



The Dairy Product Environmental Footprint (PEF)

The Dairy PEF - also known as Product Environmental Footprint Category Rules or PEFCR - is a methodology for assessing the environmental footprint of different dairy products, considering a broad array of environmental criteria and covering the full life cycle of the product, from feeding the animal to washing your yoghurt spoon. The project has been driven by the European Dairy Association (EDA) and it attests the European dairy sector's continuous effort to improve its long-term environmental sustainability.

Why the Dairy PEF?



A harmonised approach in the dairy the sector

It provides a harmonised approach from within the sector for measuring environmental footprint of products. The EU Commission and the sector want it for increasing the credibility of environmental measurements, compared to the proliferation of many non-reliable claims.

Identification of environmental hotspots

It is a assessment (LCA) based method that allows to identify the most significant environmental impacts linked to the production of certain dairy products, across a broad set of impact categories. It provides consistent, reliable, reproducible and verifiable results.



Minimising environmental impacts along the whole value chain

The project represents a cooperative effort of all stakeholders along the whole chain. It builds on the sector's several years' experience of environmental improvement. It is a simple and workable tool for all actors involved and all external bodies interested.

Environmental performance improvement over time

The Dairy PEF contributes to the improvement of the performance of the overall sector. The methodology can be used as an internal tool for companies for monitoring the environmental improvements over time and managing impacts associated with the products concerned.





The scope of the Dairy PEF contains five subcategories of dairy products, namely: liquid milk, dried whey, cheeses, fermented milk and butterfat.

Steps of the project

Pilot phase: The framework of the pilot was laid out by the European Commission DG Environment initiative of a “Single Market for Green Products”. During this phase, the five subcategories of dairy products and the set of impact categories were defined, as well as the LCA based methodology.

Transition phase: After the recognition of the EU Commission and the EU Member States, the PEF entered the transition phase, which will run until end of 2021. The objective of this phase is to monitor the implementation of the methodology and assess its future policy applications, for instance the integration in existing EU policies such as the Green Public Procurement (GPP) and the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive, or in new policy instruments that will define new environmental and green claims.

Potential applications

The Dairy PEF as it stands now is a good methodology **for improvement calculation over time** and internal assessment, as well as business-level relationships. 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.

The high quality of the work of the Dairy PEF is relevant for framing sustainability strategies in the sector. Companies involved in eco-design and “green” products can benefit from the assessment of the Dairy PEF methodology, increasing their visibility and environmental credibility. Therefore, EDA supports actions by the European Commission to integrate the Dairy PEF methodology in existing or new policy instruments, in order to reward sustainable practices in the dairy sector.

Who is involved?

 european dairy association			3 industry associations			
						6 dairy processors
	1 retailer		1 LCA consultant			
				4 public and research bodies		
	 FLEXIBLE PACKAGING EUROPE	 FEVE The European Container Glass Federation	3 packaging associations			

The success of the Dairy PEF has been recognised by external evaluators and by the vote of the European Commission and the Member States in April 2018, that defined the Dairy PEF as the reference methodology in the dairy sector: [see online](#).

