

Focus on sustainable milk production

High participation rate from Uelzena dairy farmers for the QM dairy sustainability tool

Uelzen, April 2022 – The Uelzena Group has taken part in the QM dairy sustainability tool, an industry initiative that runs throughout Germany, since the project started in 2015. Under scientific guidance, the survey collects data on more than 80 environmental, economic, social and animal welfare criteria from dairy farms. The second survey round, which covered the period from November 2020 to the end of March 2021, achieved a participation rate of 66 %. Jörn Dwehus, Chairman of the Board of Uelzena, would like to thank the participating dairy farmers: "The milk producers in our group have also contributed to generating meaningful results for Uelzena and by taking part, are demonstrating their sustainability efforts to customers. The high rate of survey participation highlights that the topic of sustainability is a firm component of everyday life at the dairy farms."

Results support sustainability efforts

The surveyed farms are predominantly farms with a focus on milk production and an average of 155 dairy cows. This survey covers a total of 87,161 cows, with almost 25,000 cows more than in the first round of the survey. On average, the companies farm an area of 227 hectares with a grassland proportion of 47 %. Staff at the dairy farms possess an impressive level of vocational qualifications. The milk producers score particularly well in environmental aspects: For instance, nearly 60 % of the farms generate renewable energy and 90 % actively promote biodiversity. In terms of animal husbandry, the results show that 98 % of the cattle are kept in stalls with room to move. More than half of the cattle also have the opportunity to spend extra time outdoors in an exercise area or meadow. In addition to numerous animal welfare and environmental criteria, the survey also addresses social aspects and the profitability of the farms. The vast majority of the farms (81 %) invest in modernisation measures, such as in feed production and feed technology as well as stall facilities. Another positive highlight is the high percentage of milk producers (77 %) involved in voluntary work.

Individual farm evaluations enable continuous improvement

As a follow-up to the survey, milk producers receive an individual evaluation. From the assigned classification for each criterion, the farm can see how it fares in sustainability matters. Their strengths are made visible as well as the areas that have potential for improvement. The benchmarking also sets the results of the individual farm against the results of other Uelzena milk producers. On the basis of the overall results, the Uelzena Group initiates a further development process, which includes, for instance, presenting opportunities for more sustainable milk production in an online seminar series.

For further information on the QM dairy sustainability tool:

<https://www.uelzena.de/en/sustainability/>

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Uelzena eG with its headquarters in Uelzen, Lower Saxony, and its four subsidiaries with production sites in Germany, is one of the leading providers and innovative problem solvers in the food processing and milk refining business.

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