



## October 2010 Newsletter Dairy LCA Project

Dear all,

Find below the October newsletter. In this newsletter you will read about the recently released US study on GHG emissions from the dairy sector, research into specific aspects of GHG emissions and have access to some new environmental opportunities related to plant genetics. Of course there is the regular update regarding the Common Methodology for GHG emissions which is now in the final furlong to its launch...what will I write about once it is released? The beauty of this area of work is that I am never short of initiatives or results to share with you!

Hope to see you in Auckland.

Best regards,

Brian

### Twitter

As reported a month ago, we are now Twittering about our global sustainability efforts. From 100 followers last month, we now have registered 135 followers. Why not seek us out and support getting our positive messages out. With followers such as WWF and the UK Food Standards Agency, we have an ideal opportunity to deliver our messages beyond our usual 'customers'.

Find us at tweeting: [@dairysustnble](https://twitter.com/dairysustnble)

### Green Paper Support for colleagues

The SAI Platform requested a support document to be used when discussing the Green Paper with colleagues within their own organisations (and encouraging them to provide submissions). The members were fully aware of the benefits, though getting this message across to their colleagues just needed something more. SAI Platform have worked on this over recent months and with drafting input from colleagues at GDP, IDF and the Green Paper Team they have developed a one page flyer that will sit on your, or your trade bodies, website and can be downloaded as and when required. Thanks must also go to Juerg Zaugg of Nestle who kindly found some great hi resolution photos for us.

The flyer is attached for you to use. It would be great to see many more submissions coming forward for the Green Paper as a result! In the last month alone over 10 new submissions have been uploaded to the Dairy Sustainability Initiative website with more currently under review!

### Challenge to RTRS

The Round Table on Responsible Soy (RTRS) continue to be challenged by anti GM groups, with the release of a report by Corporate Europe Observatory, "**GM Soy: Sustainable? Responsible?**" Using their words this report is....

*'bringing together an impressive body of scientific evidence against the suggestion that GM Roundup Ready soy production can justifiably be labeled as 'sustainable' and 'responsible'. This report includes the most recent findings on the devastating effects the combined use of Roundup Ready soybeans and the Roundup herbicide have on the environment, animal life, and human health'*



Although this report challenges only one area of the RTRS work, it is an important one...what is our position as an industry on GM? Do we have one? Is the position driven by the market you serve or do we see it as a necessary technology to sustainably feed the world's growing population? Is the scientific evidence at a sufficient level to make an informed judgment?

I would be happy to hear your views on this.

I have attached a summary copy of the report.

### **USA publish Carbon foot Print study**

The Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy has recently announced the completion of the U.S. fluid milk carbon footprint study, which measures greenhouse gas emissions associated with a gallon of fluid milk.

The study, which was conducted by the University of Arkansas, was presented during the International Food LCA conference on September 23, 2010 (Italy). The study looked at every step of the value chain from the production of feed crops to the final consumption and disposal by the consumer.

What the industry learned was that management practices are very important. Regardless of the size or region of the operation, what matters is the management of resources and waste. The basis for differences in on-farm carbon footprint is management practices. It really comes down to how a given farm manages its natural resources, the cow's diet and its manure. The study identified opportunities for better management practices and innovation across the value chain.

I have attached a copy of the executive summary of this report.

### **Signatories of the Agenda for Action to have Strategy Meeting in Auckland**

As the majority of the Signatories of the Global Agenda for Action will be attending the IDF World Dairy Summit in Auckland, they are taking the opportunity to meet together and debate delivery strategy for the commitments they have agreed to deliver collaboratively.

Though the signatories have had numerous conference calls since the launch of the Agenda for Action addressing the key year one delivery requirements, the meeting in Auckland will be an ideal opportunity to take this strategy to the next level.

Can I take this opportunity to challenge you to engage with the signatories in Auckland, either during the update session on Tuesday morning or during the main conference proceedings to provide your insights or support on how we can really make sure we deliver as a global sector on these important commitments.

I am hoping to have the Signatories, at some point during the conference, on the Green Paper stand in the Sustainability area, though if you miss them there, come and ask me on the stand and I will make sure you can make contact.



## **Grassland and the environment – the opportunities from plant breeding**

We are well aware of the importance of forage production in terms of milk production and crave the day when the science aids us in the sequestration challenge (in the soon to be published IDF Dairy LCA Methodology, sequestration by grassland is not included due to the current evidence and associated data requirements). Until we have the data that supports our cause I have attached a recent article from the British Grassland Society Newsletter (by kind permission of Jessica Buss CEO of the BGS) which provides some wider insights into potential solutions from the grassland/forage sector.

## **4th International Greenhouse Gases and Animal Agriculture (GGAA) conference in**

**Banff Canada** – Observations by Cathy Phelps of Dairy Australia who attended the conference plus more. Thanks Cathy!

At Banff there was a strong message that LCA methodology struggles with biological systems as it is essentially an engineering concept. One issue that emerged is the fact that 12 month LCA studies don't pick up reproductive efficiency. Some researchers have done longer term studies and have found that age at first calving, length of lactation, time taken to get back into calf and number of lactations/cow can have a significant impact on emissions intensity. At the moment the carbon footprint LCA methodology tends to favour high concentrate feeding and high milk yielding cows – however this particular system often struggles to get cows back in calf and in addition the number of lactations/cow in large framed herds can be quite low. Longitudinal studies indicate medium framed cows with lower milk yields but higher reproductive efficiency can have a lower emissions intensity than the systems currently favored by LCA GHG calculators. Food for thought as we are on the verge of launching the IDF Common Methodology!

The conference committee have prepared a summary that may be of interest. Go to:

[http://meristem.com/meeting/ggaa\\_2010-fa04.htm](http://meristem.com/meeting/ggaa_2010-fa04.htm) .

## **Dairy LCA – Lift Off!**

The LCA Methodology is in its final desk top publishing phase with the IDF National Committees all now having fed back their comments, all of which I am pleased to say have been positive and extremely constructive.

I am sure that those of you going to the IDF conference in Auckland will be hearing much more about the methodology and associated support materials that the IDF are developing on behalf of the global dairy sector.

The post launch phase is to get the methodology implemented. If you are adopting this methodology as part of your LCA activities within your organisation, please let me know. I need to capture this knowledge as well as any feedback that you may have once you have applied the process.

So that this methodology remains at the cutting edge of scientific developments in LCA science and other areas such as sequestration, land use and land use change, the IDF Standing Committee on Environment will be discussing the formation of a working group who will have the responsibility of monitoring LCA science, including the considerable work being undertaken by ISO. The aim of this group will be to make recommendations to the



Standing Committee when they are confident that scientific evidence warrants change in the methodology.

### **'Healthy Planet Eating' – How a lower meat diet can save lives and the planet**

This is a report released by Friends of the Earth in October, challenging the British Government to seriously consider the potential health benefits (through literature reviews and modelling) of a diet consisting of lower levels of meat.

Though the report predominantly focuses on meat consumption, dairy slips in also. Below is one of their recommendations:

*'Clear standards should be introduced to ensure that meals paid for by taxpayers in schools, hospitals and care homes reflect environmental and health factors and reduce reliance on meat and dairy in menu'*

We need to take time as a sector to digest these reports and invest the effort in establishing actions or responses to be able to responsibly respond if challenged.

I have attached a copy of the report for your consideration.

Just as an aside, recognising the important link between dairy and meat production, the SAI Platform has recently formed a Sustainable Beef Working Group. If you are interested in taking part just let me know. This group will benefit greatly from the hard work already undertaken by the SAI Dairy Working Group. Importantly the group will be liaising closely with the US initiative coordinated by WWF on sustainable beef production.

### **Agenda for Action and Green Paper - Auckland preparations**

As detailed in the last newsletter..

If you or colleagues are going to the World Dairy Summit in Auckland please remember to mark the morning of **Tuesday November 9** in your diary. We will be in **Marlborough Room 2** in the Sky City complex. There will be the update on progress of the Agenda for Action and Green Paper since the official launch in Berlin last year. This will be a short but informative session that will profile what has been achieved over the past year, with some profiling of Green Paper success stories and importantly, what we are seeking to achieve in the forthcoming year in the lead up to the official reporting year of 2011.

We will also have a small separate area in the foyer (**Auckland Promenade**) of the Sky City Complex where we can profile the Green Paper and demonstrate the content on screen as well as demonstrate how to provide on-line submissions etc. The 'Green Paper Team of Rob

Pettit, Fergus McReynolds, Gail Barnes, Marylène Tucci and I are working hard to build a dynamic display of Green Paper examples to profile at the event.

#### **Plea for assistance...**

This stand will need to be manned for the duration of the conference. If any of you are intending on going to the conference and could spare some time, even if it is half or one hour, to welcome and work with interested parties (the site is not complex). I would be very grateful if you **could you let me know asap!**



Thanks so much to those who have already come back and said they can do an hour or two here and there.