

Sustainability and agrifood systems transformation: FAO Regional Conference for Europe



Christiane Lambert, Pekka Pesonen and Alexander Anton



The Rome based Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) organized a private sector dialogue session in preparation for its Regional Conference mid-May in Rome, on the implementation of climate resilient and low-emission pathways in agrifood systems.

EDA secretary general **Alexander Anton**, one of the invited panellists, highlighted in his speech:

"FAO has identified the agrifood transformation as a crucial theme of the UN Agenda 2030 – we as European lactosphere are redefining our dairy sustainability agenda 2030 right now: the dairy sector is instrumental in driving climate smart innovation in dairy farming and processing. We value the open and bottom-up approach of FAO in setting up its work priorities in Europe very, very much."



FAO Regional Leader Europe Raimund Jehle with EDA's Alexander Anton

All the best, kaikkea hyvää, dear Pekka!

On 31 January, **Pekka Pesonen** left his position as Secretary General for COPA-COGECA, the EU farming and cooperative federation. But within his new role as Secretary General of the Finish Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, he will stay close to the European agri-forestry dossiers and to the work of COPA-COGECA.

"After 17 years at the whelm of COPA-COGECA, Pekka leaves not only a great legacy of successes behind him, but a modern, well-structured organisation with a committed team", congratulated **Christiane Lambert**, President of COPA.

Michel Debes handing over the Alsace Lait presidency



Michel Debes with the new Alsace Lait President Philippe Bernhard (left) and EDA's Alexander Anton (right)

A truly special moment for the Alsatian cooperative - after more than 30 years as President, **Michel Debes** passed on the torch to the next generation: **Philippe Bernhard**, a dairy farmer with a broad farming and industrial background. Next to its 200 farmer-owners, numerous guests attended the convention and the dinner, including MEP **Anne Sander** (EPP, FR), former MEP **Joseph Daul**, **Damien Lacombe** (SODIAAL), **Pascal Le Brun** (La coopération laitière), **Thierry Roquefeuil** (FNPL), **Eckhard Heuser** (MIV) and **Philippe Jachnik**. Alongside its main sites in France (Hoerd, Alsace and Yaourt, Savoie), the cooperative has since 2015 an international branch with its Canadian Riviera brand. "Overall, 2023 is the best year of my presidency" commented Michel Debes during the presentation of the financial report – a "more than a correct year" confirmed the dynamic General Manager **Hervé Massot**.

"Cher Michel, as a true Alsacien, you are a great European – you leave with an impressive success story and you prepared the hand over to Philippe, who is already part of the 'brigade laitière', the great Alsace Lait team. Mille mercis et bon vent, cher Michel!"

French Young Farmers President Arnaud Gaillot meets EDA



Arnaud Gaillot, President of the 'Jeunes Agriculteurs' of France and **Pol Devillers**, both dairy farmers in Doubs, the region of the iconic Comté and Morbier cheeses, met with EDA's Alexander Anton to discuss the future of European dairy.

*"In these pivotal times for Europe, we have come to Brussels to discuss the 'next generation of EU farming' with EU Commission officials and with EU Commissioner **Janusz Wojciechowski**. As dairy farmers we wanted to use this opportunity to exchange with EDA on the European dairy agenda 2030, because tomorrow is made today, as our motto line states", resumed Arnaud Gaillot.*



The President of the French 'Jeunes Agriculteurs' Arnaud Gaillot (right), Pol Devillers and EDA's Alexander Anton

EDA voices dairy industry concerns on Nutri-Score at the Belgian EU Presidency

On 25 April, the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the European Union hosted a conference on 'Sharing experiences and perspectives on Nutri-Score and other front-of-pack nutrition labelling systems'. Her Majesty Mathilde Queen of the Belgians as well as the Belgian Deputy Prime Minister and Federal Minister of Public Health, Frank Vandenbroucke, opened the conference with 180 participants joining in person and over 250 online in order to exchange on Nutri-Score and other front-of-pack nutrition labelling schemes.



Her Majesty
Mathilde
Queen of the
Belgians

Prof. Serge Hercberg (University of Sorbonne) and Kremlin Wickramasinghe (WHO Regional Office for Europe) set the scene, and scientific research supporting Nutri-Score was presented by Ioanna Bakogianni (Joint Research Centre), Stefanie Vandevijvere (Sciensano, Belgium) and Pauline Ducrot (Santé Publique France). The national experiences on nutrition labelling were presented by Finland (Minna Huttunen and Sebastian Hielm of Ministry of Agriculture) and Portugal (Maria João Gregório, National Healthy Eating Promotion Programme). The Swedish Food Agency (Irene Blom) presented the Keyhole logo used in Sweden and Denmark since 1989. The use of Nutri-Score as a potential tool in prevention of non-communicable diseases was presented by the Norwegian Institute of Public Health (Knut-Inge Klepp). Hélène Alexiou (Belgian member of the Scientific Committee of Nutri-Score) presented Nutri-Score as a screening tool to regulate food marketing to children.

The event was concluded by a roundtable discussion with participation of Roser Domenech Amado (DG SANTE, EU Commission), Michele Cecchini (OECD), Emma Calvert (BEUC), Samuele Tonello (EuroHealthNet), Chantal Julia (University Paris XIII-INSERM), Els Bedert (Eurocommerce). Kinga Adamaszwili (EDA) represented the food business stakeholders.



EDA's Kinga Adamaszwili

In the panel, she highlighted that our support for the consumer's right to be fully informed on nutritional properties of foods.

She agreed that voluntary labelling schemes can be a useful tool for consumers who are looking for additional nutritional information on food labels, but only if it helps consumers to make healthier choices and follow dietary guidelines. Unfortunately, Nutri-Score and its new algorithm is still not fit for purpose:

"Almost all European cheeses score D, without much differentiation within the cheese category and regardless of their fat or salt content. What is more, the new Nutri-Score algorithm degraded nutritional rating and image of milk: skimmed and semi-skimmed milk is now rated B (downgrade from A) and whole milk is now rated as C (downgrade from B). This negative Nutri-Score message is not only confusing and contradictory to dietary guidelines but could discourage consumers from consuming milk, cheese and other dairy products, potentially leading to important nutrient deficiencies and further public health consequences. Milk and dairy, including cheeses, thanks to their natural nutrient richness, are recommended to be consumed daily by all health authorities across the EU. Milk and dairy are the leading contributors to calcium, iodine and vitamins B intake as well as high quality milk proteins in the EU populations." She concluded that "The current system needs urgent adaptation in order to be more useful to consumers and aligned with dietary guidelines to reflect the nutritional quality of dairy products".

EDA/EWPA webinar on semicarbazides on 15 May

On 15 May, EWPA/EDA will host its webinar 'Semicarbazide in dairy ingredients - EWPA/EDA work towards a better regulatory solution and achieving best practices in the dairy industry'. The webinar will inform participants about the 2-year project carried out by the European Whey Processors Association (EWPA) and the European Dairy Association (EDA) on the regulatory challenge of limiting semicarbazide (SEM) in dairy ingredients. Thanks to the EWPA/EDA dedicated SEM Task Force led by **Christian Bruun Kastrup** (Danish Dairy Board) and composed of experts from EWPA member companies, in March 2024, the EU Commission and Member States granted a legal exemption to dairy ingredients. The work of the task force, its impact on the dairy industry, and next steps will be presented by Prof. **Thom Huppertz**, who is a key member of the EWPA/EDA SEM Task Force.

Please register via the form [here](#) by **10 May 2024**. Registered participants will receive a Teams link a few days before the webinar.

Saying goodbye to EDM

"With a degree of sadness, I have to announce that our EDM – European Dairy Magazine will end with the next issue which is to be published this month. I am sorry as a leading publication of the "lactosphere" will no longer serve as an information tool for the industry."



Ralph Ammann, Editor-in-Chief, EDM. E-Mail: ralphammann@web.de



My favourite dairy product is the cheese Le Gruyere. I simply love the amazing taste and texture of it.

EDA Focus on EU Parliament Elections

EDA's Alexander Anton presented the EDA's 'Focus on the 2024 European Parliament Elections' to **Roberto Berutti**, cabinet member of EU Commissioner for Agriculture **Janusz Wojciechowski**, a publication with foreword by President **Ursula von der Leyen**:

“The role of the European Dairy Association in ensuring that the voice of your stakeholders is heard in Europe is key. I look forward to continuing our close cooperation to ensure that dairy has a promising future in Europe.”



Ursula von der Leyen,
President of the European
Commission

You can read the [full EDA Focus on the European Elections here](#).



Roberto Berutti with EDA's Alexander Anton

New IDF leadership



As per April 2024, **Laurence Rycken** succeeded **Caroline Emond** as Director General of IDF (International Dairy Federation).

*"Congratulations to IDF President **Piercristiano Brazzale** for the great pick! We appreciate very much Laurence at IDF for her dairy dedication, for her work performance and for her open and constructive attitude. We had the honour and pleasure to welcome both, Caroline and Laurence, at our EDA Cheese Buffet early April in Brussels and I am sure we will continue the great cooperation that Caroline established over the past years",* congratulated EDA President **Giuseppe Ambrosi**.

of COVID-19 and other challenges is widely recognised by stakeholders, who advocate for maintaining previous budget allocations. EDA, therefore, calls for continued collaboration between industry stakeholders and policymakers to ensure the EU's Promotion Policy's success in boosting the competitiveness of EU agricultural products.



EDA joins agrifood sector in advocating for promotion policy

In a joint letter with other agri-food sector associations, EDA recently voiced its concerns regarding the potential impact of budget reallocations on the European Union's Promotion Policy.

The text addresses shared concerns within agri-food sector associations regarding the European Council's decision to redirect €1.1 billion from the Common Agricultural Policy and Cohesion policy to support Ukraine. While awaiting clarification on the budget allocated to the Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, there are worries that the financing of the 2025-2027 Annual Work Programmes will be affected.

The importance of promotion policy funding in maintaining market competitiveness, especially in light

Mozzarella at the EDA offices!

This week, EDA was surprised with a truly wonderful gift - none other than the exquisite fine cheese **Mozzarella di Bufala Campana** from the Consorzio in Caserta. The Mozzarella di Bufala Campana, is a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO), meaning that it has the strongest link to the place where it's made - the Campania region of Italy - and stands as a testament to the rich heritage and unparalleled craftsmanship of the region - get inspired:

<https://www.mozzarelladop.it/territory>



*Mille grazie, dott **Pier Maria Sacconi**, merci beaucoup, cher Pier Maria!*





2024 European Elections

“As EDA, we are a convinced pro-Europe voice and we are grateful to the President of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola and to the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, for their forewords to this EDA Focus - 2024 European Elections”,



Roberta Metsola,
President of the European Parliament



Ursula von der Leyen,
President of the European Commission

The challenges our Union has faced in the past years have been of unprecedented nature and have undeniably forced us to rethink the way we do things. The world is changing and we must be ready to change with it. This is a team effort. Only together can we build a strong and resilient European future for all. The European agri-food and dairy sector has always been and will continue to be a key pillar of this European future. This is about far more than just food production and farming. It is about supporting our rural communities, promoting sustainable production and healthy consumption, ensuring food security as well as contributing to Europe’s economic prosperity. Ultimately, it is about people.

In June 2024, we will elect a new European Parliament. Our Union prides itself on its democracy. We listen to and defend the interests of all people, to constantly change and improve for the benefit of all of our communities and sectors. This is why I can only encourage every European to make their voice heard by voting in the upcoming elections, because every vote matters. Europe’s future matters. A future of hope, change, possibility for all. For a strong and resilient agricultural future.”

In Europe, dairy has deep cultural and culinary roots. Every country is proud of its local speciality that uses dairy ingredients. From Crème Fraîche to Bryndza, Greek Yoghurt to Irish Butter, or Manchego to Italian Gelato – European taste is enriched by diverse dairy traditions that stretch back centuries. In fact, there are more than 250 EU-protected geographical indications for dairy foods in Europe. Behind every such delicacy, there is a profession. It is the dairy farmers, cheesemakers, veterinarians, agronomists, food scientists, quality control inspectors, and artisans who guarantee that European dairy is the best in the world.

Since its beginning, the European Union has supported dairy products and professions. With our trade power, we actively help market European dairy products around the world. With our Common Agricultural Policy, we protect dairy farmers and stakeholders from market volatility or natural disasters.

And the European Green Deal actively supports sustainable innovations that strengthen Europe’s competitiveness. I am proud that European dairy professionals are leaders in precision dairy farming, alternative feed sources, methane reduction techniques, water recycling systems, renewable energy on farms, and eco-friendly packaging. Together, we are protecting not only our cultural and culinary traditions in Europe, but also the livelihoods of dairy workers and the wellbeing of all citizens.

The role of the European Dairy Association in ensuring that the voice of your stakeholders is heard in Europe is key. I look forward to continuing our close cooperation to ensure that dairy has a promising future in Europe.”

