



Raising the Bar on Dairy Sustainability: Kerry Dairy Ireland's journey to stage 5 SDP

SDP CASE STUDY BY KERRY DAIRY IRELAND



KERRY | **DairyIreland**



County Kerry, Ireland

STAKEHOLDERS



- SAI Platform (Sustainable Dairy Partnership- SDP)
- Kerry Dairy Ireland

CONTACT

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Introduction



Kerry Dairy Ireland is a leading dairy processor supplying sustainable dairy ingredients to global food and beverage brands. The company sources milk from over 2,700 family-run farms across the south-west of Ireland, where cows graze outdoors for an average of 240 days per year. With 95% of their diet derived from grass, this pasture-based system supports animal welfare and ensures premium quality. All milk supplied to KDI is certified under the Bord Bia Sustainable Dairy Assurance Scheme (SDAS) and aligned with the Bord Bia Grass Fed Standard, guaranteeing high standards of traceability and sustainability.

KDI's sustainability priorities include reducing carbon emissions, promoting regenerative agriculture, elevating animal welfare, supporting farmer livelihoods and rural communities, and building transparent, credible, science-backed reporting across the supply chain.

The Sustainable Dairy Partnership - SDP



**Sustainable
Dairy
Partnership**
Business to Business

The SDP (now in version 2.0) is the global B2B tool for sustainability reporting in dairy. It cuts duplication by aligning with Dairy Sustainability Framework (DSF), national programmes, and ESG frameworks, and provides credible, comparable data through peer-designed, independently verified reporting.

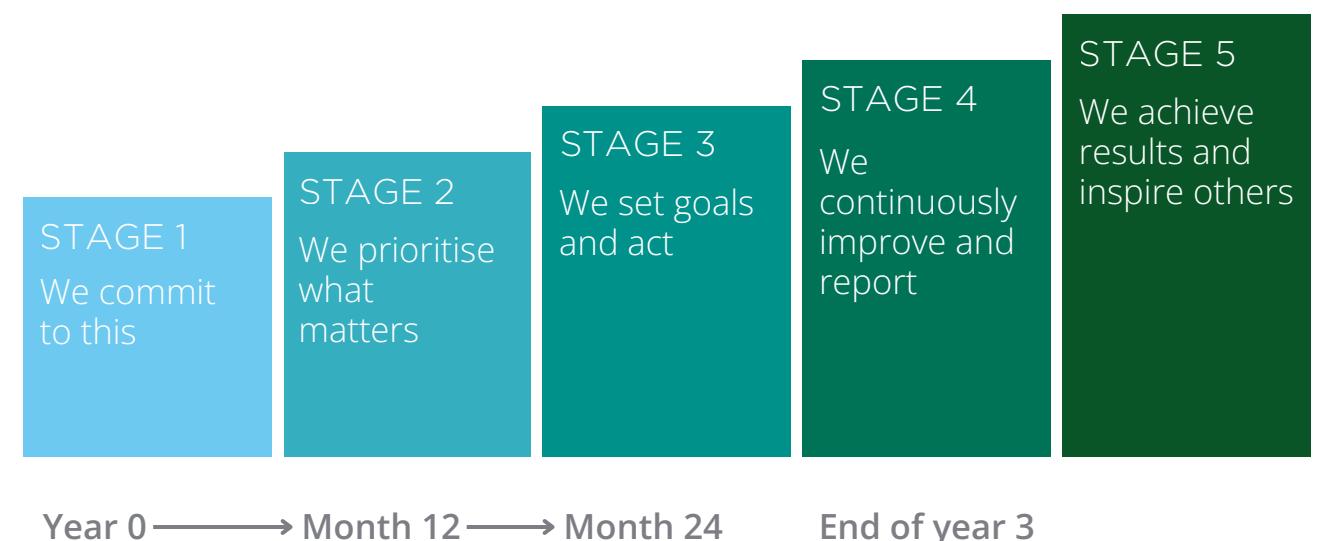
WHY IT MATTERS

- A single industry standard that cuts duplication, simplifies B2B engagement, and integrates national and ESG frameworks.
- Credible assurance independently verified data, provides high-integrity metrics for ESG disclosures and sourcing policies.
- Continuous collective improvement aligns buyers and processors to drive ongoing progress on environment, animal welfare, human rights, and livelihoods.
- One efficient reporting framework that reduces audit fatigue and enables faster, more consistent decision-making.

BENEFITS

For Processors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid multiple audits• Share verified sustainability data with buyers• Demonstrate continuous improvement
For Buyers & Traders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Real-time access to trusted suppliers' data• Simplify ESG reporting and compliance• Strengthen supply chain credibility

HOW IT WORKS



5 stages journey for dairy processors

SDP STAGES MATRIX

SDP Reporting Process	STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	STAGE 5
	Commit Year 0	Plan Year 1	Act Years 2 - 3	Measure & Adjust CIP timeline	Demonstrate & Lead CIP timeline
🛡 Foundational Elements (FE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess risk Develop management systems 	Implement management systems	Provide proof of systems in place every year		
🛡 Materiality Assessment (MA)	Commit to complete an MA or transition from national MA to company specific MA	Complete MA or transition from national MA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide proof of system to update MA every 3 years 		Lead by sharing knowledge
🛡 Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop CIP Mandatory* and high priority DSF criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement CIP Mandatory* and high priority DSF criteria Implement FP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory* and high priority DSF criteria 50% of milk volumes Monitor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory* and high priority DSF criteria Use externally verified data in modules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand CIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium priority DSF criteria Expand FP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium priority DSF criteria 65% of milk volumes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand CIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All DSF criteria Low priority DSF criteria Expand FP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All DSF criteria 80-100% of milk volumes
🛡 Farm Progress (FP)		Provide proof of traceability systems for full supply base			
🛡 Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medium priority KPIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All DSF KPIs
🛡 Progress Reporting (PR)	Create SDP report within 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four FE Result of MA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External reporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four FE Mandatory* and high priority DSF criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Externally verified reporting on KPI-based performance on FE, mandatory*, high and medium priority DSF criteria 	Integrated reporting system
DSF Membership (DSF)	Sign SDP Memorandum of Understanding		Public commitment to 11 DSF criteria		

Frequency of external verification:

🛡 Annually, 🛡 every 3 years

☒ Minimum requirements to verify GHG

* Emissions and Animal Health and Welfare

The Challenge



Before adopting SAI Platform's Sustainable Dairy Partnership (SDP), Kerry Dairy Ireland and their milk suppliers faced:

- Audit fatigue and duplication: Teams repeatedly reported similar data across multiple schemes.
- Misaligned frameworks: Different customer requirements created inefficiencies and reduced focus for on-farm improvements.
- Trust gaps: Prior to the SDP, there was no single, globally accepted and recognised sustainability framework, thereby making it difficult for buyers to compare progress consistently.

Using the SDP

Due to the complexity and fragmentation of existing sustainability frameworks, KDI turned to the SDP to create a more unified and effective system.

The Bord Bia Origin Green programme served as a foundation, and in 2023, the SDP team worked with Bord Bia to establish reporting equivalency with the Dairy Sustainability Framework (DSF), resulting in the Origin Green SDP module. This enabled KDI, as a long-standing Gold Member, to achieve verified Stage 3 equivalence.

Prior to this, KDI launched *Evolve* in 2022 an incentivised sustainability action plan for milk suppliers. *Evolve* supports farmers in improving overall farm efficiency and sustainability through targeted action across 5 key areas of regenerative agriculture: Water Quality, Soil Health, Biodiversity & Grassland Management, Animal Health & Welfare, and Farmer Livelihood & Personal Development. These criteria are directly aligned with the 11 criteria of the Dairy Sustainability Framework (DSF), which serve as the foundation of the SDP.

The uptake of *Evolve* actions are tracked systematically, allowing KDI to demonstrate measurable progress and achieve Stage 5 the highest level of SDP reporting.

A black and white cow stands in a lush green field, looking towards the camera. The field is dotted with other cows in the background. The sky is filled with heavy, dark clouds, suggesting an approaching storm. The cow is the central focus, with the vast landscape behind it.

SDP Impact Highlights

- Reduced duplication of audits and simplified sustainability reporting for suppliers, freeing up time for on-farm improvements.
- Stage 5 verification provides buyers with credible, rigorous assurance that KDI's supply chain meets global sustainability standards.
- Strengthened KDI's Scope 3 emissions reduction roadmap.
- Demonstrated measurable progress in animal welfare, biodiversity, and farm efficiency.
- Enhanced transparency and trust with customers and sourcing partners.

“

Stage 5 SDP verification shows our farmers are making real, measurable sustainability progress independently verified and aligned to global standards".

- Zita McCarthy
Senior Sustainability Manager Kerry Dairy Ireland



The Role of the SDP in KDI's Future

The SDP plays a central role in KDI's long-term sustainability vision. By integrating the SDP with Origin Green and Evolve, KDI has built a robust, scalable framework for continuous improvement. The company will continue to expand SDP-aligned practices across its supply base, deepen collaboration with farmers, and strengthen its sustainability reporting capabilities.

As KDI moves forward, the SDP will remain a key enabler of responsible sourcing, helping the company meet its climate goals, support rural livelihoods, and deliver high-quality dairy ingredients



Grateful to Kerry Dairy Ireland for their valuable insights and collaboration on this case study. We look forward to sharing more stories of Sustainable Dairy Partnership worldwide. If you're using our SDP and wish to highlight your journey, please get in touch.



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