

WORLD DAIRY DIGEST

New Zealand offers dairy aid to Myanmar

Negotiations are underway to renew the Myanmar Dairy Excellence Project (MFAT)—a \$6 million (C\$5.4 million) aid effort New Zealand offers to Myanmar dairy farmers.

Now entering its fourth year, phase two of the program is scheduled to wrap up in February 2019, but Virginia Dawson, MFAT head of development co-operation in Myanmar, says the government is optimistic about renewing the program.

“It’s often our knowledge, skills and technology that’s more valuable than our money,” Dawson says. “The sectors where we can really add value are the sectors where we’re quite advanced at home.”

New Zealand Ambassador to Myanmar Steve Marshall says the dairy program is a

“win-win,” allowing local farmers, health and transportation to benefit from improved dairy, food safety and new technology.

“The targeting of that development aid programme is development and support, but we would be insane if we did not see this would create opportunities for New Zealand,” Marshall says. “That is what foreign affairs and trade is about—opportunities for New Zealanders.”

Traditionally, Myanmar dairy farmers have a handful of cows tied to trees. Feed and water are given twice daily in 40C heat, and fodder is often unenriched rice straw.

Milk yields are a low six to eight litres a day—a third of what is achieved in New Zealand. Cows produce about six to eight litres a day—a third of what New Zealand dairy farmers achieve. www.stuff.co.nz

Pennsylvania dairy farmers to sell cows

The Pennsylvania dairy industry may be hit in the next six months, as agriculture lenders, leaders and politicians fear a large number of Lancaster County dairy farmers will sell their herds.

“As farmers use up the forage they produced last fall and are stored in silos, you’re going to see them just sell their cows,” says state representative David H. Zimmerman. “It’s the young farmers trying to start up. They’re not going to stick around.”

Since interest in milk production is dropping in the state, experts say farmers who do sell their herd will find they won’t get what they originally paid for them.

“We’re encouraging farmers to look at ev-

ery opportunity to get through the next several months,” says Mike Firestone, senior vice-president of Fulton Bank, which does agriculture lending. “But unfortunately for some farmers, it’s an exit strategy.”

Prices dairy processors pay farmers for milk have fallen steadily, and this is expected to continue in 2018. Dairy farmers are also faced with fewer milk processing plants in the state.

Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding and Zimmerman recently met with Lancaster County dairy farmers to discuss the situation, as well as strategies for dairy farmers to maintain their farms and bring a milk processing plant to the county. www.capitalpress.com

Indian dairy benefits from consumer habit changes

India’s biggest dairy is expecting restaurants, hotels and caterers to bring in the next wave of growth for the company.

RS Sodhi, managing director at Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd., the maker of Amul-branded products, says more Indian consumers are eating out, as the growing economy continues to boost income, leading to an increase in demand for dairy products.

As a result, the restaurant and catering industry continues to expand with additional restaurant and food chains, such as McDonald’s, Pizza Hut and Baskin-Robbins, opening across

the country—all of which need dairy products.

Up until now, Amul’s focus had been on retail sales with nearly 80 per cent of the dairy’s revenues coming from retail consumers. The dairy giant now plans to turn its attention to institutional sales.

India is the largest producer and consumer of dairy products, but its per capital consumption is still lower than global average. However, Sodhi says as Indians consume more protein, demand will grow, making it an attractive market to international dairy companies. www.bloombergquint.com



Arla announces massive U.K. investments

Dairy giant Arla Foods Co-operative will be spending £72 million (C\$111.6 million) to upgrade 10 out of its 12 sites across the United Kingdom with new technology, as well as expand and improve production capacity.

“While milk prices remain volatile and Brexit brings both uncertainty and opportunity, Arla farmers in the U.K. and across Europe are committed to continually investing in our U.K. business to maintain pace with the demand for nature’s original superfood, and the consumer choice it creates,” says Tomas Pietrangeli, Arla Foods U.K. managing director.

This is part of the co-op’s Strategy 2020 growth plans and the larger £500 million (C\$775.3 million) investment around the world. Part of the strategy is to grow food service sales significantly by 2020. As a result, around £18 million (C\$27.9 million) will be used to expand and develop Arla’s production and food service customers.

By 2020, Arla expects half of its growth to come from Europe and the other half from emerging markets in the Middle East, North Africa, China, Southeast Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and the United States. www.thenews.coop

Irish company rolls out cow facial recognition software

Irish company Cainthus, in partnership with Cargill, will be rolling out a new facial recognition technology to dairy farmers around the world.

“Our shared vision is to disrupt and transform how we bring insights and analytics to dairy products worldwide,” says Sri Rai Kantamneni, Cargill digital insight manager.

The predictive imaging system uses facial features and hide patterns to identify individual cows, providing dairy farmers with a way to keep track of individual animals, their food and water intake and odd behaviours. The system also uses heat detection to monitor the herd’s health and sends health alerts when something changes.

“Our customers’ ability to make proactive and predictive decisions to improve their farm’s efficiency, enhance animal health and well-being, reduce animal loss, and ultimately increase farm profitability are significantly enhanced with this technology,” Kantamneni says. www.rt.com