



The Avril Group transforms agricultural raw materials for use in human foods, animal nutrition and renewable energies and chemistry. Our activities are therefore profoundly linked to the living world, the source of all agricultural production. As a central actor in the “French Farm”<sup>1</sup>, the preservation of [biodiversity](#) is of crucial importance to the Group. This document provides an update on our actions in this respect.

### Our vision: biodiversity is a pillar of our sectors that must be preserved

Biodiversity is the foundation of all agricultural activities because it renders essential [ecosystem services](#). Dependent on core natural cycles, agriculture forms part of the [ecosystems](#) that supply it with resources (water, soil nutrients) and regulatory capacities (control of erosion, environmental purification, pollination, etc.). In return, the practices adopted by farmers affect the quantity and quality of ecosystem services.

One of Avril’s specific features is that it is present throughout the [vegetable oils and proteins sector](#) and implements actions in favor of biodiversity at several levels: procurement, industrial operations, innovations, funding solutions, etc.

### Raw materials: further driving our sustainable sourcing strategy

**In response to the diversity of situations, the Group draws strength from several tools.**

#### The Diester® Rapeseed Progress Initiative: biodiversity focused on bees

More than 10,000 rapeseed farmers in France participate in the [Diester® Rapeseed Progress Initiative](#) which since 2007 has aimed to improve the environmental footprint of the entire Diester® biodiesel production chain, from field to pump, in four areas: energy, climate, water and biodiversity. This latter aspect, whose program was launched in 2015, concerns the preservation of bees, notably because of their close links with the sector: 24 % of honey production in France arises from oilseed crops (rapeseed, sunflower)<sup>2</sup>, while through pollination, bees contribute to the production of these grains. The framework offered by the Progress Initiative has enabled the organization of discussion workshops between farmers and beekeepers<sup>3</sup>, designed to identify mutually beneficial practices and foster dialog between these actors in different regions. With the support of our partners, the lessons from these workshops can be widely disseminated in the field.

#### Biomass sustainability schemes: preserving areas of high biodiversity value

Developed by French operators in the plant production and biofuels sectors, the voluntary [2BSvs](#)<sup>4</sup> scheme demonstrates, through independent verification, the Group’s compliance with the sustainability criteria fixed by the European Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC). Other equivalent schemes also exist, such as the [ISCC](#)<sup>5</sup>. All require that raw materials should not come from areas of high value in terms of biodiversity or carbon storage. The Group’s supplies for biodiesel production also meet the requirements of these schemes.

<sup>1</sup> Avril collects more than half of French land sown to oilseeds (a million hectares growing rapeseed and sunflower). Furthermore, as a national leader in animal nutrition, the Group produces 3.5 million tonnes of livestock feeds each year from cereals and oilseed meals.

<sup>2</sup> FranceAgriMer, synthèse 2017 sur la production de miel et de gelée royale en France

<sup>3</sup> Discover the presentation video of a workshop : <http://www.progrescolzadiester.fr/atelier-mise-en-situation-agriculteurs-apiculteurs/>

<sup>4</sup> Biomass Biofuels Sustainability Verification Scheme

<sup>5</sup> International Sustainability and Carbon Certification

### **Palm Oil: zero deforestation is the aim**

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As a user of palm oil for some of its industrial activities, Avril has developed its own [sustainable palm oil policy](#) whose objective is to achieve 100% of “zero deforestation” supplies. This policy, compiled with support from an NGO, The Forest Trust, applies to all the palm oil purchased by different Group subsidiaries. A key part of this policy concerns our internal palm oil standard applicable to palm oil supplies<sup>6</sup> – when they are not already certified otherwise, with e.g. ISCC – through the purchase of RSPO credits at proportions that are fixed annually, the target for 2018 being 100% of supplies thus covered.

### **Soybean: involvement in favor of sustainable soy**

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In 2014, through its subsidiary Feed Alliance, Avril was the first French actor in animal nutrition to join the RTRS initiative<sup>7</sup>. The Group voluntarily undertook to purchase 10,000 RTRS credits each year in order to support the expansion of responsible soybean. As a member of the RTRS Executive Board, Feed Alliance brings, on the long term, its expertise to serving the sustainability of this crop.

The Group is also committed to the development of soybean cultivation in France. Its subsidiary Sofiprotéol federates and coordinates different actors involved in a national plan to increase the land sown to soybean and develop a coherent industrial strategy. The potential for growth is estimated at 200,000 ha within 5 to 10 years, the corollary being benefits for biodiversity: less pressure on the rich ecosystems of South America, a diversification of land use in France, and the introduction of a crop that is beneficial in environmental terms (improvements to soil structure, savings in inputs).

## **Products and processes: reducing our impacts**

**By constantly improving its products and industrial processes, the Group strives to limit the environmental impacts of its activities.**

### **Products: monitored and certified sectors**

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[Fleur de Colza](#)<sup>®</sup> is a Lesieur brand based on a dedicated value chain involving 1000 farmers working on the Beauce plain who must comply with tight specifications. During the past two years, biodiversity diagnoses have been conducted by the NGO *Hommes et Territoires* on several farms belonging to this sector, the aim being to identify good biodiversity practices to be included in the Fleur de Colza specifications. In 2016, Fleur de Colza was also the first brand to sign the Terres OléoPro charter indicating their commitment.

Since 2015, the Lesieur Cristal olive groves in El Kelaâ (Morocco) have been certified under the GlobalGAP scheme. These agricultural good practices notably concern the challenges of food security, the social protection of workers and also protection of the environment, including biodiversity.

### **Industrial operations: deployment of ISO14001 standards**

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The potential impacts of our industrial activities on biodiversity are mainly linked to wastewater outputs and atmospheric emissions. Based on improvement plans, the environmental management systems (notably ISO 14001) that we are introducing can mitigate these impacts. For example, the COD<sup>8</sup> of wastewater is falling each year thanks to continuing improvements to water treatment plants on our sites and monitoring of their efficiency.

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<sup>6</sup> Palm oil and its palm olein and stearin fractions

<sup>7</sup> Round Table on Responsible Soy

<sup>8</sup> Chemical Oxygen Demand, an indicator of the amount of organics in water and the pollution that may be caused

## Circular economy: valorizing biomass to preserve resources

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Terral is a subsidiary that recycles organic waste from the Group and other companies to make organic fertilizers. This principle of a circular economy enables the more efficient use of resources and reduces pressures on ecosystems. Thus the organic fertilizers produced by Terral (240,000 tonnes in 2016) enables the valorization of livestock waste from regions with surplus nitrogen or phosphorus. Export of these fertilizers to arable regions that require them therefore contributes to reducing nitrate problems in areas experiencing excess levels. In addition, the application of organic matter to crops favors the structure and microbial activity of soils.

## Group sites: a variety of local initiatives

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Numerous examples can be cited. Thus the site in Grande-Synthe operates the differentiated management of its green spaces, while the Coudekerque site is home to several beehives and combines ecological planning with the development of water reserves (planting of the pond thus created). The Venette site forms part of a regional ecological coherence scheme developed in the context of the French National Biodiversity Strategy.

## Climate and biodiversity: strong synergies

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At a global level, climate change is one of the main reasons for the erosion of biodiversity<sup>9</sup>. The Avril Group acts in favor of the climate both within its activities (reducing greenhouse gas emissions by its plants, particularly through the installation of biomass boilers) and also thanks to the production of Diester®, a biofuel whose GG emissions are 60% lower than those of conventional diesel.

## Innovation and financial investments: broadening the scope of our actions

**Innovation by the Group and Sofiprotéol's financial partners are the preferred routes adopted to broaden the scope of our actions and support the dynamics of sustainability beyond our original activities.**

### Innovation

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A high priority for Avril's innovation strategy is to further valorize the protein fraction of rapeseed and sunflower grain for new applications in human foods, livestock feeds and renewable chemistry that will have indirect benefits: a reduction in soybean imports. Furthermore, in order to enhance research by contributing its vision as an agri-industrial business, Avril is a member of the Scientific Steering Committee of the Foundation for Research on Biodiversity. Finally, Avril has become involved in the "Empreinte Biodiversité Produit" (Product Biodiversity Footprint) initiative launched by the I Care & Consult consultancy in 2016, which aims to construct a method to quantify the biodiversity impacts of a product at all stages in its life cycle.

### Investments

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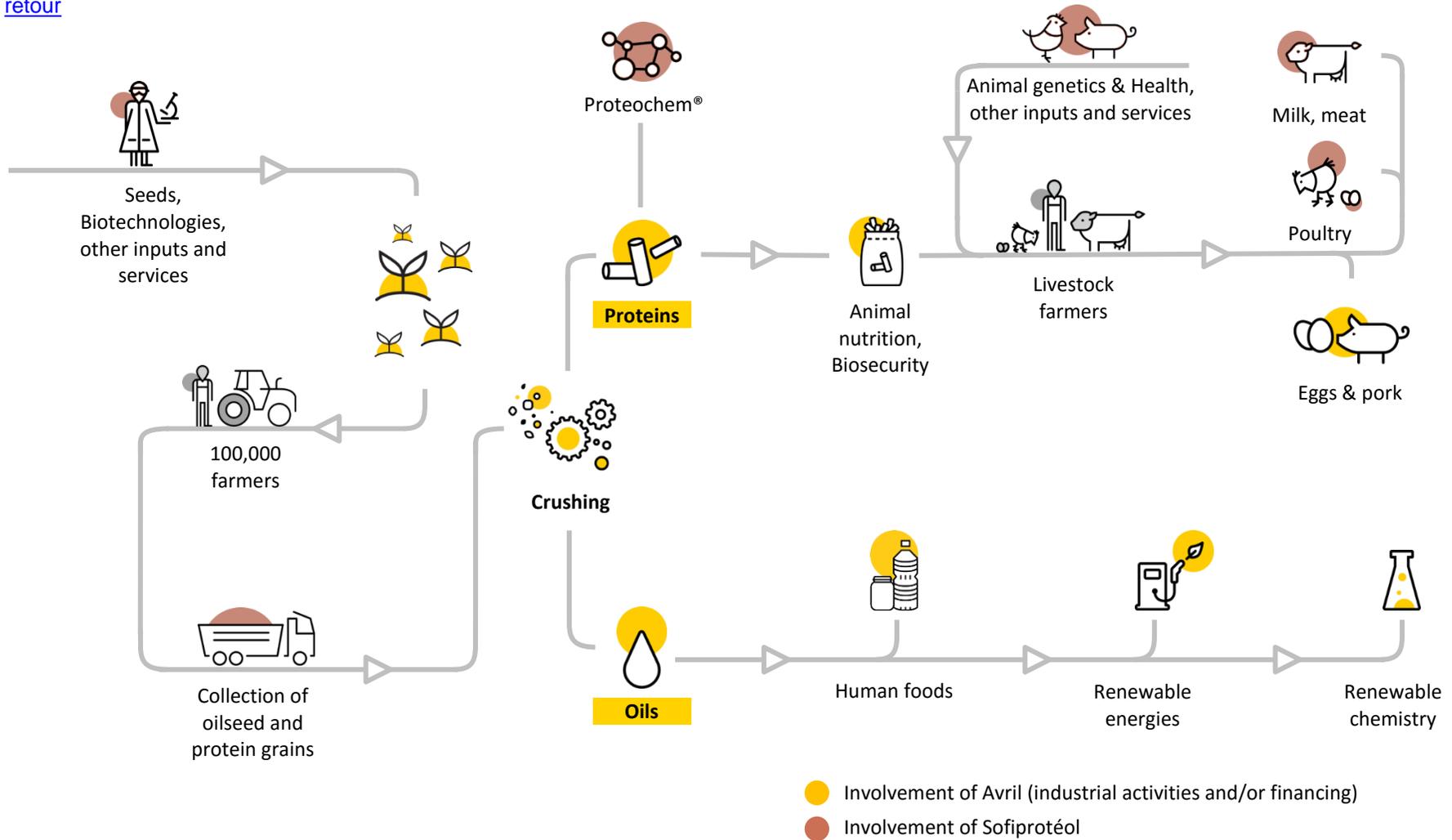
As the finance and development arm of the Avril Group, Sofiprotéol provides support for actors in the farming world under the principal of long-term financial partnerships that will serve the sustainability and competitiveness of different sectors. Sofiprotéol is committed to sustainable agriculture and supports the growth of companies developing solutions and services designed to improve agricultural productivity while preserving natural resources and biodiversity: support for biogas projects and organic farming, or the production of adjuvants that can reduce doses of plant health products, etc.

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<sup>9</sup> The other causes of biodiversity erosion are: the destruction and fragmentation of habitats, the over-exploitation of natural resources, pollution, and the introduction of invasive species (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment 2005)

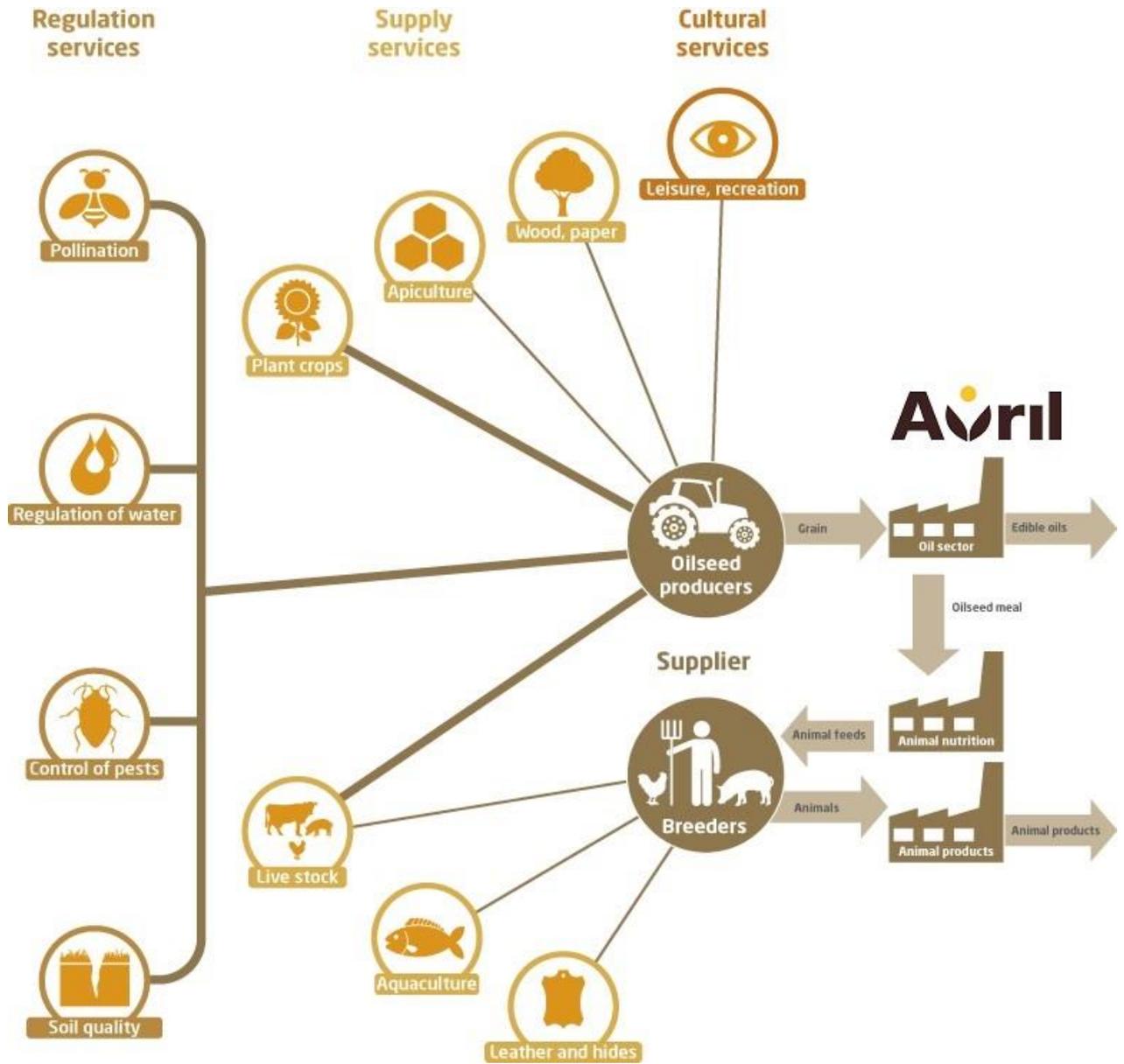
**Annex 1: A group with a sectoral structure, from grain to processed products**

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**Annex 2: Interactions between Avril and biodiversity**

[return](#)



## Annex 3: Glossary

### **Biodiversity:**

According to French Law no. 2016-1087 of 8 August 2016 on the Recovery of Biodiversity, Nature and Landscapes:

“Biodiversity, or biological diversity, means the variability of living organisms of any type, including terrestrial ecosystems, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes to which they belong. It includes diversity within and between species, the diversity of ecosystems and interactions between living organisms.”

[return](#)

### **Ecosystem**

A functional ecological unit made up of:

- The biotope : a geographical area characterized by homogeneous climatic and physicochemical conditions that enable the existence of specific fauna and flora,
- And the biocenosis: all beings that live under the same environmental conditions in a given space,

all in constant interaction.

Source: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000021779942>

[return](#)

### **Ecosystem services**

“The services offered by ecosystems and the benefits that humans obtain from ecosystems”.

These include:

- Provisioning services, such as food, water, construction timber and fiber;
- Regulating services that affect the climate, flood regulation, disease, waste and water quality;
- Cultural services that procure recreational, esthetic and spiritual benefits;
- And supporting services such as soil formation, photosynthesis and nutrient recycling”

[Ecosystem Millennium Assessment]

[return](#)

### **Industry-Biodiversity interactions**

These are the "positive or negative impacts that a company may have on biodiversity, and the interdependent links they maintain with the goods and services rendered by ecosystems”.

[<http://www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/LPS72.pdf>]