

INTERNATIONAL DAIRY magazine



The EDA Dairy Platform 2018 also focused on environmental impacts of milk production and cow welfare. Tara McCarthy (standing), Bord Bia, explained the concept behind „Origin Green“. Also in the photo (from left): Caroline Emond, IDF, Dr. Olivier Espeisse, CEVA, and Richard Laxton, Arla Foods

Managing environmental dairy impact & dairy cow welfare

EDA Dairy Platform 2018

Session 2 of the „A Green Future for European Dairy“ forum organised by European Dairy Association on 16 Nov in Dublin centered on managing environmental dairy impact & dairy cow welfare. Four prominent speakers provided the audience with an overview on what is developing in the area of milk cows' welfare and the environmental impact of milk production these days.

Moderator Richard Laxton, Arla Foods, stressed that the dairy sector needs to maintain its right to manufacture dairy products. This requires communicating the value of dairy and the positive benefits of dairy in the context of the Climate Change, he said.

Branding a whole country

Ireland has managed to brand the country itself as a source of high quality foods and ingredients in one single label named „Origin Green“. Tara McCarthy, Bord Bia, described how that was done and the targets of this initiative for the future. Currently, 345 food companies take part in Origin Green whereby 95.5% of Irish dairy farmers voluntarily have become members. Ireland, McCarthy said, aims at becoming a world thought leader in food sustainability.

The importance of the international collaboration

Caroline Emond, IDF, highlighted the contribution of IDF in developing dairy cow welfare standards which is expressed in a great number of publications. Emond explained the importance of the 2016 Rotterdam Dairy Declaration, which has been signed by 26 countries so far, for setting international standards for animal welfare and sector sustainability. Next year, IDF will publish a new edition of the Dairy Sustainability Outlook.

Get more pro-active

Dr. Olivier Espeisse, CEVA, said that the use of animals for human purpose is generally disputed today. The World Animal Health Organisation OIE has developed an animal welfare standard that is recognised by the UN. The recent DG Agri report on animal welfare reflects the current discussion and came to the result that some consumer demands are distractions from fundamental welfare issues. „How can we balance public expectations against animal welfare? Should we get more pro-active?“, were Espeisse’s final questions.

True figures



Dr. Jeremy Hill, Chief Science Officer at Fonterra, explained the so-called DELTA model for an approach how another 1.1 billion consumers can be fed in 2030. This model delivers a complete picture and can be set against inholistic „findings“ that are circulating in the community. DELTA for instance looks at food waste incl. the parts that are re-utilised and it also looks at the bioavailability of nutrients. Instead of 15,000 liters of water that are allegedly used to produce 1 kg of beef, the DELTA model delivers 44 liters as real resource consumption.

The Carbon Footprint of one liter of milk varies from region to region. According to Hill, it is < 0.9 kg in New Zealand while the world average is 1.4 to 2.4 kg of CO₂ emission/l. This can be set against substitutes like soya or almond which have a higher „real“ Carbon Footprint than milk. On a nutrient basis, the CF story gets even worse for the alternatives. „We are missing the mark in communication“, was one of the core statements of Hill.