

THE PERFECT STORM



by Michelle de Lange

Are sustainability initiatives helping the dairy industry to change direction amid the significant transformation of the planet? With the world population growth projected to reach 8,5 billion by 2030 and eventually exceeding the planet's carrying capacity in terms of the food-water-energy nexus, are we heading for the 'perfect storm'?

The 52nd Symposium of the South African Society of Dairy Technology challenged the thinking in terms of cultivating sustainability. The facilitator, Jonathan Hanks, founding partner of Incite, reframed the sustainability value proposition for the dairy business. It is not about being green and being good, but rather about resources and relationships as different forms of capital to address the deep social issues in South Africa. Purpose-led companies recognise the competitive advantage that lies in addressing societal challenges.

PURPOSE-LED CHARACTERISTICS

The purpose must be

- authentic;
- driven from the top with conviction in each instance;

- supported by long-term, science-based and context-based targets; and
- aligned with the United Nations sustainability development goals.

Sue Viljoen of the World Wide Fund for Nature outlined a scenario of failing water supplies, failing water infrastructure, and failing water governance, all of which has put water in the headlines for all the wrong reasons. Water source areas (areas that produce disproportionately greater volumes of surface water runoff per unit area than other areas), are our most important natural national asset. Learn more about where your water comes from by scanning the QR code.



Dr Craig Galloway from Trace and Save.



Dr Heinz Meissner (Milk SA) and Vaughan Koopman (Danone).

Your dairy facility's water risk is linked to your land-use practices and the condition of your water source areas. Water scarcity is not the only form of water risk; the risk may be physical, reputational, and/or regulatory – all of which impact the bottom line. Scan the QR code to explore, assess, value, and respond using the water risk filter.



Water stewardship is a progression of increased improvement in water use, a reduction in water-related impacts of internal and value chain operations, and a commitment to collective action with other businesses, government, and communities to manage our shared water resources. Is your business catering for the millennials and concerned consumers of the future?

FIVE STEPS ON YOUR WATER STEWARDSHIP JOURNEY

- STEP 1:** Water awareness
- STEP 2:** Knowledge of the impact
- STEP 3:** Internal action
- STEP 4:** Collective action
- STEP 5:** Strengthening of governance

Real-time case studies included presentations by Henk van der Hyde of Danone, Andre Robins of Nestlé, André Adendorff of Woodlands Dairy, and Colin Ohlhoff of FairCapeDairies. They demonstrated how these companies are embracing the challenge and integrating business and sustainability through

innovative and transparent governance, employee engagement, and knowing the impact and opportunity areas. It is key to set reasonable goals, measure the status quo, standardise, measure the progress, monitor, and celebrate when efforts are paying off. Water-saving activities include reduction in usage, re-use, re-cycling, and treatment of waste water.

AS A DAIRY FARMER YOU MUST KNOW:

- the origin of your water;
- the quality of your released water; and
- who your downstream users are.

Dr Craig Galloway from Trace and Save had an encouraging message. He highlighted all the opportunities for a positive impact when the focus shifts to on-farm regenerative agricultural practices. In his view, there is ample opportunity for the secondary industry to provide support through incentives, technical support and extension, production standards, by celebrating the champions and investing in technology such as blockchain technology, and through accountable marketing.

Claire Lipsett from Talbot introduced their new vibrating sheer enhanced technology (VSEP) for water and energy recovery from waste water at the factory level with virtually no pre-treatment, and includes ultrafiltration, nanofiltration, and reverse osmosis options. Final presentations included presentations on the circular plastic economy (Sue Viljoen), the journey of the milk bottle (Colin Ohlhoff), and alternative dairy packaging (Wayne Witthoft). [mpo](#)

- 2** days spent talking about driving sustainable practices in the dairy industry.
- 10** presenters shared their expertise and experience of what sustainability means.
- 11** industry sectors were represented, from producers and processors, to input and equipment suppliers, to regulatory bodies.
- 140** delegates attended the events, to learn, share, and build new contacts.