

Scottish Dairy Climate Change Group

Environment



Why the environment top of mind for processors

There are a wide variety of reasons why dairy processors are focused on sustainability in general and environmental sustainability in particular. These include:

- **Ethics**
- **Customers**
- **Consumers**
- **Regulatory environment**
- **Finance**

Why the environment top of mind for processors

- Ethics – all food production has an environmental impact. The world needs to change to stay within its planetary boundaries on food production. Dairy is playing its part towards continued environmental improvement.
- Customers – the environment is top of mind for dairy's customers be they retail or B2B as dairy is part of their supply chain. Customers are looking for transparency, data showing the forward moves by the industry. Many industry customers have stated plans to cut their own emissions.
- Consumers – consumers have an increasing awareness regarding the environmental impact of food production. They want, and deserve, to consume food that fits with their needs and ethics. Unfortunately, media does not always give them the correct information about livestock agriculture and that can negatively impact consumers' views. Dairy needs to be able to counter the misconceptions with facts – as a sector we are evidence based.

Why the environment top of mind for processors

- Regulation and policy initiatives – the regulatory environment around food is complex and increasing in complexity. There are a raft of initiatives in play which impact the policy space.
- Finance – future financial investment in all industries including the dairy sector will be impacted it's sector's ability to prove committed and continuous commitment to sustainable development.

Processor actions and achievements

Through the UK Dairy Roadmap and Dairy UK Environmental Benchmarking Survey dairy processors have set targets, monitored and reported on the direct environmental impact of their business for over a decade. To date they have delivered continuous improvement including:

- **20% improvement in energy efficiency (kWh/tonne)**
- **17% decline in energy-related carbon emissions (kg CO₂/kg)**
- **20% improvement in water efficiency (m³/tonne)**
- **11% improvement in effluent efficiency (m³/tonne)**
- **60% decline in COD density of released effluent (kg/m³)**
- **94% of solid waste is recycled or recovered**
- **23% average recycled content by weight across all packaging**
- **Only 1.3% of inputs are lost as food waste**

On Farm

- Through the work of the Dairy Roadmap, other industry initiatives and individual processor initiatives in collaboration with their farmers, there have been substantial improvements in the environmental space on farm over the last few years. However, more can and needs to be done particularly in the area of on farm environmental footprint.
- Throughout 2020, the Roadmap Steering (Dairy UK, AHDB and NFU) coordinated discussion on the role dairy can play in delivering Net Zero.
- Gathering participants from across the dairy value chain in the UK we identified the following areas for action:
 - Setting aligned targets and commitments
 - Developing industry benchmarks
 - Communicating Best Practice
 - Research & Development
 - Advocacy

Dairy Roadmap – net zero

The Dairy Roadmap is forming a series of action groups tasked with developing an ambition for the UK dairy sector and identifying a pathway for improvement.

As secretariat, Dairy UK is currently liaising with key stakeholders and developing terms of reference for the following:

- **Dairy Net Zero Ambition Group**
- **Dairy Net Zero Action Group**
- **Dairy Climate Communications Group**