




DCNI Quarterly

May 2023





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Northern Ireland

FOREWORD

Welcome to the latest edition of the Dairy Council newsletter, DCNI Quarterly.

In this issue we bring you a recap of recent developments within the industry, beginning with a look back on 'What's New' in nutrition research and a closer look at our collaboration with CCEA on the production of sustainability resources for students of GCSE Agriculture and Land Use.

Elsewhere (and overseas), we were delighted to close out the joint EU DCNI-funded export programme after generating over £55m in new sales for NI dairy. We bring you details of the successful six-year programme and how it helped ensure potential customers from South-east Asia and the Middle East – from South Korea to Saudi Arabia – saw first-hand the high quality and standards of Northern Ireland's dairy sector.

We'll also check in on our social media channels which continue to engage a broad range of audiences.



Dairy Council NI hosts successful 'What's New' in Nutrition Conference

Each year the Dairy Council Nutrition and Health conference brings the latest updates in Nutrition Research to an audience made up of academics, nutrition students and health professionals. The 2023 Conference saw us return to an 'in-person' event and we welcomed delegates back to W5 at the Odyssey.

The conference, chaired by Professor Sean Strain from Ulster University, shed light on new developments in nutrition science and practice, including those in relation to dairy foods. It featured a virtual presentation from Dr Sandra Iuliano from the University of Melbourne whose research, showing that improving dairy consumption in residential care homes is an effective way to reduce malnutrition and prevent falls and fractures among older people, we have highlighted previously in this ezine.

The audience also heard from Dr Claire McEvoy (Queen's University Belfast) asking if diet can protect against cognitive decline during ageing, and Dr Michael Crowe (Dublin Dental University Hospital) who shared insights around the potential role of dairy foods in good dental health.

Professor Ciarán Forde (Wageningen University) and Professor Marion Hetherington (University of Leeds) also spoke on the research challenges for processed food and health and the role of reading infant cues in responsive feeding, respectively. While Professor Nicole Darmon of the French National Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment, engaged the audience with her research on dietary shifts to improve nutrition and sustainability.

Dairy Council for Northern Ireland nutritionist, Dr Carole Lewis commented: "It was fantastic to be back in person again to uncover some of 'what's new' in nutrition research. Our annual conference serves as a platform for experts to present the latest science helping us to understand more about nutrition and health including the important role that dairy has to play in a healthy, sustainable diet."

More details on the conference along with presentations from each of the speakers, can be found [here](#).



Getting our teeth into the positive effect of dairy on dental health

Dr Michael Crowe's presentation to the Dairy Council Nutrition and Health conference posed the question, Dairy ingredients or Dairy Matrix: a role in dental health? It's well known that dairy foods contain protein, calcium and phosphorus which are important for tooth development, but Dr Crowe also looked at the potential of dairy to impact the local environment within the mouth and so reduce tooth decay risk. The results with cheese are particularly promising and several 'protective factors' have been identified including proteins which can reduce adhesion and growth of oral bacteria and calcium for 'on-the-spot' enamel repair. Dr Crowe discussed the possibility that there may be an additional beneficial 'matrix effect' of dairy whereby the impact is enhanced through interactions of the food components and structure working together. With tooth decay being the most common non-communicable disease in the world, this was welcome news to our audience of nutritionists and health professionals.

Pictured at the conference are (L-R) Professor Sean Strain OBE (Ulster University), Dr. Claire McEvoy (Queen's University Belfast), Dr. Michael Crowe (Dublin Dental University Hospital & Trinity College Dublin), Dr. Carole Lewis (Dairy Council NI), Professor Ciarán Forde (Wageningen University) and Professor Marion Hetherington (University of Leeds).

Supporting school milk... and more!

The Dairy Council will continue with our activities in support of school milk, with the distribution of more than 26,000 'Milk and More' leaflets to schools throughout Northern Ireland in June.

The leaflet is sent onwards by schools to parents of pupils starting school and highlights the nutritional benefits for children of break-time milk, setting the information in the context of eating well throughout the school day. We know that children who take milk in Primary One, are more likely to keep drinking milk during their time at primary school.

*milk and more...
throughout the
school day*



have you heard?



Futureproofing the Industry through Education

In previous editions we introduced readers to the resource for GCSE Agriculture and Land Use developed by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA), in collaboration with DCNI.

Designed to support both teachers and students, the 'Sustainable Farming' online resource has received considerable take up attracting almost 3,500 page views with 1,360+ downloads to date. This resource aims to help students to understand more about sustainable farming on a local scale, while aligning their learning outcomes to CCEA's GCSE Agriculture and Land Use specification.

The online resource focuses on case studies from dairy enterprises and industry leaders across Northern Ireland.



Hedge Management and Biodiversity

The Hedge Management and Biodiversity in farms resource aids students in exploring how restoring, establishing and managing hedges can improve biodiversity and reduce farmers' carbon footprint. In the chart below you will see the learning outcomes of the unit.

Learning Outcomes	Pupils will be able to:
Unit 1: Soils, Crops and Habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• define the terms habitat, ecosystem and biodiversity;• describe how farmers can improve biodiversity and minimise the impact on ecosystems by:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• restoring and establishing hedges;• creating and managing habitats;• describe ways farmers can reduce their carbon footprint; and• evaluate the benefits to farmers of initiatives to enhance biodiversity, for example financial incentives and sustainable agriculture.



£55.6 million in new sales for the NI Dairy Industry



Following an independent review, the Dairy Council was able to announce last month that the recently completed round of EU and DCNI funded export programmes drove £55.6 million in new sales of dairy products to markets in South-east Asia and the Middle East.

Implemented in two tranches over six years the programmes received investment in marketing support to

the value of £2.6 million, driving sales in Saudi Arabia, UAE, China, Taiwan, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, Thailand and Japan.

Dr Mike Johnston, chief executive of the Dairy Council, which was the only organisation in the UK agri-food sector to secure EU funding for export support, said while the programme is concluding, its legacy will provide future opportunities for the industry.

The support and assistance offered by agencies and organisations across the sector, says Dr Johnston, made success possible even in the face of restrictions visited upon the programmes by Covid in the final years.

“We had confidence in these export programmes from the outset, as structured with both outward and inward missions, they ensured potential customers got to see first-hand the professionalism and efficiency of Northern Ireland’s dairy industry and the high EU standards to which the dairy sector here operates as they walked the entire NI dairy supply chain,” he said. “However, even our own projections were exceeded with the programme demonstrating a return of investment of 21.3:1; bringing remarkable value and establishing long-term relationships upon which trading channels between Northern Ireland and international markets can continue to thrive.”

***“While the programmes did not stop entirely during the Covid era, restrictions did mean a delay with the postponement of both outward and inward missions. Throughout we have received invaluable support and assistance from our colleagues at DAERA, FSA, CAFRE and the Institute for Global Food Security at QUB. We are grateful to them and to everyone along the supply chain who helped us in highlighting its integrity and robustness, giving new overseas customers the confidence and trust to source their dairy products from Northern Ireland, thereby supporting our core aim of generating sales and, ultimately, contributing to the wider economy,”** he concluded.*

Social media round-up

Seasonal recipes and nutritional insights continue to be the order of the day for the Dairy Council social media channels, where our 3.3k Instagram followers engaged with an Easter-themed competition tasking people to guess the correct number of Mini Eggs in the jar. Think you know the answer?

You can find out by following [@dairycouncilni](#) where you'll also discover a host of delicious recipes, from pavlovas to homemade soup, all aimed at raising the profile of quality local dairy products.

Meanwhile, [Twitter](#) is a space where we continue to build positive engagement with health professionals and the wider dairy industry.



HEADS UP



DCNI @ the Nutrition Society Irish Section Meeting

DCNI is taking the opportunity to communicate with a large audience of nutritionists, dietitians, scientists and researchers at the 2023 Nutrition Society Irish Section Meeting which will be held at the Technological University of the Shannon, Athlone from 14th- 16th June.

Details of our activities for nutrition and health professionals including information on our conferences, webinars and the dedicated section of the DCNI website will be included in the conference e-programme booklet for all delegates.




World Milk Day

Thursday 1st June marks World Milk Day and with it an opportunity to recognise and showcase the importance of milk as a global food. The theme for 2023 will put the focus on sustainability including how dairy is reducing its environmental footprint to become a key part of a more sustainable future.



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