

## IDF Press Release



Scientific expertise for the dairy sector worldwide

[IDF continues to maintain that dairy fats play a role in a healthy and balanced diet after outcome of Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation](#)

Brussels, 11 March 2011 - The International Dairy Federation (IDF) welcomes the FAO/WHO conclusion that there is no convincing evidence for significant effects of total dietary fats on coronary heart disease (CHD) or cancer. It also notes in the report conclusion that energy balance is the critical factor in maintaining a healthy body weight, regardless of the percent energy of total fat. In addition, the report shows that replacing saturated fatty acids with refined carbohydrates has no benefit for CHD and may even increase the risk of CHD and metabolic syndrome development.

“These recommendations are in line with the outcome of the IDF-facilitated symposium ‘Scientific Update on dairy fat and CHD’, which highlighted that despite the contribution of dairy products to the saturated fatty acid content of the diet, there is no clear evidence that dairy food consumption is consistently associated with a higher risk of CHD,” commented Richard Doyle, IDF President.

The IDF is pleased to see that the report recognizes the distinct biological properties and health effects of individual fatty acids, including the different saturated fatty acids, although these were not yet translated in dietary advice.

### [Trans fat](#)

However, the IDF has reacted to the recommendation on total trans fatty acids (TFA), which does not reflect the differentiation between trans fats from animal and industrial sources. It believes this differentiation is justified on the scientific evidence presented in the report that indicates harmful effects from industrially produced sources of TFA. The report recognizes that amongst adults, the estimated average daily ruminant TFA intake in most societies is low. This is in agreement with the previously published WHO Scientific Update on trans fatty acids that stated there is no conclusive evidence as yet to support an association of ruminant TFA with CHD risks in the amounts usually consumed in the diet.

The IDF stresses that dairy products, which contain both saturated fatty acids and ruminant trans fatty acids, are part of a healthy and balanced diet. Given the contribution of dairy foods to nutrient intake within the population, recommendations to reduce dairy food consumption irrespective of the nature of the dairy product should therefore only be made with caution.

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**Note to editors**

Report of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on fats and fatty acids in human nutrition available at:

<http://www.fao.org/ag/humannutrition/nutrition/en/>

Proceedings of the symposium 'Scientific Update on Dairy Fats and Coronary Heart Disease. Supplement to the December issue of the Journal of the American College of Nutrition (JACN, Vol 27, No. 6, 720S-754S, 2008)

R Uauy et al. 2009. WHO Scientific Update on trans fatty acids: summary and conclusions. European Journal of Clinical Nutrition (2009) 63, S68–S75

Founded in 1903, the International Dairy Federation represents the dairy sector worldwide by providing the best global source of scientific expertise and knowledge in support of the development and promotion of quality milk and dairy products to deliver consumers with nutrition, health and well-being.

The IDF is represented in 57 countries and membership is growing: the IDF accounts for approximately **85%** of the world's milk production at present.

The IDF aims to identify, elaborate and disseminate best practice at international level in order to guide the dairy sector and to harmonize members' work on a variety of issues along the dairy production chain, including animal health and welfare, protection of the environment, nutrition, food safety and hygiene and food standards.

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