

Dairy Sustainability Synopsis

The European dairy sector is continuously working on improving and implementing the three core pillars of sustainable development. Environmental, economic and social sustainability constitute a reference in the daily work of the European dairy industry as a contribution to bring the world onto a sustainable and resilient path.



Environment

Dairy is an important actor for climate and the environment. EDA is proud to highlight the relevance of dairy in the wide context of environmental actions – including climate but looking to the broader picture with water and land uses, biodiversity and animal welfare. Our special [EDA factsheet](#) on animal welfare indicates many projects and contributions.

Nutrition

The nutritional benefits of dairy are easily highlighted by many examples; especially the EU School food scheme support and the central place in all existing dietary recommendations – all age groups should be eating dairy between 2 and 4 times a day and each can choose what products suit them best. Dairy also allows the huge benefit of converting inedible plant material like grass into highly nutritious products for humans and thus help nourishing the European and world population. See our factsheets on [Dairy & Children](#) and [Health and nutritional benefits of Dairy](#).



Society

The social role as core actor in rural areas, especially many with geographical challenges as mountains, arctic or arid areas is much recognised but not yet enough highlighted. Without dairying many rural areas would bear any economic actor – the animals and the milk processing industry guarantee jobs, education and health infrastructure in many valleys and plains in the EU.



Environment

Where we want to be

- Absolute circularity and virtuous water/energy cycle
- Zero-waste industry
- Participant to the global sustainability agenda
- Sustainable industry
- Small environmental footprint
- Net contributor to clean energy
- Towards a common water reutilization practice

Where we are

- Dairy processes are already highly resource efficient
- Manure as an effective and environmentally friendly alternative to fertilizers
- Continuous increases in production per cow, in order to reduce climate impact
- Helps keep landscapes intact, greening of peripheral areas, carbon sequestration

Factsheets

- Feeding the World with dairy
- The importance of dairy in a sustainable diet
- Dairy as an important actor for Climate and Environment
- Dairy Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) Project
- Water as a key resource
- (Re-) using water
- Circular Economy
- Food Wastage #1
- Food Wastage #2



Nutrition

Where we want to be

- Play key role in a healthy and well-balanced diet
- Contribute to a well-nourished world
- Feed the populations of the future (in a sustainable and affordable way)

Where we are

- Dairy herds can convert un-edible material into high quality protein
- Milk is a major global supplier of energy, protein and vital fats
- Dairy provides essential vitamins and minerals
- Dairy plays a key role in the development of adolescents and health of the elderly
- Important part of a healthy and affordable diet for all groups of population

Factsheets

- Health benefits & nutritional value of dairy
- Dairy & Children: A healthy combination
- Undernutrition among elderly
- Trans-Fatty-Acids: Q&A
- Nutrient-rich dairy
- Source of high-quality protein
- Lactose intolerance
- Sugar in dairy products



Society

Where we want to be

- Continued status as the economic backbone of rural areas
- Ensure fair living standards
- Continue to provide valuable cultural and economic input
- Continue to be major contributor to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in- and outside the EU
- Equality between sexes, religions and nationalities

Where we are

- Dairy contributes significantly to the development of the youngest in societies
- Dairy animals are a regular source for food and wealth
- Women have key functions in the dairy processes
- Milk is rated the top agricultural commodity in value terms
- The dairy industry ensures livable wages and living standards

Factsheets

- New European School Food Scheme
- How the European dairy sector contributes to the SDGs
- Dairy contribution to social sustainability
- The European dairy sector and the Sustainable Development Goals