

## **U.S. Dairy Industry Advances Three Game-Changing Solutions to Deliver a More Sustainable and Secure Food System**

*New U.S. Dairy Sustainability Report reinforces progress across environmental impact, animal care, nutrition and food security, including nationally-aggregated processor data*

**ROSEMONT, Ill., Sept. 16, 2021** – As society wrestles with threats to the global food supply and leaders prepare to convene for the United Nations’ first-ever [Food Systems Summit](#), the U.S. dairy community is reaffirming its commitment to be part of the solution, pledging to address its total greenhouse gas footprint and setting goals to achieve carbon neutrality, optimize water use and improve water quality by 2050. In addition, U.S. dairy is strengthening equitable access to nutritious dairy foods around the world while ensuring animal and employee welfare through a transparent production system.

Through the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy and the support of key stakeholders like Nestlé and The Nature Conservancy, the community is accelerating adoption of new practices and technologies that use fewer resources and emit fewer greenhouse gases, including methane, while producing innovative and affordable products that sustainably nourish a growing global population.

“The past 18 months have challenged us in ways we never thought possible, reinforcing the essentiality of a strong, resilient supply chain,” said Mike Haddad, chairman, Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy. “As food systems transformation takes center stage, the U.S. dairy sector is undergoing a transformation of its own – not only as an affordable and sustainable food enjoyed by people around the world but also as a future source of bio-based energy and products contributing to a circular economy and a cleaner planet.”

### **U.S. Dairy’s Game-Changing Solutions**

Ahead of the Food Systems Summit, the UN solicited “game-changing” ideas, initiatives and innovations that have the potential to bring about positive change. Fueled by the ingenuity of thousands of visionary dairy farmers and underpinned by the industry’s [Stewardship Commitment](#) and [2050 Environmental Stewardship Goals](#), the U.S. dairy industry responded with three game-changing solutions:

1. [The U.S. Dairy Net Zero Initiative](#), a five-year, industry-wide effort to accelerate progress toward the 2050 Goals. Through foundational research, on-farm pilots and development of new product markets, NZI aims to make sustainable practices and technologies more accessible and affordable for U.S. dairy farms of all sizes and geographies.
2. [The National Dairy Farmers Assuring Responsible Management \(FARM\) Program](#), an internationally-certified industry initiative to ensure transparent production practices and provide assurances that U.S. dairy farmers are global leaders in animal care, antibiotic stewardship, biosecurity, environmental stewardship and workforce development.
3. [School Nutrition and Food Bank Partnerships](#), allowing the U.S. dairy community to draw on decades-long relationships to quickly adapt in crisis situations; provide nutrition to people experiencing food insecurity, especially children; support farmer livelihoods through market access; and promote resource conservation through strengthened supply chains.

“Supporting and enabling farmers through game-changing programs like the Net Zero Initiative has the potential to transform the dairy industry,” said Emily Johannes, senior manager of sustainable sourcing at Nestlé. “Scaling up climate-smart agriculture initiatives is key to Nestlé’s ambition to achieve net zero

greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and will help reduce the carbon footprint of many of our brands. We are excited to be the first corporate partner to collaborate with the U.S. dairy industry and our suppliers to contribute to an even more sustainable supply chain.”

### **A First for U.S. Dairy – Transparent Reporting of Processor Data**

The U.S. dairy industry recently released its biennial [Sustainability Report](#) reflecting contributions to and progress against social responsibility priorities including environmental impact, animal care, food safety and community contributions. The Report also details strategies for achieving U.S. dairy’s stated goals and the industry’s future reporting commitments.

Marking a significant milestone in U.S. dairy’s sustainability journey, this year’s Report incorporates nationally-aggregated processor data, a first for U.S. dairy. Dairy processors representing 75 percent of U.S. milk production developed and provide ongoing support for a reporting tool to serve as a credible and consistent way to calculate and track processor sustainability progress. Aggregations on GHG and water intensity, as well as other sustainability metrics, will serve as a baseline for future reporting.

A sampling of the industry’s collective achievements during the reporting period include:

- By making use of the water present in milk, U.S. dairy processors were net positive for water, returning more than they withdrew from municipal and other sources.
- More than 95 percent of waste from reporting processors was recovered, redirected and put to beneficial use (vs. sent to landfill).
- The U.S. dairy community provided 1.538 billion servings of fresh milk and dairy foods in 2020 to food banks in the Feeding America network, a 33 percent increase over 2019.
- The U.S. dairy industry supported 3.3 million jobs in the U.S. and contributed \$752.93B in total economic impact<sup>1</sup>.

### **Partnerships Fueling Continued Improvement**

In addition to investments farmers are making on their own farms, strategic collaborations across agriculture and with global corporations bring added value through expertise, leadership and financial support to drive sustainability-focused innovations.

[Last year](#), Nestlé committed up to \$10MM in a multi-year partnership with U.S. Dairy’s Net Zero Initiative to support scaling access to environmental practices and resources on farms across the country. In the partnership’s first major milestone, Nestlé and its CARNATION® brand recently [announced](#) that Trinkler Dairy Farm, a CARNATION® supplier, is the first partner farm of the NZI Dairy Scale for Good pilot, seeking to implement sustainable farming practices and technologies to demonstrate the economic viability and scalability of reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions. These learnings will help document the value of farm-powered solutions and make innovative technologies more accessible and affordable for all dairy farms.

Other partnerships include Starbucks, which also [announced](#) a \$10MM, multi-year commitment to dairy sustainability via U.S. Dairy’s Net Zero Initiative, as well as The Nature Conservancy, serving as a strategic advisor and providing access to TNC scientists, conservationists and experts to help advance

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.idfa.org/news/u-s-dairy-industrys-economic-impact-totals-753-billion>

work in biodiversity, soil health and regenerative agriculture practices, water quality and practical solutions to reach the industry's 2050 Goals.

"These investments reinforce the meaningful role dairy plays in sustainable diets, both now and in the future," added Haddad. "These and other partnerships across the value chain help accelerate our collective impact, all in the name of forming a more regenerative, equitable and nutritious food system."

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#### **About the Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy**

The Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy® is a leadership forum that brings together the dairy community and third parties to address the changing needs and expectations of consumers and customers. Initiated in 2008 by dairy farmers through the dairy checkoff, Innovation Center leaders and members collaborate on important areas like the environment, nutrition and health, animal care, food safety, and community contributions. Through the Innovation Center, the U.S. dairy community demonstrates its commitment to continuous improvement from farm to table, striving to ensure a socially responsible and economically viable dairy community. For more information, visit [www.usdairy.com/about-us/innovation-center](http://www.usdairy.com/about-us/innovation-center).