

DAIRY INDUSTRY SUSTAINABILITY VISION

TO BE A LEADER IN SUSTAINABILITY—ENSURING THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF THE PLANET, OUR COMMUNITIES AND STAKEHOLDERS.

We believe that Dairy can take a

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

THE DAIRY INDUSTRY IS COMMITTED TO:

- Recognizing and appreciating all members in the Value Chain from farm to table.
- Working in a unified and a collaborative way with all stakeholders consistent with the VISION.
- Taking responsibility for our environmental impacts and celebrating our positive contributions to the planet.
- Ensuring economic fairness across

First-ever dairy industry sustainability report released

Illustration by Diana Arsenian

Early this year the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy released its first-ever Sustainability Progress Report. *Progressive Dairyman* interviewed Erin Fitzgerald, the center's vice president of sustainability, to review some of the



Fitzgerald

highlights of the report. Below are her comments about excerpts from the report.

How did this sustainability effort get started?

In 2008 we brought together 200 stakeholders including NGOs,

academics, producers, retailers from across the dairy value chain and asked them how we could reduce greenhouse gas emissions and produce value. What came out of that was a clear vision for our sustainability commitment as well as 10 projects that are worth conservatively \$238 million and a 10% reduction in our overall greenhouse gas footprint.

Why do a report like this?

“The goal of this report is to serve as a resource to stakeholders who are increasingly asking qualitatively and quantitatively what the dairy industry is doing toward sustainability.”

Who are these stakeholders you mention?

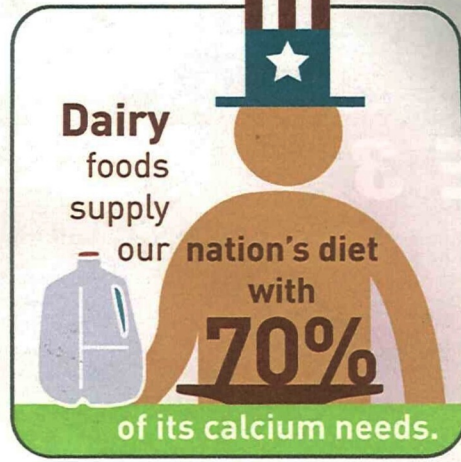
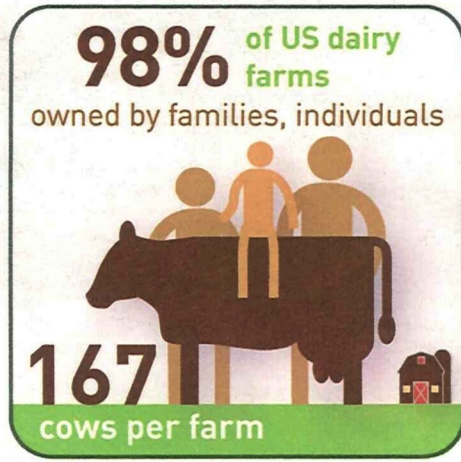
Consumers, environmental organizations, government, milk buyers, co-ops.

What's an example of a quantitative piece of sustainability included in the report?

We contribute to 70 percent of the nation's calcium needs. Our carbon footprint is approximately 2% of greenhouse gas emissions. Qualitatively we have some amazing stories in the dairy industry, but the work of this initiative will be to back those up with science.



Continued on page 32



“Qualitatively we have some amazing stories in the dairy industry, but the work of this initiative will be to back those up with science,” Erin Fitzgerald, vice president of sustainability at the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy.

First-ever dairy industry sustainability report released, cont'd from page 30

Should dairy producers be alarmed or encouraged by this report's findings on their portion of the value chain emissions (51 percent)?

Most life-cycle assessments will show environmental impact at the source of where raw materials are

made or are interacting with land, air and water. What they should feel proud of is that the industry is supporting and aligning around the producer. We all deliver the final product to our consumer. We are in this together.

Why would you encourage a dairy producer to review a copy of the report?

A dairy producer should be incredibly proud of their industry's willingness to be a leader in sustainability. I think this report and its framework give producers the

right language to express their story of stewardship to their neighbors and communities.

What should producers be proud of in this report?

We were able to quantify our environmental impact. The top highlight is the publication of the life-cycle assessment. This report really does quantify where environmental impact occurs along the value chain.

What parts of this report would you like to improve?

We know the scope of what we are trying to do is immense. We already have 500 stakeholders contributing approximately 14,000 man-hour days of time. It is our goal to continue to build the resources required to support the industry's sustainability efforts. Last year we raised \$1.6 million of investment. We need more people to bring the best of the best to solve problems and capture sustainability's opportunities.

How will this report help the industry market more milk?

Increasingly, consumers are asking these questions. There is an upward increase trend in corporate social responsibility reporting. Consumers in this digital age want to see transparency. They want information and fact. We hope this report will serve as a guide for brands and co-ops to point those consumers to solid resources.

What is Dairyville 2020?

This picture was one of our projects called Dairy Power. We hosted a summit in New York in 2009 and asked how we could process 40 percent of manure into digesters and what would be the social, environmental and community benefit of doing so. This is representative of looking at a dairy farm as part of a community solution.

How are producers getting involved?

Producers noted in the sustainability progress report are providing leadership and helping to drive innovation by participating on the Sustainability Council, Innovation Center board of directors and the Common Voice team. Many more producers participate in the sustainability commitment through volunteering their time to work on the 10 GHG reduction projects, telling the stories of their own efforts to reduce environmental impact, and providing data for life-cycle assessments and other research. **PD**

Access the report online at: www.usdairy.com/sustainability/

Dairies, producers and co-ops named in the report:

- Anderson Erickson Dairy
- Besancon Farms/Brent Besancon
- Byrne Dairy
- California Dairies Inc
- C Bar M Dairy/Greg Ledbetter
- Clauss Dairy Farms
- Emerald Dairy/John Vrieze
- Fair Oaks Farms/Mike McCloskey
- Fiscalini Farms & Cheese/John Fiscalini
- Foremost Farms USA
- Foster Brothers Farm
- Gar-Lin Dairy Farm/Dana Allen
- Graywood Farm
- Green Meadow Farms
- Haubenschild Farms/Dennis Haubenschild
- HAR-GO Farms/John Goud
- Holsum Dairy/Ken Beulow
- Land O'Lakes
- McArthur Farms Inc/Robert Rydzewski
- Nobis Dairy Farms
- Otsquago View Farms/Craig Stevens
- Paul Rovey Dairy/Paul Rovey
- Prairie Farms Dairy
- Prairieland Dairy/Dan Rice
- Rice Dairy/Peter Turk
- River-View Farm/Dave Forgey
- Select Milk Producers
- Shamrock Farms
- Spruce Haven Farm
- Stonyfield Farm
- Stouder Holsteins/Bill Stouder
- Swiss Valley Farms
- Twin Birch Dairy/Dirk Young
- Wanner Farm/Alfred Wanner



Illustration by Diana Arsenian