

# How are farmers perceived?

Common narratives in the media & public discourse, and where these come from

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# Media landscape

- > Less specialised
- > Agriculture with environment
- > Less time
- > Farming NOT a sexy beat
- > Poor training
- > Broken trust
- > News fatigue

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## Angry farmer

A recurring theme in media is the **'angry' farmer**  
Headlines often use phrases like "furious farmers," or combative language such as "farmers fight back"  
Idea of 'pitchfork politics' and **farmer exceptionalism** - that farmers get preferential treatment over e.g. climate protests



## Agribashing...

**Demonisation of farming** - farmers as a polluter, **industrial**, key driver of climate change & biodiversity loss, bad for environment & animal welfare, farmer seen as complaining/ negative

## ...vs. romanticising

Romanticisation of the 'simple life', bucolic, eternal sunset farms, the 'instagram' farm life - especially true of the younger, **'farmer influencers'** on social media, e.g. regenerative agriculture movement  
Farming as **a way of life** - part of the cultural heritage. Also used as advertising tool



## Food producer

Farmers role reduced to **food production** - less recognition for other socioeconomic benefits, e.g. rural vitality, job creation, biodiversity, climate, public health  
Pervasive **'feeding the world'** and **'food security'** narratives - e.g. 'No Farmers No Food'



## Farmer image

Male, white, old, flannel shirt and hat (cliché), often pristine; tractor/ machinery. **'Old school farmer'** (traditional, working by hand/ tractor) vs **'the young farmer'** (using high tech)  
**Characteristics:** Seen as uneducated & unskilled (esp. farm workers), reclusive / resistant to change, stubborn, hard working, traditional/ outdated, sacrificial. 'Farmers' as a homogenous whole

## Size matters

Small farm = good  
Big farm = bad



## Farming vs environment

Farming & food production framed as **fundamentally at odds with the environment**. Farmers framed as **'anti-environment'**, especially following the EU farmers' protests, largely explained as a pushback against the EU's Green Deal



## Sustainability as a 'burden'

Farming sustainably is seen as a burden, requiring **'trade-offs'** - e.g. **more expensive** and/ or **less productive**  
Reductionist 'who should pay?' Farmer or consumer?' narrative



## Struggling farmer...

Struggling financially, burdened by red tape, undercut by trade, poor mental health, socially isolated. **'Victim of the system'** with small, family farmers against the 'big guys'. **Crisis farming** - dealing with a permacrisis (e.g. Covid, Ukraine). Narrative of precarity. Unattractive profession

## ... vs armchair farmer

**Cashing in the money**, greedy  
Landowners/ agrocompanies vs. farmers  
**'CAP worth a third of the EU budget'** is a repeated point. Commonly heard: "What are they complaining about, they're millionaires?" and/or fancy tractor/ tech = lots of money



## Urban/ rural divide

**Gap between farmers and rest of society**, and vice versa - feeling of poor understanding of the reality of farming. Consumers far from realities of farming



## Far-right farmers

Seen politically as **right leaning**, but increasingly associated with the rise of the far right, e.g. 'regressive' rural populations  
Farmers = **block to progress**. Increasingly portrayed anti-EU



# Farmer image



Male, white, old, flannel shirt and hat (cliché),

often pristine; shown on a tractor/ with machinery





# Angry farmer

## POLITICO

Meet the — really — angry farmers coming to take down Brussels

Farm-to-fork, to protestors with pitchforks: the death of EU's sustainable food policy



"We have farmers on the street everywhere ... we are in emergency situation so we have to act as such." | Mohammed Badra/EFE via EPA

FRANCE - AGRICULTURE

Paris Agriculture Show opens as angry farmers continue quarrel over costs



Farmers are venting their anger. Foto: VRT NWS

Farmers protest in Brussels against the EU (VIDEO)

euro news. Video. Angry farmers protest in London

Macron leaves angry farmers for soon-to-be NATO member Sweden

French President Emmanuel Macron begins a two-day state visit to Sweden on Tuesday (30 January), with the Nordic country on the cusp of becoming a NATO member following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



Watch: Angry farmers block streets, dump manure and clash with police in Brussels



Signing of Mercusor deal would cause farmer anger to 'explode again', protestors warn

Tuesday 12 November 2024

By Ellen O'Regan





# Farming vs environment

Farmers are in revolt and Europe's climate policies are crumbling. Welcome to the age of 'greenlash'

**EU agriculture reform pits farmers against environmentalists**

## **Rushed rollback of EU green farming rules triggers dismay**

The bloc's notoriously complex legislative process can apparently be simplified — when it comes to farmers, that is, and when an election is around the corner.

## **Farmers Won't Save the Climate at Their Own Expense**

Pushing farms toward a green transition could result in a big backlash.

FUTURE PERFECT

### **How rioting farmers unraveled Europe's ambitious climate plan**

Road-clogging, manure-dumping farmers reveal the paradox at the heart of EU agriculture.






# Sustainability as a burden

## The 'trade-off' argument



**Economic and Food Security Impacts of Agricultural Input Reduction Under the European Union Green Deal's Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies**


Navigating sustainability trade-offs in global beef production

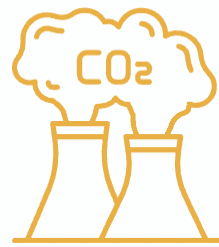


Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

### Synergies and trade-offs in climate-smart agriculture

An approach to systematic assessment





# Agribashing... vs romanticisation



**UK has more than 1,000 livestock mega-farms, investigation reveals**

Newly published figures show for first time how US-style factory farms have spread across British countryside

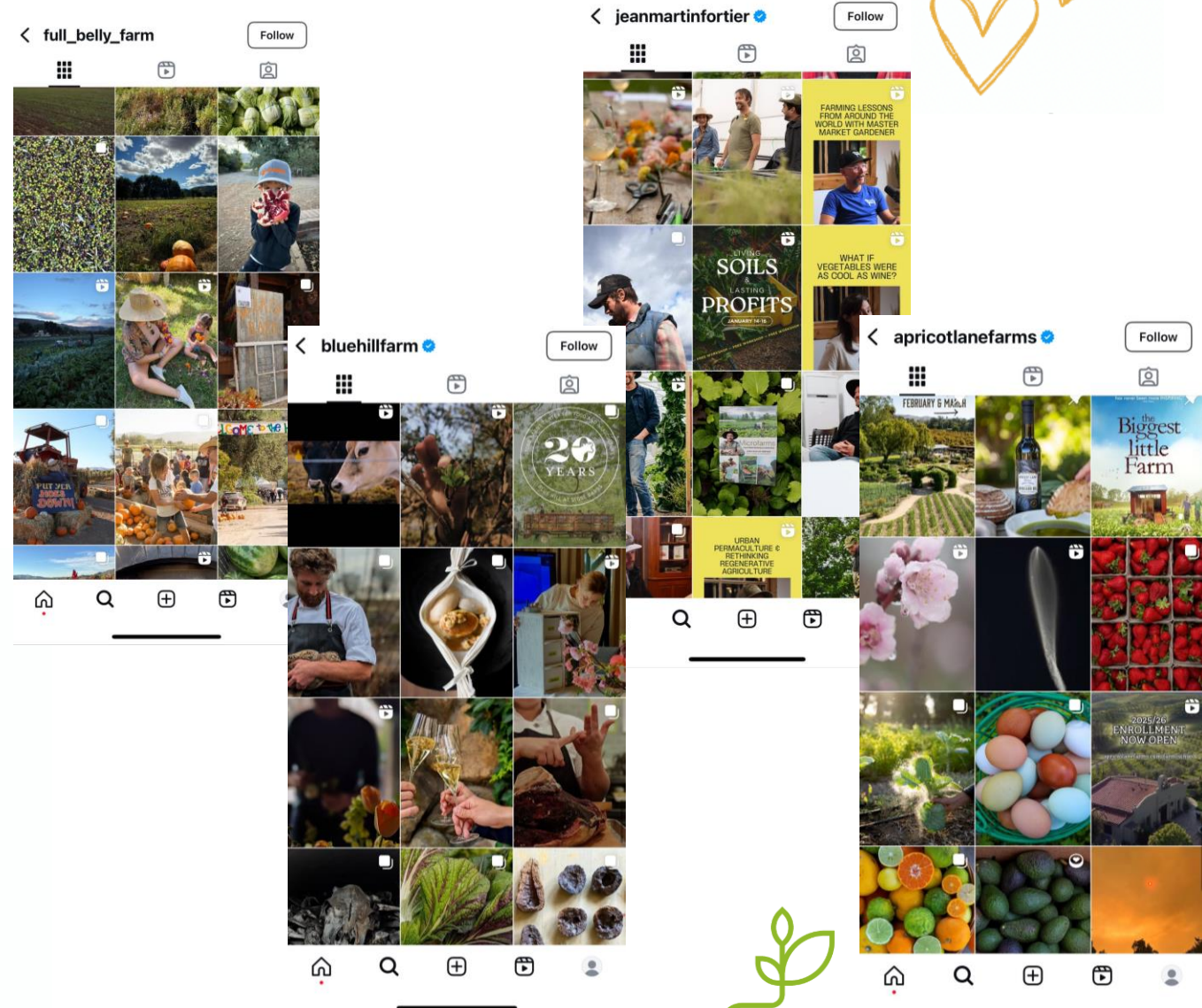
Press Release > NATURE & FOOD

**EU gives factory farms a free pass to pollute**

**Drugs, hormones and excrement: the polluting pig mega-farms supplying pork to the world**

**Mapped: The Deep Ties Between Big Ag and Europe's Right-Wing Politicians**

**European far right opportunistically supports farmers**





# Struggling farmer... vs 'armchair' farmer



Why are Europe's farmers struggling with mental health?

The Telegraph

Ban on bee-harming insecticide adds to struggling sugar beet farmers' woes

The Guardian

'We didn't realise how hard it is': small farmers in Europe struggle to get by



'Welfare for the rich': how farm subsidies wrecked Europe's landscapes

Revealed: billionaires are 'ultimate beneficiaries' linked to €3bn of EU farming subsidies

The big fat Greek plot to defraud the EU

"Farmers" raked in millions of euros for land they didn't own or work.





# Food producer

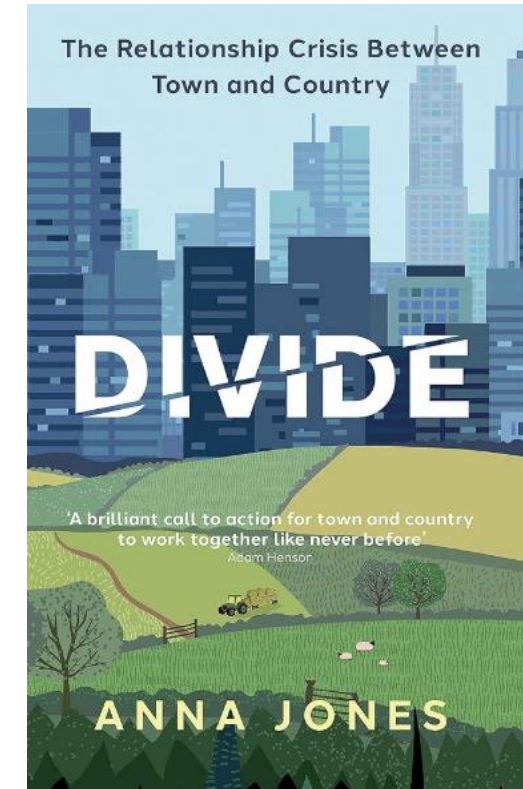
Primary role





# Urban/ rural divide

Gap between farmers and rest of society, and vice versa - feeling of poor understanding of the reality of farming



**The paradox of the urban-rural divide**



# Thank you!

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