

PRESS RELEASE

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The ROK Raises the Total Greenhouse Gas Reduction to 3% of the NDC for the Agricultural Sector

Sejong, 16 October 2025 — The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) has prepared a plan to promote the certification and distribution of low-carbon agricultural and livestock products. The plan focuses on promoting the certification of low-carbon agricultural and livestock products, promoting the distribution and consumption of such certified products, and improving consumer awareness of such products.

The low-carbon agricultural and livestock production certification system grants official recognition to agricultural and livestock product items that are produced with farming techniques that reduce carbon emissions in the production process.

The certification system has been in operation for 65 agricultural product items and 3 types of livestock to support farmers' voluntary carbon-reduction efforts and encourage value-based purchasing among consumers.

<Eligible agricultural and livestock products for the low-carbon production certification>

- The agricultural sector: grains, fruits, vegetables, special-purpose crops, and forest products
- The livestock sector: “hanwoo” (Korean native cattle), pigs, and dairy cattle

As agriculture and livestock farms have recently been suffering greater damage from extreme weather events, such as heatwaves and torrential rains, the demand for stronger response to the climate crisis and associated conflicts are intensifying. The international community is also strengthening regulations to curb greenhouse gas emissions by introducing various carbon taxes and certification systems. In the Korean agricultural sector, the demand for a wide adoption of carbon-reduction technologies and low-carbon production certification is on the rise. However, the still-low consumer awareness and a weak market for “low-carbon production” certified agricultural and livestock products are pointed out as obstacles to the effective functioning of the low-carbon production certification system.

To establish a sustainable production and distribution system for “low-carbon” agricultural and livestock products, the MAFRA has set a goal of achieving 30,000 certified “low-carbon” farms, an annual distribution of 50,000 tonnes of agricultural and livestock products certified as low-carbon production, and a consumer awareness level of 95% or higher by 2030. To meet this goal, the MAFRA will focus on three action points: (a) strengthening the certification system's foundation, (b) promoting the distribution and consumption of certified agricultural and livestock products, and (c) broadening public awareness. Through these efforts, the MAFRA plans to raise the total

greenhouse gas reduction to approximately 3% of the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for the agricultural sector.

1. The MAFRA will increase the number of certification agencies, bolster consulting expertise, identify more eligible product items and techniques, and expand incentives for participating farmers. This way, the MAFRA will strengthen the foundation for the certification system.

In line with a growing trend for a wider application of low-carbon production certification, the MAFRA will increase the number of certification agencies to include qualified local authorities. For livestock products, the MAFRA will enhance a case study-based training programme for certifying officers and strengthen oversight of the distribution system.

The MAFRA will identify more eligible product items through statistical data on carbon emissions and field surveys, and actively seek out and supply applicable low-carbon farming techniques and technologies from the latest research findings of the Rural Development Administration (RDA), public agencies for agricultural research and development in provinces, and the academic and research sectors.

For certified farms with high greenhouse gas reduction performance, they will be allowed to renew their certificates through a simplified procedure and their exemplary cases will be highlighted and shared. Furthermore, these farms will be given priority in the selection for related central and local government projects.

2. The MAFRA will establish a demand-creating distribution chain by

making it mandatory for large buyers to purchase low-carbon agricultural and livestock products, as well as by providing support in connecting buyers and producers. To promote the consumption of agricultural and livestock products certified as low-carbon production, the MAFRA will introduce a system for collaboration among producers, distributors, and consumers.

Specifically, the MAFRA will increase prioritised purchases by public agencies. To this end, through the proposed amendment to the Act to Promote the Purchase of Environmentally-Friendly Products, the MAFRA will make it mandatory for public agencies to purchase low-carbon agricultural and livestock products. The government will also help low-carbon production certified farms to create a stable market by encouraging collaborative business, such as large companies serving foods made with “low-carbon” certified agricultural and livestock products at their canteens, and supply agreements with major retail chains.

Furthermore, the MAFRA will set up a consultative body of representatives of distributors, producers, and consumers to encourage their collaboration for the distribution of low-carbon production certified agricultural and livestock products, such as information sharing, producer-buyer match-making, and joint marketing efforts.

3. The MAFRA will carry out stronger publicity campaigns to raise public awareness about “low-carbon” agricultural and livestock products.

Specifically, the MAFRA will encourage the public to make an ethical, value-based purchase by means of storytelling and visualisations, such as package

labels indicating how much carbon has been reduced in the production of the products. In addition, the MAFRA plans to introduce field trips to low-carbon production certified farms and hands-on experiences in after-school, daycare programmes called “Neulbom School.” The MAFRA will also expand the general public’ access to low-carbon agricultural and livestock products by operating interactive booths at exhibitions and local festivals, as well as by collaborating with private platform services and businesses.