

Address by IDF DG Dr. Nico van Belzen at the 1st Pancyprian Scientific Conference of IDF National Committee, Cyprus, 8 December 2017

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Good morning Your Excellency Mr. Kouyialis, Dr. Georgiou, ladies and gentlemen.

The International Dairy Federation was established in 1903, more than a hundred years ago. IDF represents the global dairy sector and support its technical, scientific and economic development. The member countries of the Federation cover approximately 75% of world milk production and 85% of milk powder exports.

Humanity is facing great challenges. In my view, the most pressing challenge is the increase in the size of the human population, which is the root cause of many other issues. Another great challenge is climate change. To ensure a good quality of living in the future, we need to address these challenges together.

When the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, we in the dairy sector started to think about our role in meeting these goals. We discussed our role with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN. The outcome of this discussion was that IDF and FAO jointly signed the Dairy Declaration at the IDF World Dairy Summit in Rotterdam in 2016.

The Dairy Declaration recognizes the critical contribution the dairy sector makes to sustainable development. Milk and dairy products have an essential role in balanced, nutritious and healthy diets. The dairy sector makes a major contribution to countries' economies, income and employment. Approximately 1 billion people, including farmers, milk processors, researchers, suppliers and their families, derive their livelihoods from the dairy sector. The dairy sector has a key role in the management of ecosystems, can help to address environmental degradation and climate change, and can support biodiversity.

It has been estimated that in 2050, there will be at least 9 billion people on the planet. How much dairy will these people want to consume?

Today, people in South America consume two portions of dairy each day on average. In Europe, average consumption is three portions a day, which is also the recommended amount in some countries.

If in 2050 all people would want to consume two portions of dairy per day, the production of milk would need to double compared to today's production levels. However, we would need to use less resources and produce less waste than we do today. This will be a huge challenge.

Livestock is sometimes criticized for having too much environmental impact. However, we should recognize that milk-producing animals and other ruminants play an important role in creating food from land that is unsuitable for crop production, as well as from crop residues like stalks and leaves that cannot be eaten by humans. A recent study from the USA estimates that if all livestock husbandry would be discontinued, this would lead to nutritional deficiencies for the American population. The impact of taking out livestock would be even greater in developing countries, where many poor people would not be able to survive without livestock. It is clear that dairy has an important role in a sustainable future.

I would like to thank the Ministry of Agriculture and the dairy sector in Cyprus for their contributions to IDF and their support of the Dairy Declaration.

Thank you for your attention.