

PRESS RELEASE

23rd IFCN Supporter Conference 2025

SEPTEMBER 23RD – 25TH, GRAZ, AUSTRIA MAKING SUSTAINABILITY PROFITABLE, HOW TO FUTURE PROOF THE DAIRY INDUSTRY

The International Farm Comparison Network (IFCN) invited its supporters, leaders from across the global dairy sector, to its 23rd Supporter Conference in Graz, Austria. This year's conference focused on the topic *"Making Sustainability Profitable: How to Future-Proof the Dairy Industry."* Graz, located in the heart of Styria, a region known for both its long dairy tradition and innovative sustainable farming practices, welcomed more than 150 participants from around the world between September 23rd and 25th, 2025.

Łukasz Wyrzykowski, General Manager of IFCN, opened the conference by highlighting that sustainability and profitability are inseparable drivers for the future of the dairy industry. He stressed the importance of understanding both short-term shocks and long-term trends in the sector, noting that milk production must continue to grow to meet rising global demand.

Stefan Scherer, General Manager of smaXtec and conference sponsor, described the event as an opportunity to share knowledge, refine narratives, and connect with peers from all corners of the industry. While the dairy sector faces ongoing challenges, the ability to distinguish between immediate market pressures and long-term structural developments was emphasized as key for navigating uncertainty. High milk prices and growing demand offer opportunities, yet sustainable growth depends on aligning production with economic, environmental, and social goals.

The panel discussion *"What does Sustainability & Profitability mean in the Dairy Supply Chain?"* examined how sustainability extends beyond environmental considerations. Profitability was described as a prerequisite for long-term investment and resilience. Gilles Froment, President of IDF, underlined that only profitable farms and companies can invest in solutions that drive positive outcomes for the future. Amber Horn-Leiterman added that *"profitability is sustainability"*, highlighting operational efficiency as a pathway toward more sustainable dairy systems. Grant Hartman, Chairman's Representative at Müller UK, emphasized the importance of investments that enable farmers to overcome challenges and remain resilient in a changing market.

Presentations throughout the conference reinforced the link between sustainability, profitability, and innovation. Helen Dent, Sustainability Lead at Kite, reminded participants that outcomes must be measured and monitored to ensure effective sustainability initiatives. The discussion highlighted that a company's environmental footprint is increasingly part of its market positioning, and transparent communication of efforts is essential to build trust and stimulate consumption.

The panel *"Sustainability & Profitability – Making the Dairy Industry Future Proof"* brought together leading voices from across the dairy value chain. Stefan Scherer underlined the sector's unique ability to transform grass – indigestible for humans – into high-quality protein. Franz Waxenecker, Senior Director Precision Services at dsm-firmenich, stressed that connecting all elements of the value chain demonstrates how sustainability and profitability reinforce each other. John Allen, Director Global Corporate at AB Agri/Asterra, highlighted approaches that are replicable, renewable, and provide high nutritional value. John Heslin, Director Dairy Technology, Global Marketing at MSD, noted that dairy farmers

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are continuously investing in technology and called for increased technological support to meet future challenges. Robert Walker, European Growth Officer and CEO of Keenan (Alltech), emphasized the critical role of technology and services across the supply chain in driving progress toward sustainable, profitable dairy systems.

In conclusion, the Graz conference demonstrated that reliable data, measurement, and informed decision-making are the foundation for both sustainability and profitability. IFCN continues to play a pivotal role by providing insights and trusted data that help the global dairy sector navigate challenges, make better decisions, and prepare for a resilient future. The event was hosted by smaXtec and supported by AB Agri, Alltech, dsm-firmenich, Milk Sustainability Center, MSD Animal Health, Asterra, C-Lock Inc., FoodChain, Novonesis, Royal Agrifirm Group, Royal GD, SimHerd and Uniform Agri.



About: IFCN is a global dairy research and consultancy network based in Kiel, Germany. Founded in 2000, it now brings together more than 100 researchers and provides expertise in the form of data services to more than 140 companies in the global dairy supply chain.

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