danish dairy board

danish dairy brief

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Views and comments on international policy issues

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World Milk Day

Celebrate milk as a nutritious and carbon efficient food – well suited for the future surge in demand for healthy food at an affordable price

FAO celebrates the 1st of June as World Milk Day. And we will join in the celebration by counting down to the expiry date of the EU's quota regime. 306 days to the 1st of April 2015 where the European milk producers are free to produce according to market demands.

All experts agree that we will experience increased demand for food and that the ever growing middle classes in Asia and Africa will be looking for better quality nutrition by substituting starches with protein. Demand for dairy products is projected to be rather stable in Europe, Oceania and America, while it is projected to increase in Africa, Asia and the Middle East *(Milk and Dairy products in human nutrition, FAO, 2013; IDF, 2013).*

We will thus need to be able to produce more food and this food must be produced as sustainable as possible. Sustainable diets are diets with low environmental impacts, which contribute to food and nutrition security.

In 2010 a new FAO estimate concluded that the dairy sector accounts for only 2.7% of total GHG, which includes emissions related to milk production, processing and transport *(Greenhouse Gas Emissions from the Dairy Sector: A Life Cycle Assessment. FAO, 2010).*

A French study (Vieux et al., 2012) concludes that dairy products contain many nutrients compared to fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables must be consumed in much larger amounts to provide the same level of nutrients resulting in a higher climate impact.

The high numbers of different nutrients in milk and dairy products make milk an important part of a sustainable diet. The first scientific study to explore the nutrient density of beverages in relation to greenhouse gas emissions was published in 2010 *(Smedman et al., 2010).*

This study reported that milk provides more nutrients in relation to its climate impact than other beverages.

Just look at this table:

Beverage	NDCI index
Milk, 1,5% fat	0.54
Soft drink	0
Orange juice	0.28
Beer	0
Red wine	0.01
Mineral water	0
Soy drink	0.25
Oat drink	0.07

A high figure indicates a high nutrient contribution in relation to the climate impact, e.g. the higher index the better.

Milk production is part of the solution and increased milk production can contribute to economic growth both in all parts of the world.

Happy World Milk Day!

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