS/Rapporto_ASviS_2022/RapportoASviS2022.pdf

³⁴ TARGET 2.3 : Development of a sustainable agrifood supply chain.

https://asvis.it/public/asvis2/files/Rapporto_ASviS/Rapporto_ASviS_2022/RapportoASviS2022.pdf

³⁵ (Dairy and Derivatives), Description of the compartment.

http://www.agricoltura.regione.campania.it/quote_latte/lattiero-caseario.html

the Paestum plain south of Salerno (Italy). This farm is focused on, as it is an ICEA-certified ³⁶(Reg. (EU) 2018/848) family-run farm with attached dairy. The company named Vannulo was founded in the early 1900s and its activity was aimed only at raising buffaloes. In 1988, the entrepreneur diversified his activity in tune with what the market demanded, creating a dairy for the production of buffalo mozzarella made with a short chain. In the early 2000s, the entrepreneur initiated a process of innovations in buffalo farming with the introduction of a Wms (Voluntary milking systems) milking robot³⁷ (Tenuta Vannulo). The innovation allows animals to be milked voluntarily throughout the day and at the time the animal feels the need. This voluntariness brings well-being to the animal by avoiding stress. Another relevant aspect of the milking robot is the real-time verification of freshly milked milk. In fact, with this system, there is the possibility of real-time verification of any alterations³⁸. Article 13 of the TFEU requires that animals be taken into account as sentient beings. Animal welfare has entered the legal language and recurs in sources of different order and degree ³⁹(Animal Welfare).

Conclusions. The central theme of the paper is the models of sustainable agriculture portrayed by the various international and national Conferences, which have inspired national and European strategies. Already in the FAO Treaty on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, a reference to sustainable agriculture emerges. With Rio+20 in 2012, sustainable agriculture is part of a blueprint for the transition to a low-carbon economy, becoming instrumental in combating climate change. Rio+20 in 2012 also drove approval toward the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, with its 17 Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030. Each Goal refers to one aspect of life on the planet. In particular, Goal Two specifically mentions promoting sustainable agriculture. The Marrakech Conference puts agriculture at the center of climate action. In Europe, sustainable agriculture has emerged as part of the Europe 2020 Strategy with its three priorities, including greener and more competitive sustainable growth. In 2019, the European Council endorsed the new Strategic Agenda 2019-2024. The goal of the Agenda is to guide the work of the institutions on four priorities. Among the four priorities is ensuring food security for quality production. In January 2023, the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) came into force. The 2023-2027 CAP aims to provide support for small farms and strengthen agriculture's contribution to the EU's environmental and climate goals. The new Common Agricultural Policy is also a means to achieve the ambitions of a

³⁶ Reg. (UE) 2018/848; Organic productions. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:02018R0848-20220101&from=EN>

³⁷ Tenuta Vannulo, history tradition and innovations. <https://www.csreinnovazione sociale.it/wp-content/uploads/Antonio-Ardia-Bio-Vannulo.pdf>

³⁸ Georgofili, Proceedings of the Georgofili Academy. La Mungitura Robotizzata della Bufala. 2010, Series VIII, Vol.7. Florence.

³⁹ Animal Welfare in the framework of international and European sources: a notion with complex content, by Mario MAURO. *Agribusiness Law, Legal Review*. 2023, no. 1. <https://flore.unifi.it/retrieve/14da800f-a721-42d7-b3dc-b0142636f4d0/Mauro%20Benessere%20animale-compresso.pdf>

"Producer to Consumer" strategy, Biodiversity Strategy 2030, and the European Green Deal. Despite these commitments undertaken among the different countries participating in the Conferences, the IPCC Sixth Report of Working Group I caused the declaration of the Code Red for Humanity. In the words of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, "The Working Group I Report is nothing less than a Code Red for Humanity."

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