EUROPEAN DAIRY ASSOCIATION
ASSOCIATION LAITIÈRE EUROPÈENNE
EUROPÄISCHER MILCHINDUSTRIEVERBAND

PRESS INFORMATION

European Dairy Association (EDA) aims for a sustainable dairy industry.

Brussels, 4 June 2009

The European Dairy Association (EDA) has taken its responsibilities with regards to sustainability and commissioned CE Delft, an independent Dutch research and consultancy organisation, to carry out a literature review focusing on 'facts and figures' with regards to effects of the dairy life cycle on climate change. The aim of the report was to provide clear and objective information on the current state of business regarding greenhouse gas emissions. One of the major conclusions of the report is that dairy livestock emissions contribute 1.2% to the global greenhouse emissions.

THE REPORT

The literature review has examined three groupings of emissions: the global on-farm dairy emissions directly related to the milk production at the farm, the global cradle-to-farm-gate emissions, and the emissions per unit of milk up to the moment of consumption.

Analysing the available data on dairy livestock emissions, the CE Delft Report concludes that dairy cattle contribute 1.2% to the global greenhouse emissions. Although global livestock emissions have significantly increased in the 20th Century, current trends indicate that dairy emissions have decreased since 1990.

On-farm methane emissions have also considerably decreased in Europe. The emissions from enteric fermentation in dairy cattle and those due to manure handling lowered respectively by 30% and by 20% between 1990 and 2005.

Cradle-to-farm emissions of milk contribute to 3% of total global climate emissions. Half of this 3% is due to enteric fermentation for both dairy cows and young cattle, thus being the main source of climate impact. The post-farm emissions add 10% to 20% to the life cycle of dairy.

LCA studies find that greenhouse-gas emissions are 0.8-1.4 kg CO2 eq. per kg milk for the milk life cycle up to the farm. Including post farm emissions would lead to a climate effect of 0.9-1.8 kg CO2 eq. per kg milk. These differences originate from different agricultural systems and differences in milk production per cow.
The report concludes that it remains difficult to compare results of different life cycle studies and determine the factors contributing to the overall climate effect of dairy production, and thus recommends to establish general standards for performing milk life cycle assessments, which will enable the comparison of different farm-management systems and ultimately lead to a better view on the possibilities to reduce dairy's impact on climate change.

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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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