



IDF WOMEN IN DAIRY REPORT

UNLOCKING ENDLESS POTENTIAL

Issue N° 1 - October 2023



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FOREWORD

For generations, the dairy sector has been contributing to empowerment of women.

- Milk and dairy foods improve nutrition of girls and women at different stages of their life.
- Milk production support the livelihood of millions of women and their families as we as create socio-economic value for rural communities.
- Dairy farming increases/diversify family incomes, especially in developing countries.
- Increase the understanding of food choice and the necessity of food availability through educational efforts, such as school milk programs.

The global dairy sector is strongly committed in helping achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals for the benefits of people and the planet including SDG5: to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Our sector is proactive and dynamic in pursuing this goal.

In 2022 IDF set up a Task Force on Women in Dairy with the goal to:

- filling up the gap in facts and stories on the place of women in all aspect of the dairy value chain and on the contribution of dairy on women empowerment.
- showcasing that IDF is also a source of inspiration and role models for the contribution of women into science, agriculture, and food sector.
- pointing out that IDF offers a wide and rich worldwide network to support and develop their expertise and careers to women.

This report is a testimony of existing practices around the world to empower women in the dairy sector. Helping them to thrive, take up their place and assist the sector in tackling the challenges in transformative food systems.

The 15 case studies brought together in this first edition brings you to each continent, each unique and adapted to locale needs, they showcase examples of women empowerment in every step of the value chain. From veterinary practices in Mexico, increasing production efficiency and market access in



India Senegal and Nigeria to upskilling women in different fields such as the programs in South Africa and New Zealand. The unique insights women can give to develop new products in the examples given from China and Japan. Finally, the vast network provided in national peer groups such as the ones in UK, IE and US.

Agriculture is essential to sustain life by providing food we all need to survive. It is a major employer of women globally and constitute a more important source of livelihood for women than for men in many countries. Dairy has been contributing to the empowerment of women both from nutrition and livelihood perspectives. Our aim is for all in the sector to understand the contribution women can bring and the role they play in assisting the sector in achieving the sustainable development goals.

We are pleased to share with you how women are positively contributing to sustainable dairy.

We trust that the women in these case studies will inspire you! Have a great reading!

A white, handwritten signature on a blue background.

Ms Caroline Emond

1st female DG IDF

Messages from the Co-Chairs of the IDF Task Force on Women in Dairy



In my experience working in the dairy industry throughout the world, I have found women to be inherently focused on positive change and collaboration, both of which are required for development within the dairy industry value chain from farms, to support services, to leadership, governance, and policy. Women are not only working and contributing to their organisations, they are also focused on contributing to their communities, and their families.

In order to support and develop women to contribute in a sustainable way, and keep their experience in the industry, we need workplaces that work for women, adapt technology to make life easier for women, and recognise of the intangible benefits that women fundamentally enable. It's my belief that the inclusion and engagement of women is key to a sustainable dairy industry, and we must continue striving for this.

Ms Lynda Mcdonald

Project Manager Dairy Development, Tetra Pak

As a former President of the IDF, I have been privileged to meet so many IDF members who are running exciting initiatives to empower women in the dairy sector.

We are operating in a world where a lack of gender equality means that the UN dedicated a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 5) to ending discrimination against women and girls, and made gender equality and women's empowerment integral to all 17 SDGs. In the UN's own words, it is proven that empowering women and girls helps economic growth and development.

I am inspired by our IDF members who are taking positive action to make sure women are championed and encouraged within the dairy sector. It's wonderful to see a lot of great women supporting women and to see a lot of great men being strong advocates for the importance of diverse teams which are fully inclusive of women.

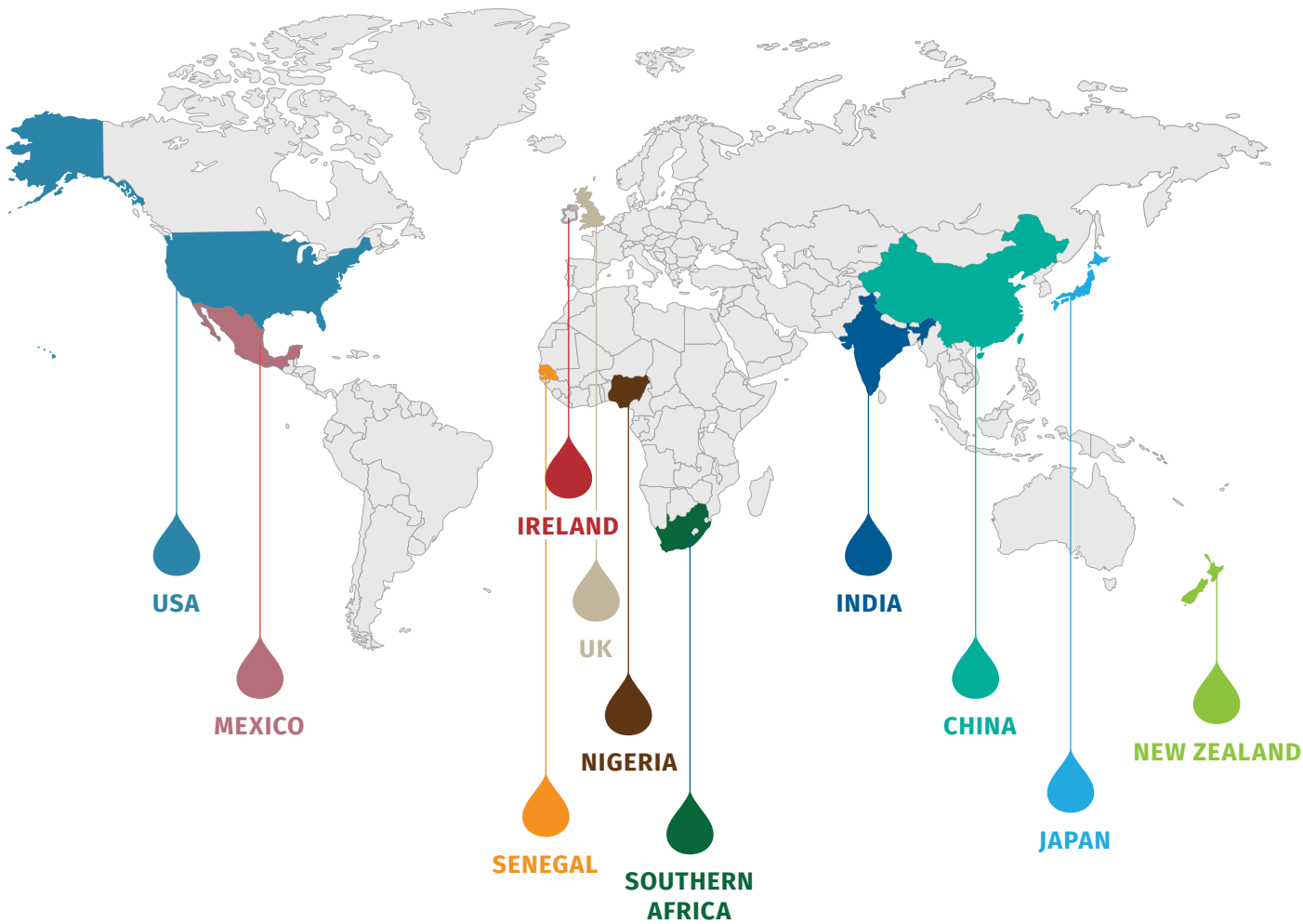
The work of the IDF Task Force on Women in Dairy was put in place for a number of reasons: to understand what we mean by female empowerment as a dairy community, to understand the breadth of initiatives within our dairy world which support women, and so that IDF can showcase what the dairy sector is doing when talking to agencies of the UN and others.



I am delighted that the Task Force has generated so much positivity, excitement and momentum. We will work hard for real tangible outcomes that will move the needle and motivate even more people to take action to empower women in dairy today and encourage women to join dairy in the future.

Dr Judith Bryans

Chief Executive, Dairy UK



- 🍃 Fonterra’s women in STEM
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NEW ZEALAND

Fonterra's Women in STEM

Nurturing diversity for dairy's future

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Sustainable Development Goals

The Fonterra Research & Development Centre (FRDC) contributes significantly to SDG 5, which focuses on Gender Equality, through its efforts to promote gender diversity and empower women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines, particularly within the dairy sector.

Notably, the FRDC's Leadership Team is a testament to its commitment, boasting a remarkable 77% female representation. This commitment to gender balance not only serves as an inspiring model but also actively advances the cause of gender equality in the workplace and the broader industry.

Timeline

The FRDC, with a rich history of 97 years, has been a pillar in the industry. The FGTP program, a cornerstone of our initiatives, has nurtured industry leaders for over half a century. Our commitment to gender diversity, exemplified by our women-to-men ratio, remains an ongoing and steadfast endeavour. Continuously, we champion the cause of promoting women in STEM within Fonterra, regularly assessing and refining our male-to-female ratio statistics as we progress.

The big picture

Fonterra's initiative is a vital step towards addressing the underrepresentation of women in STEM fields, specifically within the dairy sector in New Zealand. With women comprising 52% of their [R&D] workforce and a commitment to diversity, Fonterra is actively promoting female leadership and participation in STEM. This initiative not only strives for gender equality but also recognizes the value of diverse perspectives.

By encouraging women and girls to pursue STEM careers, Fonterra is opening new opportunities and pathways in the dairy industry. This not only empowers women but also leads to enhanced innovation and problem-solving capabilities. Diverse teams are known for their ability to tackle complex challenges, which is crucial in an ever-evolving dairy market.

This initiative goes beyond just numbers; it's about improving livelihoods. By breaking down gender barriers in STEM, Fonterra creates a more inclusive and equitable dairy sector. It provides women and girls with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in STEM roles, ensuring a stronger and more prosperous future for all involved in the dairy industry. We monitor

and voluntarily report our male-female pay gap; we have approx. 1.5% difference between males and females (in favor of females)

In essence, Fonterra's initiative is about creating a more inclusive, forward-thinking, and innovative dairy sector where women and girls have equal opportunities to excel in STEM, ultimately enriching the industry.

The premise

The FRDC initiated efforts to combat gender disparities in STEM, specifically within the dairy industry. This involved addressing challenges such as the underrepresentation of women, combating stereotypes and biases, and creating pathways for women in STEM careers. The FRDC recognised that diversity was crucial for innovation and, as part of its mission, aimed to enhance gender equality within STEM while strengthening its own capabilities in dairy innovation.

Getting the wheel in motion

To empower women in STEM, Fonterra initiated a programme for mentorship, professional development, and leadership training. Creating the Fonterra Graduate Technical Programme (FGTP) over 50 years ago, this supportive environment offers equal opportunities for women. Actions like these pave the way for women to excel in STEM roles, fostering an atmosphere of inclusion and innovation. The Fonterra Research & Development Centre has over 350 staff, and 52% are female.

“Shaping Dairy's Tomorrow by Empowering Women in STEM Today.”

Laurette Batstone



The history of success

FRDC's commitment resulted in a significant increase in the representation of women in STEM roles. Two of the women on the FRDC Leadership Team, which is 77% female, have worked their way up as GM's after starting out with the Fonterra Graduate Technical programme (FGTP). This programme offers the opportunity to gain your Master of Dairy Science and Technology and has been successfully developing industry leaders for over 50 years. Women now hold key positions in research, development, and innovation. This inclusivity has brought fresh perspectives, fuelling innovation and addressing complex challenges more effectively. We believe it has led to significant advancements in dairy science and has added to the success of Fonterra as a leader in the dairy industry.

The value of the initiative

Fonterra's initiative demonstrates the tangible value of gender diversity in STEM. It serves as a model for other organisations, showcasing the benefits of diverse teams in driving innovation, meeting customer needs, and staying competitive in the dairy industry. It underlines the importance of equal opportunities and promotes a more inclusive, forward-thinking, and impactful cooperative.

New opportunities

Fonterra is committed to sustaining and expanding its efforts to empower women in STEM. Fonterra and its Research & Development Centre will continue to support women's growth in STEM, further diversify recruitment pathways, and explore new collaborations and partnerships. Future opportunities include expanding mentoring programs and participating in global initiatives to advance gender diversity in STEM.

References

[Fonterra's Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives.](#)

[More about the FGTP programme.](#)

NIGERIA

Danone Southern Africa's future farmers programme

Upskilling our future farmers initiative

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Sustainable Development Goals

In line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Danone reframed its sustainability goals in 2023 under three pillars namely Health, Nature and People. Included under the Thriving People and Community Pillars, Danone's strives towards being a force for good and this includes the upliftment of our community. Sustainability is part of Danone's DNA and therefore this initiative was a natural befitting venture. Danone understands that people are at the core of the sustainability journey, and it is our privilege and duty to equip and empower communities with skills and capabilities of the future to thrive in a fast changing economy. Danone is proud of the recent strides it has made in transformation and understand the value in fostering a diverse and inclusive workforce where individuals are treated equitably regardless of gender. Moreover, gender-balanced teams contribute to more informed decision-making, bolster the company's reputation, and ensure compliance with legal requirements.

Timeline

Danone partnered with Ncora Dairy in 2022 for the first time and the partnership will continue in the future.

The big picture

The Women in Dairy: Upskilling Our Future Farmers initiative displays the company's ongoing commitment to upskilling and supporting our community of future farmers. Supporting the development of women in the farming industry will have a positive impact on the economy and the development of future farmers. This is at the core of Danone's dual purpose whereas a corporate we are aware of our social and economic responsibility.

“While the future of farming will be shaped by numerous factors and will vary across regions, the increasing recognition of women's contributions in farming and the growing support for gender equality provides a promising outlook for the future of female-driven farms.”

Gisela Maritz

The premise

The programme included a five-day workshop, training learners in dairy manufacturing, quality, operations, marketing, commercial and retail positioning of dairy.

Getting the wheel in motion

Internally Danone has evident success in the transformation of its people. In the last two years the human resources leadership team has developed the correct succession pipeline to future proof the business with high performing teams resulting in a culture to win. This includes proactive measures to achieve global targets of gender balance in management by 2030 as well as driving equity and closing gender pay gap by 2025.

The history of success

Although this is the pilot project of the Future Farming programme it was clear that there has been a valuable skills transfer as delegates were able to connect directly with experts. Danone will continue to connect with the delegates, providing support and guidance on current and upcoming projects.

The value of the initiative

Having women actively engaged in agriculture is of immense value for various reasons, contributing to individual, societal, and global well-being in the following ways:

1. Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction: Empowering women in agriculture can lead to increased





agricultural productivity and income, which in turn contributes to poverty reduction and economic growth in rural areas.

2. **Diversity of Perspectives and Skills:** Women bring unique perspectives, skills, and knowledge to agriculture. Their involvement can lead to more diversified farming practices, innovation, and creative solutions to challenges in the sector.
3. **Family and Community Well-being:** Women often have a central role in managing household resources and ensuring the well-being of their families. Their engagement in agriculture can have positive spillover effects on health, education, and overall community development.
4. **Rural Development:** Women's participation in agriculture can drive rural development by promoting local economies, infrastructure improvement, and social services in rural areas.
5. **Sustainable Practices:** Women have been shown to be more likely to adopt sustainable and environmentally friendly agricultural practices, contributing to long-term ecological balance and resilience.

6. **Empowerment and Gender Equality:** Engaging women in agriculture can empower them economically and socially, helping to challenge gender norms and promote gender equality in rural societies.
7. **Inclusive Decision-Making:** Women's participation in agricultural decision-making processes at all levels can lead to more inclusive, equitable, and effective policies and practices.

New opportunities

Danone will continue to support Ncora Dairy provide guidance related to Regenerative Agriculture practices. 10% of Danone's milk is produced by Ncora Dairy and the aim is to increase this percentage.

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NIGERIA

Arla's milky way partnership programme in Nigeria

Female dairy farmers taking leading positions in Nigeria

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Sustainable Development Goals

By focusing on capacity building in The Milky Way Partnership and implementation of cooperative processes in The Damau Household Milk Farm Project, both looking especially at involving women, Arla Foods and its partners support the ambition of achieving gender equality as outlined in SDG 5.

Both female unemployment (35.2 %) and female underemployment (24.2 %) ranks higher than corresponding male statistics (31.8 % and 24.2 % respectively) according to National Bureau of Statistics Nigeria, Q4 2020.

Taking part in training sessions in The Milky Way Partnership project allowed pastoralist farmers to increase their income due to better milk yield and quality. The majority of farmers participating were women who also acquired a better understanding of the business structure and opportunities of being a farmer and part of the commercial dairy value chain.

With 36 % of Nigerian women facing financial exclusion compared to 24 % for men (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2019),

“We used to hawk milk. We don't anymore and my children go to school now.”

Hadiza Jibrin, female dairy farmer from the Luumo Kosam cooperative in Nigeria

this challenge was also addressed in the initiative helping women set up their own bank accounts and providing information on handling the improved income.

In The Damau Household Milk Farm Project, which aims to settle 1,000 nomadic pastoralist farmers, new cooperatives were formed and with an increased focus on female representation, women were elected to hold managerial positions making sure their voices are heard and included in the development of the future dairy sector in Nigeria.

Timeline

The work began in 2015 when Arla conducted a Human Rights assessment of the domestic dairy value chain. In 2016, The Milky Way Partnership project commenced (to end in 2023). Later, in 2019, the construction of the Damau Household Milk Farm started, and in 2023 the state-of-the-art Arla Dairy Farm was inaugurated. All three pillars serve as a foundation for the new Partnership for Green and Productive Dairy in Nigeria (2023-2028).

The big picture

In Nigeria, women play a pivotal role in traditional pastoralist dairy farming. Women milk the cows, and they own the milk while men own the cows.

Part of the milk is kept for household consumption, the rest is sold, and the income from dairy is spent on household items including nutrition and education of children making it an important commodity. Patriarchal and religious beliefs influence gender roles and household dynamics among traditional pastoralist households, and women have historically had a lesser role in decision-making.

From the very beginning of the Milky Way Partnership, the project has had an enhanced focus on empowerment of women. Communication channels were established to provide women with a formal voice to express their own choices and to ensure that female farmers were well informed of project activities. One of the main achievements has been the democratic election of women to formal positions within the new cooperatives in the Damau Household Milk Farm project. This ensures that in the farm communities, women are fully involved in governance and have a voice to determine the development of a sustainable dairy sector in Nigeria.

The premise

The aim of the initiative was to ensure full inclusion of women in dairy activities. Giving them a voice and involvement in the governance of the cooperatives while also securing financial inclusion and independence for them. To create a sustainable future for dairy farming in Nigeria, female participation is imperative and equal rights is a prerequisite for success.

Getting the wheel in motion

As a large part of women in the pastoralist dairy farming communities have limited access to information, an important first step was to employ a female project assistant to ensure direct communication with female farmers making sure information of the project reached them and also establishing a channel through which they could raise their concerns and wishes freely.

A gender workshop was also held to create a plan of action to promote empowerment of women including steps for women to set up their own bank accounts which only 35 per cent of women in Nigeria have, according





© Hans-Henrik Hoegh

to the National Bureau of Statistics Nigeria (2022).

As a rule, all meetings and workshops in the project were required to have female represented.

The history of success

5,365 female farmers took part in capacity building sessions on topics like Herd Health, Milk & Milking Hygiene, Cooperative Formation & Management and Dairy Business Management. The sessions were offered to both men and women with female representation above 50 per cent.

Another 81 women, made up of farmers, extension agents, milk collection centre managers and livestock specialists, attended additional specialist training in select topics.

181 women and 60 female youths were trained in Feed Entrepreneurship and Skills Acquisition (tailoring, knitting, cosmetology, bedsheet/throw pillow-making) adding additional ways to improve their income.

Democratic election of 31 women to formal positions within new cooperatives in the Damau Household Milk Farm demonstrating acceptance in the traditional pastoral community that women now have a voice

to influence the development of the dairy sector in Nigeria.

The value of the initiative

Women in the traditional pastoralist communities now feel a personal sense of ownership. They are empowered with access to multiple streams of income, not only from dairy farming but also from learning other skills like sewing and soap-making, reducing financial exclusion for women.

Importantly, the overall improved household income has also resulted in their children going to school securing a better starting point for future generations of women in Nigeria and the development of the dairy sector in general.

Three important observations:

1. When mobilised, the number of women taking part in capacity building sessions was greater than that of their male counterparts.
2. When given a dedicated and safe platform, women were comfortable with sharing their concerns and thoughts on the development of the industry.
3. The men in the traditional pastoral communities did not oppose to change as long as they felt involved and included.

New opportunities

Continuation of female representation in training sessions and in leading positions in cooperatives is key to building on the successful results already achieved. Direct female-to-female communication and education on income-improving opportunities are important levers which will be focal points in the future of the initiative.

With The Damau Household Milk Farm and the Arla farm up and running, creating more job opportunities, it is imperative that more women have access to jobs in all areas of the commercial dairy sector and inclusion of women will be monitored and tracked as part of the ongoing work.

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SENEGAL

Caprine milk as source of income instead of a taboo in Senegal

Women empowerment in both caprine and bovine livestock value chains

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Sustainable Development Goals

Milk allows women to improve their living conditions by enabling them to contribute to family expenses and to the security and well-being of the family. Nevertheless, women face many constraints that can limit their income. Our initiative therefore highlights the importance of considering women and their perceptions so that they can also benefit from goat and cattle value chain improvement projects and policies.

Timeline

A two-step research action project was conducted by McGill University and local collaborators in the region of Fatick, Senegal; First (2019-2020), a survey was conducted among a sample of 50 female producers from the bovine and caprine milk value chains; Second (2021), a training program was developed with local actors and tested with 20 women trainees to strengthen some of the skills identified in the first study..

The big picture

The dairy industry in Senegal is developing and evolving in a context of rapid urbanization, population growth, and increasing consumer demand for dairy products, while being met with changes in the dietary behaviour of Senegalese people. The bovine and caprine value chains therefore act as a critical source of nutritionally rich food, helping to meet the dietary needs of millions of Senegalese, particularly children and women of childbearing age. Goat farming is also an important source of meat, especially in rural areas where cattle are not often slaughtered. Despite its nutritional and economic importance, the caprine sector has yet to recover from certain cultural perceptions.

For a holistic examination of women's involvement in goat and bovine production activities in the Fatick livestock sector, a value chain analysis approach was adopted for our study. The value chain is the set of activities that add the value necessary to move a product or service through the different phases of production. This value chain analysis approach allowed us to not only understand women's involvement and perceived contributions in each segment of the bovine and goat value chain (production, processing, transportation, marketing, etc.), but also to understand where opportunities for improvement exist.

The premise

We adopted an action research model in which field activities were implemented following the recommendations of a study conducted in the region on women's involvement and challenges in the livestock production sector.

Getting the wheel in motion

To address some of the issues raised by women and other farmers in the region, training modules co-designed with different local actors were developed. These trainees



© E. Habanabakize, McGill University



© E. Habanabakize, McGill University

were equipped with practical skills and techniques to make animal feed using locally available materials in the context of climate change. Aspects of milk hygiene, as well as processing and marketing of by-products, were also covered during these trainings to allow a diversification of products and revues for the women entrepreneurs.

The history of success

- Recommendations and an intervention strategy were made to help sector stakeholders realize the needs for the challenges raised and act on the opportunities and recommendations to help women improve their livelihoods through livestock production;
- The core mission of universities is capacity building - under this project, together with our local collaborators, we have had an impact on a wide range of target audiences by participating in the training of women graduates and women farmers by strengthening their scientific and technical knowledge.;



© E. Habanabakize, McGill University

“Our study in Fatick, Senegal showed that women are more active in the caprine than the bovine milk value chain, because for most women, access to livestock is by virtue of their relationships with men (husbands, fathers, and sons) who control livestock, and yet in general the men are usually not interested in goats and small ruminants. in general.”

Elsa Vasseur

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The value of the initiative

- 3 graduate students (2 MSc, 1 PhD) from Senegalese universities were trained in community research and scientific knowledge dissemination; they all contributed as co-authors to 2 published peer-reviewed papers in scientific journals;
- 20 trainees became trainers, and therefore were able to transfer the skills acquired to hundreds of farmers over the next few years;
- 2 technical documents in multiple language are available online for the public for self-training.

New opportunities

In order to advance the livestock sector as a whole in the region, there is a need for holistic management policies that fully recognize the role of every key actor, and specifically women in the value chain, as well as the diversity of value chains and their complementarity. To achieve this, it will require the establishment of policies and interventions that intentionally consider the needs and opportunities offered by both the caprine and bovine value chains, while putting gender mainstreaming at the centre of the discussion and reforms.

INDIA

Shreeja's innovation and initiatives

Empowering women, enriching communities

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Sustainable Development Goals

Shreeja's innovation and initiatives contribute to several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), primarily:

1. Goal 1: No Poverty - Shreeja's focus on enhancing the financial well-being of its members, improving savings, and creating assets aligns with the objective of reducing poverty and promoting economic empowerment.
2. Goal 2: Zero Hunger - By promoting dairy farming and increasing milk production, Shreeja contributes to ensuring food security and promoting sustainable agriculture.
3. Goal 5: Gender Equality - Shreeja's emphasis on women's empowerment, representation, and leadership within the dairy sector directly supports the goal of achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.
4. Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth - Shreeja's initiatives provide employment opportunities for women in various roles throughout the dairy supply chain, contributing to inclusive economic growth and decent work.
5. Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production - Shreeja's commitment to promoting sustainable and ethical practices in the dairy industry aligns with the objective of ensuring responsible consumption and production patterns.
6. Goal 15: Life on Land - Shreeja's focus on sustainable agriculture, animal welfare, and environmental conservation contributes to the goal of protecting terrestrial ecosystems and promoting sustainable land use.
7. Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals - Shreeja's collaboration with stakeholders, including members, government agencies, and development organizations, exemplifies the importance of partnerships to achieve sustainable development goals

Timeline

Initiated in 2014 and still thriving

The big picture

Shreeja, with its impressive membership of 1,20,000 women, boasts the world's largest women base in the dairy industry. What sets Shreeja apart is its commitment to empowering women at every stage of the supply chain. From pooling milk to selling the byproducts, Shreeja has strategically engaged women throughout the entire process, ensuring their active participation and economic empowerment. In a groundbreaking move, Shreeja exclusively enrolls women as members, granting them shareholding and ownership in the company. This approach not only provides financial inclusion to its vast membership but also creates a sense of ownership and pride among women in the dairy industry. By recognizing women as key stakeholders, Shreeja promotes a more inclusive and equitable business model. Shreeja has embraced digital technology to streamline operations and improve efficiency. Through digitization, the company ensures timely and transparent payment of milk bills to its 1,20,000 members. Payments are processed every 15 days, offering financial stability and predictability to the women involved.

The premise

Shreeja's initiatives and programs have greatly contributed to women empowerment in the dairy sector and the promotion of female leadership. Here's how:

1. Enhanced Mobility: By offering capacity building programs, Shreeja has empowered women to overcome societal restrictions and actively participate in governance and business functions.
2. Economic Independence: Through their involvement, women have gained

financial autonomy, allowing them to provide nutritious food for their families and build assets.

3. Education and Opportunities: With improved resources, empowered women prioritize quality education for their children, enabling them to pursue higher education and explore wider opportunities.
4. Decision-Making and Growth: Empowered women play an active role in decision-making, benefiting not only themselves but also 1,20,000 families. Their decisions contribute to the overall growth and development of the dairy sector.

Getting the wheel in motion

Shreeja has implemented several initiatives and programs aimed at enhancing female leadership and empowering women within the dairy sector. These include:

1. Women only Membership: Shreeja has a unique policy of enrolling only women as members, granting them shareholding and ownership in the company. This approach ensures that women have a direct stake in the organization and decision-making processes.
2. Women centric Supply Chain: Shreeja has strategically engaged women across its entire supply chain, from milk pooling to selling byproducts. By placing women in key operational roles, the organization promotes their leadership and active participation in the dairy sector.
3. Financial Inclusion: Shreeja has financially included its 1,20,000 women members by providing them with regular and transparent payment systems. The company digitized milk bill payments, ensuring that women receive their earnings promptly and enabling them to manage their finances effectively.



**"I am a housewife.
And on the
board of directors!"**

*Name: Thayamma
Place: Atlavari Palli, Penumur Mandal, Chittoor Dist.*

"I have been a proud member of the Shreeja. Not only do I sell milk to the company but I have been an active associate too. I was first selected as a VCG and MRG member. Later I was made to attend their Leadership Development Programme where I learnt how to feel and act in an empowered manner. Now, I have been elected as one of the 11 board members of the company.



**"I couldn't go to school.
But today my son
is a pharmacist"**

*Name: Suguna
Place: Kalavagunta,
Penumur Mandal, Chittoor Dist*

"Being a widow, I was struggling to make a living with two cows. That's when I joined Shreeja. With better income and strong support, I was able to afford good education to my son and daughter. My son working as a Pharmacist.

4. **Women led Policy Governance:** Shreeja has implemented a women-led policy governance model, ensuring the representation of women members from small, marginal, and big farming backgrounds. This inclusive approach allows for diverse perspectives and ensures that decision-making processes reflect the needs and aspirations of all women in the organization.
5. **Two tier Governance Structure:** Shreeja has established a two-tier governance structure consisting of the Village Contact Group and the Member Relation Group. The Village Contact Group comprises representatives from every seven members, while the Member Relation Group represents one village. These groups serve as platforms for developing leadership qualities among women members, encouraging their active participation in shaping the organization's direction.

The history of success

Based on the sample survey conducted among 5,000 Shreeja members, several key performance indicators (KPIs) illustrate the impact of the organization's initiatives on women empowerment in the dairy sector. The survey revealed significant positive outcomes:

1. **Savings Improvement Rate:** 100% of surveyed members reported improved savings, indicating the effectiveness of Shreeja's initiatives in enhancing financial well-being.
2. **Decision making Influence Rate:** 100% of members stated their families consult them for major expenses, highlighting increased involvement in decision-making processes.
3. **Asset Creation Rate:** 77% invested in bovine animals, 23% in house repairs, 12% in land, and 27% in other assets, demonstrating the positive impact on asset creation.
4. **Affordability Index:** 100% of members reported affordability improvements in clothes, education, and health services, indicating enhanced economic independence.
5. **Social Empowerment Index:** 100% of members experienced positive social changes, such as contributing to household income, gaining respect, and reducing drudgery.
6. **Nutritional Consumption Rate:** Among surveyed members, higher consumption



“Milked with Might: Women at the Helm.”

M.Nishanth

of pulses, fruits, and milk and milk products was reported, showcasing improved nutrition.

The value of the initiative

Since its 2014 inception, this initiative has injected ₹3600 crores into the rural economy by ensuring all milk payments flow through individual bank accounts. Additionally, profits totalling ₹40 crore are returned to the producers. As a ₹1000 crore entity run by milk producers, the initiative underscores several key learnings:

1. Placing women at the forefront catalyses development.
2. Dairy offers stability in the often unpredictable agricultural sector.
3. Leveraging dairying for rural transformation necessitates empowering women.
4. Elevating women in dairy not only empowers them but paves the way for household prosperity, community growth, and national sustainable development

New opportunities

The horizon beckons promising developments for our initiative. Over the next five years, we

aim to integrate an additional 1,000,000 women members. Embracing the digital era, we're set to incorporate Artificial Intelligence and IoT throughout our dairy supply chain. An environmentally-conscious pivot is underway as we target decarbonisation and transition towards alternative energy sources. We'll also tailor our product range to align with evolving consumer preferences. Most significantly, we envision amplifying our members' profits tenfold, a testament to our commitment to community prosperity and sustainable growth.

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INDIA

The tale of Vasudhara dairy

Empowering women through dairy

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Sustainable Development Goals

Vasudhara Dairy's initiatives align with several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). First, in relation to SDG 1: No Poverty, the dairy cooperative societies of Vasudhara Dairy generate rural employment, providing livelihoods for individuals who may otherwise struggle with poverty and lack of opportunities. Through dairy, women are not only able to support themselves and their families but also contribute to the overall economic growth of their communities by stopping migration in search for food and income.

Second, in line with SDG 2: Zero Hunger, Vasudhara Dairy plays a crucial role in promoting food security and sustainable agriculture. By encouraging dairy farming, providing training on animal husbandry, and promoting the use of improved breeds, Vasudhara Dairy contributes to increased milk production and improved nutrition in women. And since India being a vegetarian country, milk is a prime source of protein and multi-vitamins.

Furthermore, Vasudhara Dairy's efforts are aligned with SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being. Through training programs, the dairy cooperative societies educate women members on proper animal care, vaccination, and disease prevention, ensuring the health and well-being of both the animals and the women.

Lastly, Vasudhara Dairy actively supports SDG 5: Gender Equality by empowering women in rural areas. By actively involving women in dairy activities and providing them with leadership roles, the cooperative societies challenge gender norms and promote gender equality. Women gain decision-making power, economic

“Empowering Rural Women: Vasudhara Dairy's Transformational Impact.”

Narendra B Vashi

independence, and increased self-confidence, transforming their lives and breaking barriers that have long hindered their progress.

Timeline

The initiative started from 1973 and it is still going strong.

The big picture

Vasudhara Dairy deserves recognition for its innovative approach to addressing rural unemployment and promoting women empowerment in remote villages. By involving women in dairy activities and providing leadership roles, it challenges traditional gender roles and creates sustainable income opportunities.

With 75% of its members being women, Vasudhara Dairy empowers women economically and socially. Its initiatives align with multiple Sustainable Development Goals, including Ppoverty Aalleviation, Ffood Ssecurity, Ggood Hhealth, and Ggender Eequality. By generating rural employment, promoting sustainable agriculture, ensuring animal health, and empowering women, Vasudhara Dairy contributes to holistic community development.

The organization's strategic decision to form women-only cooperative dairy societies has proven successful, with increased milk procurement and rapid expansion into tribal areas. Through training programs, Adivasi women are equipped with practical knowledge to improve milk production and farming practices. Vasudhara Dairy's impactful approach to addressing local challenges and empowering women is deserving of recognition.

The premise

Vasudhara Dairy's initiatives, such as the Swavambi Gramin Nari scheme, Self-Help Groups (SHGs), the Calf Rearing Scheme, and bio-gas plant construction, have contributed significantly to women empowerment and female leadership in the dairy sector. Through subsidized cow loans, women have gained economic independence and become role models in their communities. The formation of SHGs has fostered collaboration and empowered women with financial management skills. The Calf Rearing Scheme has provided women with the opportunity to showcase their animal husbandry capabilities, generating income and instilling pride. Women's involvement in biogas plant construction has promoted sustainable





practices and positioned them as leaders in environmental protection. Overall, these initiatives have empowered women economically, enhanced their skills, and positioned them in the dairy sector in such a way that at present Vasudhara Dairy's Vice-Chairman is Mrs. Sudhaben Patel, a woman who is leading more than 1 lac farmers.

Getting the wheel in motion

Vasudhara Dairy has developed specific initiatives to enhance female leadership and empower women in the dairy sector. These include self-help groups, cow loans, heifer-rearing schemes, bio-gas plants, and financial assistance for modern cattle sheds.

The Dairy acts as a guarantor and a financing platform for women members and provides cow loans exclusively to women, enabling them to acquire cows for milk production and improve their economic well-being. This way Vasudhara Dairy also brings financial assistance to the doorstep of the women. Heifer-rearing schemes provide women with young female calves, promoting sustainable animal husbandry and income generation through the sale of mature cows or milk production.

The dairy facilitates the formation of self-help groups for women, providing a platform for knowledge-sharing, access to financial services, training, and entrepreneurial skill development.

Vasudhara Dairy also sets up bio-gas plants for clean cooking, utilizing cow dung and organic waste to produce biogas. This

initiative improves women's health by reducing indoor air pollution and relieving the burden of firewood collection. Financial assistance for modern cattle sheds supports women in improving animal husbandry practices, promoting animal welfare, and enabling efficient and sustainable dairy farming.

These initiatives demonstrate the dairy's commitment to promoting female leadership, economic independence, and overall empowerment of women in the dairy sector. By providing resources, skills, and support, Vasudhara Dairy empowers women to become self-reliant and improve their livelihoods.

The history of success

Vasudhara Dairy's initiatives have had a profound impact, as demonstrated by key performance indicators (KPIs).

- The Swavlambi Gramin Nari (Cow Loan) Scheme witnessed an increase in beneficiaries from 857 to 2,256, with a cumulative total of 62,048. The loan amount provided rose from Rs. 261.18 crores, while recovery amounts reached Rs. 251.26 crores.
- The Heifer Rearing Scheme achieved a cumulative total of 59,780 heifers, with loans of Rs. 47.64 crore and consistent recovery amounts.
- The Self-Help Group Scheme formed 5018 groups, accumulating savings of Rs. 161.74 crores and involving 93,816 members.

- The Biogas Plant Scheme saw a remarkable increase in the number of installed units, from 28 in 2018-19 to 242 by 2022-23, totaling 11,042 units. The scheme also received substantial funding with a cumulative total of Rs. 31.26 lakh.

These metrics highlight the significant and sustainable impact of Vasudhara Dairy's initiatives on rural communities, including increased income, improved living conditions, and enhanced socio-economic status.

The value of the initiative

Through the continuous efforts of Vasudhara Dairy, more than 75,000 women spread across more than 800 villages have received self-employment and a sustainable livelihood. Through the means of dairying, these women have been able to earn a monthly income of INR 8,000. Through this income, they have uplifted their socioeconomic status by providing high-quality education to their children and building Pucca houses. Those who want to work in this area can achieve great results by identifying the pain areas for women and solving those areas with utmost integrity and perseverance.

New opportunities

For newer opportunities, we are planning to establish multi-commodity FPOs (Farmer Producer Organisations) to increase the income of women. These FPOs will mainly trade in agricultural commodities like honey, pulses, fruits, and green fodder that is available locally at our women members' farms. With the ever-increasing inflation and the rising input costs for dairy, it is necessary that our women members can get additional income in which these FPOs can become helpful. In addition, with the Government of India's 10000 FPO scheme, these FPOs can avail the grants and benefits for business operations.

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INDIA

Asha Mahila milk producer company empowerment through dairy

All women milk producer a radiant symbol of empowerment

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Sustainable Development Goals

The Company is contributing to **Goal 4, 5, 8 and 9** of UN Sustainable Development Goals.

For the Asha Mahila Milk Producer Company, milk is not just a commodity but a catalyst to empower women across its area of operations. Being a completely women-owned organization, managed by a women Board of Directors, has resulted in developing confident women leader entrepreneurs who now have become a significant contributors to their own household income. Having demonstrated their acumen, they are no longer considered any less, rather their advice & suggestions are sought by the family members. All of this has been possible because of the creation of a sustainable livelihood. This has opened doors of **entrepreneurship and women's participation in the workforce** in one of the most challenging geographies.

The sweeping socio-economic change is not confined only to them but has had a cascading effect on the families as their children have access to better education opportunities and nutritious food owing to the better price realisation for the milk they pour in their organization.

Asha makes payments digitally directly into the bank accounts of its members, this has led to **financial inclusion** as now members can easily avail various banking facilities like loan, Kisan credit cards, interest incomes, ATM usage etc.

To ensure uninterrupted business continuity Asha has set up a **robust infrastructure** to carry out activities along the dairy value chain, which include milk pooling points and milk chilling centres well equipped

“Churning change - empowering women by unleashing collective strength to bloom in dairy sector.”

Mr. Dharmendra Malik

to ensure milk quality, thereby benefitting the producers with transparent payment mechanism and consumers with quality milk. Recently Asha has deployed **solar based milk chilling equipment** at its Milk Pooling Points. In addition to promoting the use of renewable energy, it helps cut down on the use of electricity while also ensuring milk quality.

Timeline

Asha Mahila Milk Producer Company was incorporated in March 2016 with only 11 women milk producer members and commenced its operations in November, 2016.

Since, the company has achieved a membership base of over 35,000 women producer members, operating in more than 650 villages and intends to at least double the amount of villages and triple the member coverage by the end of 2027.

This journey reflects a commitment to self-sufficiency and a desire to transition from majorly a B2B player to a cherished consumer brand. We are dedicated to diversifying our product portfolio beyond milk, cottage cheese, and ghee (clarified butter) to include processed products like cheese, yogurt, curd, dairy based sweets, and ice creams.

While initially regional, we are now focused to cater to a nationwide audience.

We are determined to become a leading milk brand in the country.

The big picture

Headquartered in Rajasthan, geographically the largest and the 7th most populated Indian state. Yet it lacks industrialization and thus has lesser avenues of employment. Most women are uneducated, therefore, participation and recognition of women in livelihood is even lesser.

Asha Mahila Milk Producer Company, follows an innovative approach where opportunities are not confined to the existing desirable set of people but follows an equitable and pragmatic approach to upgrade and uncover the untapped potential of all women farmer members.

From being looked upon as a dependent member, making no monetary contribution to the family income, to now looked up to as an important earning member and a financial contributor, Asha has turned farfetched dreams into reality.

- A completely women-owned Organization, managed by a women Board of Directors
- 85% of the revenue of Asha goes back as milk payments directly to the farmers' bank account.
- To cater the consumer demand, in addition to institutional sales of milk, Asha has ventured into retail sales under the brand name 'Marudhara'. Currently the product range includes dahi (curd), paneer (cottage cheese) and ghee (clarified butter).



The premise

In the rugged terrain of Rajasthan characterized by the undulating topography with scarce groundwater resources, the aim of our initiative is to empower women through helping build a sustainable source of income. We are committed to reshaping the mindset of population, challenging age-old norms, and fostering gender equality by providing women the means to achieve financial independence.

Getting the wheel in motion

Asha has successfully implemented a range of initiatives aimed at empowering women and enhancing their involvement in leadership roles. Since the Board includes women Directors, there are multiple initiatives put in place to unravel their prowess. These initiatives encompass Leadership Development Programs that provide comprehensive training, including financial management and leadership development, enabling women to participate actively in governance. Additionally, the Women's Education Program equips them with essential dairy sector knowledge for improved productivity and profitability. Industry exposure visits to top dairy manufacturing units broaden their horizons and boost motivation. These efforts have led to increased female participation in membership and governance, fostering confidence, entrepreneurial skills, and a transformed perception of dairy farming as a reliable source of livelihood in the operational area of the company.

The history of success

- Clocked a turnover of Rs. 224.67 Crore / USD 27.1 million

- In FY 2022-23, distributed ₹71,55,000/- as loyalty incentive to its members. Additionally, paid a dividend of ₹8 per share, benefiting 35,000 families.
- 9 out of 11 board members are women who have been elected democratically
- Cost optimization enabling higher producer share in the consumer rupee: around 85% of the revenue is paid back to the women farmer members
- Eliminating middlemen resulting in fair and transparent system: The MPC has established direct milk procurement facilities thereby eliminating the exploitation by middlemen. The intervention of technology has led to timely payments directly into the bank accounts of the members.
- About 730 stakeholders – sahayaks, transporters, AI technicians and channel partners etc. have benefited from the direct and indirect employment opportunities generated.

The value of the initiative

The value of this initiative extends beyond economic gains, an all-women milk producer company emerges as a radiant symbol of empowerment. Women, once bound by tradition, now stand as pillars of strength both social and economic; it encompasses community development, gender equality and sustainable livelihood.

Others can draw inspiration and practical lessons from this experience to address similar challenges in different regions by replicating our model. By building partnerships with local and central government agencies, and NGOs similar to what we have done they can enhance the success and sustainability of such initiatives.

New opportunities

Asha has been transforming hopes to reality and this is our ongoing indispensable goal. We foresee the future of this initiative on a vibrant canvas, where each stroke of innovation and determination paints a picture of growth, empowerment, and sustainable prosperity for the women of Rajasthan by taking up following steps:

- Diversifying Product Range: We look forward to the launch of new value-added products like yogurt, and packaged milk, tapping into a broader consumer market.
- Harnessing the Export Potential: With a solid foundation, the company is exploring regional and international markets, creating opportunities for increased revenue and global recognition.
- Skill Exchange Programs: Collaborations with other women-led initiatives can facilitate knowledge sharing, enhancing skills and fostering a sense of solidarity.
- Community Development: Further invest in community projects like education assistance for the kids of the members, commencing scholarship programs for kids performing exceptionally well in their curriculum, etc.

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INDIA

Learnings from Sakhi

A bottom-up approach to empowerment through dairying

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Sustainable Development Goals

The Company is contributing to Goals 1, 2, 5, 8 and 9 of UN Sustainable Development Goals.

At Sakhi, milk surpasses its mere commodity status, becoming a potent catalyst for empowering women throughout its expansive area of operations. Dairying, far from being a mere occupation, bestows upon women the invaluable gift of the ability to generate income, thereby enabling them to alleviate out of poverty and directly contribute to their households' livelihoods, ensuring food security and uplift their quality of life. Inclusion of women in the dairy sector has illuminated the path towards greater gender equality in society, allowing rural women to make decisions and take leadership roles.

Through its grassroot interventions, Sakhi has created numerous direct and



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indirect employment opportunities for functionaries such as Sahayaks, MAIT, and other stakeholders. The organization's commitment to nurturing its workforce shines through its comprehensive training programs, equipping each individual with the necessary skills to access dignified work and enhance their employability.

To ensure uninterrupted business continuity Sakhi has set up a robust infrastructure (9) to carry out activities along the dairy value chain, which include milk pooling points and milk chilling centres well equipped to ensure milk quality. Sakhi has harnessed the power of technology to build a path of transparency and accessibility. A mobile-based application has been adopted in the system that allows members to gain insights into their data in both English and Hindi. From daily pouring details to historical statistics, from payment information to member passbooks, this ensures that members remain well-informed.

Timeline

Sakhi Dairy was founded on March 19, 2016, and it continues to thrive, driving positive change in the lives of women in the dairy sector

The big picture

In the culturally rich land of Rajasthan, where patriarchal traditions have long held sway, a beacon of change shines brightly. Sakhi, stands as a testimony to the power of women's empowerment. Sakhi is helping women dairy farmers break societal norms that limit autonomy and perpetuate gender inequality.

Sakhi has disrupted this cycle of inequality and emerged as a catalyst for

“Sakhi Dairy: Where Dreams Breed, Women Lead and Communities Succeed.”

Dharmendra Kumar

transformation. Unlike the unorganized milk-selling mechanisms of the past, where farmers would sell milk to middlemen and wait months for minimal or no payments, Sakhi has leveraged technology and introduced a revolutionary 10-day payment cycle. Its cloud-based computing software ensures a fair and transparent payment mechanism for its women dairy farmer members. Payments are directly credited to their bank accounts. Furthermore, Sakhi has launched a mobile application that allows members to effortlessly track their records with just a few taps. In 2022-23, 85% of the total revenue was utilized for member payments.

The premise

Being a completely women-owned organization the activities and the programmes greatly contributed to women empowerment in the dairy sector and female leadership. Women, who had never stepped out of their houses are attending board meetings, organizing awareness drives and maintaining company accounts. They are now being treated as equal to men. Sakhi symbolizes the essence of empowerment, breaking down barriers and developing an environment where women can thrive. With the help of financial inclusion and independence, the socio-economic



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advancement of rural women is very much evident. They now access formal banking services, deposit and save money. This has created a virtuous cycle of progress, touching the lives of their children and family in remarkable ways. Their children are now exposed to better education opportunities and family to better nutrition, housing and sanitation as a result of the improved price realization for the milk they pour.

Getting the wheel in motion

To enhance the female leadership and women empowerment in the dairy sector Sakhi initiated the following initiatives for its members:

- Digital payments** – which allowed members to access finance and resources like bank credit and agricultural inputs necessary for dairy farming or other related businesses. By linking members with other government and financial sector schemes, women members have access to better facilities and cheaper credit which helps them grow their own enterprise.
- Leadership Development Programmes**, which aims to train and prepare women to participate as active members and leaders in the company's governance. The program includes various training modules, financial management/ banking operations related training, fostering leadership

development, and educating them about management duties and roles etc. Women members are encouraged to become more aware of their rights and responsibilities as owners of the company.

- Women's education program**, here the women are taught the nuances of the dairy sector including good animal management practices for better productivity thereby realizing better profits.
- Industry exposure visits** to other world class dairy manufacturing units, this helps in broadening their horizon of aspirations and get motivated to achieve their goals.

The history of success

- Clocked a turnover of ₹ 345 Crore / USD 41.7 million
- In FY 2022-23, distributed ₹ 179 million as loyalty incentive to its members. Additionally, paid a dividend of ₹8 per share amounting to ₹ 54 million, benefiting 36,000 families.
- 8 board members are women who have been elected democratically
- Cost optimization enabling higher producer share in the consumer rupee: around 83% of the revenue is paid back to the women farmer members
- Eliminating middlemen resulting in fair and transparent system: The MPC has established direct milk procurement

facilities thereby eliminating the exploitation by middlemen. The intervention of technology has led to timely payments directly into the bank accounts of the members.

- About 1000+ stakeholders – sahayaks, transporters, AI technicians and channel partners etc. have benefited from the direct and indirect employment opportunities generated.

The value of the initiative

Sakhi Dairy's transformative approach demonstrates that gender equality and economic progress can go hand in hand. By empowering women through dairy farming, it has created a model that not only improves livelihoods but also fosters female leadership, promotes financial inclusion, and strengthens rural communities. Sakhi's success serves as a beacon of hope, showcasing the immense potential of women in agriculture and providing a roadmap for others to follow.

New opportunities

- Further enhance women's participation in leadership roles, promoting gender-inclusive governance.
- Enhance sustainability in dairying by reducing its carbon footprint by increasing adaptation of renewable energy.
- Expand both vertically and horizontally and empower more women associated with dairy farming – launch more consumer products and also formalize fodder operations for cattle by setting up an FPO
- Continue leveraging technology for transparency and accessibility to benefit even more women in the dairy value chain.

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INDIA

Paayas – story of transformation of women in rural Rajasthan

Behind the veil to profitable business

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Sustainable Development Goals

Out of 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, Paayas has been able to contribute in 11 goals

1. No Poverty – The model by design provides employment and business opportunities largely to small and marginal farmers based out of small village hamlets with little income from agriculture in arid & semi-arid zones. Therefore supporting livelihoods to decrease poverty.
2. Zero Hunger - Employment of poor farmers placed in remote hamlets restricts risks of hunger, as well as provides availability of the milk and a diversity of dairy products.
3. Gender Equality – No reservation, equal remuneration, voting rights, facilities, growth opportunities are clearly defined principles in the model.
4. Good Health and Well-Being - Massive sensitization campaigns to educate all members, especially female members, and rural youth on clean milk production and dairying as employment generator.
5. Quality Education – The company has provided scholarships to nearly 3700 students in past years to enable them to attain their basic education. Students of class 9,10,11 and 12 are provided with scholarships on merit basis.
6. Reduced Inequality - Parity in all aspects such as member's admission, payment of milk, voting right, shares, board formation, etc. No reservation on caste, creed, race, religion is permitted.
7. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure – Paayas developed sustainable and resilient infrastructure through its dairy value chain equipped with strong IT based system in about 3500 small hamlets.

“Paayas - Success story of Women purely on the principle of ‘Equality’, No Feminism or Machoism.”

Dr Jayendra Chaturvedi

In addition, decent work and economic growth opportunities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, peace justice and strong institutions, are other parameters which Paayas fulfills with high success rate.

Timeline

It started in Dec 2012 and is still ongoing.

The big picture

In rural society ridden with low women literacy, poverty and hunger, Paayas created a sustainable, technology based, transparent platform for women.

Starting milk procurement in such an environment, Paayas made inroads in remote villages and empowered women, the backbone of dairying, yet deprived of a fair share.

Instead of the easiest reservation route that organizations follow to promote women, Paayas created a competitive environment for men and women using technical & human interventions. Company achieved technological breakthrough in between illiterate and technophobic women by applying massive extension and L&D tools.

Indian Dairy Association has conferred the national level award to Paayas women members for 3 times in just 10 years of inception. They have been awarded due to:

- their assuming Board member / chairperson role,
- their 3-fold growth in membership to 40000,
- 6 times growth in Village Contact Group.

The premise

In the quest of becoming a world class dairy organisation, the foremost challenge is to perform with limited resources under typical socio-economic conditions of state. The aim is to “Create World class organisation on Principle of Equality, with no bias towards Gender, Caste, Creed, Race or Economic status”.

Getting the wheel in motion

Change strategies were applied at the following level

- Technological
- Strategic
- Human Resource Management (HRM)
- Financial Inclusion



Few Glimpse of Women Empowerment Through Dairying



Dairy Woman Award 2016



Dairy Woman Award 2017



Dairy Woman Award 2023



Annual General Meeting



Launch of Cow Ghee at IDF-World Dairy Summit



49th Dairy Industry Conference

To establish transparency, at the very beginning, the company implemented a automated milk procurement system throughout the dairy value chain right from the farmer to the processing level. Post pouring, in no time, message containing shift wise pouring details like quantity, fat, solid not fat (SNF), value, etc. reaches members through SMS / mobile application. SAP –ERP was put in place early during our journey to further strengthen transparency.

Massive communication events were organized covering the majority of the population in the operational area with various awareness and educational programs. Member education was provided as well as learning and a development platform was created to improve efficiency and productivity of dairy women. Some of the programs launched under the said intervention are: Women Awareness Program (WAP), Producer Awareness Program (PAP), Clean Milk Production (CMP) Awareness Program, SAMVAAD Program, Leadership Development Program.

Traditionally payment of sales proceeds to milk producers remained in the form of cash, leaving scope of ambiguity. Cash was mostly received by males. Realizing it to be a major deterrent towards women freedom and empowerment, under financial inclusion techniques, massive banking drive was taken up in rural hinterland. Paayas is one of the pioneers to have gotten bank accounts opened for all the members and remitting hundred percent sales proceeds to them only through their respective bank account. This helped to put the women members in the driving seat.

The history of success

KPI under women leadership: -

- National Recognition – In the first 10 years of inception Paayas created a record when its women members won the National IDA award 3 times.
- Incremental Women participation at all level- Our women membership grew 3 folds (11,455 in 2013 to 38,241 in 2023), women participation in Village Contact

Group grew six folds (450 in 2015 to 2,781 in 2023). Further, From 18% female directors in 2013 to 36% in 2023 in male majority board. Since 2018, females have been getting elected as Chairperson.

- Scalability and viability of model- Highest turnover of 17,271 million at volume of 880 Thousand Kilogram per day achieved in 2019-20. Sustainance during the COVID-19 pandemic without any setback indicates strong business foundation.
- Implementation of plan of National significance with utmost success – Front runners in successful implementation of 4 sub-projects under National Dairy Plan I.

The value of the initiative

The initiatives brought significant change in the life of female members -:

- Paayas created a platform for healthy competition among men and women without any discrimination or reservation. Women membership grew 40000 which is a major milestone for any mixed gender producer organization.

Few Glimpse of Women Empowerment Through Dairying



Visit of Mr. Thomas R Carter



Visit of Mongolian representatives



Visit of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) representatives



Visit of Ms. Helen Leitch
World Bank representative



Visit of Mr. Edward W. Beesnyan
World Bank Representative

- National Award to women members 3-fold by Indian Dairy Association in just 10 year of inception showcases the fame and performance standards that are generated by company's initiative.
- Hailing from ordinary background, a few of women members reached to topmost position of Board of Director and Chairperson.
- Paayas has its formed Village Contact group (VCG) from amongst members to act as bridge between producers and company. Women participation as a VCG member rose by 6 times in a short span, clearly depicting the success of the said women empowerment.

New opportunities

Whatever is produced needs to be sold and hence buzzword is sales and marketing. Current levels of cattle feed sales is 42,000 metric tonne, milk sales is 80,000 lt/day, ghee sales is 890 metric tonne, which would allow for further growth. Company's aim is to create a strong procurement network with input services and to establish sustainable livelihood opportunities. Strengthen the business opportunities for sales of milk and products supported by input product and services. Company is primarily collecting its raw material in the form of milk through a well-established channel. This gives a great market opportunity and sustainable employment opportunity to women who can utilize this supply channel into a profitable marketing centre. Thus strategy is to provide the latest information on technology tools , L&D Environment and Growth Opportunities. The future is "creation of sustainable rural distribution channel for women".

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www.paayasmilk.com

CHNIA

Yili Group career promotion system

Empowering female quality managers and showcasing female leadership in the dairy industry

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Sustainable Development Goals

Establishing a fair career promotion channel, promoting fairness and transparency in procedures, processes, and outcomes, Yili Group has made outstanding contributions to the goal of “Gender Equality”.

The establishment of dairy colleges and digital teaching centers ensures equal access to high- quality technical, vocational, and higher education for all women, significantly increasing the mastery of relevant skills required for work and making outstanding contributions to the goal of “quality education”.

The dairy industry has a large proportion of maternal and infant products, and female leadership has been more fully utilized here, demonstrating huge advantages. With the experience of employees who are mothers, we have gained a better understanding of the feelings of target consumers and every detail of demands. We have developed more high-quality maternal and children's products and services than before that are trusted and loved by consumers, making outstanding contributions to the goals of “Eliminating Hunger” and “Good Health and Well-Being”.

Women join social organizations and assume external positions, many of whom are international organizations such as the China National Committee of the International Dairy Federation (IDF) and the China National Accreditation Commission for Conformity Assessment. They exchange and share information and talents from around the world, making outstanding contributions to the goal of “Promoting Partnerships to Achieve Goals”.

Timeline

Since its establishment in 1993, Yili Group has been establishing, implementing, and improving a fair career promotion system, encouraging and promoting women's participation in social organizations. In 2019 and 2023, digital teaching centres and dairy colleges were established respectively, providing more empowerment opportunities for female quality management workers. In the future, it will continue to promote women's ability to demonstrate more abilities in the dairy value chain.

The big picture

The project empowers female quality managers through a diversity of measures, enhances women's professional and management capabilities, and opens up to female technical talents and management talents. The specific innovation points are as follows:

“Yili Group has made significant contributions to the global Sustainable Development Goals by empowering women and girls to the fullest extent possible in the dairy value chain.”

Wan Peng





- Establish a “dual channel” professional development system for technology and management and provide women a fair (diversified) professional competition environment.
- Build a comprehensive women’s empowerment training system covering professional technology, leadership enhancement, project management, and other fields. Through expert interpretation, practical interaction, and other forms, continuously improve women’s professional technology and management abilities in the process of women’s work and enhance women’s competitiveness.
- Encourage women to undertake research on national, industry, enterprise and other scientific and technological projects, increase their participation in scientific and technological decision-making, and

support women to play a greater role in scientific and technological innovation.

- Encourage women to take on external positions and provide them with greater growth opportunities. Through social platforms, women engage in technological innovation, expansion and improvement, collaborative development, inclusive sharing, and dedication to society.

The premise

By establishing training systems such as dairy colleges and digital teaching centers, we empower 100% of female staff and assist them in enhancing their professional and management abilities and competitive advantages.

Establish a “dual channel” career development system, establish an open and fair competition system, and provide

women with fair promotion opportunities. The proportion of middle-level leaders increased from 16.7% to 45.5%, and the proportion of expert women increased from 30% to 37.5%.

Encourage women to join social organizations, with over 60% of external positions held by women. There are 2 deputies to the National People’s Congress, 1 national women’s representative, 2 “Grassland Talents” in Inner Mongolia, 3 members of the China National Committee of the International Dairy Federation (IDF), and 3 auditors of the China National Accreditation Committee for Conformity Assessment. Leveraging social platforms, they engage in technological innovation, expansion and improvement, collaborative development, inclusive sharing, and dedication to society.

Encourage women to undertake research on scientific and technological projects with 65 internal and external scientific and technological projects completed, 13 external scientific and technological awards received, and over 120 professional papers published. More than 50% of the research projects are dominated by female from 2008 to 2023. Improving women's innovation ability and participation in scientific and technological decision-making and leveraging the voice of female scientific and technological talents in scientific and technological work.

Getting the wheel in motion

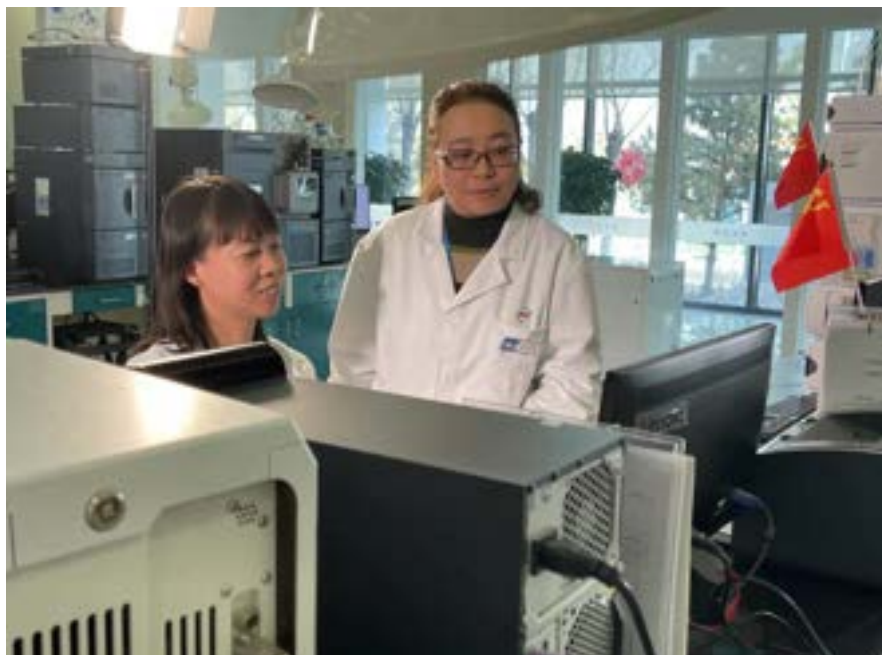
Build a comprehensive training system for women's professional and leadership abilities and jointly establish the Dairy College with Inner Mongolia Agricultural University to create a high-level education and teaching base for professional talent cultivation. Establish an online digital teaching center and develop thousands of professional and leadership courses. All of them are free and open! Develop auditor training courses for the inspection engineer group which accounts for 90% of women and establish a training program from internal auditors to national auditors.

Encourage women to undertake research on national, industry, and enterprise science and technology projects, establish project management methods and reward systems. Provide funding, personnel, venues and other resources to support projects, and improve supporting logistics support services.

Encourage women to take on external positions, provide greater growth opportunities for women, assign dedicated personnel to assist and guide females in running for National People's Congress and women's representatives, join social organizations such as the Women's Science and Technology Association and IDF and provide continuous professional team support to selected women and helping them play a greater role on social platforms.

The history of success

- More than 45% of middle-level leaders are women;
- More than 35% of experts are female;
- 1 Dairy College;
- 1 digital teaching center;



- 1 set of training system for auditors of the National Accreditation Commission;
- 100% of women have access to training opportunities;
- More than 50% of women hold external positions;
- More than 50% of the research projects completed are female dominated.

The value of the initiative

By providing fair promotion opportunities and empowerment platforms for female managers in the dairy industry, enhancing women's leadership in the dairy industry can help enhance the gender diversity of the executive team. This not only enhances the inclusiveness and cohesion of the work team, but also facilitates innovative work, making the team more harmonious and efficient. Simultaneously developing the potential of women can also help businesses and industries, as well as solve the increasingly severe talent shortage problem

New opportunities

To further enhance the leadership of female quality managers in the dairy industry, companies should proactively identify high potential women within their teams, develop succession plans for them, and refine them into specific action plans, timelines, and goals. At the same time, outstanding female managers can be used as role models to promote their successful cases within the team, in order to enhance women's

confidence in career development and also break the stereotype of women in the industry.

The flexible leadership demonstrated by women in the industry will enhance corporate performance and fill key talent gaps, which is conducive to value creation and enhances the competitiveness of the enterprise in the industry.

References

<https://yili.17learning.com.cn/#/home>

JAPAN

Meiji α -LunA Product Line for Women

Helping women participate to their full potential in the workplace

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Timeline

Research from 2018, Product from 2023.

The big picture

Women's physiology is different from that of men, therefore related issues are also different from those of men. These challenges are not always recognized by male co-workers, and this can affect performance and personal outcomes.

According to the "Women's Health Questionnaire Survey" conducted in 2021, we know that more than 80% of women have issues during their menstrual cycle that can affect their work performance. The estimated that labour losses are 551.6 billion yen per year.

Lack of understanding from male colleagues can also be a problem. Therefore, a team of women from both marketing and research in Meiji work together to specifically develop new products to benefit women, decided to make easing menstrual pain the focus of their efforts.

Previous scientific studies had shown that the dairy protein α -LA (lactalbumin) can play a role in

suppressing pain and inflammation. New clinical trials conducted by Meiji showed positive outcomes, specifically with women experiencing menstrual discomfort. The results of these

studies were published as "Relieving effects of bovine milk-derived alpha-lactalbumin on menstruation-related symptoms in healthy women volunteers" in the journal *Japanese Pharmacology & Therapeutics* 2020 Vol 48 No 8 p1409-27.

The premise

The main challenge was overcome by letting a team of women develop a product line for women. A team of men would never have come up with this concept.

Getting the wheel in motion

Although Meiji is proud of the progress we are making to include and empower women overall, this entry is focused on a product (α -LunA) conceived by and for women. Specifically, as this is a product with a functional dairy ingredient that helps women with menstrual discomfort and pain so they can perform to the best of their abilities. This improves productivity and empowers women.

The concept, scientific validation, peer-review publication, and product development were all headed and conducted by women

The history of success

A new product line called α -LunA included drinks, powder, chocolate, gummy candy, etc. was developed, which in addition to α -lactalbumin, also includes 3 different B vitamins. The powder type can be easily added to foods, while the chocolates can be easily consumed between meals, on the go, or in the office. This product and concept went on to win the Happy Woman Award 2023 for SDGs in Japan. (Unfortunately, the photo of this event cannot be used due to image rights of the public figures who attended.)

The value of the initiative

The concept is being expanded to a line of Meiji Femnicare Foods, a brand to support women's bodies with convenient and delicious foods, and address women's unique health issues during all life stages.



© Meiji



© Meiji

Meiji hopes this can help create a society where all people can work together while performing at their best.

New opportunities

More products will be added to the Meiji Femnicare Foods brand line of products soon.

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MEXICO

Driving excellence in Mexico

Women leading good livestock practices certifications in dairy farming

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Sustainable Development Goals

This project is currently working on certifying dairy farms, located in Mexico's largest dairy region, in Good Livestock Practices. To achieve this, we have assembled a team of 10 young recently graduated veterinary doctors in collaboration with the largest and most important veterinary association, the Mexican Federation of Colleges and Associations of Veterinary Doctors, and the most important veterinary school in this dairy region, the Antonio Narro Autonomous Agrarian University. We have aimed to create an inclusive team, providing equal opportunities for both men and women. There is a noticeable gender gap in the Mexican agricultural sector, particularly within the veterinary field. Female veterinarians often need to exert more effort than their male counterparts to establish professional authority in the eyes of producers, given the historical dominance of men in this field. To promote gender equality and empower women in the agricultural sector, it is crucial to raise awareness, through experiences like these, about the significant value in employing qualified women in roles directly related to safe production, animal welfare, and health.

Timeline

This project began in April 2023 and is currently ongoing.

The big picture

In this project, we empower recently graduated young female veterinarians by providing them with valuable hands-on experience and training alongside the national expert in Good Livestock Practices, Dr. Nelly Peña Haaz. We connect them with prominent dairy farms, aiming to create value both for the farms through the Good Livestock Practices Certification and for the veterinarians by integrating them into

“Closing the Gender Gap in Dairy Farming: Women as Professionals in Good Livestock Practices Certification.”

Gabriela Flores Serrano

the farms. This inclusion breaks away from the traditional pattern, which used to be predominantly composed of men, and brings a fresh and energetic perspective to the farm's team.

The mentorship of Dr. Nelly Peña Haaz is crucial for identifying improvement opportunities and ensuring the project's effectiveness. Furthermore, we actively promote female leadership and greater participation of women in the dairy industry by equipping the veterinarians with valuable professional knowledge and enhancing their livelihoods.

The premise

Certifying to the authority that our milk suppliers operate under audited standards ensuring the safety and quality of the milk, through an Action Team comprised of skilled and recently graduated veterinarians, with 50% female representation, mentored by the national expert in Good Livestock Practices, Dr. Nelly Peña Haaz.





the Good Livestock Practices guidelines become ingrained in the organizational culture of the farms. It's worth noting that the farms did follow the recommendations provided by the team, and in subsequent visits, progress in compliance has been noted. Finally, the young veterinarians are content with the development of their veterinary skills, which has had a positive impact on their professional growth.

The value of the initiative

The connection with both industry leaders and professional associations, the provision of high-quality training on strategic topics, and the creation of meaningful work experience for young women interested in the agri-food industry generates substantial value for society as a whole. This experience could be a turning point, a model, for the collaboration between professional associations, government, and academia, yielding numerous positive outcomes, including Production Certification and all the aforementioned external processes. It can serve as a role model for other veterinary colleges, dairy producers, and dairy processing companies across the country.

New opportunities

The shared experience in this project can serve as a turning point and a benchmark to encourage greater collaboration among various stakeholders in the agri-food sector, potentially leading to more certified farms, enhancements in safety and quality practices, and significant progress towards gender equality in the industry.

Getting the wheel in motion

To empower women, Dr. Nelly Peña Haaz provided them with professional training. They were affiliated with a government initiative that provided them scholarships and comprehensive medical insurance coverage. They conducted diagnostic visits to dairy farms, being mentored by Technical Advisors. This process fostered skills and work habits, enhancing their employability. As a result, they gained potential access to job opportunities that had historically been denied to them due to gender discrimination. Overcoming systemic barriers, we empowered these young veterinarians, promoting gender equality in the dairy industry, and contributing to the creation of a more inclusive society.

The history of success

The young veterinarians were able to integrate seamlessly into the Livestock Production Units. They visited 60 Dairy Farms and conducted assessments related to good livestock practices. The Technical Advisors informed us that they were well received by the managers and owners of the farms, who are satisfied with their work. Upon completing the diagnostic phase, we initiated the promotion phase, during which the veterinarians take on the role of Good Livestock Practices Promoters. They work closely with the Production Units and Technical Advisors to ensure compliance with the guidelines of Good Practices. In this phase, they are conducting training sessions for the staff and ensuring that

Others can draw lessons from this experience regarding the importance of cross-sector collaboration and the establishment of strategic partnerships to achieve successful outcomes. Additionally, they can recognize the value of providing quality training and employment opportunities to young women interested in the agri-food industry, aiming to empower them and promote their leadership in a sector historically dominated by men.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

International Dairy Foods Associations Women in Dairy Network

Empowering, Encouraging, and Supporting Women in Dairy towards Greater Gender Equality

AUTHOR

Becky Rasdall

International Dairy Foods Association • United States of America

✉ brasdall@idfa.org**Sustainable Development Goals**

IDFA's Women in Dairy network works to improve gender equality across the dairy sector by ensuring the industry improves female leadership representation and adequately supports and empowers women throughout their professional journey. Women in Dairy does this by creating professional and leadership development opportunities, hosting networking opportunities, creating and promoting benchmark data and workplace surveys, and holding transparent discussions about frequently unspoken issues facing women in the workplace.

Timeline

IDFA's Women in Dairy network was created in 2019 and has since grown to nearly 900 members. IDFA's Women in Dairy network is as active now as it has ever been, and IDFA is working to expand this work for several years to support women's equality in the dairy industry.

The big picture

In a recent survey, a shocking 61% of IDFA Women in Dairy network participants reported they felt gender has played a role in their missing out on a raise, promotion, key assignment, or chance to get ahead at work. That percentage was even higher for those with less than five years of professional experience. IDFA believes these statistics must change. Women in Dairy is creating benchmarks for such data, elevating those results, facilitating allyships with men in dairy, breaking down workplace conflicts that may contribute to the data, and creating professional development/placement programs that support women in dairy.

“Improving gender equality in dairy.”

Becky Rasdall

The premise

IDFA's Women in Dairy network started as an opportunity for women in the sector to network, to share encouragement, and support one another.

Getting the wheel in motion

IDFA's Women in Dairy network focuses on empowerment of women through professional and leadership development webinars offered monthly, forming allies and networking through monthly mentoring groups. We are developing additional programming to highlight anecdotes and advice from successful women who have overcome biases and barriers, as well as building surveys and data collection tools to create transparency around the prevailing biases women face in the dairy workplace. The network will share best practices with industry leaders to help improve gender equality and continue to report on industry benchmarks to inform continued programming.

The history of success

IDFA considers the growth of the Women in Dairy Network a significant marker to its success. Going from zero to almost 900 members in just 3.5 years, people are joining IDFA's Women in Dairy Network at a rate of almost a person per day. The participants also have provided significant and regular feedback about the help, support, and growth they have achieved through the Network and the relationships they have built through it. The network will continue to measure success through their feedback and, hopefully, through improved gender perceptions through future survey data over time.



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The value of the initiative

The value of giving women a place and voice for their experiences, their growth, their reflections, and their frustration is invaluable. IDFA does not feel there is a need to quantify the value of those experiences. And even as the initiative continues to inspire its participants, we continue to learn from the experience of other women networks as well. IDFA works to intentionally connect with women's networks globally from various sectors, to share experiences and

learn from one another. We believe that only together can we learn and grow and continue to overcome the inequalities and needs that cause our Women in Dairy Network to exist

New opportunities

IDFA's Women in Dairy network is developing new programming and insight tools that will be revealed at the 2023 IDF World Dairy Summit.

References

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UNITED KINGDOM

Supporting women in dairy to achieve and celebrate success in the UK

Women in dairy to connect, share and inspire

AUTHOR

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(on behalf of) Women in Dairy • UK

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Sustainable Development Goals

Historically, the dairy industry in the UK has been very male dominated, latterly more women have become involved in the industry. From more women attending college courses for agriculture, and then working in the industry, to farmers having to become more business focussed and wives and female family members finding themselves more involved in the family farming business. Despite this rise in women in the industry, very few women would attend events such as farm walks, discussion groups or knowledge exchange meetings and were therefore missing out on these valuable resources. Women in Dairy enables women have opportunities and more participation in the industry, from the ground up.

Our aims are:

- Connect – Bringing women together from across the dairy industry.
- Share – Exchange knowledge and experiences to develop skills and confidence.
- Inspire – Encouraging innovative thinking and vision for the future of UK dairy.

Timeline

Women in Dairy is an initiative that was set up in 2015 by four founders, Emily Egan (who was with RABDF), Lisa Williams (who was with Promar International) and Becky Miles and Sarah Bolt (both working for AHDB Dairy at the time). They realised that they all had a shared passion for raising the profile of the role of women in the industry in the UK and by working together they could achieve much more, so Women in Dairy was born.

“Designed to support women in dairy to achieve and celebrate success!”

Sarah Bolt

The project started with groups in the south-west and Cheshire. We're proud that it has now grown to incorporate an annual conference and we have 14 groups up and down the country. September 2023 sees our 9th conference and an opportunity to announce The Dairy Industry Woman of the Year Award winner.

The big picture

The aim is to bring women together who work in dairy, from farm, to farm office and throughout the industry, through regional discussion groups for knowledge exchange, networking and to promote the dairy industry.

Our aims are:

- Connect – Bringing women together from across the dairy industry.
- Share – Exchange knowledge and experiences to develop skills and confidence.
- Inspire – Encouraging innovative thinking and vision for the future of UK dairy.

The premise

When asked, we found that historically women did not join in farm walks, discussion groups etc. because they felt awkward being one of the few women attending, and if they did attend, they felt that they did not feel comfortable asking questions “in case the men thought they were stupid”.

There was also the provision of facilities at on farm events, many farms did not have adequate bathroom facilities for females, and whilst this did not seem to be a barrier to men, it has certainly been highlighted as one of the main reasons for not attending events in the past.

Getting the wheel in motion

To roll out our initiative across the country we have run facilitation training events to empower women, whatever their role in the industry to run / facilitate the regional groups. Today we have farmers, farm workers, vets, agricultural representatives, and consultants facilitating our groups to deliver the desired priorities for the group members themselves.





Discussion groups have covered such a raft of topics it is hard to pick out one or two, suffice to say many haven't been the 'traditional discussion group topics' like mastitis, or grassland management, instead they have been topics like succession planning, business strategies, first aid training – all reflecting the roles that women have in the industry.

The history of success

I have facilitated discussion groups for many years and the biggest difference I found with the Women in Dairy discussion groups was that the members would regularly contact me to ask for information or tell me about changes they had been inspired to carry out as a result of a previous meeting – I would normally have to drag this information out of other groups. I found that more women would want to understand more about KPIs and look to record and monitor in order to make more informed decisions. The women were more open to identifying their challenges and certainly more open to sharing their solutions!

The value of the initiative

It is always hard to evaluate the impact of an initiative, but the fact that 14 groups are meeting across the country and the annual conference continues to grow, I can only assume that we are doing something right.

The best news is that women now have the confidence to attend on-farm events, and even those not run by Women in Dairy have a high female attendance, and I am sure that we have played a role in this.

New opportunities

I have always wondered whether Women in Dairy will last forever! I have conflicting views on this, and I'm sure my co-founders do as well.

Whilst on one hand, we would be proud if the initiative outlives our careers within the industry. On the other hand, a part of me would be disappointed that it is still needed – here's hoping that opportunities will be equal for both genders in the future. Whatever the future of Women in Dairy is,



it will be in safe hands as the number of women in the industry continues to grow, motivated by the empowered, inspiring women within our industry today.

References

www.womenindairy.co.uk

IRELAND

The Agri-Food Diversity & Inclusion Forum in Ireland

Achieving greater gender equality within each level of the industry

AUTHOR

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Sustainable Development Goals

1. Goal nr 05 Gender Equality
2. Goal nr 08 Decent Work and Economic Growth
3. Goal nr 10 Reduced Inequalities.

Timeline

Established in 2017 and on-going.

The big picture

To create awareness and provide support to the industry as it advances its D&I agenda AgDif produces a series of webinars, case studies and toolkit to provide inspiration and practical examples and learnings from companies in the food and drink industry.

AgDif's program of activities for every calendar year aims to do three things:

1. Firstly, to raise awareness of the importance of gender equality at CEO and board level, ensuring that all senior leaders within the Irish Food and Drink industry are committed and take action to strive for excellence in this space.
2. Secondly, AgDif provides tools and support for companies who wish to embrace D&I Agenda, regardless of what stage of the D&I journey they are on
 - Toolkits, case studies, webinars, masterclasses
3. Thirdly, AgDif aims to ensure D&I targets are included within member companies' Origin Green plans. These D&I targets will have a multitude of initiatives underneath them within companies, some being awareness creation and celebration of women in leadership, mentoring or leadership training for women within an organization as well as quotas for interview panels and selection.

All of these activities and initiatives place greater importance of gender equality within companies and ensure balance and equality is at the forefront of key decision makers within the industry.

The premise

Through driving the D&I agenda, AgDif aims to support and position our food and drink sector as the industry of choice for the best talent from around the world

AgDif has brought engagement and industry led commitment to not only gender equality but also broader Diversity & Inclusion agenda. These efforts have led to an increased focus on gender equality within boards, management, workforce and graduate entry to the industry.

Getting the wheel in motion

AgDif has a unique structure being a collaborative initiative led by Bord Bia, the Irish Food Board, and AON in partnership

“A collaborative initiative to drive the Diversity & Inclusion agenda within the Irish Agri-food industry.”

AgDif

with the 30% club. It comprises an advisory group, made up of CEOs from across the industry, who set the strategic agenda, and a taskforce, which rolls out various initiatives in order to drive D&I within the industry.

Initiatives are focused on 1) building awareness, 2) providing toolkits and webinars and 3) supporting organizations in setting targets (further detail under the big picture above).

The history of success

One key metric which will be useful in the gender equality space in Ireland is the gender pay gap which was brought into law in 2022. It is envisioned that a portal will exist over the next 12 months to capture data on gender pay gap at an industry level so we will be able to utilize this data to track the progress of the Irish food and drink industry.

AgDif's strategy from 2022 – 2024 calls out a key performance indicator around the number of companies that have diversity and inclusion targets within their origin green plans. The target for 2022 was 10 companies and by the end of 2022 we had 14 companies with these targets included. The target for 2023 is to have 30 companies with D&I targets. The deadline for submissions is September 30th and we should have the KPI results by mid-October

The value of the initiative

The vision of AgDif is that the Irish food and drink industry is the industry of choice for the best talent due to the importance it places on diversity and inclusion. Gender



equality within every level of the industry is central to the focus of AgDif, ensuring our actions and initiatives focus on achieving greater equality within graduate entry level programs, executives within the organization both in terms of retention and attraction as well as senior management, director level, CEO and board make ups.

Studies have shown that more diverse companies are more profitable, thus increasing economic growth. The wider scope of AgDif is not just gender but all areas of diversity and inclusion including ethical, cultural, sexual orientation, age etc. which enhances AgDifs greater impact on reducing wider inequalities.

New opportunities

AgDif will continue to build a program of activities along our pillars of Awareness, Tools and Targets to support gender quality in the Agri-Food Industry.

AgDif will broaden remit wider than gender, to encompass other areas of diversity e.g. culture, age, sexual orientation etc.

AgDif will aim to further increase focus on setting measurable and meaningful D&I targets and supporting companies in setting and achieving these

References

[Agri-Food Diversity & Inclusion Forum \(AgDif\) - Bord Bia | Irish Food Board](#)





Helping nourish the world with safe and sustainable dairy

The IDF is the leading source of scientific and technical expertise for all stakeholders of the dairy chain. Since 1903, IDF has provided a mechanism for the dairy sector to reach global consensus on how to help feed the world with safe and sustainable dairy products.

A recognized international authority in the development of science-based standards for the dairy sector, IDF has an important role to play in ensuring the right policies, standards, practices and regulations are in place to ensure the world's dairy products are safe and sustainable.



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Celebrating 120 years of dairy expertise: proud to be Dairy

IDF was founded in September 1903, during the first World Dairy Congress in Brussels. The original aims of the federation are much as they are today: to represent the dairy sector as a whole at international level by providing a global source of scientific expertise and knowledge in support of the development and promotion of quality milk and milk products so as to deliver consumers with nutrition, health and well-being.

For the last 120 years, IDF has contributed to the development of standards for the dairy sector and has closely collaborated with key stakeholders to share its expertise for milk and dairy products, with safe, sustainable and fair-trade practices at heart.

The creation of IDF was an act of innovation. It was so innovative that 60 years after that, the FAO and the WHO created Codex based on the standardization work that IDF had done with milk and dairy products.

120 years later, IDF is still developing dairy science, knowledge and innovation, and sharing them with the world through its publications, its awards and recognitions, and its events, like the IDF World Dairy Summit.

IDF has become a synonym of Dairy. That is why we not only say that we know Dairy. **We are Dairy.**

