INTERNATIONAL DAIRY FEDERATION - GERMAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE

NEWSLETTER

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IDF World Dairy Summit
United Dairy World 2009

BERLIN 20-24 SEPTEMBER

GIVING PRIORITY TO ANIMAL WELFARE ISSUES

Andrea Gavinelli
Head of Unit Animal Welfare,
European Commission - Health and
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The global dimension of animal welfare: European policies and international trade opportunities

There is a growing expectation from consumers worldwide for animals used in food production to be well treated. Science has also more clearly defined the link of animal welfare with the increase of efficiency in production, animal health, securing sustainability, and ethical concerns.

Animal welfare is high on the EU agenda

New European policies are now, more than ever, considering and respecting the national priorities given to animal protection issues. Animal welfare has its place on the EU agenda in relation to ethical duty as well as the political responsibility of European Institutions towards European citizens in ensuring respectful treatment of farmed animals.

The EU has traditionally taken a regulatory approach regarding animal welfare in Europe. A relevant body of legislation has been developed over the last 30 years driven by public concern about specific topics and addressing the protection of animals on the farm, during transit and at the time of killing.

It is also becoming increasingly more urgent to clarify the role of animal welfare in the WTO context. This could properly orient animal welfare policies particularly in countries with emerging economies and in order to catalyze resources from international organisations.

International partnership is now urgently needed to develop capacity building programmes in order to implement internationally shared animal welfare standards. This is where the ongoing cooperation with international organisations such as the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and FAO could play a very important role.

Where the future lies

Current research efforts are focused on providing scientifically sound indicators to assess the welfare status of animals in terms of their behaviour, physiology, performance and health. These animal-based indicators are seen as more sensitive to variations in both farm management and static system-design variables and provide a more reliable assessment of actual animal welfare.

Furthermore, automated measuring of on-farm animal welfare is a new and promising field with a number of potential advantages when compared to on-farm auditing.

The aim of the Commission is to assess the future possibility of building a new policy framework on these new scientific evolutions that could support more competitive advantages for the farming sector and better welfare for the animals. The dairy sector will be fully considered in this process.

NUTRIENT DENSITY: A NEW ANGLE ON CALORIES

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Nutrient density of dairy products: Helping consumers build healthier diets

Many energy dense foods and diets provide ample calories but relatively few nutrients. Dietary advice continues to be based around nutrients to avoid and the notion of "healthful" food seems to be based on the absence of fat, saturated fat, trans fats, cholesterol, sugars, and sodium rather than on the presence of any beneficial nutrients that the food might actually contain. Dramatic increases in the rates of obesity and diabetes suggest that such advice has not been effective, indicating that it may be time to develop a more positive approach to food guidance based on the total nutrient density of foods.

The NRF revolutionary approach

The Nutrient Rich Food (NRF) index discriminates among foods across and within food groups. In the dairy category, skim milk and fat free plain yoghurts get the highest scores. Importantly, the NRF approach places all foods along a continuum, stressing that all foods and all food groups have a place in a healthy diet.

The NRF approach exemplifies a positive way to convey vital information about nutritional attributes of foods to the consumer. When coupled with a program of consumer education, nutrient density of foods can become the foundation of dietary recommendations and meal planning. We have data showing that the consumption of more 'healthful' foods did translate into healthier diets.

Much more than a food ranking or a shelf-labelling tool, the NRF score is part of a comprehensive nutrient navigation system. The published NRF scoring algorithm can be readily applied to individual foods and to the total diet, providing an easy way to put dietary guidelines into practice.

'Healthy and affordable'

Where some consumers may value good nutrition and nutrients per calorie, others are more concerned with affordability. An econometric approach to nutrient profiling uses nutrient quality scores and food prices to explore the relationship between food quality and cost. The best value in terms of affordable nutrients was milk and dairy products, eggs, beans and fortified cereals.

Given the current economic situation, there is new focus on food prices and diet costs. The NRF approach can help the 2010 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee to identify and promote affordable, appealing, nutrient rich foods.

Professor Adam Drewnowski
University of Washington

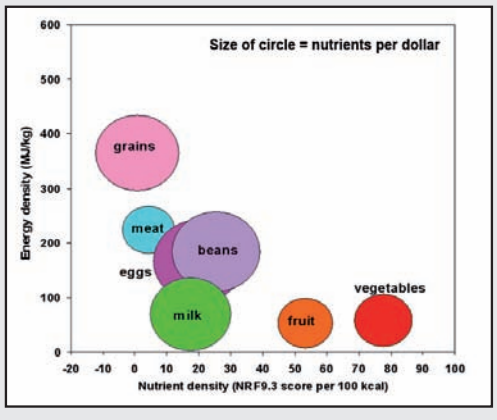

Figure 1: The relation between nutrient density (NRF9.3 score) and energy density of foods by food group.

ANIMAL HEALTH AND ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

IDF's position and activities on animal welfare and their implications for less economically developed countries

By Professor McCrindle, Section VPH, Dept Paraclinical Sciences, UP

Animal welfare has become an important topic internationally due to the discovery that optimal care and nutrition that improves the wellbeing of farm animals, also results in a more secure and safe supply of protein rich food for people.

The global increase in dairy production has raised a wide range of ethical and emotive issues including animal welfare and the IDF has responded in a proactive way to these challenges and opportunities. In 2003, the IDF produced a fact sheet on dairy animal welfare, followed in 2004 by the joint FAO / IDF 'Guide to Good Dairy farming Practice'. These guides are considered the gold standard for dairy producers worldwide, in order to benchmark good farming practices, including those that promote the wellbeing of their dairy animals. With all these initiatives in place, it is imperative that standards for dairy welfare are based on reliable science.

Standardizing dairy animal welfare criteria globally is difficult.

In less developed countries, the wellbeing of humans is intricately linked to the welfare of their livestock. Due to production systems often being extensive, welfare challenges are different to those in more intensive systems and include drought, tropical diseases, predation by wild animals, stock theft and conflict situations. Regional production systems, cultures and climates must also be taken into account.

The wide diversity of member countries and the partnerships with the FAO and OIE allow the IDF to play a significant role in empowering less developed nations to apply relevant science based criteria in order to improve the welfare of dairy animals within their own farming systems.

IDF is involved in several initiatives with the aim to promote and ensure animal welfare.

Extensive communication activities are being promoted through the IDF website as well as the work of national committees in participating countries. In addition there is a high level of coverage of animal welfare topics at international conferences such as the IDF World Dairy Summit in Berlin, in September 2009. Furthermore, IDF has observer status at OIE and plays an active role in the OIE animal welfare committees.

In 2009, the FAO established an online portal for livestock welfare and the IDF is featured prominently as one of the participating organisations. This "Gateway" is a participatory platform that allows users to retrieve or submit information. The aim is to provide a single access point for information related to farm animal welfare, thus enabling queries and contributions from both economically developed and developing nations.

The "Gateway to Farm Animal Welfare" is located at:
http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/programmes/animal-welfare/en/

Facts and Figures about Bluetongue

By Dr. Ir. Annet G.J. Velthuis, Business Economics, Wageningen University and Franz J. Conraths, PD Dr. med. vet., DipEVPC, Director and Professor, Federal Research Institute for Animal Health

Bluetongue is a viral disease of ruminants caused by the Bluetongue virus. The virus is transmitted by certain species of midges but not by contact between ruminants. The disease does not pose a risk to human health.

In recent years, Europe experienced several incursions of Bluetongue virus. Many of them seem to have spread from Turkey and North Africa to European countries in the Mediterranean region. In principle, introduction is possible through importation of infected animals, contaminated animal products, vaccines or infected vectors.

Many scientists believe that the climate change helped the main vector of Bluetongue in Africa to spread to Southern Europe. It seems also possible that the climatic conditions in the exceptionally hot summer 2006 may have helped Bluetongue vi-

ANIMAL HEALTH AND ANIMAL WELFARE CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

rus after its initial introduction to replicate in local species of biting midges and to spread within the ruminant population.

The Bluetongue disease can cause large production losses. For the average Dutch dairy farm the costs related to production losses are estimated at 5,800 Euros in the epidemic from July 2007 till July 2008. Diseased dairy cattle can have reproduction failures, like a postponed gestation or no gestation, abortion or delivering calves too early and/or with a low birth weight. Furthermore, the condition (i.e. body weight) of diseased cattle is decreased due to less appetite resulting in reduced milk production for a couple of days. Considerable economic losses were also reported by the cattle industry, mainly referring to dairy herds.

It is very difficult to stop the Bluetongue virus from spreading. It is hard to control the midges from spreading the virus, especially since a lot is still unknown about the transmission of Bluetongue.

The dairy industry must advise dairy farmers that vaccination is the most effective way. Immunization with inactivated serotype-specific vaccines has proven to be an effective measure in endemic areas. It helps to mitigate clinical disease, to reduce economic losses and to limit the further spread of the infection.

The risk of introduction of the Bluetongue virus may also be reduced with the respect of import regulations and the spread of the virus can be reduced with movement restrictions for susceptible species as laid down in EU Commission Regulation.

In the face of new emerging challenges we certainly need **interdisciplinary co-operation to assess the risks, adapt efficient** control measures and surveillance to the present needs. The biggest challenge is to eradicate the Bluetongue virus serotype 8 and serotype 1 from Europe and farms and vets should remain vigilant in detecting any new cases of the disease that might be caused by a new serotype.

Measuring farm animal welfare objectively: the outcome based assessment, challenges and opportunities for the dairy sector

By Professor Linda Keeling, Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences - Co-author: Professor Christoph Winckler, University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, BOKU

Can you briefly describe the key criteria by which you propose to successfully measure farm animal welfare?

To successfully measure farm animal welfare is not easy and there is no gold standard. The scientists involved in the EU research project "Welfare Quality" proposed 12 different criteria, grouped into 4 main areas reflecting feeding, housing, health and behaviour. Whenever possible, animal based measures of welfare should be used to assess these criteria. Some of these are based on previously developed scoring systems, such as those for assessing body condition or gait scoring, but others, like those for injuries, aggression, lying down behaviour etc have had to be developed further and tested within the project. We also tried to include indicators of positive emotional states in the assessment and whenever possible assessment measures have been checked for their validity, reliability and their feasibility.

How important is it to the dairy industry that farm animal welfare is measured using this standard guide?

A standardised methodology allows benchmarking. This benchmarking can facilitate comparisons between farms or in the same farm over time, monitoring changes in welfare as a result of different management strategies or housing. The harmonisation that can result from the wider use of a reliable standard methodology may help facilitate trade by exposing unfair animal welfare claims.

How difficult would it be for the dairy industry to implement these new measures?

The difficulty in implementing these new measures is dependent on why they are needed in the first place i.e. what additional resources are needed around the recording itself. It will also depend on who has to be trained to take the measures. Presumably, if it is someone who already has a good knowledge of dairy and who might be visiting the farm in any case, then they will be easier to implement. The incentive for their implementation is also important.

NUTRITION AND HEALTH CONFERENCE (PART 1) HIGHLIGHTS

If the data collected is going to be used for advisory purposes, perhaps linked to strategies for improving farm economy, or as part of a marketing strategy, then the interest from within the dairy industry in adopting the measures will be greater than if it is seen as a form of control imposed on the industry from outside.

Can you give an example of the challenges this poses for the dairy sector and how can they be taken advantage of?

The challenge is perhaps for the dairy sector to see that this is a methodology and it is up to industry to use it to their advantage and maximize the benefits. The methodology can identify aspects of welfare that are good and those that are less so, for example, helping to direct improvement strategies to where they will be most effective on the farm or become a basis for claims of high welfare status that can be used in marketing.

Dairy and malnutrition in the elderly (industrialized and non-industrialized world)

By Lisette CPGM de Groot, Professor (endowed chair) Nutrition and the ageing process, with due attention for the elderly.

FACTS & FIGURES

- **Dairy products provide significant amounts of protein and** a number of minerals and vitamins relevant for healthy ageing.
- The nutrient richness of dairy products is widely recognized and an important part of a diet for the elderly, providing significant protection from malnutrition.
- Dietary advice should also focus on an adequate supply of energy, protein and micronutrients in addition to avoiding saturated fats.
- For the younger, healthier 65 year-olds we estimated that including lower fat dairy products rather than the whole fat equivalent may help to improve the dietary pattern.
- With vitamin D, calcium, vitamin B12 and protein, dairy products contain important nutrients in relation to bone health.
- The hedonic properties of dairy foods are important for feeding the frail elderly. Even slight differences between regular and micronutrient fortified foods in scores of desire to eat and attitude toward products may be perceived for a longer period of time.

Dairy Fat: Advances in Research

By Dr. Helen Bishop MacDonald, President, Nutrisphere

Despite many advances in the research surrounding dairy fat the consumer maintains the viewpoint that saturated fats are harmful and dairy fat consumption in particular should be reduced, if not avoided.

Recent findings

In 2009, Bruce German and co-presenters concluded that despite their contribution of saturated fats to the western diet there is no clear evidence that dairy foods are consistently associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular or coronary heart disease.

Peter Elwood showed evidence in 2009 at the American Oil Chemists Society meeting that there is a survival advantage associated with the consumption of whole milk and full-fat dairy products. Philippe Legrand continued the discussion, showing cellular evidence that saturated fatty acids ought to be further individually defined rather than being lumped together as they are most often.

Saturated fatty acids are not the only components of dairy fat. Work published in 2008 gave evidence that menaquinones (vitamin K2) from dairy fat had an inverse association with incidence of prostate

ANALYSIS OF THE EUROPEAN DAIRY POLICY

cancer, while another study found that the vitamin K2 of cheese and milk has positive effects on the blood vessels in the heart. There have also been numerous papers on the anti-carcinogenic benefits of rumenic acid found in dairy fat.

Global communication on positive health benefits is crucial

These findings are likely to have a considerable impact on the dairy sector economically, but ONLY if the dairy sector is successful in bringing this information to the public and to health professionals. The nutritional benefits that accrue from consuming three or more servings of dairy each day have the potential to be enormous. There is also strong evidence that such habitual consumption of dairy products can reduce the incidence of cancers of the colon, breast and prostate; type 2 diabetes, kidney stones, heart disease, osteoporosis and obesity.

When addressing the consumer's poor perception of dairy, one must first address the issues of calories. There is no doubt that fat contributes more calories than do either carbohydrate or protein, however studies show that due to a greater satiety value, consumption of full-fat dairy products can actually lead to a reduced energy intake over a 24-hour period.

Over and above the concern for calories, however is the misunderstanding on the part of both consumer and health professionals regarding the risks inherent in consuming animal fats. The extent of the problem regarding attitudes to saturated fats is potentially huge and it is the challenge of the dairy sector to correct these misconceptions.

The European Dairy Policy

By Lars Hoelgaard, Deputy Director General, Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development, European Commission

The EU dairy policy has four main tools to support the EU farm gate milk price:

- Intervention of the buying of butter and skimmed milk powder, which takes away temporary surpluses of the market.

The reduced intervention prices have been partly compensated by way of a decoupled direct payment (3,5 cents/kg milk) directly made to present or former dairy farmers.

- Milk quotas to limit production.

Quotas have been slightly increased in recent years, where quotas will expire in 2015.

- Export refunds to support exports to balance the EU market.

The EU has offered to eliminate refunds in the context of a successful outcome of the DOHA round provided our trading partners submit to similar disciplines.

- Import tariffs.

The future level also depends on the outcome of the DOHA round.

Globally there are different policies amongst major dairy producers. These range from a micro managed quota system in combination with institutional fixed prices for milk, which is used for many different dairy products in Canada, to a liberal policy such as in Australia and New Zealand. Net importers of dairy products often apply low import tariffs in order to facilitate easy access for dairy imports. In contrast, there are countries that impose export taxes to prevent exports to combat internal inflation, such as the case in Argentina.

In dealing with the current imbalance on the EU market there are three main headings: measures to increase demand, measures to reduce supply and measures to support the income of farmers at times of very low milk prices.

In this context the EU Commission will continue to support the EU market and stabilise EU milk prices as long as it is necessary. With regard to quotas, these expire in 2014/15 and, as the European Council has specified, there should be no changes in policy as decided in the Health Check with a gradual increase in quotas in order to ensure a soft landing.

The overall aim of the EU dairy policy is to have a sustainable and viable dairy sector that produces what the market needs, adapts to different market circumstances and is not subject to systematic intervention from governments. The recently reformed EU dairy policy puts more emphasis on the role that the sector itself should play.

Expected effects of the policy are further consolidation in the processing sector and closer links between farmers and processors in order to manage the volumes needed. Farmers should be encouraged to organise themselves in order to better stand up to the power of the retail sector.

ALSO IN THE NEWS

Welcome Reception highlights









A Global Dairy Agenda for Action - Climate Change

The signing of the Declaration will take place tomorrow from 0900 to 10:30 in room Dublin 21. IDF and 6 other signatories will be pledging their commitment to a more sustainable dairy industry.

The declaration will be supported by a green paper outlining the initiatives undertaken by the stakeholders along the whole of the supply chain with the purpose of addressing the impact of climate change and reducing GHG emissions.

For more information please visit the IDF website on Sustainability at http:www.dairy-sustainability-initiative.org

5th IDF International Mastitis Conference

21st to 24th March 2010, Christchurch Convention Centre, New Zealand

The 5th IDF Mastitis Conference is the major veterinary meeting for mastitis and milk quality research, where innovative research and the advances in mastitis with the aim of achieving worldwide understanding will be reported. The conference will attract international mastitis leaders (academic, technical, communicators etc) to discuss progress since the 2005 meeting in Maastricht.

For further information, please visit: www.mastitis2010.com or contact The Conference Company idfmastitis2010@tcc.co.nz or +64 9 360 1240

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www.wds2009.com

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