

WORLD DAIRY DIGEST

U.S., Mexico united on dairy trade priorities

The United States and Mexico's dairy industries have put together a joint list of trade priorities following the first round of North American Free Trade Agreement renegotiation discussions.

The United States-Mexico Dairy Alliance has listed nine priorities, and U.S. Dairy Export Council president and chief executive officer (CEO) Tom Vilsack says it's a sign the U.S. wants to strengthen its relationship with Mexico as its "most trusted dairy trading partner."

"That goal is all the more essential given other nations' efforts to pursue harmful and disruptive

approaches to dairy trade with Mexico through practices that hurt Mexican and U.S. dairy farmers and workers in the process," Vilsack says.

The National Milk Producers Federation CEO and president Jim Mulhern says he's pleased Mexico has joined the U.S. in opposing the European Union's attempts to put up trade barriers on dairy products with common cheese names, such as Parmesan and Asiago whose labels do not bear geographical indicators enforced by the EU. U.S. dairy groups are also opposed to Canada's new Class 6/7 pricing. www.dairyreporter.com



Arla opens new business in Ghana

Arla Foods has opened a sales and packaging facility in Accra, Ghana, and will begin selling Arla-branded dairy products in September 2017.

The expansion will allow the company to employ eight people. Additional employees will be hired as the market grows. The facility will supply products from its Danone range, such as powdered milk, as well as Arla and Lurpak products, such as butter and cheese.

The new business is a part of Arla's Good Growth 2020 strategy, which aims to develop new markets for Arla's products outside the European Union. Its goal is to triple its revenue in sub-Saharan Africa by 2020.

There is currently a milk deficit in West Africa, which gives the company a market to provide its dairy products to consumers. www.dairyreporter.com

Ice cream consumption increases in China

Ice cream consumption in urban China has increased by 10 percentage points over the last two years, as half of consumers say they enjoy eating the cold treat at home.

This growth comes at a time when ice cream sales have been declining. Retail volumes have dropped by 1.6 per cent a year from 2014 to 2016. However, according to Mintel research, the overall value of the market continues to increase since consumers are looking for premium flavours and formats, such as edible containers, customized flavours and shapes and innovative packaging.

Consumers are also looking for healthier options, with just under 60 per cent saying they're willing to buy ice cream that's 100 per cent natural or has no additive.

"Urban Chinese consumers are paying more attention to their health, while still looking for opportunities for indulgence, which should not be compromised," says Cheryl Ni, Mintel's food and drink analyst.

Despite the steady decline in ice cream sales at traditional retailers, sales at online stores have experienced growth. www.foodnavigator-asia.com

Improving 'spreadability' of cold butter

Australian food researchers have found smaller milkfat globules changes the consistency of cold butter, improving its spreadability. The same discovery also makes low-fat cream easier to whip.

"Fat globules in milk come in various sizes, with each size class able to be used to improve specific dairy products," says professor Bhash Bhandari from the University of Queensland's School of Agriculture and Food Sciences in Australia.

Leading the team of researchers, Bhandari says the team's recent findings reveal small fat globules stabilizes cream and gives cold butter a softer texture.

The team wants to develop techniques to create innovative dairy products without large capital investments. They're exploring nanoemulsion technology—emulsifying oil and water with droplets ranging in the billionth of a metre—in dairy foods.

"This is a great outcome for the dairy industry since these innovations could boost the sale of dairy fat products, potentially increasing the return on investment to dairy manufacturers," says ARC Dairy Innovation Hub director and associate professor Sally Gras. www.dairyreporter.com

Three New Zealand farms test positive for cattle disease

Three additional farms in New Zealand have tested positive for Mycoplasma bovis disease—a serious bacterial cattle disease that can lead to udder infection, pneumonia and arthritis in affected cattle. It does not, however, pose a risk to humans or food safety.

This brings the total number of affected farms in New Zealand to six, with the Van Leeuwen Dairy Group owning four of the six farms.

"We fully expect to find more infected properties as we continue our tracing and testing program," says Ministry for Primary Industries response co-ordinator David Yard.

News of the initial outbreak in July briefly impacted the country's currency since dairy is New Zealand's largest export good. www.dairyherd.com