

**Briefing 960**

**The milk environmental road map**

**Summary**

For 2010 dairy producers targeted 50% of their farmland being entered into an Environmental Stewardship Scheme. There are already 45% of producers in schemes. 47% of dairy farmers have an annual Nutrient Management Plan (target 65%) Producers are also making good progress against 2015 targets on carbon footprinting and reducing emissions. Milk processors are on recycled plastic in milk bottles, environmental benchmarking and meeting government targets on carbon reductions and energy efficiency and retailers are involved in saving energy, fuel and water and packaging.

This paper is summarised from 'The Milk Roadmap: One year down the Road' which can be accessed at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/business/products/roadmaps/pdf/milk-roadmap-oneyear090727.pdf>

In setting targets for the industry there must be an existing baseline from which performance can be benchmarked, monitored and improved upon. This also requires the ability to accurately measure performance. There are areas where specific targets and figures can be applied and measured, for example fertiliser usage, nutrient levels, pollution incidents and entry into Environmental Stewardship schemes. However, there remain important areas where measurability of performance is more complicated notably ability to measure the dairy sector's contribution to GHG emissions.

Some main targets and the industry's performance against them are summarised below

Target	Current Level	How?	Limitation
<b>Producers</b>			
50% of dairy managed farmland entered into Environmental Stewardship Schemes	45% (estimated)	Continued promotion of the scheme and its benefits	Natural England are currently examining the ways in which the benefits of management plans might be captured in future
5-15% reduction in water usage per litre of milk	Varies per farm. This target reflects the little extra reduction possible for some of the most efficient producers and a high reduction for people who are not already efficient.	Reducing waste of water and improving efficiency by auditing and seeking opportunities for water re-use such as rainwater harvesting and use of 'green water'.	Water usage can only be reduced to levels which do not compromise standards of animal welfare standards or hygiene
65% dairy farmers actively nutrient	On target – 47% of dairy farmers have a nutrient plan	Compliance with revised NVZ Action	Farmers may be reluctant to adopt nutrient planning

planning		programme and continued development of nutrient planning tools and materials and communication of benefits	unless they can see a direct economic benefit to doing so.
30 dairy farms piloting on-farm Anaerobic Digestion	Only a small number of case studies are available on dairy farmers who have invested in this technology. Data currently being gathered	Clear communication and information disseminated to farmers about AD, including finance, installation, planning and benefits	Huge capital investment required and only currently suited to large dairy units.
20-30% of producers trialling new technologies to reduce emissions	On target – current level 32%	R&D has been identified as a clear priority under new Dairy Co Business Plan	Competing pressures on DairyCo's budget.
95% of producers have a manure management plan	On target – current level 94.8%	Promote the benefits of waste management and ensure total compliance	Data sharing
95% of producers have Farm Health Plans	On target – current level 95.1%	Promote the benefits of pro-active farm health planning, educate producers and explore performance based outcomes	Data sharing, indicators / measurability of health
Dairy farmers to improve energy efficiency by 15%	Currently gathering data		
<b>Processors</b>			
All processors will meet or beat energy and CO <sub>2</sub> reductions of the sector Climate Change Agreement.		On target	
Environmental benchmarking and best practice performance programme		On target: Dairy UK has launched a Benchmarking tool and will be developing a best practice programme in 2009 and 2010.	
Annual sustainability report providing evidence of progress towards targets.		Data is being collected	
A minimum of 10% recycled UK HDPE in milk bottles		On target: Should reach 10% incorporation rate for milk bottles by end of 2010	

## Retailers and Consumption

One area of focus is the development of low-carbon retail stores. Major retailers are seeking to make significant savings on the energy, fuel and water usage and are committed to the development of renewable energy technologies. Retailers have made significant investments in energy saving technologies for their stores, including low-energy lighting and more efficient refrigeration.

Significant savings in emissions have also been achieved from transport improvements fewer vehicles moving more goods. Retailers have also invested in alternative transport, including the introduction of double decked lorries and the use of both trains and water- based transport systems.

Retailers are also committed to not sending waste to landfill and have made considerable progress in recent years. Retailers are also encouraging consumers to recycle with the introduction of improved recycling facilities at retail stores across the UK.

Major retailers and many of their suppliers are working in partnership with WRAP to develop new packaging solutions and technologies. This includes using innovative packaging formats; reducing the weight of packaging (e.g. bottles, cans and boxes); and collaboration on packaging design guidance.

In recent years retailers and suppliers have managed to reduce packing waste by between 25 – 30% and are committed to ensuring carbon savings from packaging by developing low-carbon packaging.

Over the past year retailers have also encouraged local producers into stores and have developed local brands, which not only helps reduce some of the impacts of the supply chain but also supports local communities.

Retailers continue to encourage consumers to reduce the use of plastic carrier bags and have developed alternative bags such as the introduction of “bag for life” schemes. This has helped retailers reduce the use of plastic bags by between 25 – 40%.

Retailers have invested in research into reducing energy use on farm and on nutrition planning to help reduce GHG emissions. They have also invested in carbon footprinting which has enabled farmers to identify hotspots in their businesses and helped to both reduce carbon emissions and improve cost efficiency.

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Alan Spedding, 06 January 2010

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