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The State of Women-Led Agrifood Companies in Europe 2025

January 2026

dealroom.co

FOREWORD BY

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"Across the continent, female founders are building innovative, competitive businesses that respond directly to the challenges facing our food system. At the same time, unlocking their full potential still requires continued progress in access to finance, networks, visibility, and markets. This report highlights both the momentum and the opportunity for women-led agrifood companies in Europe.

At EIT Food, we see this moment as an opportunity to accelerate change. Together with startups, investors, and corporates, we work to expand access and open pathways to growth through initiatives such as EIT Food EWA (Empowering Women in Agrifood) as well as Supernovas, Girls Go Circular, WE Lead Food, and the STREAM IT Project. These efforts demonstrate what is possible when talent is met with the right support - and they point to the scale of impact we can achieve together.

I invite you to read this report not only as an overview of the current landscape, but as a platform for collaboration and action. Whether you are a female founder, investor, corporate partner, or organisation committed to strengthening Europe's agrifood ecosystem, there is a role to play. By working together, we can unlock talent, accelerate innovation, and ensure that Europe fully captures the value already being created.

We hope this report sparks ideas and actions."

Richard Zaltzman
CEO at **EIT Food**

"Women are among the most dynamic drivers of innovation in Europe's agrifood sector. Across regions and value chains, women-led companies are introducing new technologies, business models, and social innovations that address pressing challenges—from sustainability and climate resilience to nutrition, circularity, and inclusive growth. Their contribution is central to the transformation of Europe's food system.

Despite this impact, women-led agrifood companies continue to face structural barriers, particularly in access to investment, networks, and scale-up opportunities. Investing in women entrepreneurs is therefore not only a matter of equity, but a strategic imperative for Europe's competitiveness and long-term resilience.

This report presents an evidence-based overview of progress and remaining gaps. At EIT Food, advancing gender equality and diversity is a core organisational priority, and we hope that the report's findings will support our efforts to build a more inclusive European innovation ecosystem for food systems. We invite ecosystem stakeholders to use the insights in this report to strengthen support for women-led agrifood companies and accelerate inclusive innovation across Europe."

Małgorzata Druciarek
Gender and Diversity Senior Manager at **EIT Food**

Table of contents

Why this report?

EIT Food, in a collaboration with Dealroom, created this report to move beyond assumptions and anecdotes - and to ground the conversation on women-led agrifood companies in evidence. Despite growing awareness, too little shared data exists on the realities women founders face across Europe, where the gaps are most persistent, and what is holding progress back.This report brings together insights from across the agrifood innovation ecosystem to identify barriers, highlight challenges, and point to where action is needed. Its purpose is to create a common reference point for founders, investors, corporates and policymakers who want to drive meaningful change.

To learn more about EIT Food's effort in supporting women in the agrifood sector visit **EWA | Empowering Women in Agrifood**

A few words on the methodology and approach to close the diversity data gap

Dealroom does not infer or assume the gender of founders, investors or users. Instead they work with publicly available data sourced from news feeds, professional social media and, crucially, with the wider community: thousands of users self-identified on their Global App and a network of 70+ ecosystem platforms powered by Dealroom.

While data gaps remain, Dealroom uses available insights to highlight key achievements, and invite founders to apply for a Dealroom for Builders Package for limited free access to the Dealroom platform and the ability to claim their Dealroom profile

Apply for Dealroom for Builders

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We identified over 740+ VC-backed agrifood companies with 1+ women (co-)founder

We started with **16k VC-backed** agrifood companies on **Dealroom.co** platform, founded since 1990

3.5k+ active VC-backed agrifood companies in the 27 countries in scope, founded since 1990

Scope of this report

740+ active VC-backed agrifood companies in the 27 countries in scope with 1+ women (co-)founder (includes all female and mixed teams)

Usually referred to in the report as "women–founded agrifood companies"

Countries in scope

This report **includes** the following list of 27 countries in scope: Portugal – Türkiye – Spain – Greece – Czechia – Italy – Romania – Bulgaria – Lithuania – Latvia – Hungary – Croatia – Poland – Ukraine – Cyprus – Malta – Estonia – Serbia – Slovenia – Albania – North Macedonia – Slovakia – Montenegro – Bosnia and Herzegovina – France – Germany – Netherlands.

For simplification those countries are usually referred to as "Europe" across the report.

The first chapter of this report includes both startups which have maintained their main center of business (HQ) in their country of origin as well as startups which have since relocated their HQ outside. The following chapter (VC investment numbers) only include companies currently HQ in the regions in scope.

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1

Women in Agrifood Overview

- Europe hosts 740+ VC-backed women-founded agrifood startups across 27 countries, with ~700 of those at pre-seed, seed and Series A, reflecting an ecosystem that is still largely early-stage.

- Activity is most concentrated in Germany (144 VC-backed companies), France (117), Spain (105), Italy (79) and the Netherlands (54) and Türkiye(50) whilst concentrated in Estonia (20), Poland (18) and Bulgaria (17) in Central Eastern Europe.

- Women founders account for a rapidly increasing share of newly founded agrifood VC-backed companies, rising from 17% in of startups launched between 2015–2019, to 34% in 2020–2025. Around 25 companies raise their first VC round each year.

- Women-founded, VC-backed agrifood companies in Europe are worth €10bn. Excluding HelloFresh, their enterprise value has grown 4.7x since 2019 - more than twice the growth rate of the agrifood ecosystem overall.

Snapshot of women–founded agrifood companies in Europe, as of 2025

740+

VC-backed agrifood companies co-founded by women (across all stages) Launched since 1990

€2.7B

VC investment since 2019 in women-founded European agrifood companies

€10B

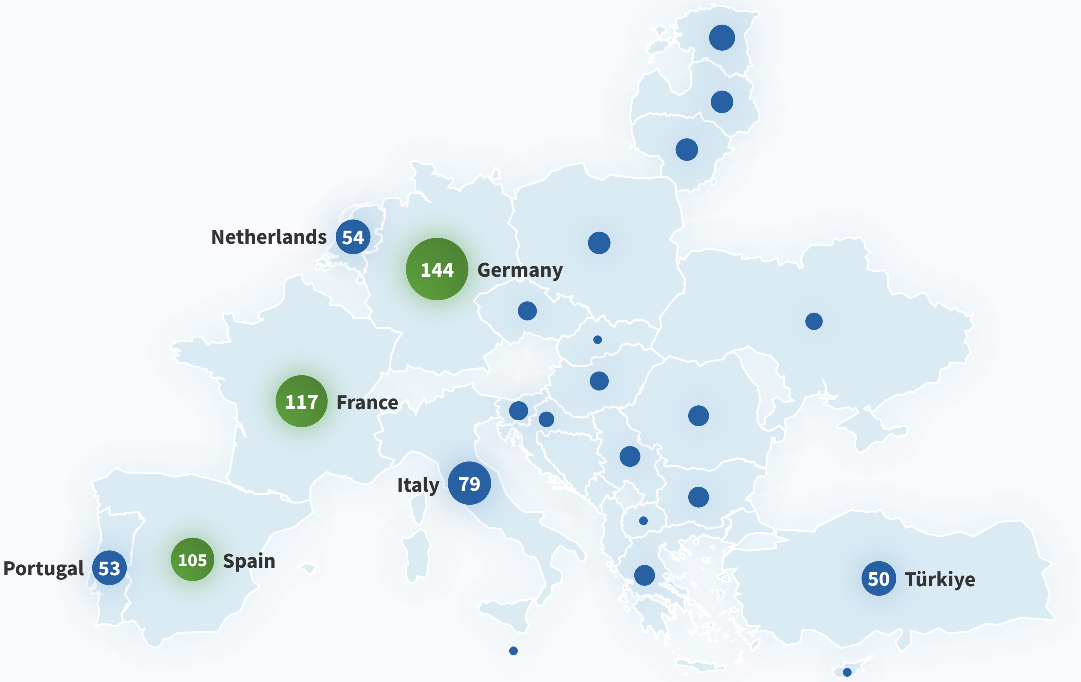
Enterprise value in 2025 of women-founded VC-backed agrifood companies in Europe

14%

% of all agrifood VC since 2019 raised by women-founded companies in Europe

Number of Venture Capital (VC)-backed women-founded agrifood companies in Europe

(27 countries in scope)



Source: Dealroom.co. Includes all women-founded, VC-backed agrifood companies across the 27 countries in scope, at all stages (i.e., companies that have raised at least one VC-type round).

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740+ women-founded agrifood VC-backed companies, predominantly at early-stage

Around 25 new companies raise their first VC round each year. Later-stage outcomes remain limited : when compared with all European VC-backed agrifood companies (all founding-teams), women-founded companies represent a larger share at early stage, and a comparatively smaller share of late stage and top outcomes

Flow of new companies

Pool of VC-backed companies

Outcomes to date
$25M+ revenues (Colts)
$100M+ revenues (Thoroughbreds)
and/or $1B+ valuation (Unicorns)

Flow of new companies	Pool of VC-backed companies					Outcomes to date	
±25 Raise their first VC-round each year	**540** Pre-Seed Up to $1M funding*	**104** Seed $1-4M funding	**60** Series A $4M–15M funding	**32** Breakout Stage $15–100M funding	**5** Late stage $100M+ funding	**5** $100M + revenue	HELLO FRESH $1B+ valuation or exit
% of all agrifood 27 countries in scope, all founding teams	**22%**	**18%**	**18%**	**17.8%**	**21%**	**15.5%**	**7.7%**

700+ Early-stage

Source: Dealroom.co. Companies founded since 1990; based on HQ or founded locations; VC-backed companies. *Also includes companies with non disclosed funding amounts.

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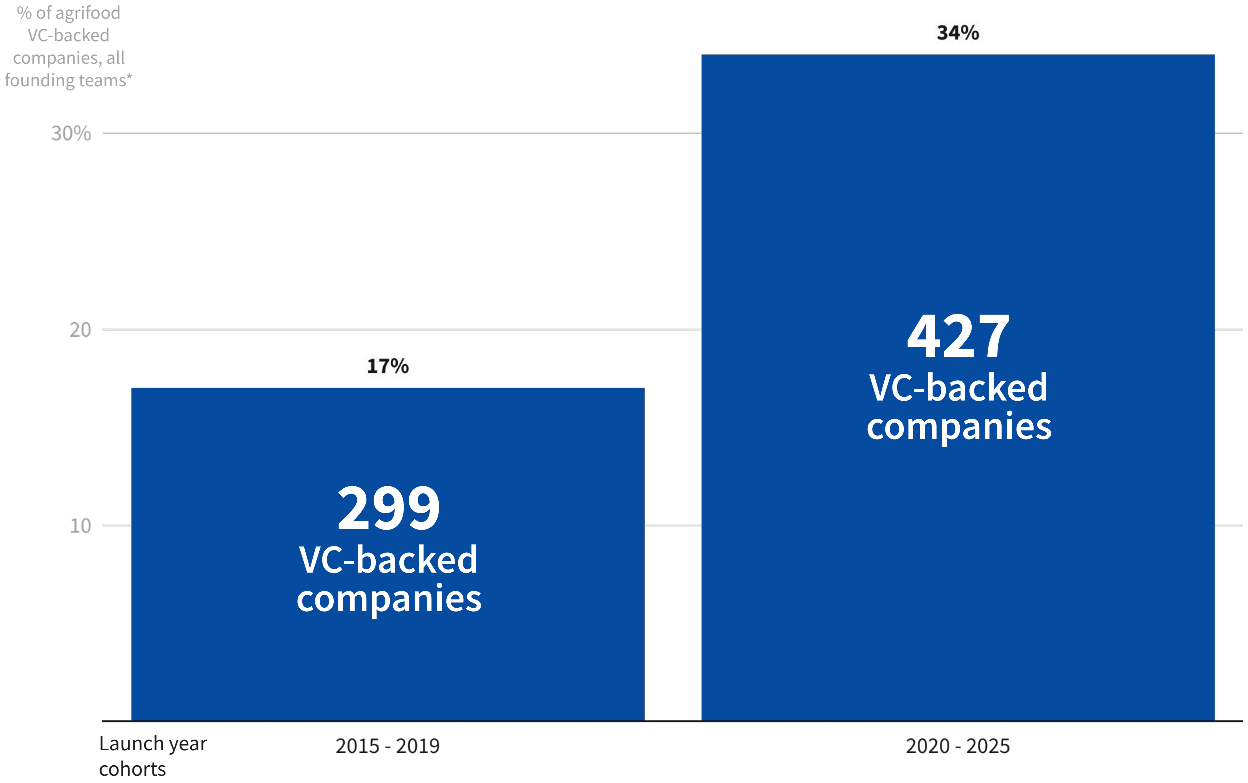
Women founders are driving a growing share of new agrifood VC-backed companies

The share of VC-backed agrifood startups with a female founder rose from 17% to **34%**, increasing from 299 to **427** companies between 2015–2019 and 2020–2025

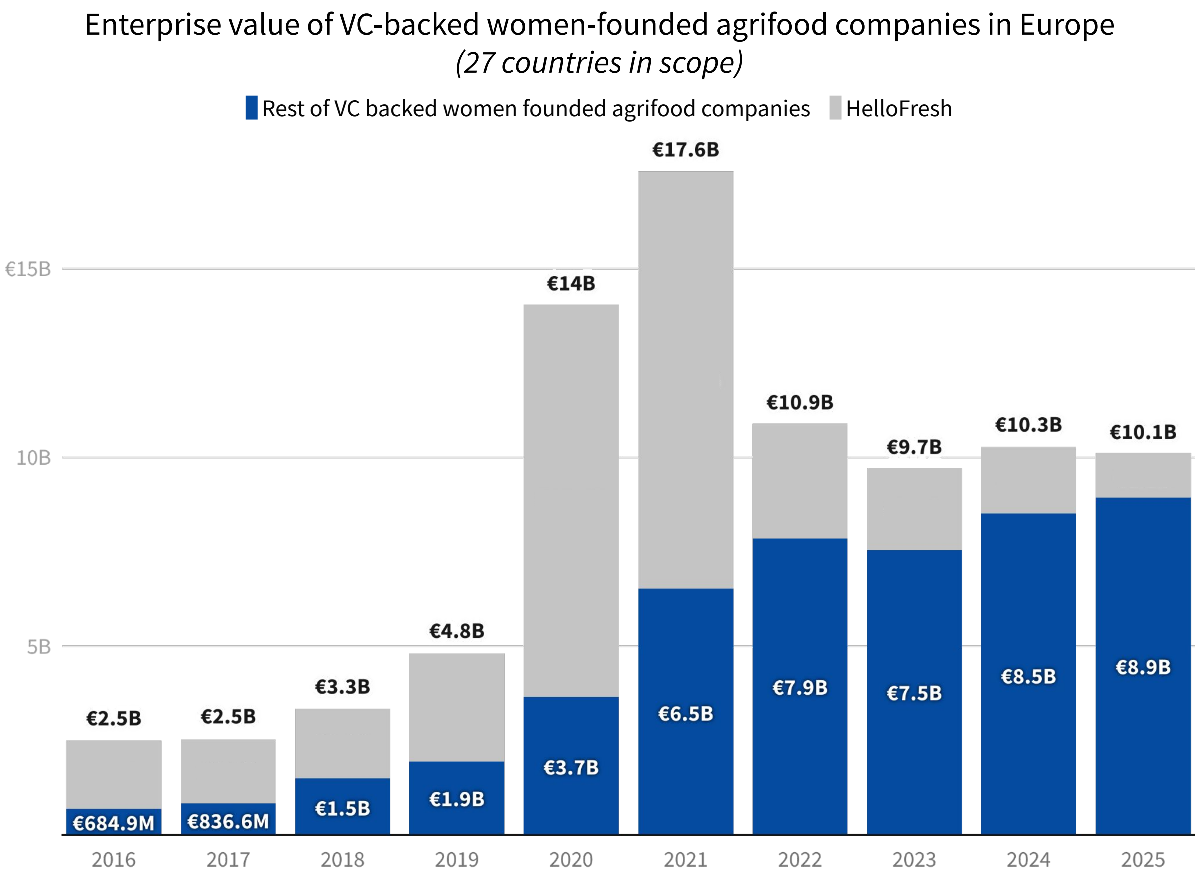
VC-backed agrifood startups with a female founder by launch year cohorts
(27 countries in scope)



Source: Dealroom.co. *Also referring to the 27 countries in scope

Women-founded agrifood startups in Europe are worth more than €10B

Excluding HelloFresh, their enterprise value has grown 4.7x since 2019, more than twice the growth rate of the agrifood ecosystem overall



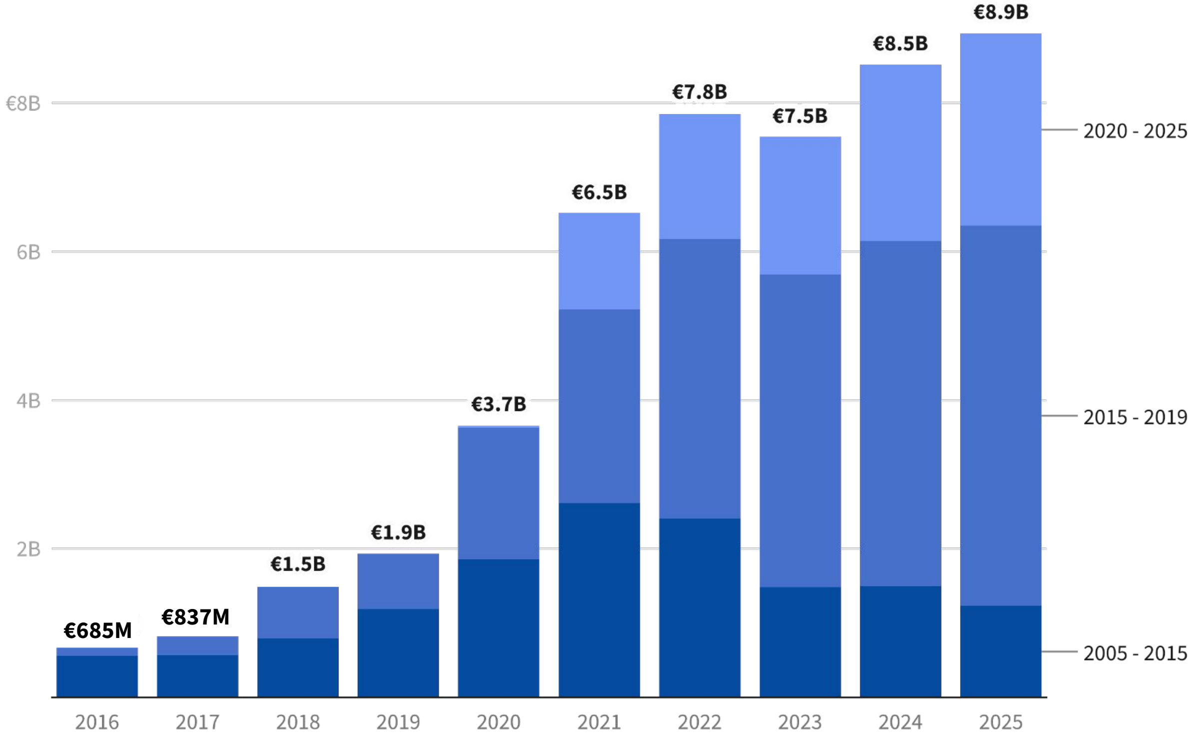
Source: Dealroom.co. Data as of November 2025. Sum of the valuations of all VC-backed women-founded agrifood companies in the 27 countries in scope. Using estimated valuations based on most recent VC rounds, public markets and publicly disclosed valuations

A young ecosystem: 84% of the value comes from companies founded since 2015

Compared with ~50% across the agrifood VC-backed ecosystem overall

Excluding HelloFresh, women-founded VC-backed companies have grown 4.7x since 2019, compared with roughly 2x growth across all VC-backed companies

Enterprise value of VC-backed women-founded agrifood companies in Europe by launch year cohort *(27 countries in scope - excluding Hellofresh)*



Source: Dealroom.co. Data as of November 2025. *excluding hellofresh. Sum of the valuations of all VC-backed women-founded agrifood companies in the 27 countries in scope. Using estimated valuations based on most recent VC rounds, public markets and publicly disclosed valuations

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Notable European agrifood startups with a women founder mapped

Explore the landscape »

2

VC Landscape

- Agrifood stands out as a relatively strong sector for women founders, ranking as the fourth most funded industry for female founders since 2019 and capturing a higher share of VC investment going to women-founded companies than the European average across all sectors

- VC investment peaked in 2021 and has trended downward since, in line with broader agrifood VC trends. The number of early-stage VC rounds in women-founded agrifood startups has more than doubled in the last 8-10 years

- France and Germany lead in both capital and deal activity, but early-stage momentum is increasingly visible across a wider set of countries, including Southern and Eastern Europe, with some notable seed rounds

Agrifood is the fourth most funded industry for female founders since 2019

The share funding going to female-founders in agrifood is above the European average for all startups

% of VC investment raised by women-founded companies in Europe since 2019 by industry *(27 countries in scope)*

Industry	VC Amount (2019-2025)	% of total funding since 2019
Health	€5.8B	22%
Enterprise Software	€3.5B	11%
Fintech	€3.0B	10%
Food	€2.7B	14%
Fashion	€2.6B	54%
Energy	€2.0B	10%
Home Living	€1.7B	30%
Marketing	€1.6B	13%
Transportation	€946.8M	4%
Education	€677.4M	20%
Security	€658.8M	9%
Robotics	€579.3M	13%
Real Estate	€517.7M	7%
Wellness Beauty	€473.1M	20%
Travel	€470.0M	8%

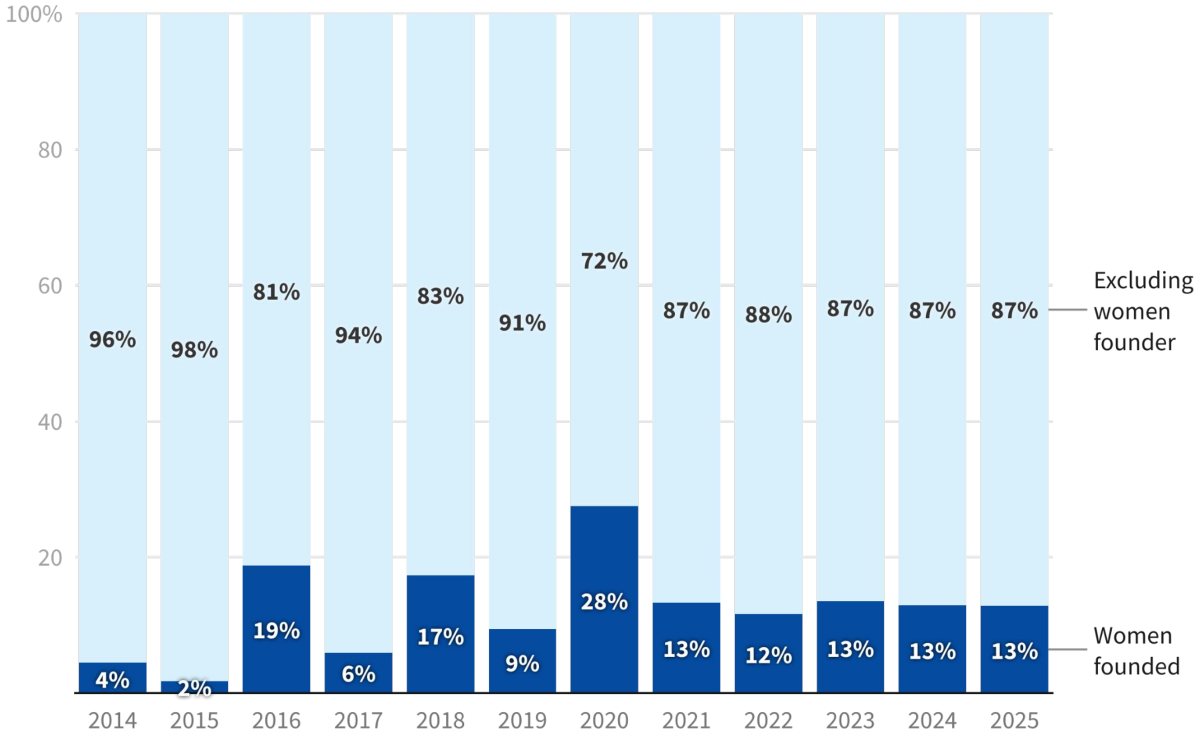
European average
12%

Source: Dealroom.co

Women-founded companies have raised around 13% of total agrifood VC in Europe since 2021

Earlier spikes were driven by a few outlier rounds(**Hellofresh** - 2016 and **Innovafeed -** 2020), rather than a sustained shift in funding trends

% of VC investment raised by women-founded agrifood companies in Europe
(27 countries in scope)



Source: Dealroom.co

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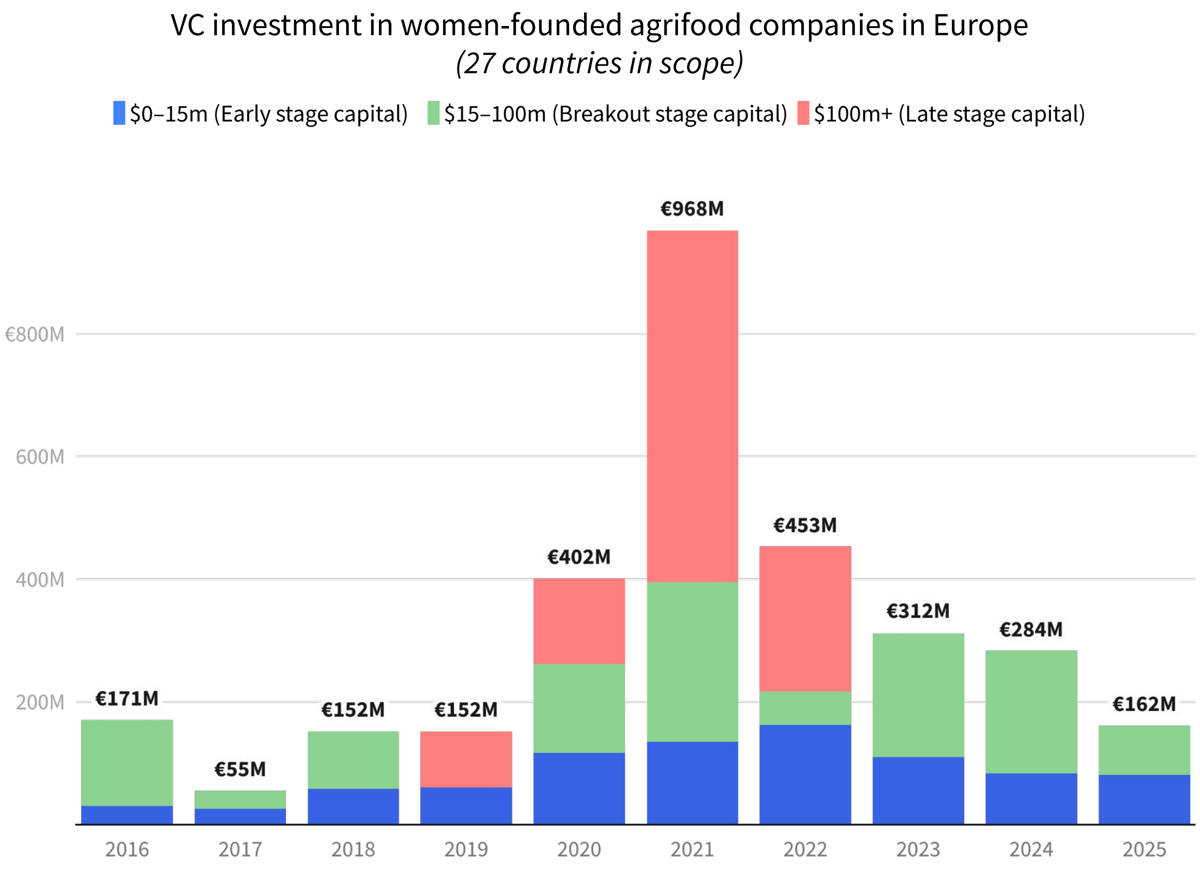
Women-founded agrifood companies in Europe have raised €162M in VC in 2025

VC investment peaked at €968M in 2021, driven by a few late-stage rounds (**Jokr**, **Infarm** and **Everli**).

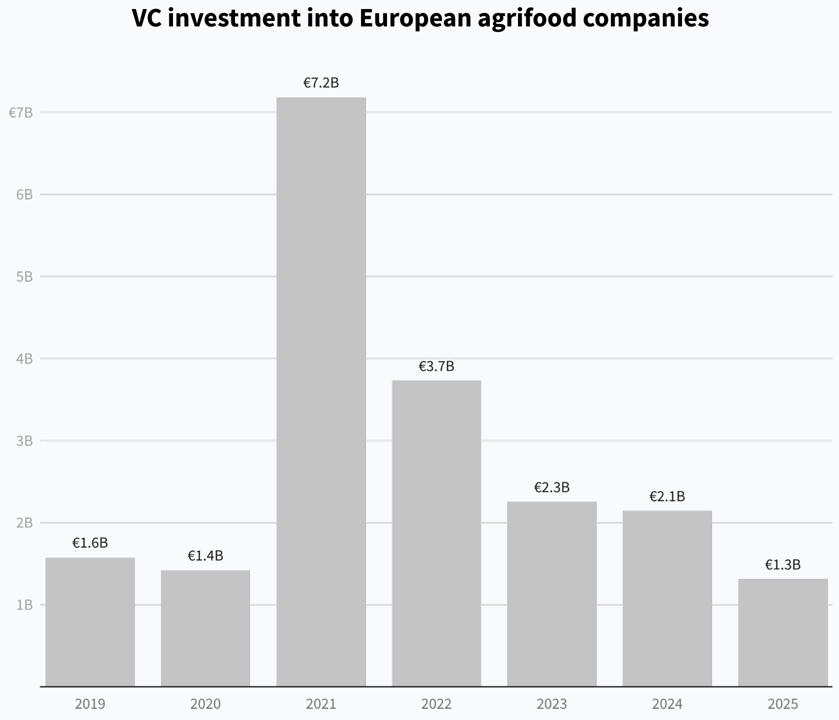
Since then, investment has trended downward with no comparable mega-rounds raised.

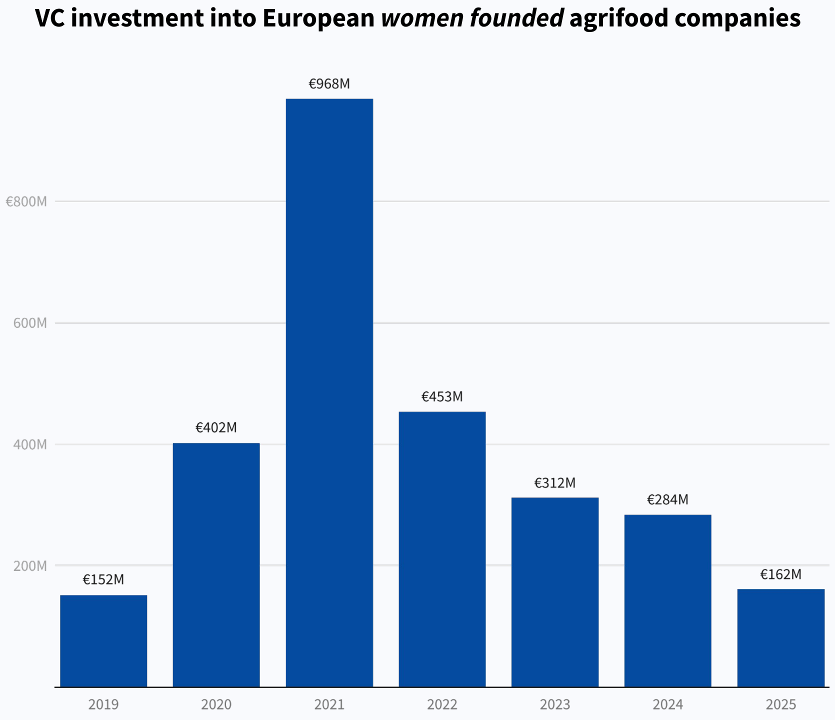


Source: Dealroom.co

The decline in VC investment since the 2021 is consistent with trends across the agrifood sector overall, reflecting the broader European VC contraction

Despite a post-2021 VC contraction, funding raised by women-founded European agrifood companies is ~7% higher in 2025 than in 2019, while total agrifood VC is nearly 20% lower over the same period.





Source: Dealroom.co

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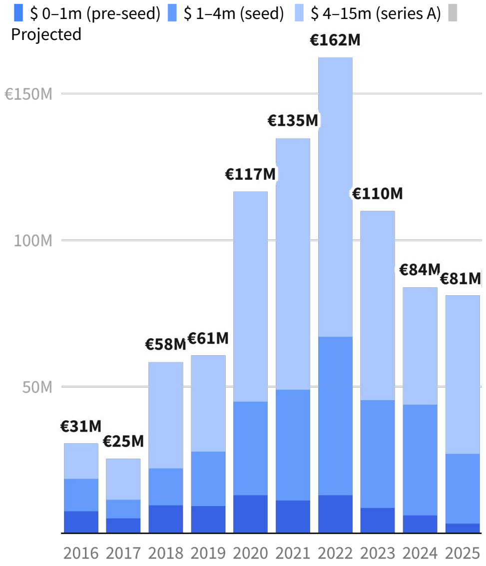
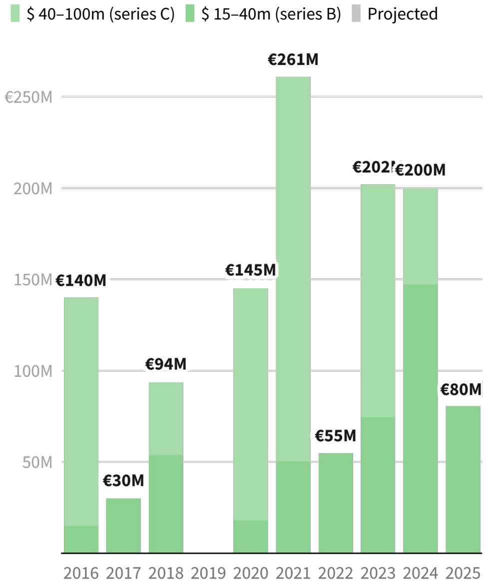
Whilst Series A rounds grew 35% year on year in 2025, smaller round sizes (pre-seed and seed) fell.

Breakout-stage funding dropped around 60%

Early-stage VC peaked in 2022 and has been gradually falling since. Series A rounds grew year-on-year



Breakout-stage raised €80M in VC investment in 2025, but 60% less than 2024



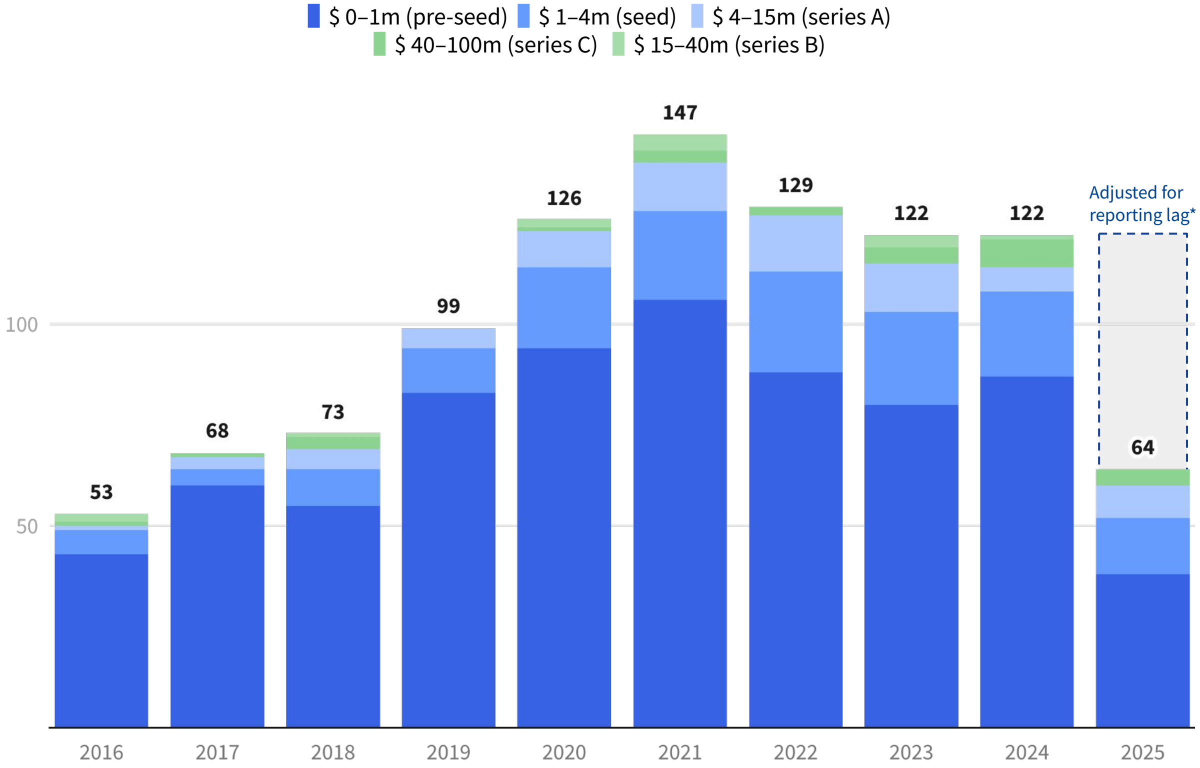
Selected companies which raised since 2024 in each respective category.

Source: Dealroom.co. Data as of mid December.

The number of early-stage VC rounds in women-founded agrifood startups has more than doubled in the last 8-10 years

While 2025 round counts appear lower year to date, pre-seed and seed activity is expected to increase as deals are reported with a lag*

Number of **Early-stage and Breakout VC rounds** in Europe's (27 countries in scope) women founded agrifood startups



Source: Dealroom.co.
Data as of December 2025. *The number of pre-seed rounds in 2025 is expected to increase in the coming months due to reporting lag. Adjustment is based on assumptions and cannot fully reflect final numbers

The share of funding rounds going to women-founded agrifood companies is mostly increasing at later stages

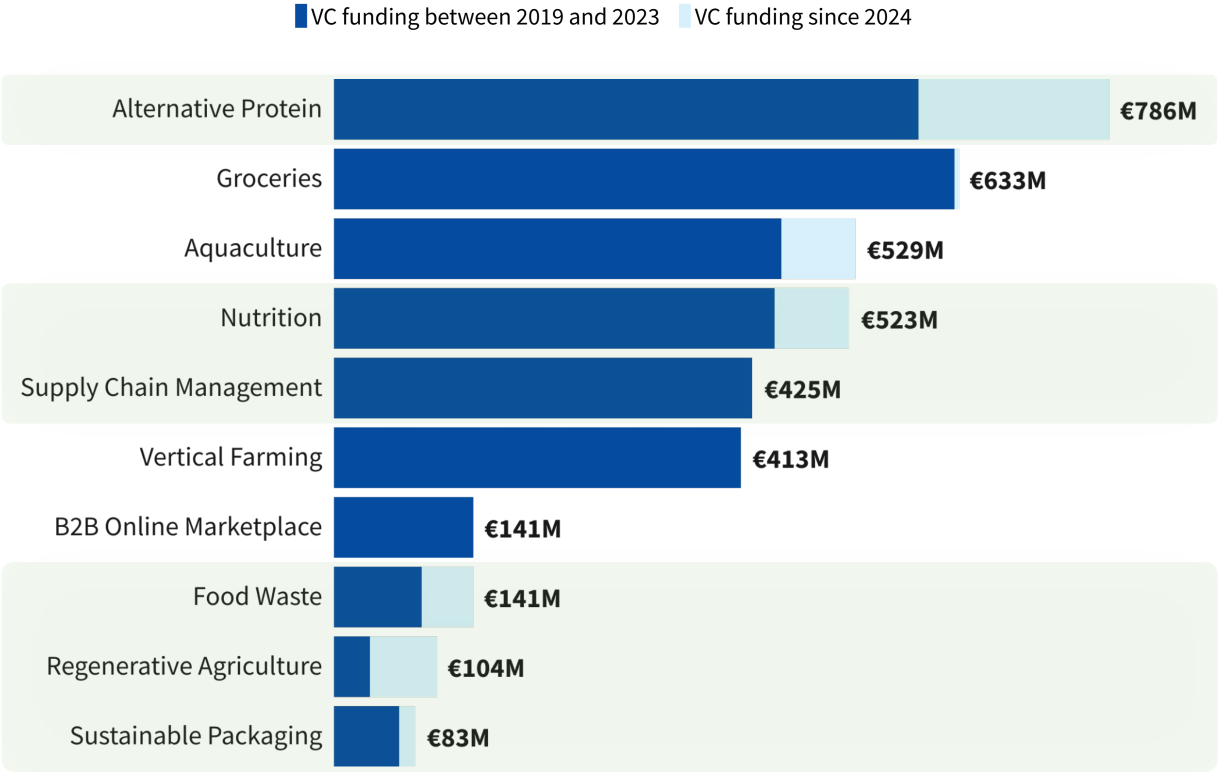
Comparing 2019–2022 with 2023–2024, the share of seed rounds rose from 18.1% to 20.3%, while Series B increased from 9.5% to 25.6% and Series C from 22.2% to 33.3%.

Source: Dealroom.co.
Data as of December 2025. *The number of rounds in 2025 is expected to increase in the coming months due to reporting lag, therefore 2025 is omitted from this chart

Alternative Protein, Nutrition and Supply Chain Management stand out as some of the most funded segments since 2019

Regenerative agriculture has experienced the biggest surge in funding

Top segments by VC investment in women-founded agrifood companies in Europe, since 2019 *(27 countries in scope)*

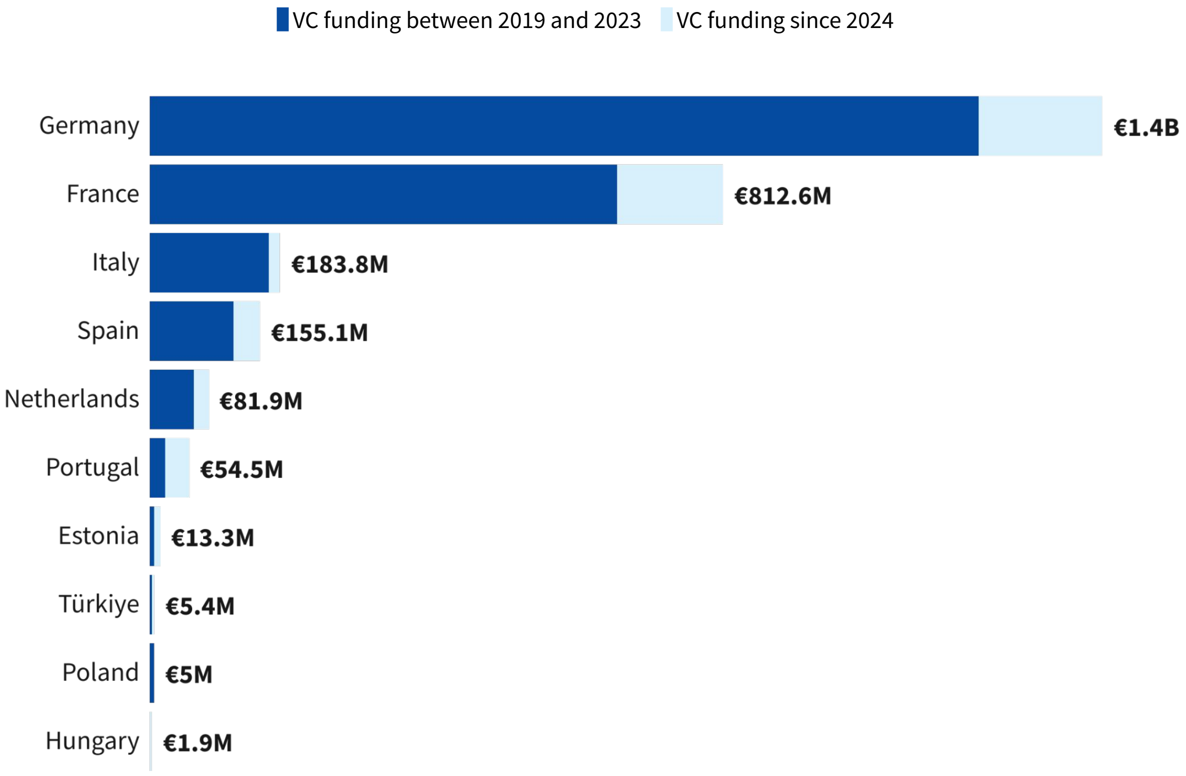


Source: Dealroom.co. Segments overlap between each other, so a startup/ VC round can be counted as part of multiple segments. For more information consult methodology page x

Germany and France lead VC investment into women-founded agrifood companies since 2019

Together, Germany (€1.4B, with **JOKR** accounting for 38% of funding) and France (€813M with **Innovafeed** accounting for 50% of funding) account for the majority of VC raised. Italy and Spain follow

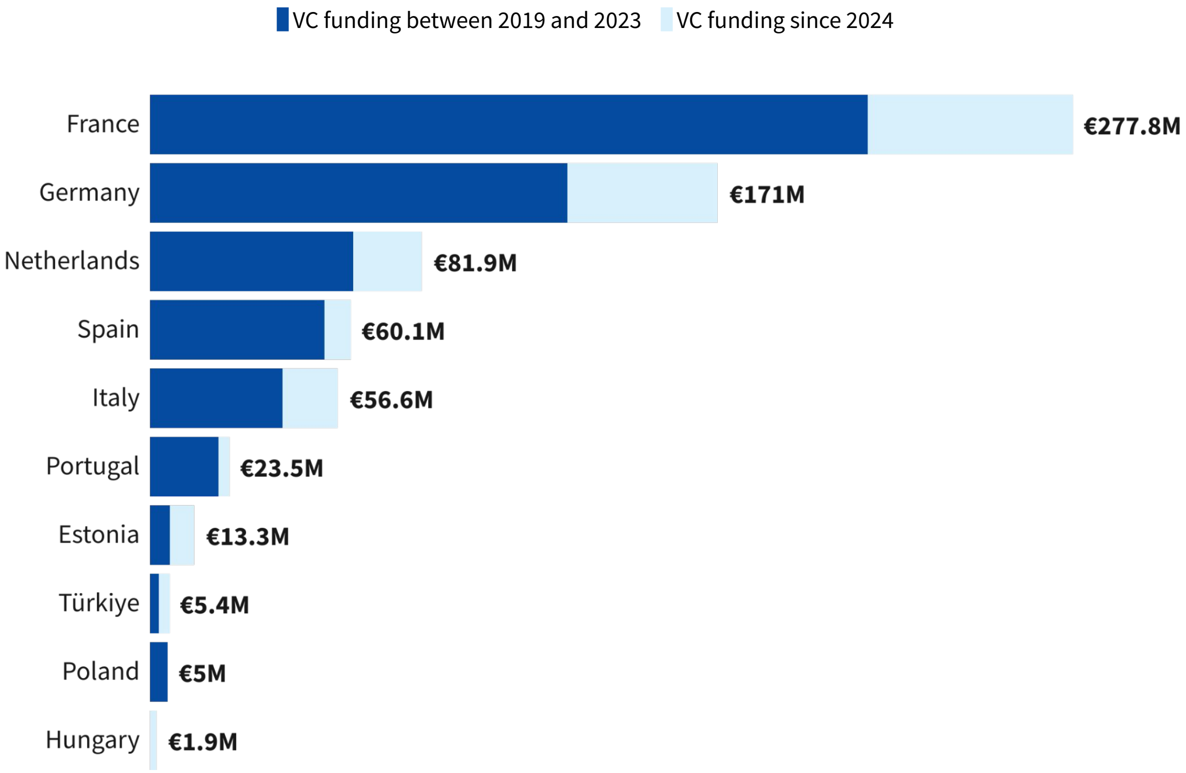
Top European countries for VC investment in women-founded agrifood companies, since 2019
(27 countries in scope)



Source: Dealroom.co

At early stage, France, Germany and the Netherlands attract the most VC for women-founded agrifood companies

Top European countries for **early-stage** VC investment in women-founded agrifood companies, since 2019
(27 countries in scope)



Source: Dealroom.co. Early stage VC funding refers to rounds up to $15M.

The top VC rounds in 2025 went mainly to French and German companies

View online »

Top rounds in women-founded agrifood companies in Europe, in 2025
(27 countries in scope)

Company	Country	Round	Date	Segment
NeoFarm	France	€30M Series B	Sep 2025	Agricultural robotics
nextProtein	France	€18M Series B	Nov 2025	Alternative protein
doinstruct	Germany	€16.5M Series A	Mar 2025	Agrifood workforce training
SEAentia	Portugal	€16M Early VC	Feb 2025	Aquaculture
SIDES	Germany	€10M Series A	Jul 2025	Food delivery logistics
Rival Foods	Netherlands	€10M Series B	Jun 2025	Alternative proteins
LISAQUA	France	€9M Early VC	Oct 2025	Aquaculture
VEGDOG	Germany	€9M SERIES A	Jun 2025	Pet care
NUTROPY	France	€7M Seed	Oct 2025	Alternative protein
HEY HOLY	Germany	€5.7M Series A	Jul 2025	Pet care

Source: Dealroom.co

Southern and Eastern Europe have also recorded notable early-stage rounds

View online »

Notable rounds in women-founded agrifood companies in 2025
Southern and Eastern Europe focus

Company	Country	Round	Date	Segment
SEAentia Science Based Aquaculture		€16M Early VC	Feb 2025	Aquaculture
exolab		€5M Series A	Feb 2025	Dietary supplements
LION HEALTH		€3M Early VC	Jun 2025	Food as medicine
PFX Biotech		€2.5M Seed	Jun 2025	Alternative protein
Äio		€1M Early VC	Jul 2025	Alternative protein
finedine		$1M Seed	Jan 2025	Restaurant tech
EthicHub		$1M Early VC	Feb 2025	Farm management
SafePAS Safe Portable Analytical Systems		$700k Seed	May 2025	Soil analysis
Purrmi		€650k Seed	Apr/Sep 2025	Pet care
Genbioma		€525k Seed	Feb 2025	Dietary supplements

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Top European investors in women-founded agrifood companies since 2019 are predominantly French and Germany

Top European investors in women-founded agrifood companies, since 2019
(27 countries in scope)

Investor	Preferred round	Activity index*
FoodLabs	SEED	100
Bpifrance	SEED	100
High-Tech Gründerfonds	SEED	77
Blue Horizon	SEED	54
Founders Future	SEED	54
ProVeg Incubator	SEED	46
Kima Ventures	SEED	46
Five Seasons Ventures	SERIES A	46
SWEN Capital Partners	EARLY VC	46
HV Capital	SERIES A	38
Eatable Adventures	SEED	38

Source: Dealroom.co; *Based on participation in VC rounds since 2019; ranking reflects activity volume rather than capital deployed, with the most active investor indexed to 100.

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3

Industry Perspectives

To shed light on the perception and sentiment of the VC community, 9 EWA programme founders and two investors share their insights

Insights from founder interviews with:

Dr. Bahar Gök
Co-Founder
at **Raymare**

Priscila Silva Delgado
Co-founder and CMO
at **Gundo**

Guiomar Sánchez Carrón
Co-founder and CEO
at **BioProcesia**

Monika Gaszyńska
Founder
at **Serio**

Kaire Rajave
Founder
at **Nord Tempeh**

Paulina Gruodienė
Founder
at **Fruttberry**

Iva Kalinova
Founder and CEO
at **Wholenest**

Jelisaveta Ilic
Co-founder and CEO
at **Tisalytics Bio**

Fernanda Vasconcelos
Co-founder and CMO
at **Nolita**

Insights from Investor interviews with:

José Luis Cabañero
Founder and CEO
at **Eatable Adventures**

Isabel Faria
Fund Manager and Angel Investor
at **COREangels Food**

EWA | Empowering Women in Agrifood Programme in a snapshot.

Key stats since 2020

600+
Women entrepreneurs supported

€13.5M+
Funding attracted by EWA alumni

60+
New startups created through EWA support

Selected EIT-backed organizations across Europe

Notable backed companies » view all EWA participants

M2R AGRO-FARM
Shimejito
foodObox
nolita sweet, not sugar
agrogrin tech
ALMA SERUM
microhobist
BioProcesia
Raiz

EWA Empowering Women in Agrifood

EWA is EIT Food's flagship entrepreneurship programme for women founders.

It supports **early-stage women entrepreneurs** across Europe in developing sustainable, community-rooted solutions for food system challenges.

Find out more here

Source: Dealroom.co, EIT Food

Women founders are building solutions to core agrifood challenges

"I realized that we are consuming so many artificial additives, and especially when I became a mom, I wanted to be very responsible and clear about what I want to give to my kids.

We came up with the idea that we should create something that is an alternative to everything that's already offered. It's unquestionable that if you reduce these ingredients in the products you consume, this benefits your health."

Iva Kalinova
Wholenest

"Raymare develops biotechnological solutions that increase the resilience of plants under drought and other climate-related stress conditions

My research in nanotechnology during my doctoral studies demonstrated that it's possible for plants to absorb water and nutrients more efficiently and controllably. We adapted this scientific approach to agriculture."

Dr. Bahar Gök
Raymare

"By speaking with experts and doing our research, we came across the huge problem of harmful algal blooms. We realized that currently there is no solution on the market that takes into consideration microorganisms and their interactions and relative abundances in water.

Our vision is to become support for fish producers as well as governmental and regulatory agencies, and to be part of solving this challenge."

Jelisaveta Ilic
Tisalytics Bio

"I saw how difficult it is for people to eat better, even when they want to. The problem isn't a lack of information, because there is a lot of nutritional information available. The problem is timing

What makes Gundo different is that we don't educate people outside the shopping journey. We integrate the personalised experience exactly where food decisions are made, when people are buying their groceries."

Priscila Silva Delgado
Gundo

Impact that scales: Where societal value meets business growth

Women-founded agrifood ventures design impact as a core business lever; aligning health, climate, and efficiency with clear commercial outcomes

Impact begins with real unmet needs

“I wanted to use something that is lacking in our diets, which is fibre. Most cereals are refined and lose their fibre… After many tests, we discovered a thermomechanical process that shapes fibre properties, and we have been using it since then.”

Fernanda Vasconcelos Nolita

“We are looking for clues in the water that will make people and the planet healthier. Harmful algal blooms are a global challenge — they cause fish to die, and the toxins can affect human health. Our numbers clearly show the scale of the problem.”

Jelisaveta Ilic Tisalytics Bio

Complex problems require systemic solutions

“One-dimensional approaches are insufficient for climate-focused solutions. Complex problems like drought cannot be solved by focusing solely on water or solely on inputs. The most effective solutions address plant physiology, soil health, and resource efficiency together.”

Dr. Bahar Gök Raymare

“We are producing plant-based drinks without artificial additives, emulsifiers, stabilizers, or gums — while still achieving a long shelf life with the same quality.”

Iva Kalinova Wholenest

“Our approach promotes resource efficiency across the food system, lowers pressure on agriculture, and offers a stable, healthy, and sustainable alternative for animal feed. We create products that re-enter the food chain, closing the loop.”

Guiomar Sánchez Carrón Bioprocessia

Impact unlocks commercial scale

“Another key insight is that impact and business value must grow together. When positive health outcomes are aligned with clear value for retailers — like higher baskets and stronger engagement — scaling becomes possible.”

Priscila Silva Delgado Gundo

“Our products are made in Lithuania, creating local value and jobs, while being plant-based and concentrated, which helps reduce overconsumption and food waste linked to frequent snacking.”

Paulina Gruodienė Fruttberry

Confidence, visibility, and recognition shape women founders' ability to scale, and the EWA programme helps deliver all three

Winning the EWA award gave us the visibility we needed right before opening our first investment round.

As a plus, I rate extremely high the sense of belonging to a women community facing the same challenges and experiences. EIT Food gave us the confidence, tools, and connections to turn a vision into a scalable solution for a more sustainable food system."

Guiomar Sánchez Carrón
BioProcesia

EIT opened doors to invaluable opportunities and connections, and now it's our work to transform them into collaborations.

EIT helped facilitate connections with industry experts and collaborations. It opened connections with people working in development agencies. Especially through the EWA program, mentors introduced us to important aspects of business development."

Jelisaveta Ilic
Tisalytics Bio

The mentoring part was especially crucial. Being a solo entrepreneur can be quite lonely, and working with a mentor provided a sense of shared progress and made development faster.

I would also highlight the network. The programme connected me with a community of entrepreneurs providing a strong starting point within the food innovation community and enabled knowledge sharing.

Kaire Rajave
Nord Tempeh

EIT Food gave us visibility, confidence at the right moment, and access to opportunities we wouldn't have reached on our own.

Through these programmes, we connected with two Spanish retailers who later became our main paying clients, directly accelerating our B2B growth. An unexpected boost came through someone in the EIT network who shared an opportunity related to a European Union–funded ultra-personalisation project, which we later won

Priscila Silva Delgado
Gundo

Agrifood founders rely on a mix of public funding, programmes, bootstrapping and alternative investors at critical early stages

"The most important milestones were getting funding. First, we won an award in Poland of around €20,000, which allowed us to move into our first production facility. It was small, but it allowed us to produce at a larger scale. Then, winning the EWA programme prize of €10,000 was a big milestone. After that, we raised around €300,000 from private investors, which allowed us to move into a bigger production facility, increase production and sales, and grow the company."

Monika Gaszyńska
Serio

"We talked to all kinds of investors at the beginning, including funds, but my project doesn't fit most funds' criteria. Business angels usually don't invest large enough amounts, and we wanted funding for five years. We then started talking to corporate investors, and the approach was completely different. They were genuinely interested in the future of the company and in supporting us step by step."

Fernanda Vasconcelos
Nolita

"Fruttberry has been developed primarily through founder bootstrapping and reinvested revenues. We are currently at the contract-signing stage with the Kaunas University of Technology Food Institute for the development of an innovative product supported by European Union funding."

Paulina Gruodienė
Fruttberry

"We raised a pre-seed round of 200K and received initial funding through national innovation grants (CDTi NEOTEC, 325 K) and regional calls (150 K). Winning the EWA award was a turning point. It gave us the visibility we needed right before opening our first investment round. After winning the EWA Spain 2022, BioProcesia has been recognized as one of the promising startups in circular bioeconomy in Spain."

Guiomar Sánchez Carrón
Bioprocessia

Investor conviction follows signals, and ecosystem support matters

Women-led startups bring operational discipline, market insight, and strong narratives, though ambition is sometimes underplayed. Agrifood startups excel in innovation, early validation, and sustainability, but scaling requires capital, go-to-market strategy, and execution support. Ecosystem players like EIT Food help bridge these gaps while promoting gender diversity and investor confidence.

Investor insights by

José Luis Cabañero
Founder and CEO
at **Eatable Adventures**

Isabel Faria
Fund Manager and Angel Investor
at **COREangels Food**

What founder-related factors drive investment conviction at early stages?

"Conviction is driven by domain expertise, learning speed, resilience in long development cycles, and balanced teams combining technical and commercial skills. These factors are gender-neutral."

- **Eatable Adventures**

"Early-stage conviction is driven by domain expertise, execution, coachability, and resilience. Women founders often show strong discipline and clear problem definition, though they may face extra scrutiny on scalability and risk."

- **COREangels**

Do women-led teams show different strengths during fundraising?

"Women-led teams frequently demonstrate discipline, operational focus, market understanding, and elaborated narratives. Occasionally, ambition or market-leadership narratives are underplayed; when addressed, investor reception typically improves."

- **Eatable Adventures**

"Technology and ambition are comparable, but women tend to signal capital needs conservatively, plan use-of-funds precisely, and articulate operational and regulatory risks clearly."

- **COREangels**

Where are agrifood startups strongest, and where do they need support to scale?

"Startups excel in technical innovation, early validation, and sustainability alignment. To scale, they need capital, go-to-market strategies, regulatory planning, and execution capacity beyond the founding team."

- **Eatable Adventures**

"Startups excel in tech validation and early pilots. Scaling, commercialisation, industrial partnerships, and follow-on capital, is the toughest phase."

- **COREangels**

How can ecosystem players like EIT Food strengthen the pipeline for women-led agrifood startups?

"Ecosystem players can de-risk early commercialization, build founder capabilities, and signal quality to investors. Ensuring equal access to acceleration programs and prioritizing gender diversity are key."

- **Eatable Adventures**

"Ecosystem players such as EIT Food are critical in bridging these gaps by providing technical validation, market access, and investor readiness. Continued support helps startups, particularly women-led teams, turn strong solutions into scalable, investment-ready businesses."

- **COREangels**

Scaling agrifood startups required more than just capital

Partnerships

“One of the biggest achievements was getting into larger supermarkets, which is very difficult for small businesses. When we got into Lidl in January last year, it was really big for us. After that, we started discussions with Auchan, one of the biggest chains in Europe.”

Monika Gaszyńskas
Serio

“Talk to everybody! Build strong partnerships, as they are essential for scaling. To achieve our vision, we need strategic partnerships with agrifood companies and clients, additional funding to scale our technology, and supportive policies that incentivize circular practices.”

Guiomar Sánchez Carrón
Bioprocessia

The right market

“Market growth is crucial. We cannot force people to buy vegan products; it has to come from broader societal change. We also need more openness from supermarkets toward smaller companies and new products.”

Monika Gaszyńska
Serio

“When you try to create something very disruptive, you may think it will be a huge success because it is innovative. Often, it is the opposite. “People don’t immediately understand very innovative solutions. They understand trends that are already visible.”

Fernanda Vasconcelos
Nolita

Regulation/licenses

“One of the most important milestones for Raymare was completing the commercialization process of our Aridox® product by obtaining its license in Turkey. In parallel, we officially applied for CE certification, taking a significant step towards entering the European market.”

Dr. Bahar Gök
Raymare

“Mentors introduced us to important aspects of business development, such as legal matters. We worked on creating essential documents like NDAs and contracts, which are often underestimated but very important.”

Jelisaveta Ilic
Tisalytics Bio

Talent and people

“Having the right people around you makes a huge difference: founders, partners, mentors, and support programmes like EIT Food. You don’t need to have everything figured out to move forward, but you need focus, speed, frequent pivoting, and the right people around you.”

Priscila Silva Delgado
Gundo

“Startups with teams can move much faster. If possible, building a strong team early is the best way to accelerate growth, even though my own path as a solo entrepreneur was situation-specific.”

Kaire Rajave
Nord tempeh

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Methodology

Methodology

What is a startup?

Companies designed to grow fast founded since the information age (since 1990). Generally, such companies are VC-investable businesses. Successful startups go on to raise significant capital and become **Scaleups** at **Breakout** ($15M–100M funding), and/or **Late** ($100M+ funding) stages. A handful become very big (e.g. $1B+ valuation).

Power law outcomes

Unicorns: Startups that reached US$1B+ valuation or exited at this level.
Decacorns: A subset of unicorns valued at US$10B+.
Thoroughbreds: Startups generating US$100M+ in revenue

They may be counted as part of multiple categories, as many unicorns also qualify as thoroughbreds, and all decacorns are unicorns.

Venture Capital, Investors

Investment are referred to by their round labels such as Seed, Series A, B, C, … late stage, and growth equity.
VC investment Includes the following equity rounds: Convertible – Angel – Early VC – Growth Equity VC – Late VC – Media for Equity – Private Placement VC – Seed – Series A – Series B – Series C – Series D+.
VC investments exclude debt, non-equity funding, lending capital and grants. Based on round size, investment is also divided into 3 main categories:
Early-stage investment: Investment raised between $0-15M, **Breakout-stage investment**: Investment raised between $15-100M, **Late-stage investment:** Investment of $100M+.

Enterprise value

The combined valuation of the tech ecosystem is based on their market cap or latest transaction value. Transaction value is realized from exit or implied unrealised valuation from the latest VC round, which is either announced or estimated by Dealroom based on benchmarks.

Underlying Data

Dealroom's proprietary database and software aggregate data from multiple sources: harvesting public information, user-submitted data verified by Dealroom, data engineering. All data is verified and curated with an extensive manual process.

The data on which this report builds is available via app.dealroom.co. For more info please visit dealroom.co or contact support@dealroom.co.

Data collection was as of Mid-December 2025. The accuracy and completeness of the data depends on the information available from Dealroom and other public sources.

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Methodology

Countries in scope

This report **includes** the following list of countries: Portugal – Türkiye – Spain – Greece – Czechia – Italy – Romania – Bulgaria – Lithuania – Latvia – Hungary – Croatia – Poland – Ukraine – Cyprus – Malta – Estonia – Serbia – Slovenia – Albania – North Macedonia – Slovakia – Montenegro – Bosnia and Herzegovina – France – Germany – Netherlands.

The first chapter of this report includes both startups which have maintained their main center of business (HQ) in their country of origin as well as startups which have since relocated their HQ outside. The following chapter (VC investment numbers) only include companies currently HQ in the regions in scope.

Founder gender

This report focuses on **women-founded VC-backed companies** : with at least one women founder or co-founder. This includes majority of women-founded teams as well as mixed-gender founding teams.

About our gender data

Founder gender diversity is identified using a structured, multi-step approach based on publicly available and voluntarily disclosed information. This includes founder gender disclosures provided directly via Dealroom or partner ecosystem platforms, as well as publicly available sources such as company websites, press releases, media coverage, and professional social media profiles.
Additional validation is drawn from participation in gender-focused programmes or investment initiatives, which indicate that a company is led by, or meaningfully includes, women founders. Where information is limited, targeted desktop research is conducted to enrich company profiles using reliable public sources.

As a European company, our reports, platform and the data it contains are GDPR compliant. As a responsible employer, and in our capacity as data provider for leading VCs, corporates and Governments, we are committed to ethical, accurate and transparent reporting. Gender data used in the making of this report was manually checked with the utmost care, but we cannot rule out possible mismatches: contact us if you wish to rectify any data about you or your business: support@dealroom.co.

Methodology

Industries, Segments

Dealroom's Intelligence Unit has developed a proprietary technology taxonomy that acts as a foundation and helps navigate existing and emerging technologies.

Dealroom's proprietary taxonomy

Agrifood

The agrifood ecosystem includes all startups operating across the food and agriculture value chain 'innovating in products, technologies, logistics, business models or services. Some agrifood startups bridge traditional food sectors and modern technology, while others exhibit growth patterns comparable to SaaS or fintech.

On the right: agrifood segments using Dealroom's taxonomy and ranked by sector signal, VC investment, enterprise value, and growth

View more

Sector	Rank	Sector Signal	Companies	Unicorns	VC Investment	Enterprise Value
10 Min Delivery Tag	#110	84	658	11	$1.0B	$94.1B
Weather Forecasting Tag	#236	73	153	2	$140.7M	$8.9B
Precision Agriculture Tag	#275	69	464	2	$259.8M	$14.7B
Agriculture Robots Tag	#303	68	86	0	$71.8M	$4.0B
Soil Restoration Tag	#321	67	57	0	$33.8M	$1.2B
Food » Agritech Sub-industry Research	#305	58	5.3K	22	$2.8B	$204.4B
Metabolism Tag	#241	58	173	11	$828.5M	$86.1B
Dietary Supplements Tag	#380	55	594	6	$141.2M	$65.4B
Autonomous Delivery Tag	#467	50	33	1	$431.1M	$5.4B
Irrigation Tag	#497	48	88	0	$63.2M	$2.7B
Supply Chain Management Tag	#347	46	2.9K	85	$3.1B	$743.6B
Beverage Tag	#118	43	468	8	$299.5M	$73.5B
Refrigeration Tag	#212	43	39	0	$50.4M	$1.1B
Nutrition Tag	#370	42	950	17	$661.7M	$78.2B
Food Industries Research	#331	41	22.0K	156	$8.2B	$1.6T
Precision Fermentation Tag	#119	38	10	0	$18.2M	$119.4M
Crop Protection Tag	#415	38	207	3	$225.6M	$15.9B
Biosensors Tag	#476	34	69	1	$38.3M	$2.1B
Sustainable Packaging Tag	#243	33	330	3	$274.7M	$13.1B
B2B Online Marketplace Tag	#459	32	783	70	$2.5B	$280.0B

Largest global food innovation community tackling crucial food system challenges.

Supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union, we create connections right across the food system that stimulate new ideas and innovations to drive change: between startups and corporates; between food entrepreneurs and investors; between consumers and industry; between research and action; between ideas and reality; between present and future.

We are one of nine innovation communities established by the **European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT),** an independent EU body set up in 2008 to drive innovation and entrepreneurship across Europe.

Find out more at **www.eitfood.eu**

Global startup & venture capital intelligence platform.

Dealroom.co is the foremost data provider on startup, early-stage and growth company ecosystems in Europe and around the globe.

Founded in Amsterdam in 2013, we now work with many of the world's most prominent investors, entrepreneurs and government organizations to provide transparency, analysis and insights on venture capital activity.

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