

As Europe Roasts, the World's Largest Meat Producer Ditches Net-Zero



By Michelle Baxter Wickham for Earth.Org

Earlier this month, JBS – the world's largest meatpacking and factory farming company – scrapped its target to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions across its entire operations by 2040.

The Brazilian company, which is now headquartered in the Netherlands, announced its net-zero commitment five years ago with big ambitions and even bigger statements. "Climate change is the great challenge of our time, and we must act urgently to combat the negative effects of global warming," Gilberto Tomazoni, JBS' Global Chief Executive Officer [said](#) back in 2021. JBS was paving the way for other multinational corporations to follow, making headlines and soaking up praise as a result.

The evidence never materialized, despite numerous meetings between leading animal welfare organization World Animal Protection and JBS and despite the charity's repeated requests for a copy of their climate action plan and roadmap.

JBS initially claimed this would be provided through the [Science Based Targets Initiative](#) (SBTi), often seen as the gold standard for climate target setting. Validation from SBTi is an influential sign for stakeholders, including investors and consumers, to trust a company's green credentials. However, in 2024, SBTi removed JBS' commitment, while the meat giant again [sought to provide reassurances](#): "While we are therefore moving forward with our environmental goals outside of the SBTi framework, such shift does not alter our climate reduction objectives."

The following year, JBS rolled back even further on its commitment. "It was never a promise that JBS was going to make this happen," Jason Weller, JBS' Global Chief Sustainability Officer, [told Reuters](#) in January 2025. The company later clarified that its climate ambitions had not changed and that "any assertion otherwise is completely untrue."

Is it therefore a surprise that JBS has finally dropped its net-zero pledge, and replaced it with a goal that completely disregards Scope 3 emissions, which account for roughly 90-97% of the company's total greenhouse gas footprint? No, but it is absolutely reckless.

Global agrifood systems account for approximately [29.7%](#) of total greenhouse gas emissions, with industrial animal agriculture – factory farming as it is commonly known – playing a sizeable role. World Animal Protection previously calculated that JBS causes emissions equivalent to 14 million cars on the road each year, from chicken and pig production alone.

This situation would be concerning enough if we weren't already seeing the devastating impacts of climate change. Western Europe was just affected by its [third heatwave this year](#), with the UK recording its hottest June on record and July temperatures hitting 30C or more for 10 days in a row; wildfires raging in France and Spain; and [thousands of excess deaths](#) attributed to the unusually hot conditions across the region.



French firefighters, deployed in Spain via the EU Civil Protection Pool, assess the advancing wildfire from the mountainside. Photo: EU Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid/Flickr.

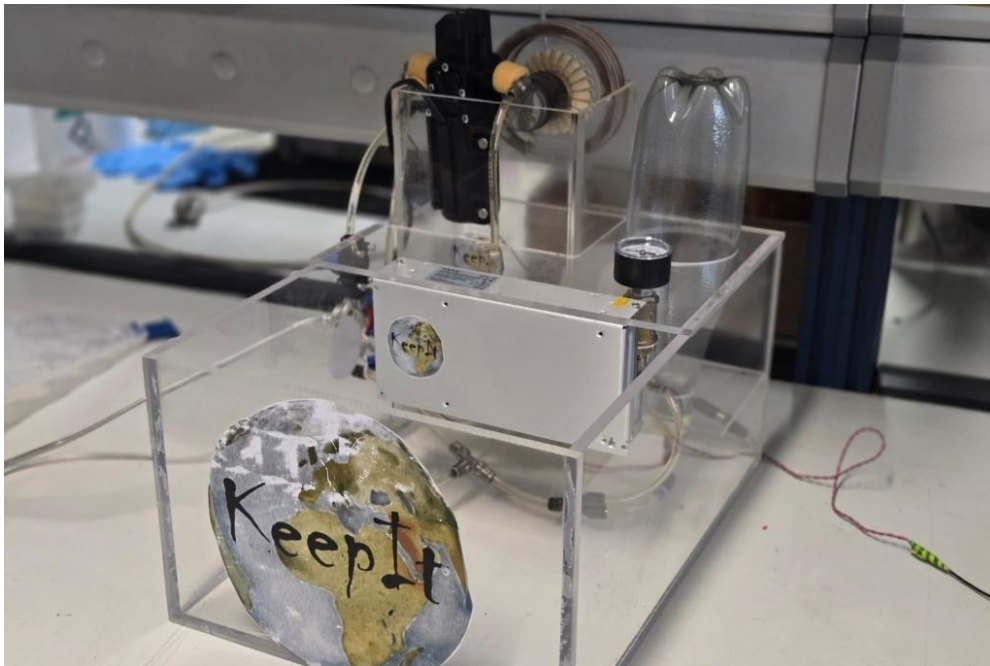
Extreme weather events are not a new phenomenon, of course. Global South countries have been experiencing severe heatwaves and rainfall for many years. However, the increasing frequency, intensity and geographical spread in recent decades should be a wake-up call to us all. Now is not the time to be weakening climate commitments. Quite the opposite, governments and high-polluting industries must act to strengthen their climate ambitions and halt the devastation before it gets any worse.

JBS argues that its business model is necessary to feed the world. We would argue that it is slowly killing the world. Factory farming is [responsible](#) for confining millions of farmed animals to a lifetime of suffering, habitat destruction, biodiversity loss and antimicrobial resistance, in addition to fueling the climate crisis. Continuing with business as usual is no longer an option.

Our broken food system needs radical transformation. We need to move away from the harmful status quo towards equitable, humane and sustainable production, where people, animals and our shared planet are respected. If we act now with a shared vision and concerted effort, a future where we all thrive is still entirely possible.

A Battery Made of Air? Hydropneumatic Energy Storage Takes Flight

BY JAN LEE



A demonstration model on display at the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Lisbon, Portugal.

Skyrocketing energy demand [sparked in large part by the construction of new data centers](#), along with massive solar and wind installations to power them, have created a booming market for energy storage. More than 112 gigawatts of energy storage were [created in 2025](#), a rise of 48% compared to the year prior. Lithium-ion batteries make up 90% of energy storage today, with China almost [totally dominating](#) production.

Now, an older method to store energy using compressed air is drawing new interest, thanks to digital innovations that can make it more efficient.

João Mendes – a physicist at TecLabs, the incubator for new technologies at the Faculty of Sciences of the University of Lisbon, Portugal – told Earth.Org how the “hydropneumatic” storage method works. “You use electricity to collect the air from the environment and put it inside a reservoir. When you’re doing this, the compressed air has the potential to produce power. This means that if you want to open the reservoir and have the air go through a turbine, it will produce power,” he explained.

Because air, even when compressed, takes up large amounts of space, natural caverns are most commonly used for storage. But while the technology “[provides](#)” energy market support and socio-economic benefits,” underground geology is often perceived as a risk by utilities. Additionally, because traditional compressed air systems suffer from low round-trip efficiency due to heat loss during compression, the technology has historically been limited to massive, specialized industrial facilities – most notably the [Huntorf plant](#) in Elsfleth, Germany, the first commercial-scale diabatic Compressed Air Energy Storage plant in the world.

There, since 1978, energy from the grid produced during low demand times has been used to compress air and store it in underground salt caverns. It is then released during peak load periods to supplement the electricity production of the natural gas power plant.



KeepIt, an energy storage company co-founded by Mendes, uses a modified system that improves this efficiency with a new type of hydraulic accumulator and digital system monitoring. The concepts underlying the innovation were [published in 2023](#), and the first prototype already serves the energy storage needs of the university campus.

“It’s mostly an engineering innovation,” Mendes told Earth.Org. “The different aspects of the system existed, so the innovation was how we put it together, and the control of the system. We needed to be able to work with [compressed air] in a way that we could optimize it, and the optimization is our innovation. How do we ensure we are efficient, using which parameters? How can we improve the energy density?”

The next step was to further develop the system’s modular offering: instead of storing the compressed air in an underground cave system, it is kept in a container. “Instead of needing to develop an additional storage project for every megawatt of power,” Mendes said. “We would have cubes for storage and cubes for power. The module is really, really small. Imagine a battery. We can just stack other batteries, and they would connect to each other like Legos. Each one is a small portion of a bigger system. It’s like a dam in a bottle.”

KeepIt is currently testing the system on a closed commercial scale, with plans to bring the solution to the market as early as 2027.