



Mission Statement on Sustainable Dairy Production

1. Background

The food industry relies on long-term supply of quality agricultural raw materials as the basic ingredients for their products. It is hence in its own interest as it is in the interest of the overall society, to provide a sustainable supply of such raw materials in competitive conditions, meet the food and fibre needs of populations (with respect to safety, availability, affordability) and conserve and possibly improve the natural environment as well as the socio-economic conditions of local communities. Thus, SAI Platform and its members want to play an active role in the development, recognition and implementation of sustainable practices for mainstream agriculture. Sustainable agricultural practices are being developed within SAI Platform for selected commodities of outstanding importance. Therefore, a specific working group on dairy products has been formed.

Dairy Products are important products both for local consumption and for international trade. Given the fresh nature of these products, a number of safety guidelines have been developed across the globe at international level (e.g. U.N. Codex Alimentarius), at the national level (e.g. KKM in the Netherlands, IKM-QFL in Belgium.) as well as by individual companies mainly in the form of insurance schemes. Specific aspects of the production process (such as feed practices, milking procedure, animal health and welfare, etc) have also been tackled by a few guidelines. Sustainability of dairy production takes a wider approach by taking simultaneously into account the economic, environmental and social aspects of the product.

The Working Group on Dairy believes that the concept of sustainability will serve the interests of all stakeholders in the dairy sector, and ultimately, reinforce the consumer confidence in dairy products. SAI Platform's active participants in the Working Group are representatives of the dairy industry. Cooperation with important stakeholders, including from producers to customers and consumers, as well as involvement of further dedicated companies is envisaged.

2. Vision and Objectives

The members of the Working Group on Dairy share the same overall vision:

Sustainability shall become the guiding principle in the dairy sector to keep supplying high-quality dairy products. This shall be achieved through stakeholders working together to continuously improve economic viability, social progress, environmental protection and animal welfare.

This, in the eyes of the Working Group, requires the achievement of the following goals:

- Reach a common understanding of sustainability of the dairy sector. Therefore, a "Position Paper on Sustainable Dairy Production" as well as "Sustainable Dairy Production Practices" will be developed.
- Define suitable indicators of sustainable practices allowing for verification.

- Broad implementation of sustainable production practices. This shall be realised over time by the development and adoption of adequate mechanisms and through the involvement of further stakeholders that support this change in technical, political and financial terms.
- Identify elements of improvement and initiate with farmers programmes for the benefit of the continuity of dairy farming.
- A gradual and continuous increase in the amount of sustainable dairy products traded and consumed world-wide.

The Working Group on Dairy shall become the platform of the industry in relation to sustainability, aiming to be viewed as a valuable partner for the development of sustainable agriculture.

3. Methodology

Efforts of the Working Group on Dairy are geared towards the mainstream market of products. It will mainly focus on cow and buffalo milk. It follows a pragmatic and efficient approach including the definition and identification of simple and effective indicators that shall allow thorough monitoring of implementation and/or improvement of sustainable practices. Stakeholders shall be duly involved in these processes in order to develop sustainable dairy production practices as well as assure wide endorsement of the concept of sustainability in the dairy sector.

Practical work shall initially be based on existing experiences. Further development of approaches might require specific project and study work encouraged and potentially realised by members of the Working Group in cooperation with other stakeholders.

Results of the Working Group on Dairy shall be communicated and discussed with other initiatives sharing the same vision.

All activities of the Working Group shall be conducted in accordance with all applicable laws by securing appropriate legal guidance.

The Working Group on Dairy will endeavour to continuously improve the overall approach on the basis of feedback received from stakeholders as well as according to monitoring results of the entire process.

The Working Group shall play an active role in promoting the implementation of sustainable dairy production practices.