

28/04/2023

Putting the EU code of conduct on responsible business and marketing practices to work

Activity report

Commitment

Eucolait, the European Dairy Trade Association (transparency register number: 5159980776-55) signed the code of conduct on 6 October 2021. Eucolait represents exporters, importers and wholesalers of dairy products. More than 400 companies ranging from small trading businesses to large processing companies are members directly or through associations at Member State level.

As underlined in our signatory document, we endorse the aspirational objectives of the code and have pledged to promote and disseminate it within our membership.

Eucolait sustainability activities in 2022/23

In line with the goals and aspirations of the code of conduct, we have conducted two principal activities this year: a Eucolait sustainability workshop and the drafting of the Eucolait sustainability manifesto. In addition, we are involved in the sustainability working group of CELCAA, the European Liaison Committee for Agri-Food Trade.

Eucolait sustainability workshop

The workshop took place on the afternoon of 31 January 2023 and featured speakers from dairy trading and dairy processing companies, an independent dairy consultant, and a representative of the Sustainable Agriculture Initiative Platform. We took stock of sustainability measures already implemented and those being planned, with a focus on climate-related actions.

The main takeaway messages from the workshop were as follows:

- Sustainability commitments and the demonstration of these commitments are no longer an optional extra but an obligation for businesses operating today.
- Proving a company's sustainability credentials is not just important in terms of making a sale, but for the internal culture of the company itself. In terms of staffing, only those companies making progress in sustainability terms will be able to attract quality talent.
- Acquiring certification under various recognised schemes is becoming increasingly important – businesses should be aware that their customers will have to respond to consumer demands and concerns and should be able to show that they are signed up to various sustainability schemes.
- The European dairy sector has already made major strides in improving environmental performance and the most advanced processors are on track for achieving climate neutrality of their supply chains in less than 20 years. Work streams include carbon farming, biogas creation from manure, energy and feed efficiency, animal welfare improvements and other innovative solutions.
- When it comes to trading activities, the main challenge is to reduce emissions from transport and storage. The trading community also has a role in stimulating the efforts of other actors along the supply chain.
- Sustainability will increasingly fuel innovation and will be considered more and more as an investment for the future by companies.
- Despite increasingly rigorous environmental requirements, dairy has demonstrated that it is able to rise to the challenge and adapt.

Eucolait sustainability manifesto

In recent months, Eucolait has finalised a comprehensive document which highlights the role played by dairy trade in promoting more sustainable food systems and which incorporates the findings of our sustainability workshop. In this manifesto, we focus on some of the concrete measures being taken by our members in line with their sustainability commitments, specifically

focusing on trade activities. This includes reducing the environmental impact of trade, acting as a facilitator in the sourcing of sustainably produced dairy products and contributing to projects towards a carbon neutral and more responsible industry. Massive progress has already been made over the last 5-10 years and there are ambitions to advance sustainability actions even further as they are increasingly becoming part of company culture. The manifesto is currently subject to final revisions and will be published soon.

CELCAA sustainability working group

Eucolait participates in the CELCAA sustainability working group which was launched in December 2022. The working group builds on the experience and initiative of member organisations and organises educational exchanges with relevant stakeholders. The group has the objective to define what sustainable agri-food trade means and to formulate policy recommendations in this regard.