

The contested futures of livestock farming in the context of the protein transition

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Pathways to climate resilient agri-food systems in Belgium
Belgian Climate Centre

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The issues at stake

Consumption-related issues

Health impacts



Obesity

Corona heart
disease

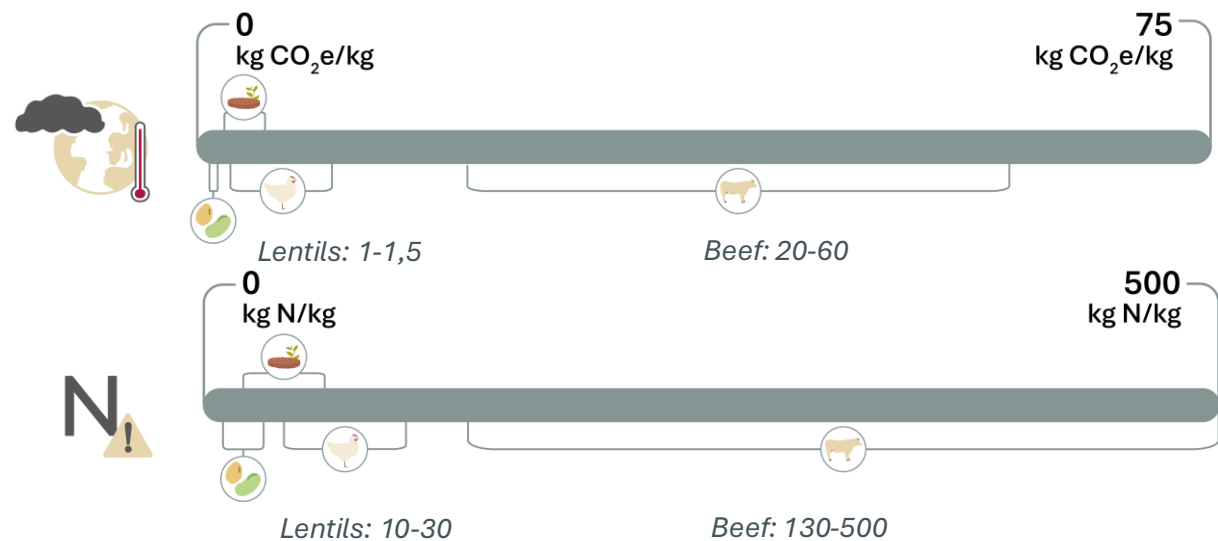
Type-2
diabetes

Production-related issues

Environmental impacts



Animal welfare impacts



The proposition of the protein transition



But what is the role of livestock farming in the context of a protein transition?



1. The current European & Belgian contexts

Europe is the world leading exporter of animal products

2/3 of EU agricultural land is dedicated to animal feed

European agricultural area



+

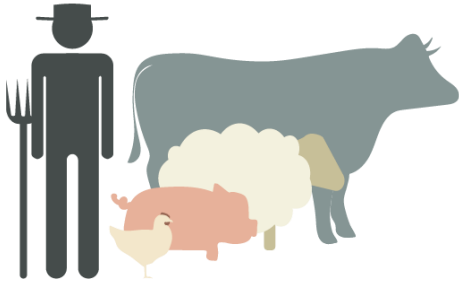
Soybean imports for animal feed



 **Europe is the leading exporter of animal products.**

Europe is not isolated

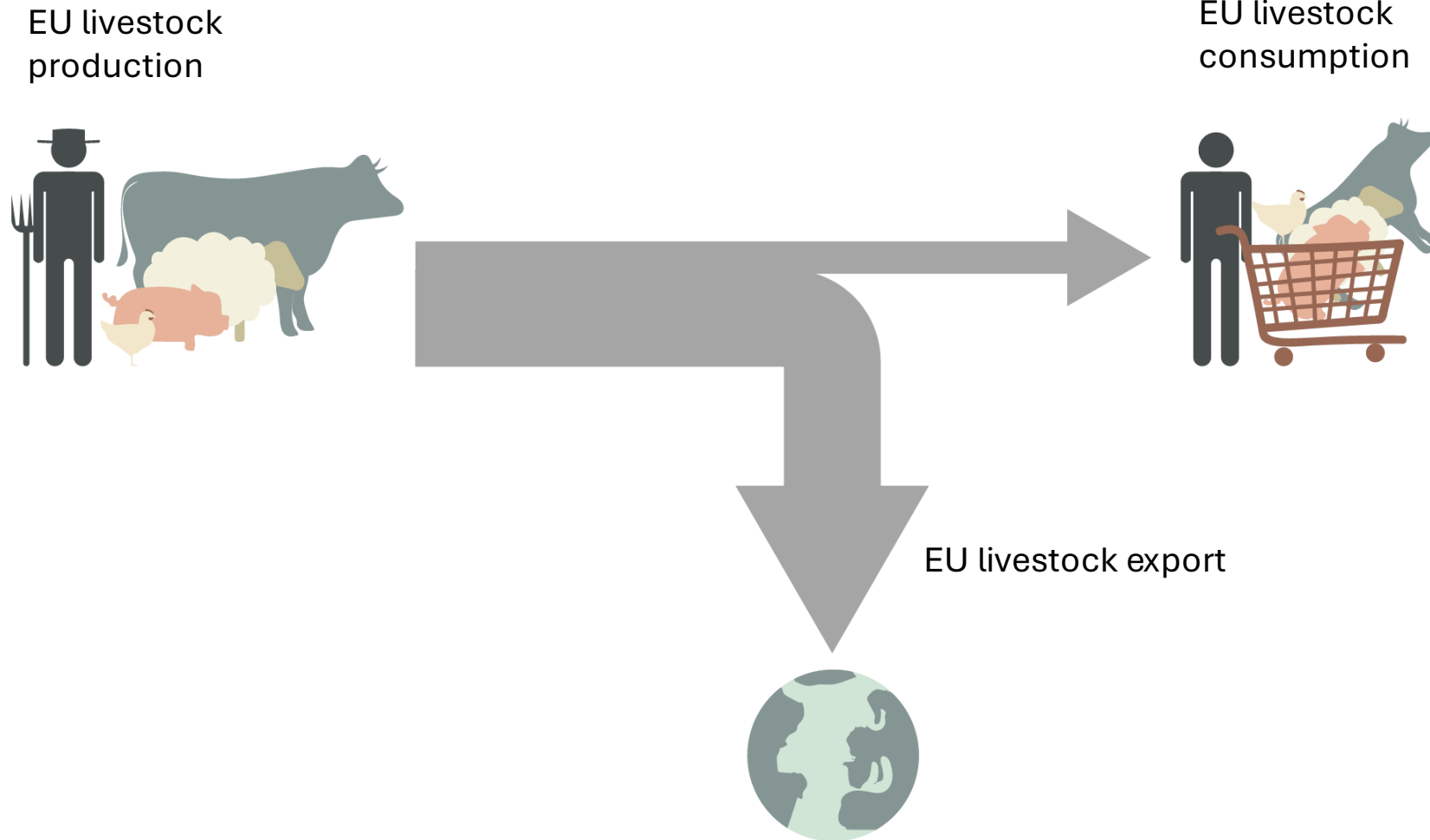
EU livestock
production



EU livestock
consumption



There is a disconnect between production and consumption due to exports



Belgium is no exception for the export-oriented strategy



Fifth net exporter of pork in the EU

67% of the production is exported



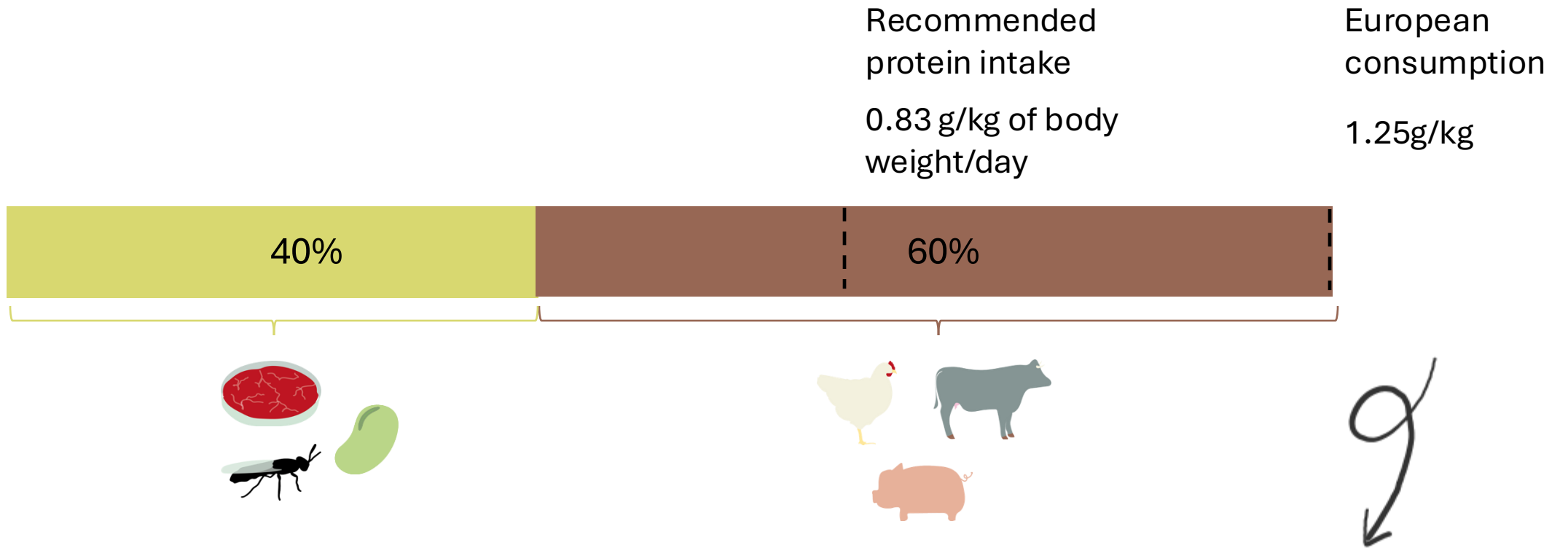
Six largest export of fresh and frozen chicken

35% going to non-EU countries



50% of the beef production is exported

We consume much more than we need



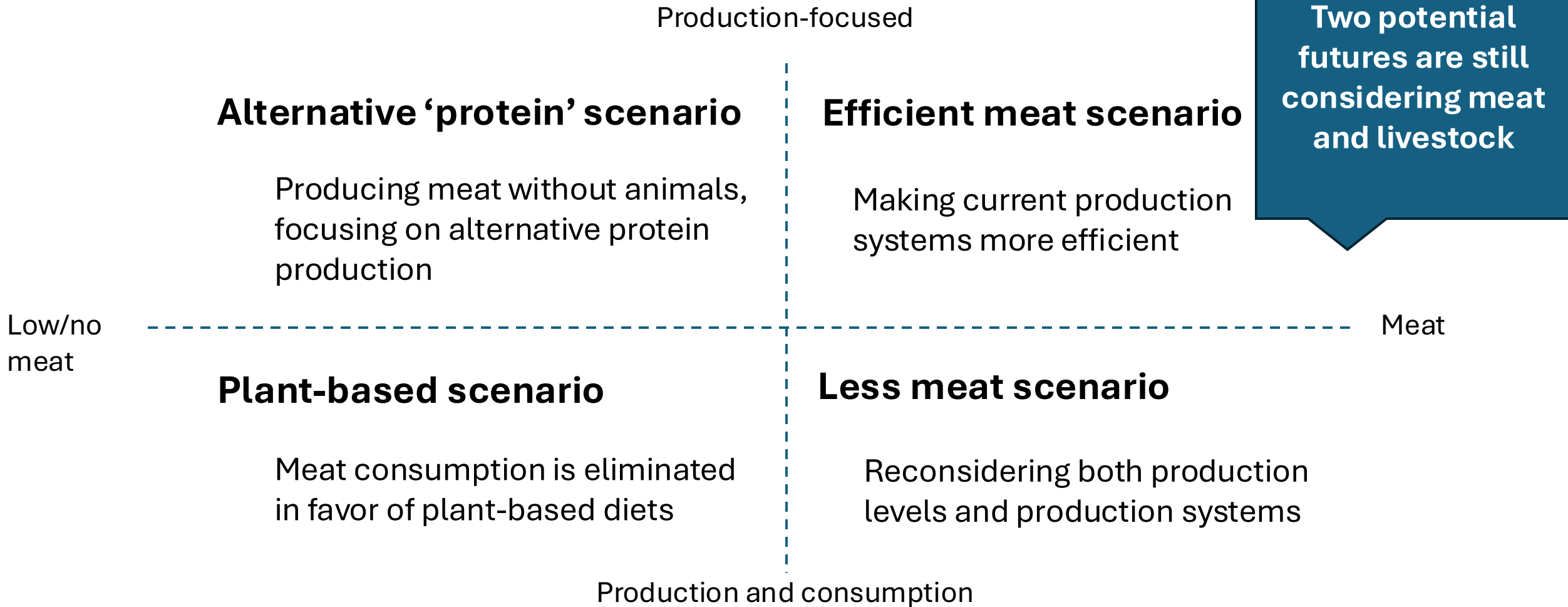
We overconsume proteins

We overconsume **animal** proteins



2. The diversity of pathways

Should livestock be part of the future?





3. What will the future be?

Changing will be harder than continuing

A locked-in system resulting from the interplay of economic x political x social x infrastructural factors

Which sectors?

Which production systems?

What proportion of meat/alternative proteins in diets?

→ The answers will depend on the indicators and criteria we choose to guide our decisions

Be explicit about the future role of livestock farming in the four quadrants

Production-focused

Alternative 'protein' scenario

Efficient eat scenario

Low meat

High meat

Plant-based scenario

Less meat scenario

Production and consumption

The KISS for the less meat scenario

Keep

Grass-based and extensive systems
Local, high-quality labels



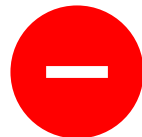
Improve

Economic viability of extensive farms
Pasture management, agroforestry, and mixed crop-livestock systems



Stop

Intensive systems disconnected from land and local feed resources
Production focused on quantity rather than quality



Start

Strategic thinking about which meats Belgium should produce
Public procurement and dietary guidelines aligned with « less but better » principles
Compensation or incentive schemes





transition of
food systems

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