



Climate adaptation and mitigation in the agri-food system

Recommendations for coherent EU policies

Friday, 13 March 2026

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Chair of the European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change

The Advisory Board

*shall serve as a **point of reference** for the Union on **scientific knowledge relating to climate change** by virtue of its **independence** and **scientific and technical expertise**.*

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1. Climate-proofing the EU agri-food system is essential for food security and climate neutrality
2. Incremental change is insufficient – a systemic transition of production and consumption is indispensable
3. The transition needs to be driven by a coherent set of policies

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The EU agri-food system fulfils different roles

The value chain of the agri-food system:

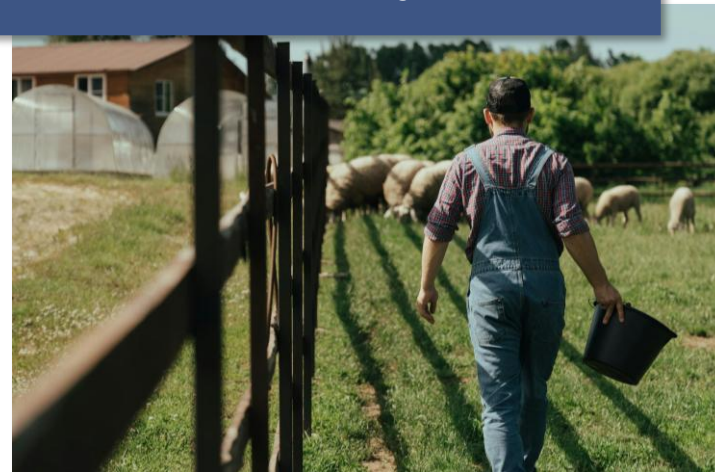


Roles of the agri-food system:

**Supplying food and biomass
for non-food purposes**



**Contributing to the EU
economy**



**Land manager and steward
of ecosystem services**



The agri-food system is threatened by climate change



Crop yields projected to decrease in southern EU, with mixed evidence for northern EU



Weather-related agricultural losses +42% to +66% by mid-century

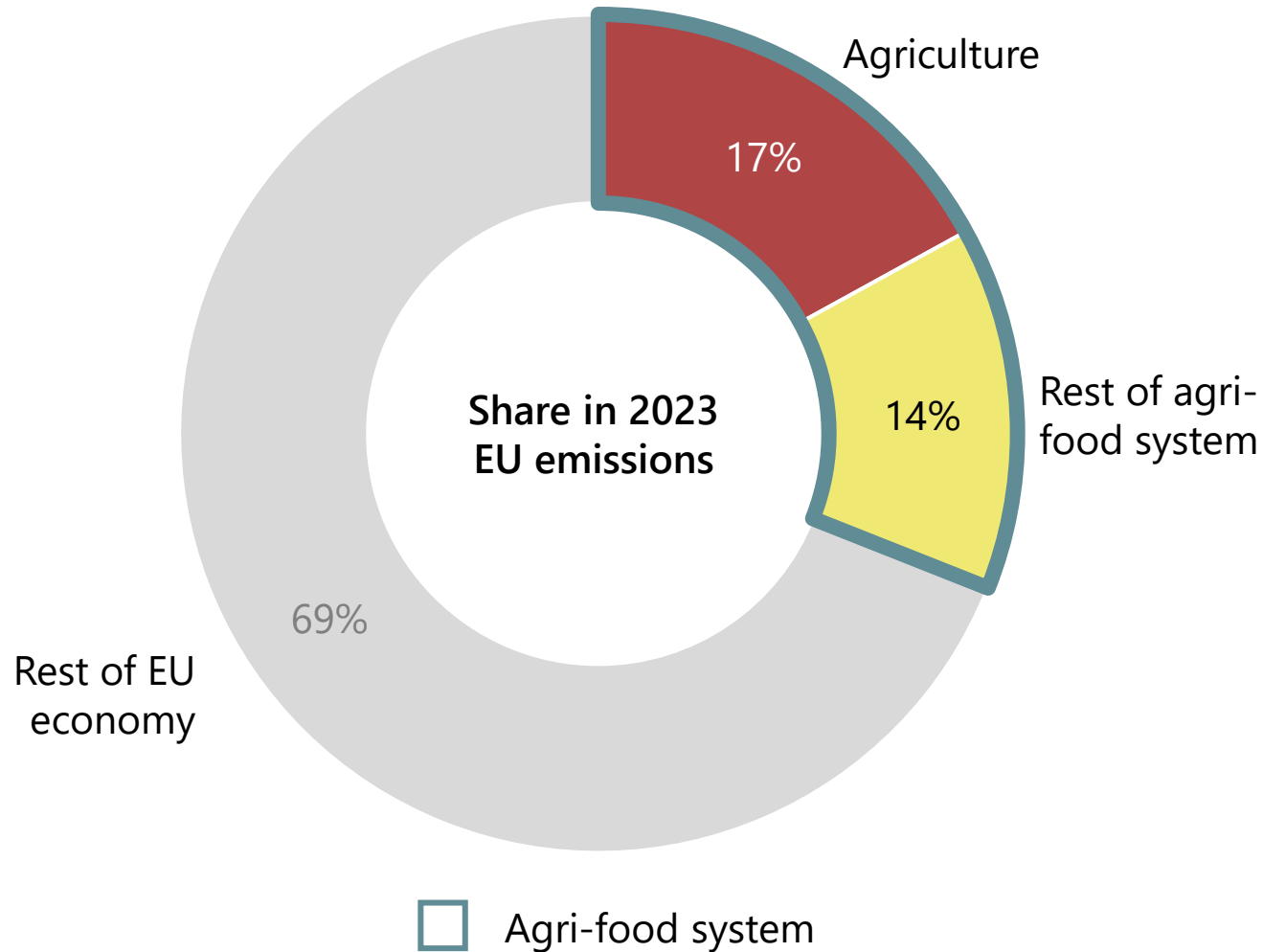


Livestock faces additional indirect risks from feed imports



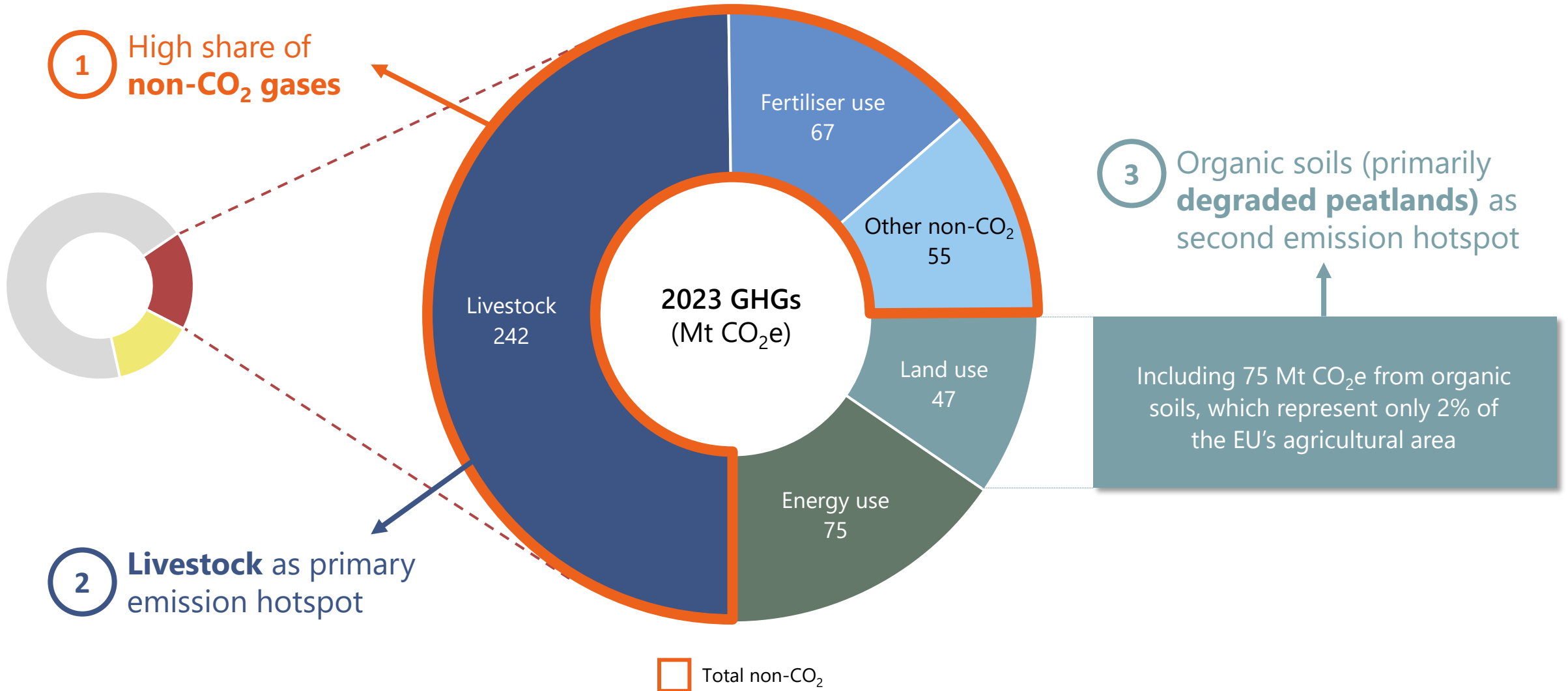
Endangering **food security** and **farmers' livelihoods**

The agri-food system is also contributing to climate change

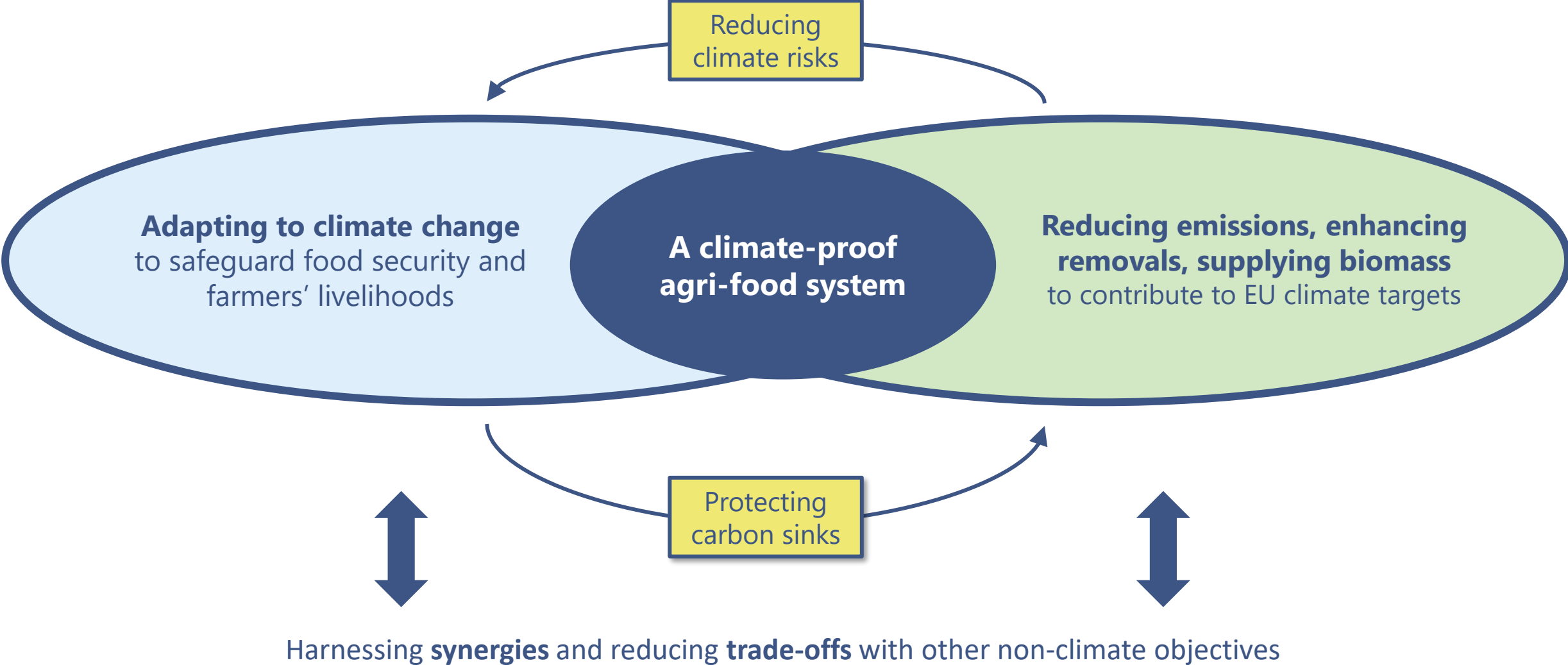


- Accounting for **one third** of all EU greenhouse gas emissions
- With **agriculture** as main emission source

A closer look at agricultural greenhouse gas emissions



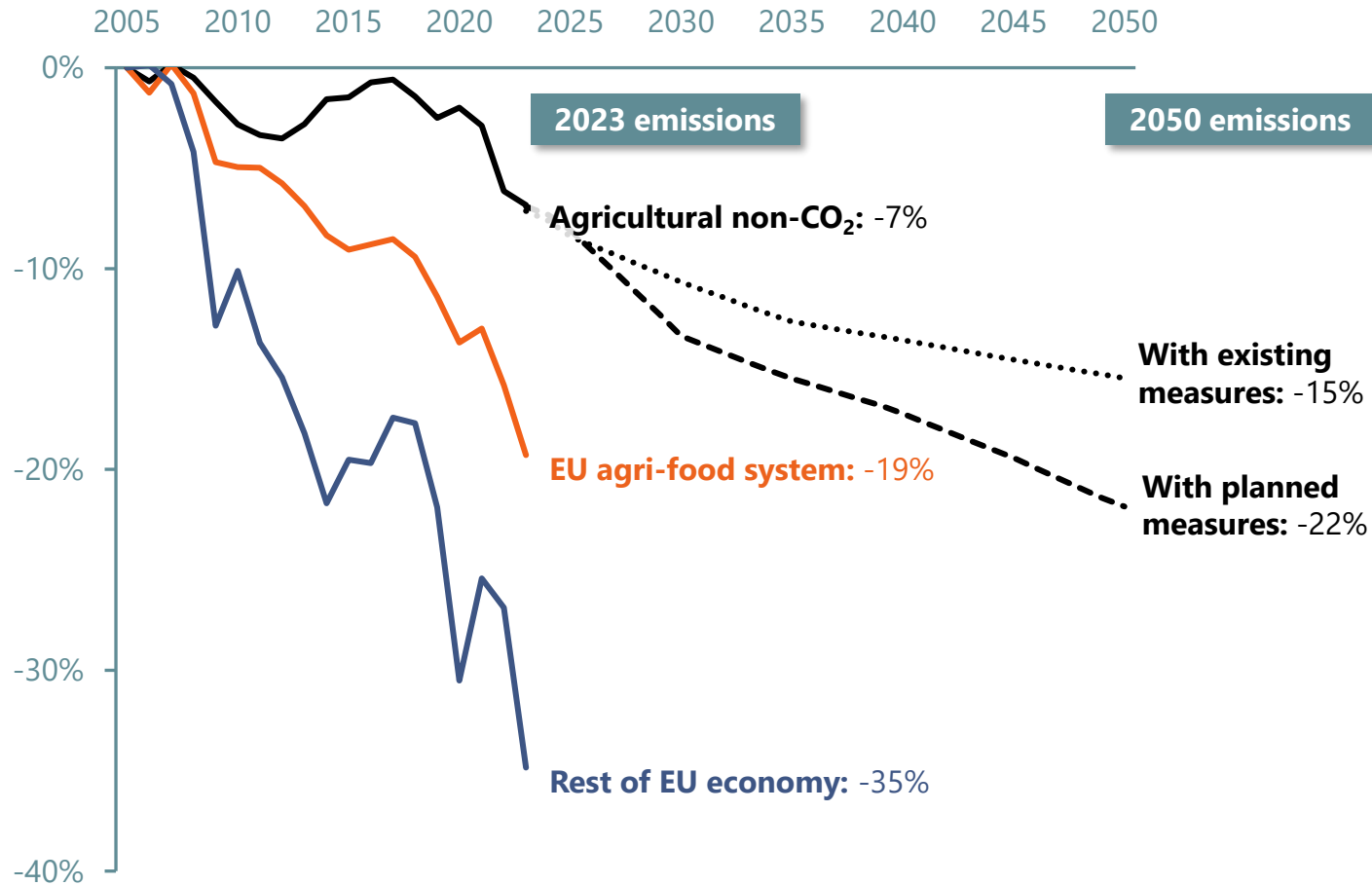
Two complementary strategies to climate-proof the agri-food system



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Progress has so far been slow

Historic and projected greenhouse gas emissions (vs. 2005)

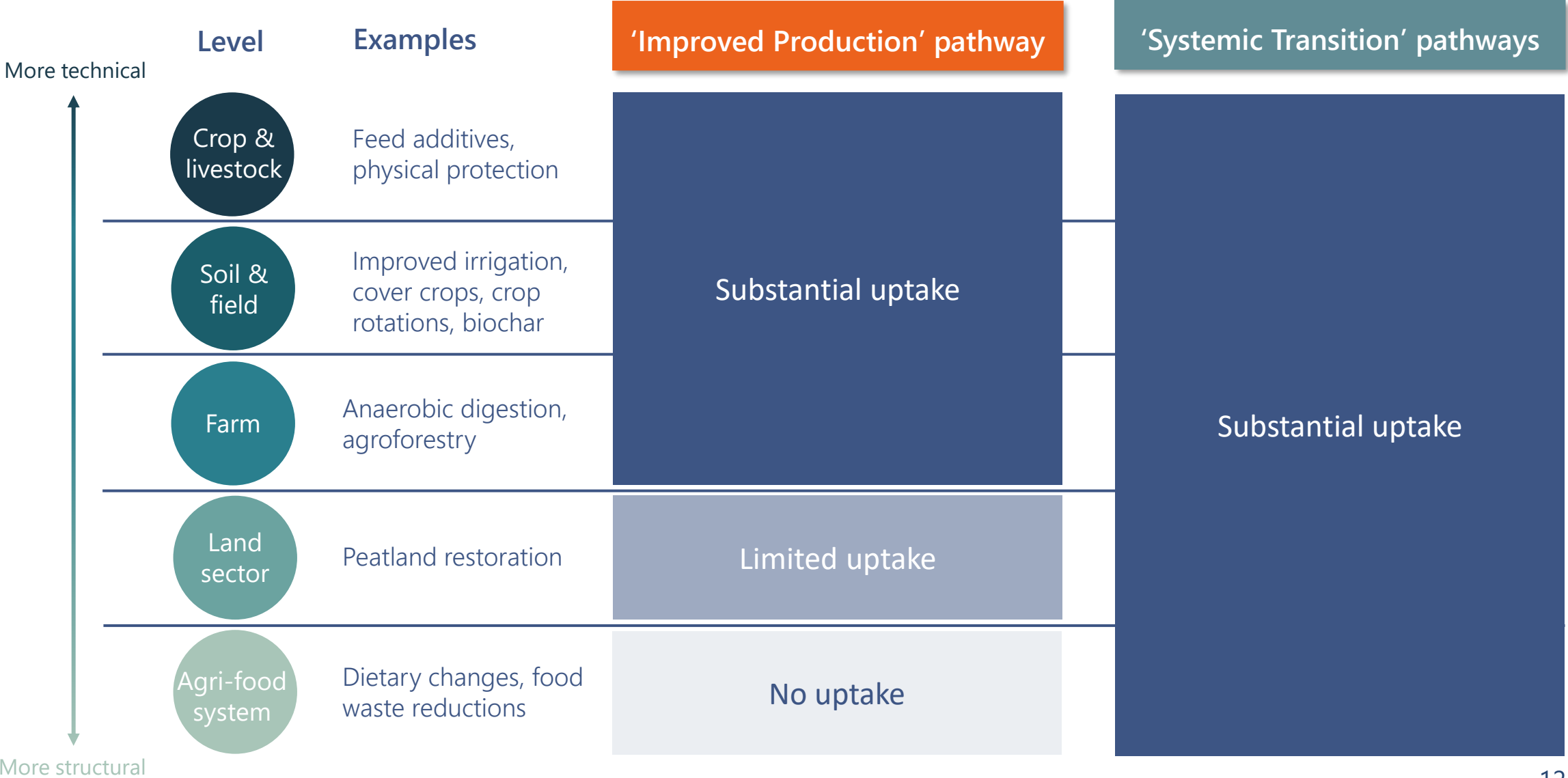


Particularly **slow progress** in reduction of agricultural non-CO₂ emissions

Only **modest additional reductions projected** by 2050 under current policies

= **higher costs and risks** for achieving EU climate neutrality, as rest of economy will need to compensate

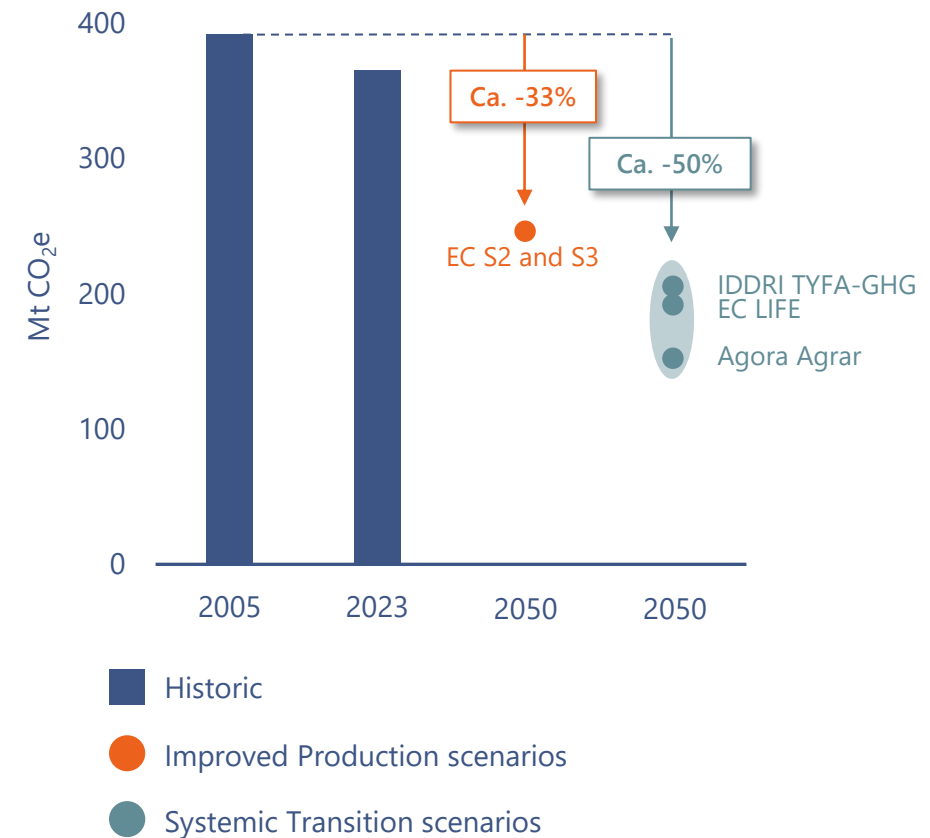
The Advisory Board compared different pathways



Only a systemic transition can deliver sufficient mitigation and adaptation

	'Improved Production'	'Systemic Transition'
Mitigation	Maximum one-third reduction in non-CO ₂ (2050 v 2005)	Can halve non-CO₂ (2050 v 2005) + freeing up land for removals
Adaptation	High risk of limits to adaptation	Can enable long-term climate resilience
Other	Limited synergies	Synergies: environment, health, strategic autonomy Challenges: livestock and regions with peatlands

Non-CO₂ emissions in agriculture

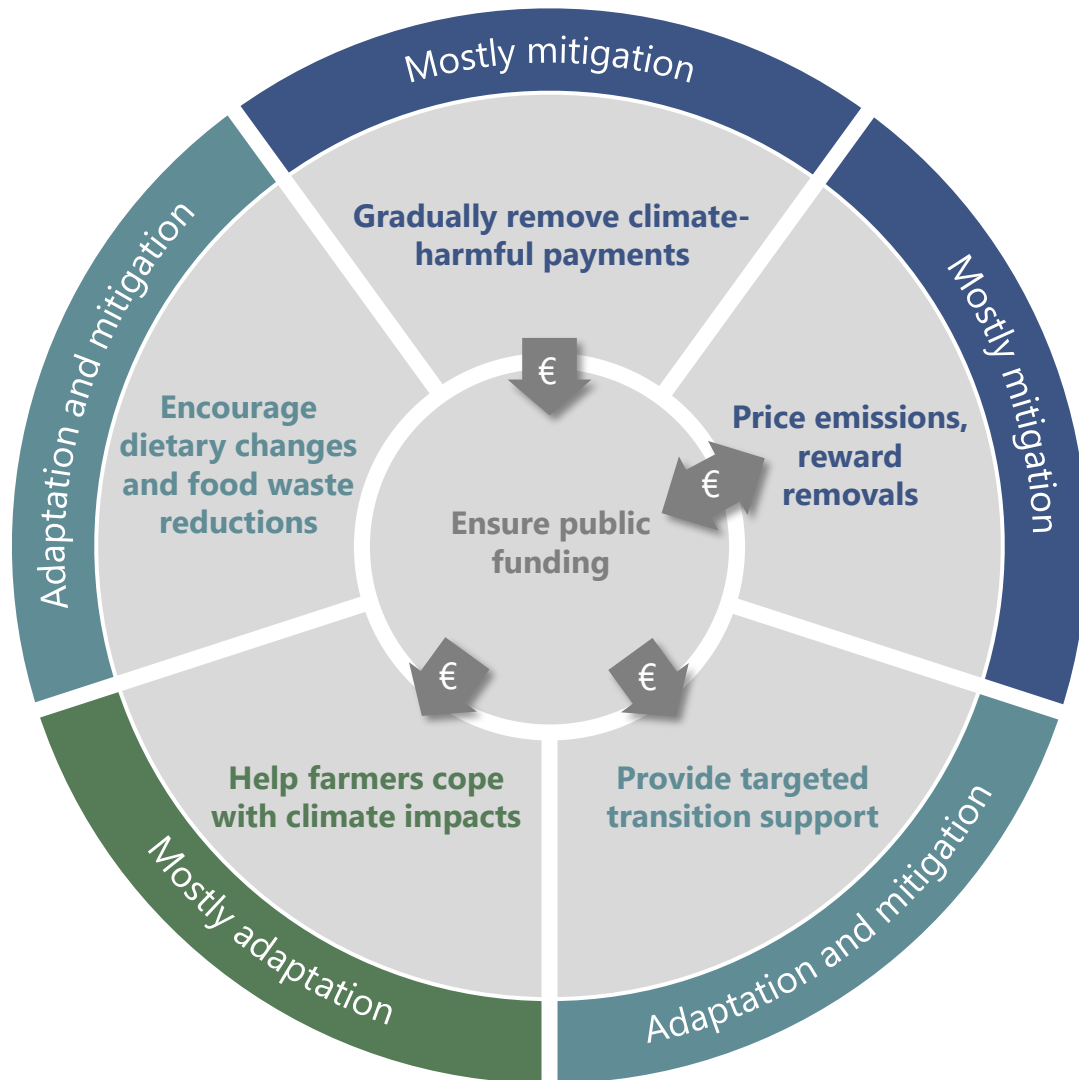


Current EU policies alone cannot deliver the required transition

Common agricultural policy	Constrained budget for multiple objectives
Effort Sharing Regulation LULUCF Regulation	Risks fragmented and cost-ineffective outcomes
Farm to Fork Strategy	Lacks implementation
CRCF Regulation	Requires additional instruments to create credit demand

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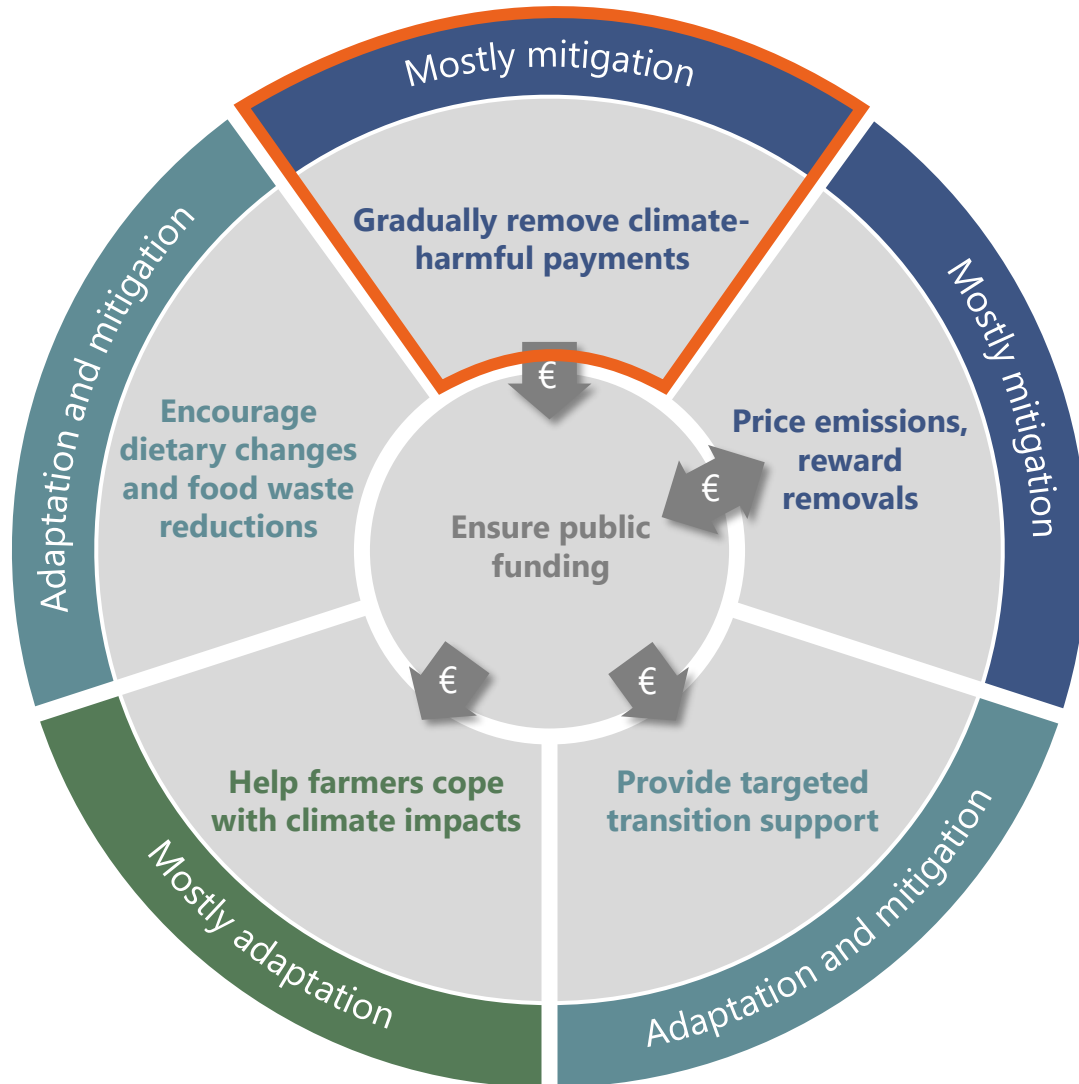
The Advisory Board recommends a coherent policy mix



6 key recommendations for a coherent policy mix

- Covering both mitigation and adaptation
- Combining supportive measures with price signals

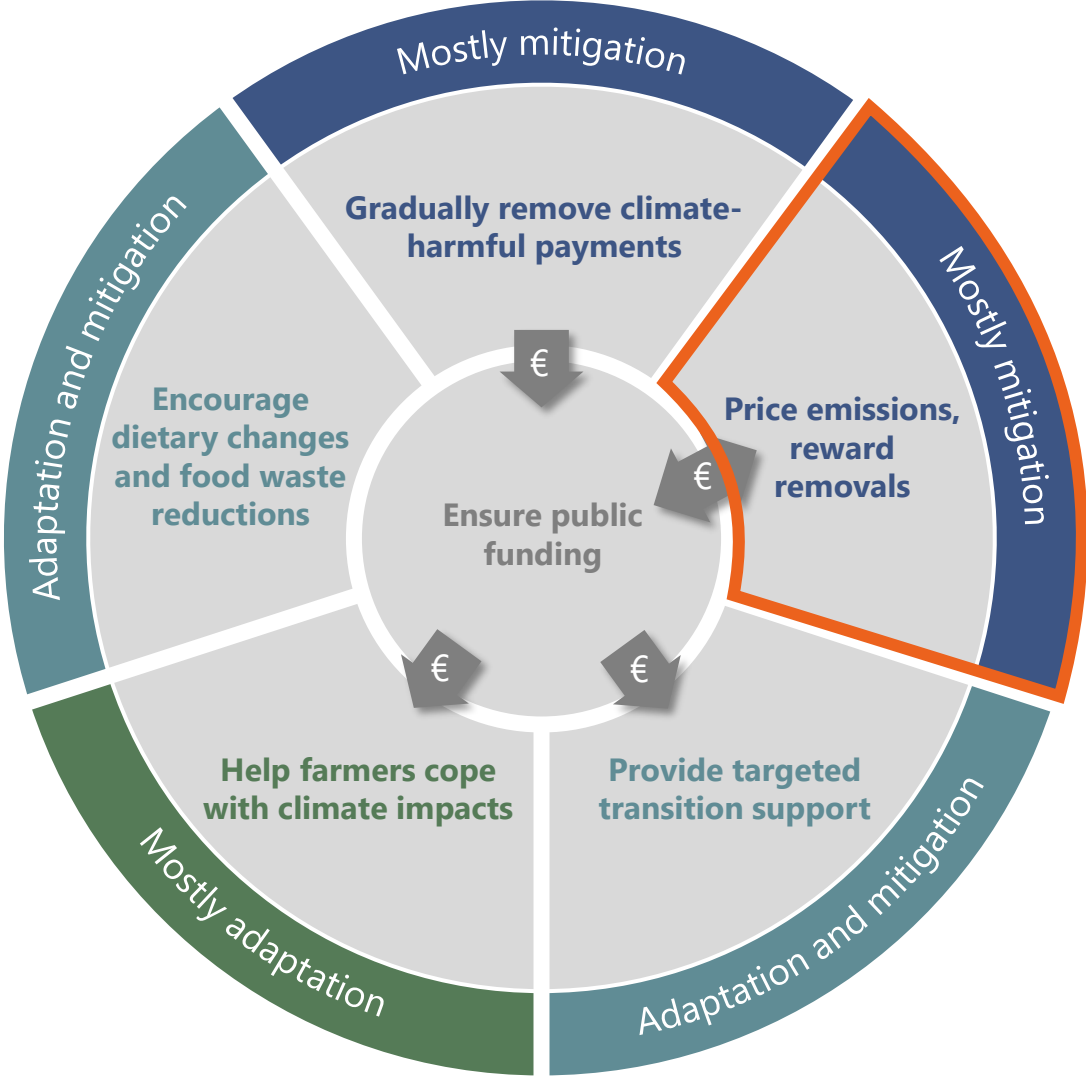
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1. Gradually remove climate-harmful payments

- Phase out coupled payments for livestock and decoupled payments for degraded peatlands over the next CAP period (2028-2034)
- In the longer term, consider alternative forms of income support to replace **general decoupled payments**

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2. Price emissions, reward removals

Start simple:

- large entities only
- simple MRV*
- free allocation
- separate systems



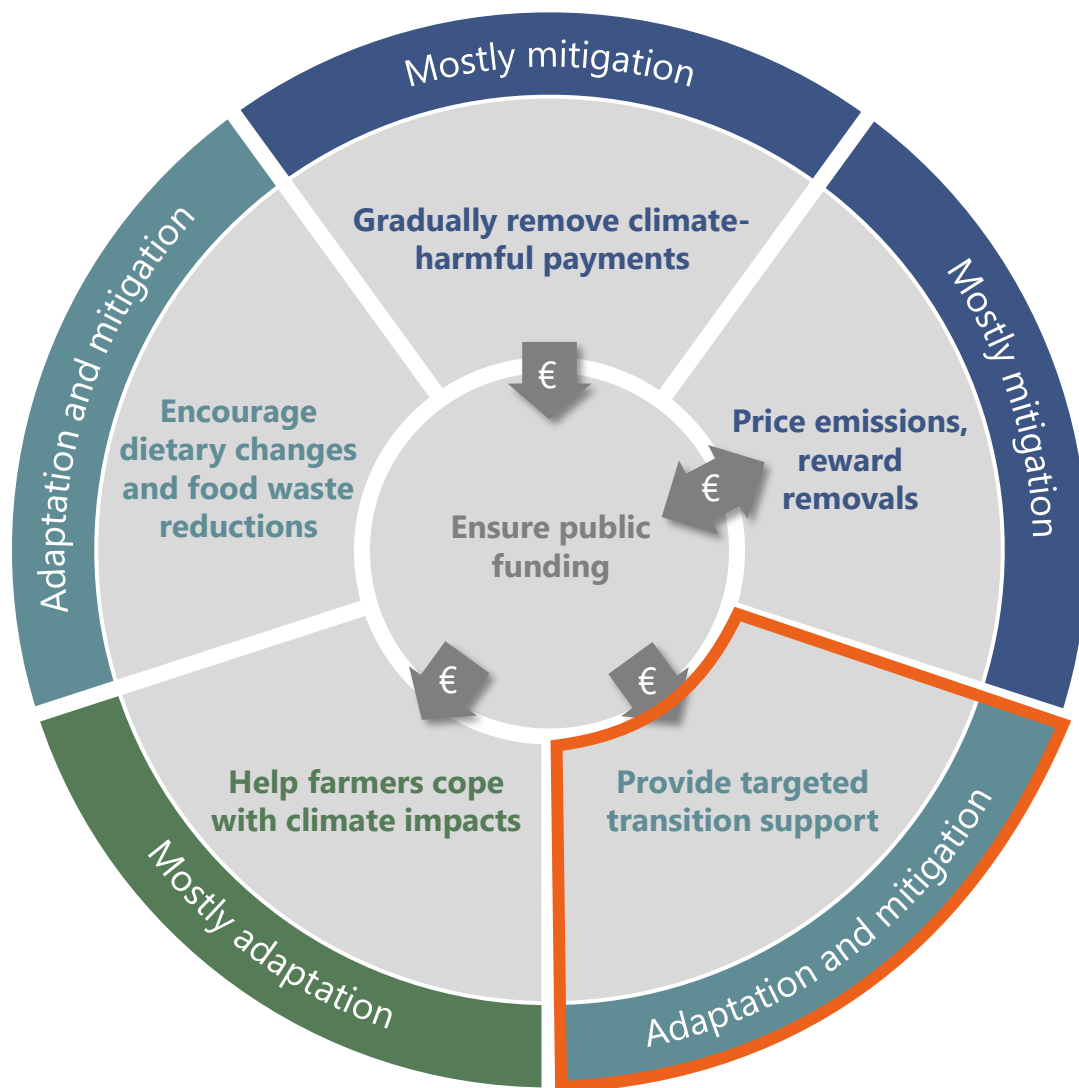
Evolve towards comprehensive system over time:

- expanded scope
- more detailed MRV*
- auctioning
- linked/integrated systems

+ address the risk of carbon leakage

* MRV = monitoring, reporting and verification of emission data.

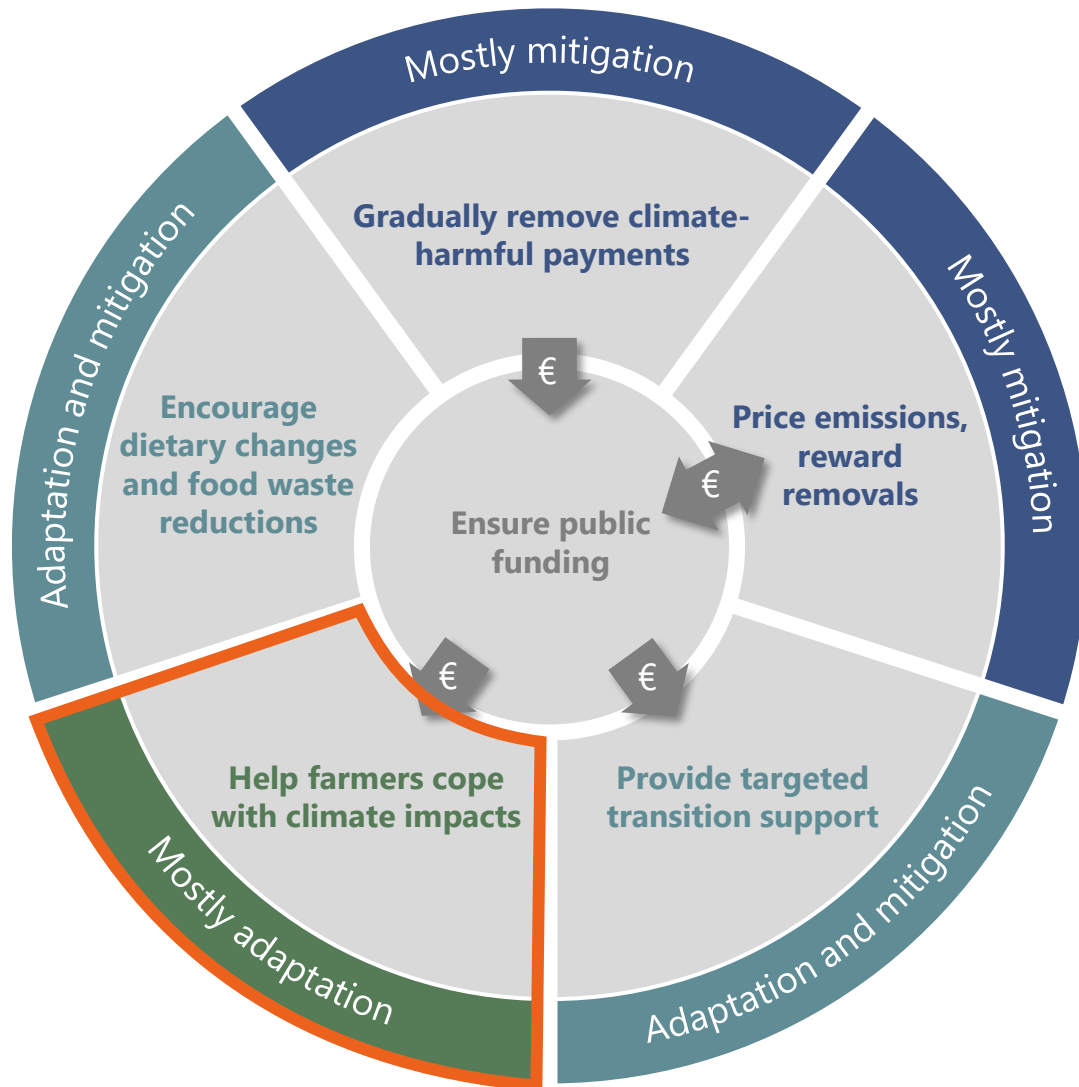
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3. Provide targeted transition support, including for:

- Investments
- Innovation and farm advisory services
- Provision of ecosystem services
- Diversification and exits

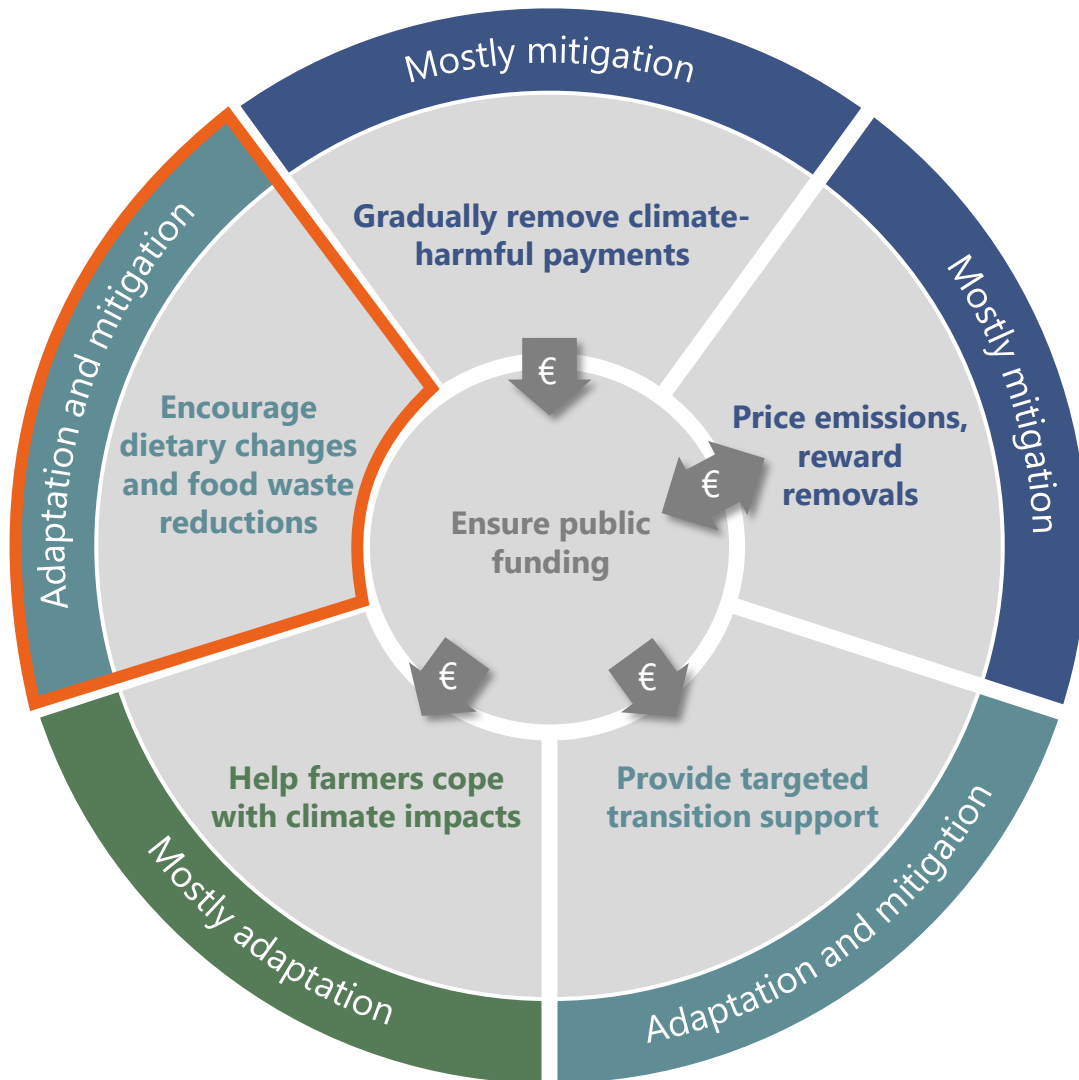
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4. Help farmers cope with climate change

- Provide support to overcome both acute and slow-onset impacts
- Keeping the incentive for proactive adaptation
- Encourage beneficiaries to 'build back better' and engage in transformational adaptation

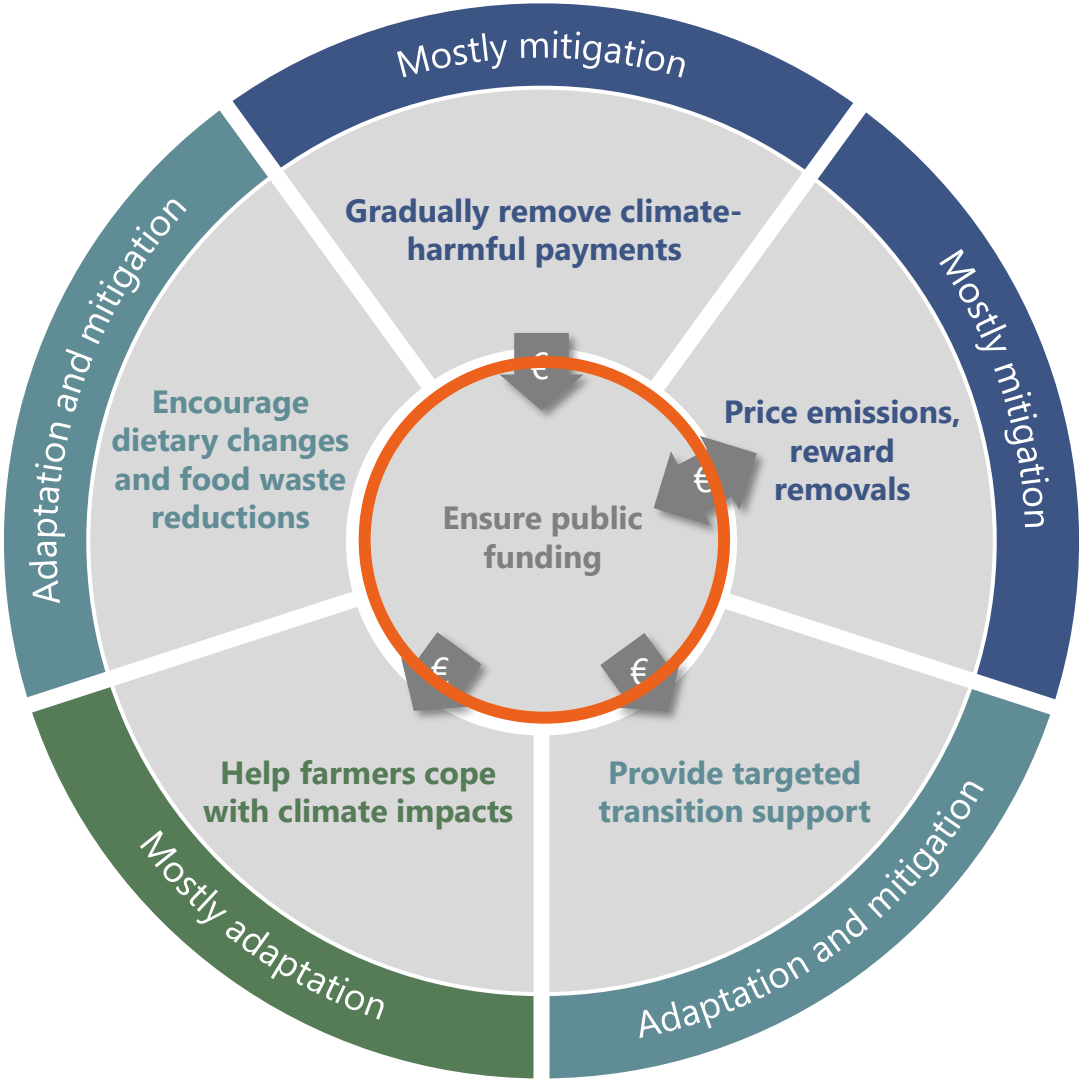
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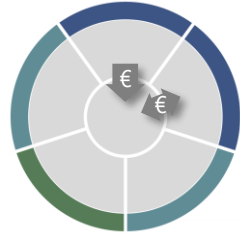
5. Encourage dietary changes and food waste reductions

- Encourage national guidelines for healthy, climate-friendly diets
- Set mandatory standards for the marketing, labelling and public procurement of food products
- Ensure robust and consistent data to assess progress
- Support Member States in implementing food policies
- Provide support across the value chain

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Public funding is required already in the **short term**.



Revenues from climate policies can make funds available, but only **over time**.

6. Ensure public funding

- Ensure sufficient and well-timed public funding by exploring options to bridge this timing mismatch



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