

Tetra Pak calls for accelerated regulation of biotechnology in food: “Europe risks falling behind”

At a summit held in the Danish Parliament on 10 September, Marie Sandin, Managing Director of Tetra Pak Sweden, emphasised the importance of Europe investing in biotechnology – particularly fermentation-based food solutions – to enable sustainable and resilient food systems as a complement to existing ones. The event, *Biosolutions Summit*, brought together international leaders from business, academia, politics, and finance to discuss the future of Europe’s biosolutions sector.

Organised by the Danish Chamber of Commerce, Copenhagen University, and the Alliance for Biosolutions, the summit aimed to concretise the EU’s ambition for green growth. A clear example of how innovation can be accelerated through collaboration was highlighted early on by Marie Sandin: *Biotech Heights* in Lund – a research and innovation hub operated in partnership between Tetra Pak and Lund University, with funding from Vinnova. She also pointed to the recently inaugurated *Tetra Pak® New Food Technology Development Centre* in Karlshamn, which supports producers in scaling up fermentation-based food products from prototype to commercial level – an essential piece in strengthening Europe’s innovation and production capacity.

“Biotech Heights is a tangible model with the expertise and infrastructure to bring together academia, industry, startups, and the public sector to commercialise biotechnological solutions – not in ten years, but now,” said Marie Sandin.

While many associate Tetra Pak with packaging, the company’s role in food systems spans the entire value chain – from concept and pilot testing, through food processing and fermentation technology, to the safe transport, packaging, and distribution of nutritious food and beverages. A key part of the company’s commitment to more responsible food processes involves utilising side streams, such as by-products from food production and transforming them into new, high-value ingredients and foods.

“Tetra Pak is not just a packaging company. We enable the delivery of 72 billion litres of food and beverages every year to over 160 countries and invest heavily in innovation, including in biotechnology, precision fermentation, and food safety,” Sandin said.

Marie Sandin stressed that the climate footprint of the food sector – which accounts for over a third of global emissions – means biotechnology must become a strategic tool in the EU’s green transition. She also emphasised that foods developed through biotechnology are not replacements but complements to traditional agriculture and food supply. “By combining innovation with established production methods, we can create a more sustainable food supply and thereby take a decisive step towards solving the climate challenge.”

Biotech Act – A Crossroads for Europe

Marie Sandin welcomed the European Commission’s announcement to accelerate the adoption of the *Biotech Act*, the Commission’s forthcoming framework to promote biotechnological innovation, and underscored the importance of including food within its scope. The proposal is now prioritised for adoption before the end of 2025.

“It is crucial that legislation creates the right conditions. Today, it can take several years to launch a new food product developed through fermentation processes in the EU – while it takes just a few months outside the Union. Europe risks falling behind. With the right regulatory framework, we can instead ensure that innovations developed here in Sweden and Denmark also have the opportunity to be commercialised here to the benefit of competitiveness, jobs, and sustainable growth. Regulations should both promote innovation and industrialisation; while ensuring we strengthen growth, green transitions, and Europe’s competitiveness.”