International Dairy Federation (IDF)
Strategic Work Program (2016–2018)

Introduction and overview

The growing world population needs nutritional security, and dairy plays a vital role in providing it both safely and sustainably. The International Dairy Federation’s (IDF) vision is to help nourish the world with safe and sustainable dairy products.

IDF provides science-based expertise and a forum for the global dairy sector to reach consensus on key dairy issues — enabling it to be the global voice of dairy to key intergovernmental organisations to ensure the right policies, standards, practices and regulations are in place to help nourish the world with safe and sustainable dairy products.

IDF has refreshed its strategy, ensuring its role remains relevant for the global dairy sector. A key area of the Strategy is IDF’s Strategic Work Program. Four focus areas or ‘pillars’ have been agreed:

- Nutrition
- Sustainability
- Food safety and quality
- Standards

These four ‘pillars’ guide the strategic focus for IDF’s Work Programme until 2018. The key deliverables for 2016 are outlined in the Operational Plan. The following provides a brief overview of IDF’s Strategic Work Programme for 2016–2018 and the 2016 Operational Plan against the four pillars.
The four pillars

1 Nutrition

“The nutritional gap affects both the wealthy and the poor. It is manifest through poor nutrition in the diseases of affluence, such as obesity and diabetes, and of poverty, such as stunting. In both cases a lack of a balanced diet through inadequate advice, poor choices or limited access can have devastating effects on the individual, on the family and on society.”

— Dr Jeremy Hill, President, IDF

According to the United Nation’s Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), there are 870 million people worldwide who are undernourished. Dairy — a naturally nutrient-dense food — has an important role to play in closing the nutritional gap, as well as proactively engaging with nutrition policy-makers and key influencers. In addition to providing evidence, IDF aims to create awareness among intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), supporting the essential role of dairy as part of a healthy eating pattern.

IDF’s three priority areas of work in 2016–2018 are:
1. Promote the role of the dairy matrix supporting optimal health
2. Engage in, explain and promote the interface between nutrition and sustainability, and
3. Promote the important role of the dairy sector in reducing under-nutrition and micronutrient deficiency with a naturally nutrient-dense food

Achievements include:
- Publication of school milk survey (2015)
- Sponsorship of session on dairy fat and health symposium at FENS meeting (October 2015)

Focus in 2016:
- Ensure the Committee on World Food Security High Level Panel of Experts (CFS HLPE) report on ‘Sustainable Agricultural Development for Food Security and Nutrition, Including the Role of Livestock’, demonstrates the importance of dairy for sustainable nutritional security
- Provide comments on WHO guidelines for saturated and trans-fatty acids to help influence a positive message for dairy
- Reinforce the robust science behind the role of the dairy matrix supporting optimal health
- Promote dairy as an integral part of a sustainable food-system
- Assembling science-based evidence for the critical role of dairy to close the nutritional gap

2 Sustainability

“By 2050 we will have to sustainability feed an additional 2 billion people. Food security and nutrition for all through sustainable agriculture will only be achieved if all stakeholders jointly invest their resources and efforts to enable food producers, including dairy farmers, to play their role.”

— H.E. Gerda Verburg, Chair (2013–2015), UN Committee on World Food Security

IDF supports a vibrant dairy sector committed to improving its ability to provide safe and nutritious food while preserving natural resources.

As part of this support, IDF is developing and promoting sustainable practices across the dairy supply chain. It is also providing science-based guidance and leadership on dairy sustainability issues to key international organisations and influencers.

IDF also believes it important that it promotes its work in sustainability as including environmental, economic and social components — and appreciates the interrelationships, interactions, trade-offs, benefits and impacts of any specific action.

For the dairy sector, sustainability is about using natural resources in a manner that sustains the foreseeable needs of future generations. It is also about ensuring all dairy producers and processors can maintain and grow their economic potential, and support local communities.

Socio-economic sustainability
With a predicted growth in demand for milk and dairy products, the sector needs to be innovative in how it produces and processes milk.

The sector needs to increase the quality of dairy products produced in systems that are both efficient and socially beneficial. As a result, IDF is focussing on the efficiency of the current production system and the need for both socio-economic and environmental benefits.

Environmental sustainability
IDF is acutely aware of the need to develop and promote common methodologies to measure the environmental attributes and innovative practices that will reduce dairy’s environmental impact across the supply chain.

Achievements include:
- 2015 World Dairy Situation Report — provision of market data to support access to effective, transparent and viable markets
- The Dairy Sustainability Framework — co-governance and support for the Global Dairy Agenda for Action program for aligning and connecting sustainability initiatives to demonstrate leadership and progress globally
- The publication of the 2015 IDF Carbon Footprint Guide — a revision on the 2010 document, contributing to further reductions in GHG emissions by the global dairy sector
- Contribution to FAO-LEAP deliverables through the publication of guidelines for assessing feed, biodiversity and large ruminants
- Input into the 2015 OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code — an adopted standard covering all the steps of dairy cow rearing and management

Focus in 2016:
- Biodiversity Framework — to improve environmental impact at farm and processing level
- Ensuring the UN CFS HLPE Report ‘Sustainable Agricultural Development for Food Security and Nutrition, Including the Role of Livestock’, demonstrates the importance of dairy for sustainable nutritional security — in partnership with Nutrition
- Promote best practices of animal health and welfare management, including prudent and effective use of animal treatments
3 Food safety & quality

“IDF engages in safeguarding the integrity and transparency of the dairy supply chain to ensure the safety and quality of milk and dairy products.”

— Dr Nico van Belzen, Director General, IDF

IDF contributes to the development of science-based guidance and provides leadership on dairy safety, quality and risk management issues to key international organisations and influencers globally.

IDF has made good progress in this area, particularly through risk management guidance. The key priority areas (taking into account the potential impact on consumer health and well-being as well as on reputation and economics of the dairy sector) for IDF are:

- Ranking and prioritising chemical, physical and biological hazards and indicators (including addressing relevant risk management strategies for hygienic practices in milk and dairy production and processing)
- Promoting best practices of animal health and welfare management, including prudent and effective use of animal treatments (including monitoring and contributing to OIE work)

A risk-based management approach to food safety, as compared to hazard-based management, allows all aspects of a food safety system, from farm-to-fork (raw material, food processing, consumer behaviour, etc.), to be taken into account.

4 Standards

“Within IDF, the work on ‘Standards’ covers a wide range of codified material including policies, laws and regulations, methods, procedures and guidelines. Hence, while being a strategic pillar on its own, it also supports the other three strategic pillars of IDF’s Strategic Work Programme.”

— Dr Jaap Evers, Senior Regulatory Manager, Fonterra and Global Dairy Sector Leader Standards, IDF

The nature of the challenges facing the dairy supply chain is increasingly multidisciplinary in nature.

IDF proactively contributes to the development of science-based globally harmonised standards, guidelines, codes of practice and related methodologies across all working areas, to continually improve regulatory environments for the dairy sector.

It does this through proactively engaging with key international organisations and influencers such as the international food standards setting body Codex Alimentarius and the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO).

IDF also identifies knowledge gaps, prioritising its activities, proposing solutions and seeking a consensus on these.

“The role of the IDF is to provide science-based expertise and consensus for the global sector,” says IDF President, Jeremy Hill, “and to be the global voice of dairy to IGOs”. The goals that underpin this vision are:

- Key opinion leaders and IGOs agree that dairy is an essential part of a nutritious, healthy and sustainable diet, which is reflected in guidance and legislation
- Key IGOs recognise IDF as “global expertise in dairy”
- Dairy sector executives recognise and support the vital role that IDF plays in shaping the operating environment for the dairy value chain
- IDF has the capacity to react quickly and to continually adapt to changes.

Achievements include:

- Protection of the term ‘milk’ — Codex regional standard for non-fermented soybean products
- The WHO guideline’s finding of no evidence of adverse effects of sugars naturally present in milk
- IDF/ISO Standard for the quantification of lactic acid bacteria by flow cytometry in starter cultures, probiotics and fermented products

Focus in 2016:

- Adoption of joint IDF/ISO/AOAC analytical standards for infant formula and milk products (fatty acids, iodine and other elements) by Codex
- Maintain the differentiation of the Nitrogen Protein Conversion Factor (NPCF) for milk products versus soy products in Codex standards
- Capability to interact with Codex, both proactively and reactively, including on Codex standards for dairy products
- Engaging with other standard-setting bodies, including AOAC INTERNATIONAL, ISO, and US Pharmacopeia
- Increase statistical and epidemiological resources to support IDF work, including methods of analysis and sampling, as well as animal health and welfare
Today, dairy is one of the most vibrant and strategic sectors, with a major impact on national economies, public health and the environment.

IDF is the leading source of scientific and technical expertise for all stakeholders of the dairy chain.

The organisation is home to 1,200 experts covering nine areas of work:
- Animal Health and Welfare
- Dairy Science and Technology
- Economics, Policies and Marketing
- Environment
- Farm Management
- Food Standards
- Hygiene and Safety
- Methods of Analysis and Sampling
- Nutrition

Combined, IDF members represent around 75 per cent of world milk production and 85 per cent of dairy trade.

The IDF’s mission is to represent the dairy sector as a whole globally, by providing the best international expertise and scientific knowledge in support of the development and promotion of quality milk and milk products, to offer consumers nutrition, health and wellbeing.

It is committed to furthering current knowledge and science on a wide range of issues by triggering state-of-the-art projects across the dairy chain.

More information
For more information on IDF, visit www.fil-idf.org — the go-to site for relevant and up-to-date information on the dairy sector. Or contact our head office at info@fil-idf.org

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