

A Manifesto
for Dairy Prosperity
2024

The dairy sector is one of the biggest agricultural sectors in the UK. It is a thriving, innovative and invaluable part of our economy. The UK dairy sector produces some of the most iconic dairy products in the world.

At Dairy UK, our job is to represent the UK's dairy processors. We provide expertise on policy and legislative changes, as well as promoting the benefits of dairy to nutrition, sustainability and the economy. We have a strong belief in the long-term success of the dairy sector and in protecting and ensuring its continued prosperity.

Our manifesto sets out policies that would be most effective in supporting the success of the British dairy sector and provides a background on the initiatives and activities our members have been undertaking, building the forward-looking industry fit for the future.

Enacting Effective Policy

The policies we believe would contribute most to the future success of the UK dairy sector are as follows:

Policy Formation

Food security

We advocate that food security be at the heart of future UK agricultural policy. Domestic and global food security requires that UK dairy production be protected and enhanced. The world needs more dairy protein and the UK is the ideal place for it to be produced.

Self-regulation

Government should work with the sector in partnership to find non-regulatory solutions, in recognition of our powerful record of self-regulation. We want Government to work with us collaboratively on voluntary solutions, particularly those relating to labelling initiatives which could have significant unintended consequences for industry.

Sustainability

The UK Dairy Roadmap

The sector's efforts to improve its sustainability credentials should be recognised and supported. We want Government to acknowledge and back the UK Dairy Roadmap as the principal sector initiative to improve environmental performance in dairy.

Environmental Schemes

The Government should ensure that UK dairy farmers can participate fully in Government funded environmental schemes; dairy farmers should be key partners in helping the Government achieve its bio-diversity objectives.

Consumer Advice and Protection

Nutrition

Dairy should remain at the heart of Government nutritional guidelines. All the latest scientific evidence demonstrates the nutritional and health benefits of dairy for which there are no adequate substitutes.

Food Safety

The UK's food safety regime needs to be properly resourced to ensure the highest level of food safety; this is the prerequisite to protecting the prosperity of the sector. We need a close partnership with the Government to ensure that this is delivered.

Farm Improvement Measures

Productivity

Government should increase funding for measures that enhance agricultural productivity and ensure that dairy farmers are given greater access to these funds. International competitive market forces mean the sector must continuously raise its productivity to remain competitive.

Planning

Planning constraints on the expansion of dairy farms must be reduced. Planning is a major impediment to the restructuring of farms that is necessary to secure economic sustainability.

Slurry

The Government needs to continue to provide funding for investment in slurry storage measures. There is a significant burden of capital expenditure required in this area if dairy farmers are to meet Government regulatory requirements.

Labour

Labour availability is an enduring challenge for dairy farmers, Government should examine a range of policy measures to improve labour availability and assist the sector in making it an attractive career option.

Trade

Export Growth

The Government should continue to support an increase in the volume and value of UK dairy exports. Global demand for dairy is rising and the sustainability of the UK dairy sector means that it should play a leading role in meeting it.

Policy Development

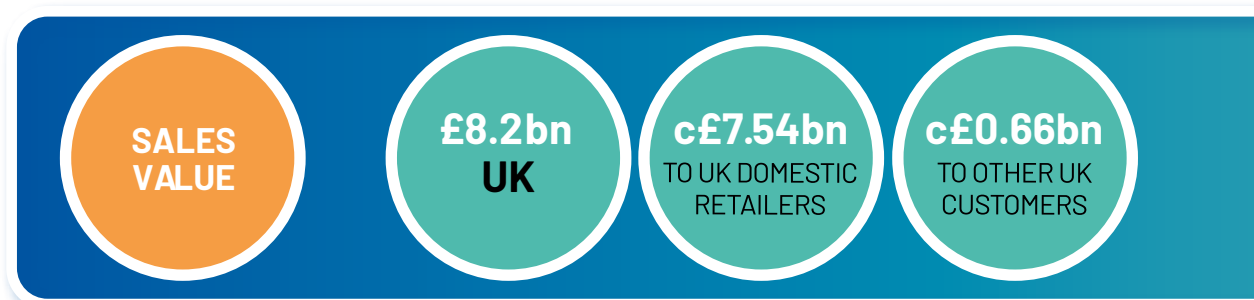
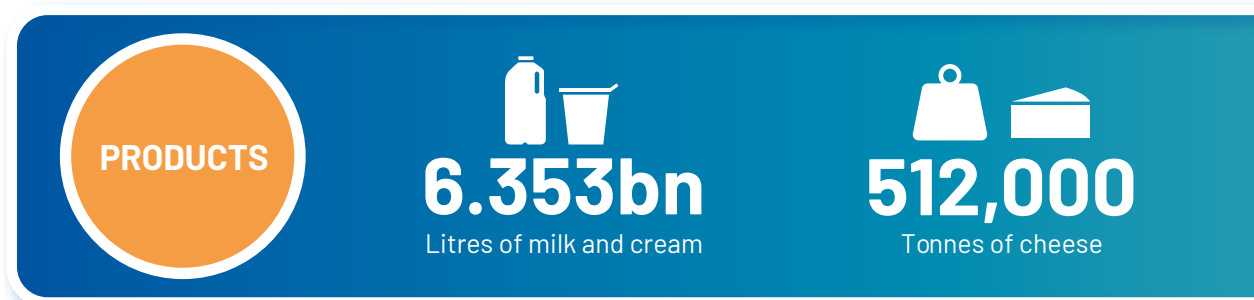
The dairy sector should be engaged closely in the development of trade policy and individual trade negotiations. The Government should seek to create genuine opportunities for improving market access whilst protecting UK dairy standards.

Security

Livestock farmers are increasingly subject to incursions by environmental and animal rights activists, causing not only disruption but an incredible amount of stress to farmers and their families. More stringent penalties should be given to repeat offenders trespassing onto farms, to deter future direct actions – recognising the damage caused and to better protect our dairy businesses, which play an essential role in the nation's food security.

The Value of the UK Dairy Supply Chain

The UK dairy sector is a vital part of the UK food economy consisting of:

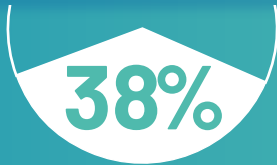




14.9bn
Litres of milk produced

Worth

£
5.7bn



Owned by farmers
through producer coops



c20,000
People employed



770,000
Tonnes of other dairy products

Value

£
10.05bn

£1.8bn
EXPORT

£1,331bn
TO THE EU
(72%)

£506m
TO 137 OTHER
COUNTRIES

The UK is not self-sufficient in dairy so it is reliant on imports to meet domestic demand. The UK imports £3.2bn of dairy products of which 99% comes from the EU. The main import is cheese which amounts to 433 thousand tonnes per annum.

Nutrition

Food security is of the utmost importance to the UK and something which has not always been valued as much as it should be. Our population needs access to high quality and nutritious food sources to protect their long-term health, and dairy products are well placed to support this.

Dairy provides affordable, safe, value for money nutrition to the British public, via a range of tasty and diverse product options. It accounts for 9% of UK adult calorie intake and is a vital source of key nutrients for all age groups.

Milk, cheese and yogurt are nutritional powerhouses, it is for this reason that dairy products are a staple part of national dietary recommendations around the world. These products are key in helping our population – particularly those more vulnerable groups – meet their daily requirement for a range of vitamins and minerals.

Dairy foods are:

- **Calcium rich and packaged alongside phosphorus and protein provide support for our bone, tooth and muscle health,**
- **A source of iodine, which is vital for our cognitive function (our mental abilities). Iodine is also particularly important for pregnant and breastfeeding women,**
- **A good source of B vitamins such as B12, B2 and B5 – which help support normal psychological function, help us feel less tired and support our immune systems,**
- **A source of potassium, which helps to support normal blood pressure,**
- **Hard cheese is a source of vitamin A, which helps to support our immune system and maintain normal skin,**
- **Innovative and varied – providing a range of low fat, lactose free and low sugar options for consumers no matter what their dietary considerations or preferences.**

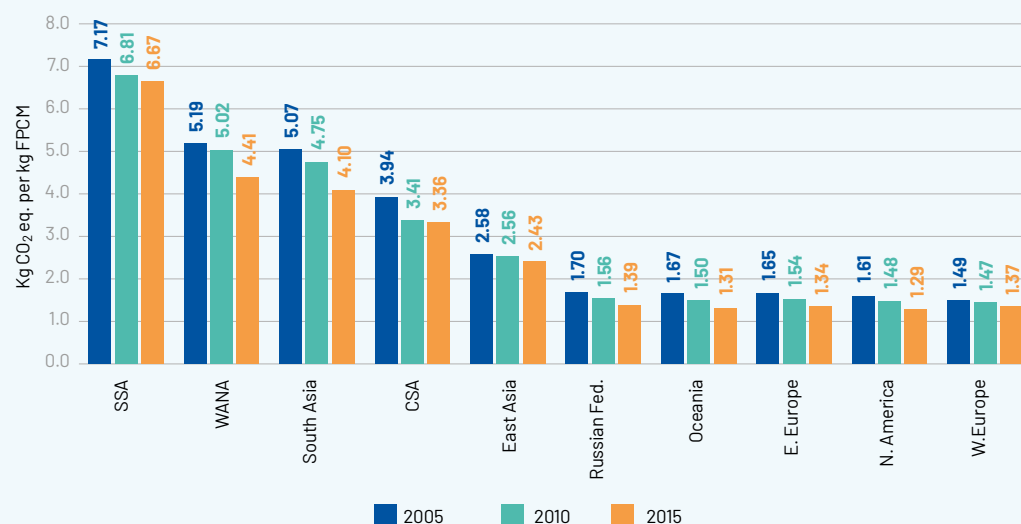
At present there are no other food products on the market that can offer consumers the same rich nutrition as dairy, in one affordable package. Dairy products are truly unique and without them many would struggle to meet their requirements for a range of nutrients, risking long term health implications.

Sustainability

The British dairy industry is one of the most sustainable in the world, and our dairy sector remains committed to continual improvement of our environmental sustainability.

UK Emissions Intensity

The UK dairy sector is one of the most carbon efficient in the world. UK average greenhouse gas emissions for dairy are estimated to be 1.25kg CO₂e/kg fat and protein corrected milk (FPCM)(Alltech, 2019). This compares with the global average of 2.5, with the highest regions reporting 6.67 (FAO, 2019).



Trends in emission intensity of milk by region. Source: FAO GDP Report, 2019.

Dairy and Climate Change

About a third of a dairy farm's greenhouse gas emissions come from enteric fermentation – largely as methane emitted by the cow. This methane is part of a natural cycle; methane gas persists in the atmosphere for an average of 12 years, after which it is broken down into CO₂ and water that is taken up by the crops that are again eaten by the cow.

This means that if methane emissions from dairy fall, the atmospheric stock of methane associated with the sector also falls, and consequently the sector can contribute to global cooling.

From 1990 to 2021, emissions intensities from UK dairy decreased by 23% (Defra Agri-climate report).

The sector is committed to play its role in supporting the delivery of Net Zero under the UK Dairy Roadmap.

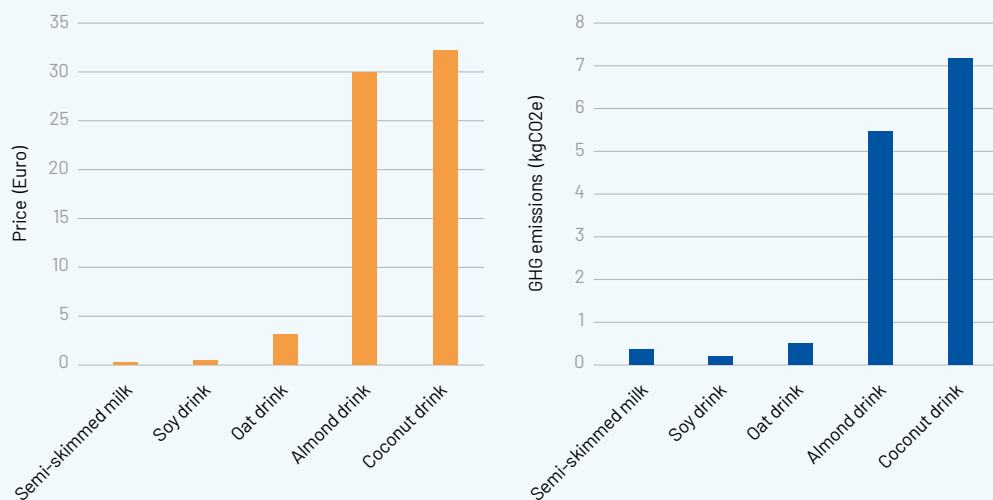
Comparative Environmental Performance Against Substitutes

Based on the nutrient content of foods, the greenhouse gas emissions associated with dairy are superior/comparable with other food types and sources of protein.

Protein quantity and quality are higher in milk than milk alternatives; one 200ml glass of semi-skimmed milk provides at least 24% of WHO requirements for all essential amino acids. By contrast, 1.7 glasses of soy drink, 7.9 of oat drink or a staggering 246.3 glasses of rice drink are required to provide the same level of protein nutrition.

Based on the current methodology for protein quality scores, the protein quality to carbon footprint ratio is similar for soy drinks and semi-skimmed milk (0.9 compared to 1.3 respectively), with other milk alternatives performing much worse at greater financial cost to the consumer.

This demonstrates that calls by some to replace dairy with alternatives are unhelpful, and do not reflect an accurate picture of dairy sustainability and the nuances of food production and its environmental impact.



The cost (left; orange) of semi-skimmed milk and milk substitutes required to provide at least 24% of WHO requirements for all essential amino acids, alongside the associated GHG emissions (right; blue).

UK Dairy Roadmap

To address environmental challenges the sector has created the UK Dairy Roadmap. It is a cross-sector initiative led by the AHDB, Dairy UK and the NFU, with the support of dairy farmers, milk processors and the wider industry, that sets challenging targets for improvements in the dairy sector's environmental performance.

Key targets include:

- **Net Zero CO2 emissions by 2050, with a sustained reduction in methane and nitrous oxide emissions to maintain a positive and improving contribution towards tackling climate change;**
- **Zero waste to landfill by 2025;**
- **30% reduction in net water input at processing sites by 2025 (2008 baseline);**
- **100% of dairy farmers to undertake a carbon footprint (so far it is estimated that 80% of farmers have done so);**
- **Improved biodiversity on dairy farms.**

Dairy processors are writing Roadmap targets into their sustainability plans, and many are going further with initiatives such as removing soy from cattle diets, promoting soil improvement via regenerative agriculture, managing water sustainably and incentivising farmers to reduce their carbon footprint.

In all, a lot of hard work has been done and continues to be done in the area of environment by farmers and processors alike, in order to do our collective part to address the climate crisis – whilst continuing to feed our population.

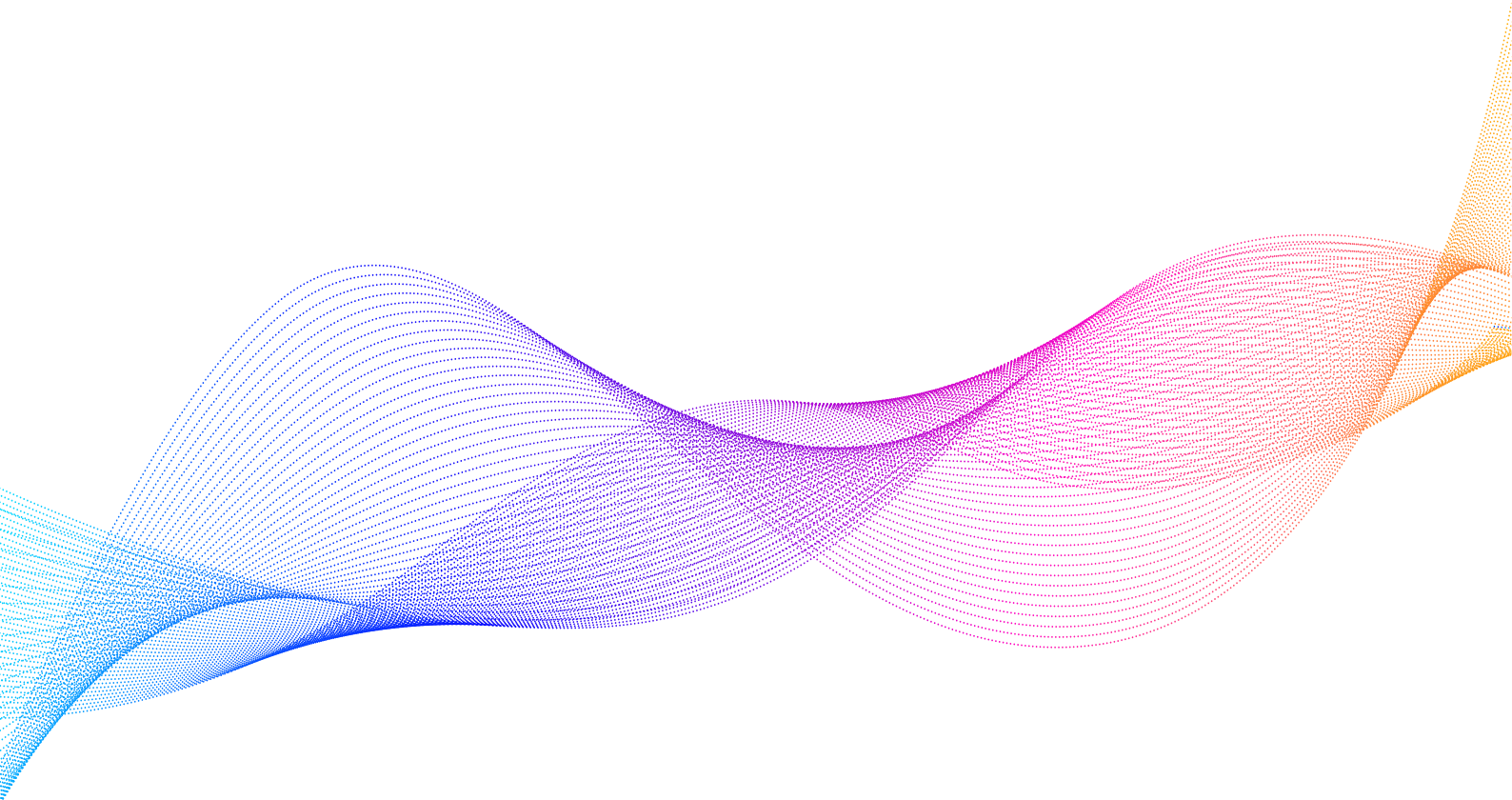
We're proud of our achievements to date, but are dedicated to building on our successful track record and pushing the boundaries on environmental sustainability.

The **dairy** sector **is an essential part of a healthy and vibrant economy** and a key partner in achieving food safety and delivering on nutrition and sustainability for the nation.

The next government needs to support the industry with a clear and evidence-led strategy to ensure it has a strong and sustainable future.

Dairy UK welcomes the opportunity for further **dialogue** with policy makers on the content of this manifesto. We strongly believe collaboration and partnership is the best way for the sector and the next government **to achieve** their respective goals. We look forward to building **a bright future** for dairy together.

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