

BUILDING A LIGHTHOUSE NETWORK FOR ORGANIC LIVESTOCK FARMING

Six policy challenges, recommendations and priority actions for Flanders

Lighthouse farms combine on-farm research, long-term monitoring and demonstration in real farming conditions, with farmers as full research and innovation partners.

1 RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

CHALLENGE Organic livestock subsectors lack adapted research infrastructure and a stable basis for knowledge development.

ADVICE Enable a diverse network with at least two farms per subsector and good geographical spread.

ACTION Start with dairy and pig farms; expand to other subsectors; guarantee collaboration for at least five years, with an interim review.

2 NETWORK COORDINATION

CHALLENGE Multiple farms, researchers and activities require continuous alignment and a central point of contact.

ADVICE Embed a network coordinator who connects farmers, researchers, funding and communication.

ACTION Fund salary and operating costs, or formally integrate the role into an existing organisation.

3 SUSTAINABLE FINANCING

CHALLENGE Monitoring and demonstration require continuity, while current project funding does not always remunerate farmers as full partners.

ADVICE Provide structural funding for long-term monitoring and demonstration, plus accessible project funding for on-farm research and farmers.

ACTION Include a lighthouse measure in the next CAP; provide transition funding; adapt research funding schemes so farmers can be full partners.

4 ROOM TO EXPERIMENT

CHALLENGE Lighthouse farms need comparable possibilities to research institutions when testing innovations under controlled conditions.

ADVICE Give lighthouse farms equivalent access to regulatory exemptions as can be used by research institutes.

ACTION Create a route for farms to request exemptions for trials involving, for example, not-yet-authorised additives or residual streams.

5 FORMAL COLLABORATIONS

CHALLENGE Long-term cooperation needs clear, shared expectations among farmers, researchers and other actors.

ADVICE Require a practical cooperation agreement and align guidance on farmer compensation.

ACTION Make agreements a project condition; cover roles, planning, biosecurity, data, communication and finance; convene stakeholders to harmonise compensation.

6 INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENTS

CHALLENGE Continuity is impossible without structural engagement from research organisations, intermediaries and public authorities.

ADVICE Develop a roadmap and a formal baseline commitment for a Flemish bio-lighthouse network.

ACTION Fund follow-up research; facilitates a joint commitment agreement among research bodies, BioForum, CCBT, ILVO/LLAEBIO (FORK-network) and competent authorities.

POLICY CALL

Create the enabling conditions for a coordinated, properly financed and long-term lighthouse network that connects science, policy and organic livestock practice.

Based on: An Jamart, Carmen Landuyt, Jo Bijttebier, Lieve De Cock, Sarah De Smet, Matthieu Frijlink, Liën Romeyns, Hilde Wustenberghs. Beleidsaanbevelingen: Samenwerking in lighthouse bedrijven voor de biologische veehouderij. (2026) | ILVO/LLAEBIO - BioForum - CCBT