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Yokohama, 26 October 2013 – Global population growth will continue to drive demand for responsibly produced foods and nutritionally adequate, healthy and affordable diets. The conference on “Future Direction on Milk and Health” on 1 November at the IDF World Dairy Summit 2013 in Yokohama, Japan, will demonstrate how our sector has operated in a manner to continually reduce its impact on natural resources while contributing significantly to dietary quality and nutrient adequacy around the world.

Mary Anne Burkman, Senior Director of the Dairy Council of California, will outline the updated resource guide “Sustainable Dairy Nutrients are Essential to Human Health”, which provides current, science-based information on which to validate the claim that milk and dairy foods are nutritious, affordable and sustainable choices in a wide range of healthy dietary patterns.

This internal guide was developed by the IDF Standing Committees on Nutrition and Environment in collaboration with the Global Dairy Platform (GDP). “Thanks to its unique network of scientific and technical experts, IDF has been a global leader in consolidating clear, concise information which details the multiple ways the dairy industry utilizes sustainable practices to provide a family of products boasting an irreplaceable package of nutrients,” explains Mrs Burkman. “We have the opportunity to broaden the discussion of environmental stewardship among key stakeholders to include food security and nutritional quality. In that holistic context, milk and dairy foods emerge as ‘must have’ food choices.”

A Broader Research Scope

Following with the dairy industry’s commitment to optimize its use of natural resources and mitigate environmental impacts, Dr Greg Miller, President of the Dairy Research Institute, US, will provide delegates with a review of the dairy industry’s advances in this area, research on the nutritional, health and economic value of dairy products, and also an evaluation of the studies linking the dietary patterns and environmental impacts. “For the time being, most of the research has been focused on carbon footprint. We are lacking studies on land, water, biodiversity and ecosystems. A solid body of quality research is needed before dietary recommendations for sustainable diets can reasonably be developed,” says Dr Miller.

Pooling pre-competitive expertise

Sustainability of foods or diets is complex and involves many different perspectives. Anna-Karin Modin Edman, Sustainability Manager at Arla Foods and Vice-Chair of the IDF Standing Committee on Environment, will provide an update of the work done by IDF in this area. “Through IDF, we have the capacity to embrace the complexity and interconnection between many fields of expertise. Thus, we can hopefully influence the debate on sustainable diets with greater impact.” Indeed, there are enormous environmental challenges regarding climate change, water and biodiversity: “As a global industry we must take responsibility for our share of the problems as well as our options for being a part of the solutions. The need to stay engaged and proactive explains why our experts work together on methodological issues related to calculating carbon and water footprints and on a framework on how to address the complexity of biodiversity.”

IDF, and the global dairy sector, clearly recognize the seriousness of the environmental challenges the world is facing, and through initiatives such as the Global Dairy Agenda for Action (GDAA) it is moving forward with concrete programmes that are providing tangible results. The initiative has now developed a framework to provide overarching goals and alignment of the sector’s actions globally on the path to sustainability: the Dairy Sustainability Framework (DSF). “We have an important role to play in creating not only a sustainable future for the dairy sector but through our highly nutritious products a more sustainable future for everyone. Through the work of IDF and our partners we need to help the world see that the dairy sector is not part of the problem but is in fact a critical part of the solution to the provision of sustainable, safe, nutrient rich and enjoyable diets,” explains Dr Jeremy Hill, President of IDF.

The GDAA session will take place on 28 October 2013.

Details of the IDF World Dairy Summit 2013 conference programme can be found at:
www.wds2013.com

<http://www.wds2013.com>

Read more <http://www.alphagalileo.org/ViewItem.aspx?ItemId=135857&CultureCode=en>