

The dairy sector welcomes discussion on sustainable food systems.

In global terms, we understand that the changing global demographics and environmental challenges means the need to supply more food, more efficiently. The dairy sector has long recognised that sustainability encompasses various elements, including the environment, socio-economic aspects, and nutrition. It is not just about feeding the world a certain number of calories, it is about nourishing people with nutrient-rich food, like milk and dairy, that encourages optimal growth and performance.

Dairy is one of the basic building blocks of a sustainable diet in most countries. Dairy foods provide many essential nutrients, including high quality protein; they are accessible, convenient and affordable. Moreover, dairy cows convert often inedible or less nutritious foodstuffs and by-products from other food production into highly nutritious food that helps people to thrive.

In addition to being a regular source of nutrition to 6 billion consumers around the world, with 150 million dairy farms globally, the UN estimates that 1 billion people rely on the dairy sector to support their livelihoods and to sustain their local communities.

The dairy sector has an established record of embracing new practices and is an active participant in implementing innovative solutions to feed the world. As stewards of the planet, dairy farmers are constantly seeking ways to efficiently produce better food while reducing environmental impacts, caring responsibly for their animals and making the land better for the next generation.

On a Canadian level, we are proud to say that dairy farming in Canada is efficient, productive, sustainable, and continues to innovate. In fact:

- Milk production per cow has nearly tripled since 1973;
- Cows produce 13% more milk in 2018 than in 2012;
- It takes 11% less land to produce the feed needed to produce a litre of milk in 2016 vs 2011.

Canadian dairy farmers have achieved these efficiencies in part due to adopting advanced farm practices, precise land management, and improved cow genetics, feed, and comfort.

Also, the Canadian dairy farming sector has one of the lowest environmental footprints in the world:

- Each litre of milk produced in Canada emits about one-third of greenhouse gas emitted on average by dairy production in the world;
- Greenhouse gas emissions from the production of a litre of milk in Canada decreased by 23% between 1990 and 2016, and the carbon footprint of a litre of milk produced in Canada decreased by 7% from 2011 to 2016.

Canadian dairy production uses only a small part of Canada's natural resources, consuming 0.02% of the freshwater supply of the southern part of Canada, using less than 3% of agricultural land despite being one of the largest agricultural sectors economically, and accounts for only 1.3% of all of Canada's greenhouse gas emissions. Also, Canadian dairy production is responsible for about 1% of Canada's total GHG emissions. This is minimal compared to other important sectors, such as road transportation (20.3%), energy used in homes (5.5%) production of electricity and heat (11.9%) or manufacturing (6%).

Saskatchewan dairy farmers strive to adopt best practices and invest in new technology to improve productivity, reduce environmental impact, and improve the sustainability of our farms.