

EDA Dairy Policy Conference 2025

Nourishing a sustainable future, nurturing innovation



It was with a warm welcome that our newly elected EDA President, **Albert de Groot** (CEO, Vreugdenhil, NL) opened our yesterday's **EDA Dairy Policy Conference 2025**. With over 150 participants including prominent representatives from the EU Institutions, industry leaders from the European dairy sector, skilled researchers, dedicated dairy farmers, and key players from the wider agri-food community, this proved to be highly successful conference.

Under the theme '**Nourishing a Sustainable Future, Nurturing Innovation**', our conference was the perfect opportunity to discuss and explore the future of our sector—the challenges, but also the opportunities ahead with the question of ensuring sustainability while nurturing innovation at the heart of the conference — as it is for our "Dairy Future".

EDA President **Albert de Groot** kicked off the conference by emphasising the importance of dairy and its role as a key pillar of Europe's future:

"Dairy unites us in a shared purpose of nourishing people and caring for the planet. We need to ensure sustainability without compromising economic viability and acknowledge the need for Europe to be at the forefront of competitiveness and innovation."



Full house at our EDA Dairy Policy Conference 2025

Read our press release on our new EDA President **Albert de Groot's** [appointment and his vision for his EDA Presidency](#).



EDA President Albert de Groot opening the EDA Dairy Policy Conference 2025





The FAO perspective on Agriculture and Dairy

Raschad Al-Khafaji, Director of the FAO Liaison Office to the European Union and Belgium, gave the FAO's position on the importance of dairy in global nutrition, which shows the significance the United Nations puts on agriculture and dairy for their agenda. Raschad Al-Khafaji underlined that we stand at a critical time and we need sustainability and resilience in the global agri-food system:

"Dairy plays a fundamental role in rural livelihoods, economic development and food security, an essential component of healthy and diverse diets. Dairy animals offer economic security while preserving biodiversity and strengthening dairy chains that empowers women, ensures food safety and gives economic security."



Raschad Al-Khafaji, Director of the FAO Liaison Office in Belgium

Our European vision for agriculture and dairy

The first session gathered speakers from the EU Institutions. **Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle**, Director at DG AGRI, outlined the EU Commission's vision for agriculture and food, now "at the core of our very busy agenda." She emphasised that transformation cannot happen without dialogue and stressed that: *"farmers will play a key role, but without the industry and providers, they will not be able to achieve a sustainable transition."*



Catherine Geslain-Lanéelle, Director – DG AGRI, EU Commission

Magdalena Montaigu, SCA Spokesperson of Poland, presented priorities of the Polish EU Presidency, stating: *"The Polish Presidency calls for action to support resilient and sustainable agriculture that will guarantee food security for current and future generations."*



Magdalena Montaigu, SCA Spokesperson of the Republic of Poland





Norbert Lins, Vice Chair of the AGRI Committee of the EU Parliament

MEP **Norbert Lins** (EPP, DE) highlighted the crucial need for young farmers, since they secure the future: "The age gap of farmers is a wake up call, we risk losing a generation of young farmers because of the increased prices, not least in land. Funds must flow where they create future."

He outlined his vision for the future Common Agricultural Policy (CAP): "We envisage a system that ensures stability while fostering innovation, guaranteeing our food production, and protecting the next generation of farmers."

Nourishing a sustainable future, nurturing innovation

Moderated by Dr **Judith Bryans**, CEO of Dairy UK, the second session delved into sustainability and innovation with researchers and farmers. Dr Judith Bryans set the scene by outlining the triple challenge of the future:

- Delivering food security
- Supporting livelihoods
- Contributing to the environment

"We know what we are doing as a sector to improve in these areas, but many people don't understand dairy's role in these challenges," she stated.

Marie-Sophie Eismann, University of Applied Sciences of Kiel presented her current research on valorisation of GHG emission reduction in the dairy value chain and pasture-based milk production in an integrated crop-livestock system under low-input conditions.



Sam de Frates, Dr Judith Bryans, Marie-Sophie Eismann, Albert de Groot, Hanne Søndergaard

A first generation UK dairy farmer **Sophie Gregory** spoke about turning ideas into impact and implementing sustainability on farm. She shared insights into how her organic farm operates and stressed the key insight of visiting dairy farms to understand farmers' realities. She also highlighted new technology as a way to attract young people into farming: "We need to apply it to dairy, to keep the next generation into dairy." **Hanne Søndergaard** (EVP and Chief Agriculture & Sustainability Officer) told us how Arla works to empower new generations, simplifying processes, and providing the right incentives for farmers. **Sam de Frates** (Vice President, Procurement, Mars Inc.) showed the work of Mars Inc. and how investment and the ecosystem can work hand in hand but it takes a special ecosystem with regards to policymakers, industry and farmers to create innovation.

Our famous **EDA Annual Cheese Buffet**, showcasing the very best of European cheese excellence.



Save the date! Our EDA Annual Convention 2025



NZ Ambassador Susannah Gordon, NZ SATE Hamish Marr, MP Harm Holman, MP Eline Vedder and EWPA President James Neville in the Dutch Parliament, Tweede Kamer, The Hague on 20 March 2025

This is the Whey! Why Processors' conference in Amsterdam



Last week we held the General Assembly of our sister organisation EWPA in Amsterdam. The get together of the 'world of whey' in the Netherlands gave our EWPA President **James Neville** the opportunity to join a roundtable in the Dutch Parliament organized by MP **Harm Holman** and MP **Eline Vedder** with NZ Ambassador **Susannah Gordon** and the NZ Special Agricultural Trade Envoy **Hamish Marr**. The roundtable in the Dutch Parliament was also a great opportunity for EWPA President **James Neville**, a British dairy entrepreneur, to meet with EU Commissioner, **Christophe Hansen**, who was invited to exchange with the AGRI Committee of the Dutch Parliament.



EU Commissioner Christophe Hansen and EWPA President James Neville