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# Policy making on saturated fat intake: the EU dairy industry refers to recent science on relevance of milk saturated fat in the daily diet

In order to make EU policy makers aware of the recent scientific findings on milk fat intake and their implications for policy making, the European Dairy Association organizes the International Conference on Saturated Fat in Copenhagen.

### Brussels, 22 September 2009

*Following the ongoing debate on the intake of saturated fatty acids, the recent publication of the EFSA "Draft Scientific Opinion on Dietary Reference Values for Fat" which suggests for public consultation to keep the intake of saturated fat as low as possible, and the proposed saturated fat levy in Denmark, the European Dairy Association (EDA), in collaboration with the Danish Dairy Board (DDB), gathers worldwide renowned scientists in Copenhagen to present the most recent research findings on milk fat. These findings will be the basis to discuss policy options for milk fat. This international conference takes place on Friday 25 September 2009 in the Danish Parliament.*

### Saturated Fat: recent scientific findings should indicate the way

Recent policy recommendations aiming at improving people's diet have primarily targeted the intake of energy, total fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt as the main areas in which public health can be improved.

The impact of the intake of saturated fat has been the object of many scientific studies, but recent studies have looked deeper into the relation between the intake of saturated fatty acids from milk fat and human health. This research indicates clearly that the different saturated fatty acids in milk fat have different effects in the body and that specific actions of some saturated fatty acids are beneficial for human health: short-chain and medium-chain saturated fatty acids do not have a negative impact on the blood lipid profile. Saturated fatty acids cannot longer be considered as one single group because of their various origins, metabolism, functions and effects.

Based on these scientific findings, policy options for saturated fat need to be re-considered. With the increasing insight into the interactions between saturated fatty acids and health, there is no conclusive evidence to make broad dietary recommendations on restricting saturated fat intake.

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## The Copenhagen Conference: programme and relevance

Because of the recent proposal by the Danish Government to establish a tax on saturated fat, not taking into account these recent scientific findings, the EDA and the DDB have joined forces to organize an international conference on saturated fat in Copenhagen, the Danish capital. This conference aims at bringing saturated fat back in the right policy context by presenting solid science.

At the Copenhagen Conference, the renowned scientists Bruce German (University of California Davis), Philippe Legrand (Agrocampus-INRA), Peter Elwood (Cardiff University) and Arne Astrup (University of Copenhagen) will present the recent research in the field of milk fat and debate with Danish and European policymakers on the need for policies for milk fat. Full details on the conference can be found on [www.sfc2009.com/uk](http://www.sfc2009.com/uk).

By organizing this conference, the EDA aims at underlining the importance of dairy products in a healthy diet. Mr Werner Buck, President of the EDA: *'We believe that dairy products are part of a healthy and balanced diet and an important provider of many minerals and vitamins and high quality protein. Dairy products are much more than milk fat and more than saturated fat. Milk fat contains a wide variety of fatty acids. Saturated fatty acids should be considered individually and not as a whole group due to their different physiological effects. We are glad that recent scientific findings support our belief by clearly indicating that specific actions of some saturated fatty acids are even beneficial for human health.'*

*'EU and Danish policymakers should strengthen dairy as a food for health, encourage consumption of dairy as part of a healthy diet, consider emerging scientific evidence on fatty acids contained in milk fat and their relation to health, and take into account the positive health aspects of dairy when discussing dairy in relation to EU and national nutrition and health policies'*, Buck concludes.

### ABOUT THE EUROPEAN DAIRY ASSOCIATION

The European Dairy Association represents the interests of dairy processors in the European Union. The membership of the EDA consists of the national trade associations for dairy processors in each EU Member State.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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