



2019

October

Position Paper

connect to the world of dairy

EDA position on current environmental challenges, including EU carbon-neutrality by 2050

The European dairy sector plays a key role in making the food system more sustainable and is willing to further engage in order to reduce its environmental impact. The Dairy Product Environmental Footprint (Dairy PEF) has shown our proactive approach in increasing the sustainability of the food system. In this context, EDA welcomes the EU Commission strategy aimed at achieving the overall [UN SDGs](#), as well as the more specific item of EU carbon-neutrality by 2050, and acknowledges its responsibility to contribute to the transition towards an environmental sustainable and climate-neutral Europe, while continuing to provide healthy and affordable nutrition for all.

Main position points

- The sector provides many positive contributions to the food system and is willing to further engage in making it more sustainable, while continuing to provide healthy and affordable nutrition for all, as well as food quality and safety.
- The Dairy Product Environmental Footprint (Dairy PEF) project is a concrete example of the sector's positive and proactive approach in increasing the sustainability of the food system. The methodology covers a broad range of environmental criteria.
- Considering more than one environmental indicator, without agglomeration and weighting, is essential in order to drive true environmental improvement and to properly communicate environmental performances.
- EDA welcomes the European Commission strategy aimed at achieving a climate-neutral Europe by 2050. We believe that the contribution of all the European sectors is fundamental for the achievement of this long-term strategic vision.

Overall SDG targeting and broad environmental approach

The current environmental challenges have an impact on the European dairy sector and more broadly on the European food system, in terms of food security, quality and safety of food products and food prices. However, we are not only affected by them: the responsibility of the dairy sector in contributing to the impact on the environment cannot be denied. It is therefore important to continue focusing our efforts on reducing the environmental footprint of our operations and of the entire dairy supply chain, while ensuring food quality and safety, in order to continue achieving the overall UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



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The positive and proactive approach of the dairy sector in the field of environment and climate has been widely recognized for many years now. The Dairy Product Environmental Footprint (Dairy PEF) method, driven by EDA and now defined as the reference methodology of the sector, is a concrete example of the proactive engagement of the dairy sector and companies in improving the environmental performance.

Dairy Product Environmental Footprint (Dairy PEF)

The Dairy PEF has been driven by EDA as a major project to better identify the most relevant environmental impacts of different dairy products in examining a broad array of environmental criteria. It covers the full life cycle (cradle to grave) for dairy products. The success of the Dairy PEF has been recognised by the positive vote of the European Commission and the EU Member States in April 2018, that defined the Dairy PEF as the reference methodology in the sector. It attests the European dairy sector's continuous effort to improve its long-term sustainability. The Dairy PEF aims to provide a harmonised approach for measuring the environmental footprint of products, given the current presence of diverse non-reliable and misleading claims, and should be used as a tool for improving the environmental performance of the overall sector. It also shows the positive outcomes resulting from the collaboration of the different stakeholders along the chain.

Use of the PEF methodology

The method, as it stands now, is a good methodology for improvement calculation over time and internal assessment, as well as business-level relationship. It could thus be used for voluntary off-pack information to stakeholders. It is not ready to allow for meaningful and quantitative comparability between products, nor on-pack labelling.

Outside category comparison is not part of the scope of the PEF. The method is not meant to compare products from different categories, for example dairy and non-dairy products, also because relevant aspects of concern, for instance health, quality and nutritional values, are not included in its scope. EDA supports this restriction on comparability and opposes comparative assessments of products inside categories, as the methodology is not yet ripe for this exercise. We also believe that it is necessary to set a regulatory framework to assure that sectors need to develop a PEF to validate green claims and that comparability is restricted, as has always been the aim of the PEF, and assure that Member State authorities are ready to enforce this.

Communication on environmental footprint

When communicating environmental performances, more than one indicator should be mentioned, without any agglomeration or weighting. By focusing on improving one indicator alone, such as climate, unintended consequences can be easily driven, for example about water and land use. To drive true environmental improvement, it is essential to consider a range of indicators based on sound and credible evidence, such as that outlined by the PEF.



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European Commission strategy on EU carbon-neutrality by 2050

EDA welcomes the European Commission strategy aimed at achieving a carbon-neutral Europe by 2050. We believe it is of utmost importance to have such a long-term vision and we call upon the EU Commission to develop cost-efficient policy tools for implementing the strategy. Such implementation tools should be in line with the EU environmental commitments and at the same time should not undermine food safety and quality.

Within the sector, actions aimed at reducing emissions such as, among others, enhancing the carbon sequestration of natural carbon sinks (like pastureland) and increasing the use of electricity from renewable sources are of utmost importance for meeting climate goals.

EDA factsheets and position papers:

EDA positions on PEF potential policy applications and EU product policy -> [Click here](#) and [here](#)

Dairy Sustainability Synopsis -> [Click Here](#) *(please see the environmental table below)*

EDA Factsheet on Feeding the World with Dairy -> [Click here](#)

EDA Factsheet on Why dairy is so important for achieving a healthy sustainable diet -> [Click here](#)

EDA Sustainability statement on circular economy -> [Click Here](#)

EDA Sustainability Statement on the European Dairy Sector & the SDGs -> [Click Here](#)

EDA Sustainability Factsheet: Dairy important actor for climate and the environment -> [Click Here](#)

EDA Factsheet on the Dairy PEF Project -> [Click here](#)

EDA Factsheet: (Re)using water in the dairy sector -> [Click here](#)

EDA Factsheet: Water as a key resource in the dairy sector -> [Click here](#)

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 reutilisation 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