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By Tom Joyce

Thursday 30th January 2020, 17:10 GMT

EU set to consider meat charge

The European Parliament is preparing to debate a proposal to introduce a sustainability charge on meat to reflect its environmental impact



Next week, the European Parliament is set to be presented with a plan to increase the price of meat across the EU to reflect its environmental costs, including CO₂ emissions and biodiversity loss.

The proposal for a fair meat charge, also known as a "sustainability charge", is set out in a new report calling for a new pricing model to be included in the European Green Deal and Farm to Fork Strategy. The charge would apparently apply to member states from 2022.

The report was produced by the TAPP Coalition, which comprises leading farming, health and environmental organisations, and will be debated by MEPs on 5 February.

An important part of the proposal is for revenues from the sustainability charge, projected at €32.2bn per year across 28 EU Member States by 2030, to be used to

help farmers invest in more sustainable agricultural practices.

The charge could also be used to lower VAT and provide consumer subsidies on fruit and vegetables, as well as offering financial assistance for low-income households and supporting developing countries to adapt to climate change and protect forests and biodiversity.

Philip Mansbridge, executive director (UK) for ProVeg International, one of the TAPP Coalition members, commented: "The time has come for us to act decisively with policy on the environmental consequences of animal protein, the price of which has been kept artificially low for far too long. Here we have a solution that is fair for farmers and supports the transition to a more plant-based food system that we so urgently need if we are serious about mitigating climate change."

The report outlines the potential

environmental savings, including a reduction in CO₂-equivalent emissions of up to 120m tonnes per year. This equals the total CO₂ emissions of four EU Member States, Ireland, Denmark, Slovakia and Estonia, and nearly 3 per cent of all EU greenhouse gas emissions.

Pier Vellinga, climate professor and TAPP Coalition chair, added: "Including the environmental cost of animal protein in the price is a crucial element of meeting EU targets for climate, biodiversity, public health and animal welfare."

Jerome Remmers, director of the TAPP Coalition, equally pointed to the wider benefits of a sustainability charge. "If EU meat consumption reduces and plant-based protein consumption rises, healthcare costs will reduce too," he said, "as Europeans eat roughly 50 per cent more meat than is recommended in dietary health guidelines.

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healthcare costs.”

MEPs are set to debate the proposal at a breakfast event at the European Parliament on 5 February,

Bas Eickhout, and co-hosted by Social Democrat MEPs Mohammed Chahim and Sylwia Spurek. The event has been organised by TAPP Coalition and Compassion in World Farming EU.

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