

EU CARBON FARMING SUMMIT

PADUA, 17-19 MARCH 2026

REPORT

❖ Introduction

From 17 to 19 March 2026, Padua hosted the third edition of the **EU Carbon Farming Summit – Bridging Actors to Accelerate Climate Actions**, organised by [Credible](#), [Climate KIC](#), and [Sae INNOVA](#) in collaboration with other partners.

The event was sold out, with over 700 people attended in person, in addition to those joining remotely.

The conference provided an intense and stimulating opportunity for discussion on the topics of carbon farming and carbon credits through a **holistic and interdisciplinary lens**, featuring speakers from diverse backgrounds and expertise, including policymakers (DG Agri, Climate and Environment), farmers, scientists, project managers, companies, public bodies, and NGOs.

The parallel sessions were organised into five different thematic areas:

- ✓ From practice to impact;
- ✓ Thinking beyond carbon;
- ✓ Standards, policy, and ownership rights;
- ✓ Financing carbon farming at scale;
- ✓ Building robust and flexible MRV.

Here is the full programme of the event:

https://www.carbonfarmingsummit.eu/resources/files/Final_Programme_ECFS_2026.pdf

Here is the link to the live streams: [Project Credible YouTube channel](#)

❖ Carbon credit markets: advantages and challenges

The Summit painted a complex picture of carbon farming and carbon credits, whilst new trends focusing on so-called biodiversity, landscape, and [nature credits](#) are emerging, highlighting the need to move towards an **integrated carbon credit approach**.

On the one hand, in a Europe where 60% of the soil is degraded, carbon farming is considered “the tipping point to create the economy of the future” (Kurt Vanderberghe – DG Climate), **a catalyst for regenerative agriculture**, offering benefits beyond improved soil health, as well as a potential additional source of income for farmers.

On the other hand, however, the voluntary carbon credit market faces some challenges, linked mainly to:

- A still-low level of demand;
- The low value of the credit (€20–50 per tonne);
- The absence of a stable, long-term income prospect for farmers;
- The high cost of Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV) systems;
- Data collection is considered lengthy and complex for farmers;
- Data accessibility and ownership;
- A regulatory framework that remains fragmented and evolving, following the adoption of the [Carbon Removals and Carbon Farming Regulation – CRCF](#) (Reg. 2024/3012).
- Administrative burdens.

It is becoming clear that certification alone is insufficient to ensure a functioning market (Massimiliano Giansanti – Confagricoltura).

Furthermore, during the panel discussion ‘Innovative Financial Models to Scale Carbon Forestry’, the moderator, Prof. Davide Pettenella (University of Padua), emphasised the need to ensure **transparency, integrity, and proper communication** within the market, identifying three distinct areas of complexity:

1. The voluntary carbon credit market in Europe is regulated by Regulation 2024/3012 (CRCF), the delegated acts of which are currently being developed; it is exposed to the risk of greenwashing and fraud and must contend with the major international standards that exist and will continue to exist despite the adoption of the CRCF Regulation (e.g., the [Gold standard](#));
2. Various types of credits are emerging that go beyond simple carbon (e.g., [Koala carbon credits](#));
3. Climate change and the current geopolitical situation are shaping a new world in which even the existing mandatory [ETS system](#) is being called into question.

In light of this, the main challenges relating to the carbon credit market can be summarised as follows:

- ✓ Focus on the demand side to build trust, going beyond mere incentives;
- ✓ Defining genuine risk-sharing strategies;

- ✓ Developing place-based solutions and enabling capital flows to reach local farms;
- ✓ Aggregating supply and demand through buyers' clubs;
- ✓ Respecting the autonomy of farmers, who must be active suppliers (Massimiliano Giansanti - Confagricoltura).

❖ Update on the political and regulatory framework

Carbon farming is part of the various European policies aimed at achieving climate neutrality and protecting the soil, and is clearly linked to the targets of the [Nature restoration law](#) (Reg. 2024/1991). Indeed, it was frequently emphasised during the conference that healthy soil is a prerequisite for storing greater quantities of carbon.

Regulation 2024/3012 (CRCF) will be subject to review by 2026, as provided for in Article 18. On this point, it should be noted that:

- ✓ In November 2025, the Commission adopted the [Implementing Regulation 2025/2358](#), which lays down technical standards relating to certification schemes, certification bodies, and audits;
- ✓ The review will consider the possibility of applying the Regulation to the reduction of emissions from the IPCC source category 'Agriculture', sub-categories 3A 'Enteric fermentation' and 3B 'Manure management', which are currently excluded;
- ✓ On 3 February 2026, the Commission adopted the **first certification methodologies** relating to:
 - Direct air capture with carbon storage ('DACCS');
 - Biogenic emissions capture with carbon storage ('BioCCS');
 - Biochar carbon removal ('BCR');
- ✓ The **forthcoming methodologies** are expected to cover carbon sequestration in agricultural soils for activities such as peatland restoration through rewetting; planting of trees; agroforestry and soil management of agricultural mineral soils, including improved fertiliser use. The Commission has opened a public consultation window on the relevant drafts, running from 22 January 2026 to 19 February 2026. See <https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14574-Carbon-removals-and-carbon-farming->

[methodologies-for-certifying-carbon-farming_en](#). If the legislative process proceeds without further amendments, these methodologies could be ready by the end of April;

- ✓ The **methodologies for carbon storage in bio-based construction** products, which are central to the ABC project, are instead expected by the end of 2026. The relevant public consultation has not yet opened. See https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/16414-Certification-methodologies-for-carbon-storage-in-long-lasting-products_en;
- ✓ For the latest meeting of the Carbon Removal Expert Group on carbon farming and carbon storage in buildings on 5–6 February 2026, see https://climate.ec.europa.eu/citizens-stakeholders/events/carbon-removal-expert-group-meeting-carbon-farming-and-carbon-storage-buildings-2026-02-05_en;
- ✓ In general, for a summary of the Carbon Removal Expert Group meetings, see [https://climate.ec.europa.eu/citizens-stakeholders/events_en?f%5B0%5D=oe_event_title%3Acarbon%20Removals%20Expert%20Group%20meeting](https://climate.ec.europa.eu/citizens-stakeholders/events_en?f%5B0%5D=oe_event_title%3Acarbon%20Removals%20Expert%20Group%20meeting;);
- ✓ Once the calls for schemes are open, certification schemes may apply for accreditation under the CRCF at any time;
- ✓ The European carbon credit registry will be established by 2028.

Furthermore, in its Communication [A Strategic Framework for a Competitive and Sustainable EU Bioeconomy](#) [COM(2025) 960 final], the European Commission announced the establishment of a **EU buyers' club** (see par. 3.3: *“To create predictable demand for results-based schemes and stimulate private investment, it will establish an EU Buyers' Club, ensuring fair opportunities and competitiveness for producers. This voluntary initiative will provide a clear demand signal for carbon farming and permanent carbon removals under the CRCF Regulation. By pooling voluntary demand from private companies, it will help generate new revenue streams for European farmers and foresters, support resilient biomass value chains, and underpin corporate commitments. To further simplify the participation of farmers and forests in the voluntary carbon farming market, the Commission will establish an EU carbon farming database of models, emission factors, remote sensing products and benchmarking datasets that will reduce monitoring and administrative costs”*).

On 17 March, the Council adopted its conclusions on the Bioeconomy Strategy; see <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2026/03/17/bioeconomy-council-backs-moving-bio-based-innovations-from-lab-to-production/>.

The so-called *Soil monitoring law* (Directive 2025/2360) – adopted in November 2025 – provides a **definition of ‘soil health’**, encompassing ‘the physical, chemical and biological condition of soil, determining its capacity to function as a vital living system and to provide ecosystem services’ (Article 3.5);

The so-called Green Claims Directive, proposed in 2023, has never been adopted and its legislative process has been stalled since June 2025. See https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/circular-economy-topics/green-claims_en; https://law-tracker.europa.eu/procedure/2023_85?lang=en.

France has adopted a national certification scheme for carbon credits (Label bas carbone). See [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2024/767181/EPRS_BRI\(2024\)767181_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2024/767181/EPRS_BRI(2024)767181_EN.pdf); <https://label-bas-carbone.ecologie.gouv.fr/>.

European Scientific Advisory Board on Climate Change, *Climate adaptation and mitigation in the agri-food system – Recommendations for coherent EU policies* (11.3.2026): https://climate-advisory-board.europa.eu/reports-and-publications/2026-03-1120260311_eu-agri-food-system-report.pdf/@download/file

❖ Finance and insurance

The issue of finance and insurance, understood as risk management tools, has repeatedly been identified as crucial.

On this point, in her inspirational opening keynote presentation, Kirsten Dunlop (Climate KIC) referred to *the insurability imperative*, that is, the need to rely increasingly on insurance to tackle climate change.

In this regard, see also European Investment Bank (EIB), *Insurance and Risk Management Tools for Agriculture in the EU* (2025): https://www.fi-compass.eu/sites/default/files/publications/EAFRD_AGR Insurance Risk_MA.pdf

However, an insurance market is still lacking because insurance is too expensive for farmers, which is why, to date, around 80% of crops are uninsured.

Furthermore, adverse extreme weather events expose farmers either to situations so unpredictable that they are not covered by the insurance or to situations so risky that they cannot be insured.

On the subject of finance, during the panel discussion “Bridging Finance Streams for the Agricultural Transition”, [Agrosolutions](#) discussed carbon credits within the broader context of potential financial instruments to support the green transition, such as:

- ✓ price premiums;
- ✓ payments for ecosystem services;
- ✓ nature credits;
- ✓ public funding (e.g., CAP);
- ✓ integrated landscape finance.

During the panel on “Innovative Financial Models to Scale Carbon Forestry”, Alessandro Leonardi ([Etifor](#)) emphasised the need for **blended finance**, with public funding acting as a lever for private investment; he also noted that large companies are increasingly interested in investing directly in biodiversity or water conservation, adopting **carbon insetting practices** – that is, investing within their own supply chains in sustainable practices – rather than offsetting practices, which involve supporting third-party projects.

Also during the same panel discussion, [Arpinge Natural Capital](#) highlighted that, on the one hand, there is a need for predictable demand and insurable risk, but that, on the other hand:

- companies do not yet know how to use carbon credits;
- there is a lack of suitable insurance;
- the **legal nature of carbon credits** is unclear and can vary between jurisdictions;
- for a farmer, it is always beneficial to diversify.