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# IDF PRESS RELEASE

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## What room for ruminants in a sustainable food future?

***Leading scientists meet to assess the climate impact of the agri-food sector in a review of sustainable eating habits***

In the climate change debate, the environmental footprint of agriculture is often under discussion, with much of the recent discourse around food focusing on the potential impact of cattle. However, not all information in circulation stands up to scientific scrutiny.

At the highly anticipated [BAMST](#) and [IDF](#) event on 21 June '[The Role of Ruminants in Sustainable Diets](#)', high-level international speakers seek to address this, by discussing the latest science to assess the nutritional and environmental implications of ruminant livestock within a sustainable food system.

Prof. Frédéric Leroy, President of BAMST, an academic non-profit organization, and professor at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel:

*"Food of animal origin, such as meat and dairy, has been critically viewed in recent years. But that is not always justified. With this event we want to bring the scientific nuance back into an important debate. Accurate information is essential if we are to make the sustained effort needed to provide healthy diets and reduce global carbon emissions."*

Like all forms of animal agriculture, ruminant production requires land and other resources. Ruminants also produce manure, which must be carefully managed, and methane, a greenhouse gas with global warming potential (GWP). However, research and practice has also demonstrated ways in which ruminants can help improve the sustainability of farms, increasing resilience to extreme weather and supporting the livelihoods of some of the land's best stewards.

Caroline Emond, IDF Director General:

*“The dairy sector has of late received increased attention for its environmental impact on the planet. Every piece of food we eat comes with its own environmental cost, but what many don’t realise is that dairy animals provide numerous benefits to the global ecosystem. As we go forward with important and necessary conversations about sustainable food systems, it is vital to recognise the central place dairy livestock have in the global ecosystem.”*

In many countries, dairy animals occupy land that cannot otherwise be cultivated. They can also eat things that humans cannot, such as grass, turning it into milk which can then be turned into a myriad of nutritious foods. Their manure contributes to the fertility of the soil, adding organic matter and nutrients. Per unit, the dairy sector has one of the smallest carbon footprints of all animal products in the world. The overall contribution of milk production and transportation represents only 2.7% of GHG global emissions.

*The event ‘The Role of Ruminants in Sustainable Diets’ will take place on Friday 21 June at The Royal Academies for Science and the Arts of Belgium, Brussels. As places at the symposium are limited, we ask that anyone wishing to attend the event register at [www.fil-idf.org/bamstidfevent2019/](http://www.fil-idf.org/bamstidfevent2019/)*

**Notes for editors:**

The symposium will be available to view live at the following link: [BAMST IDF Livestream](#).

For information:

- The livestream will start at 9.30am
- You can find the programme in the livestream link
- Participants will be invited to engage on Twitter using the hashtag #yes2cattle
- Speaker information is available here [Speaker details](#)

**ENDS**

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## About IDF

### *Helping nourish the world with safe and sustainable dairy*

The IDF is the leading source of scientific and technical expertise for all stakeholders of the dairy chain. Since 1903, IDF has provided a mechanism for the dairy sector to reach global consensus on how to help feed the world with safe and sustainable dairy products. A recognized international authority in the development of science-based standards for the dairy sector, IDF has an important role to play in ensuring the right policies, standards, practices and regulations are in place to ensure the world's dairy products are safe and sustainable.

### *About the Belgian Association of Meat Science and Technology (BAMST)*

The mission of BAMST, as an academic non-profit organization, is to establish a network of scientists in the field of meat science and technology, to stimulate scientific research and its dissemination to a broad public, and to be a reference centre for science-based information on all aspects of meat and its role in sustainable food security.

## Media contact

E-mail: [communications@fil-idf.org](mailto:communications@fil-idf.org)

### International Dairy Federation

70/B Boulevard Auguste Reyers  
1030 Brussels - Belgium  
[info@fil-idf.org](mailto:info@fil-idf.org)  
[www.fil-idf.org](http://www.fil-idf.org)

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