

# Promar / Glanbia Cheese Collaboration - Case Study 2021

## Steering Farm Sustainability Strategy

### **How Glanbia Cheese have been engaging its suppliers to tackle climate emissions and produce an accurate and informed forward-looking strategy**

#### **The Challenge**

The concept of developing a sustainable supply chain is now commanding the attention of many progressive agri-food companies. The reason for this is clear: the food supply chain is seeing increased pressure from customers, and this is influencing the need to demonstrate transparency and the 'sustainable credentials' of the entire business.

While Glanbia Cheese had previously taken steps to put greater focus on greenhouse gas emissions and climate change, in recent years, it recognised the importance of providing transparency and gaining greater visibility of the wider sustainability issues. Including, deforestation, waste, land management and animal welfare.

With the support of the Promar Sustainability Team, Glanbia Cheese identified that to do this there needed to be greater levels of engagement and communication with the farms within the business' cheese pool. An essential step when it comes to understanding how and where to focus on sustainable practices, and produce an accurate and informed forward-looking strategy.

#### **The Solution**

Glanbia Cheese are working with the Promar team to develop and deliver a pilot sustainability assessment of 20 farms, selecting a group representative of the scale and types of farm systems in the Glanbia cheese pool.

The assessment covered three areas based on the priority of Glanbia and its sustainability agenda, including:

- Short term: carbon footprint, which is based on calculations made for all major inputs, outputs and GHG emissions relating to milk production, up to the farm gate for Glanbia producers
- Medium term - issues that are a growing concern in the dairy supply chain and will be critical to ensuring farms remain resilient in the future: animal health & welfare, soya and palm oil, water efficiency
- Long term - these issues may have a long-term impact on the sustainability of an individual farm, and therefore should be reviewed where concerns are identified: soil health, renewable energy, single-use plastics

Farm assessments were carried out to gather an understanding of the individual processes and structures in place. A full quantitative assessment of the carbon footprint was undertaken to address the highest priority and provide an aggregated report of the farm. Medium and long-term concerns were addressed, primarily at a qualitative level, based on the processes and actions undertaken.

To conclude this process, each farmer in the pool was also provided with a detailed advisory report which included a summary of their results and a core list of recommendations to reduce emissions.

These visits were then followed up with informative group meetings, involving detailed discussions on how informed the farmers were and any concerns they had.

### **Finding the Value in Data Collection**

Conducting these sessions was invaluable to Glanbia Cheese. Not only was the company able to establish a more qualitative assessment of its cheese pool, it was able to build on those core farm relationships. Forming those regular conversations has helped the business to identify what potential changes need to be made and to evaluate how each farm's activities connect with the wider sustainability strategy for the business.

Grasping a better understanding of individual activity and progress will provide Glanbia Cheese with a strong message to customers too, offering greater detail on its sustainable food production.

Not to mention the value for farmers. Understanding the plans for the business at the consumer-facing end helps to keep them informed of potential growing pressures and the impact they have. Greater discussions have really helped to connect the link from farm production to the end consumer.

### **Going forward**

Future development was another item on the agenda, and how Glanbia Cheese can make the most of the results of the assessment. Not forgetting, how the business can continue to demonstrate the positive actions farmers are undertaking. Under the guidance of the Promar Sustainability Team, Glanbia set some goals going forward.

- 1- Support farmers to understand the key focus areas to continue to build sustainable growth on their farms and provide access to information that will support this.
- 2- Develop KPIs to a suitable framework to guide the development of a farm sustainability strategy with measurable 5,10- and 20-year goals.
- 3- Gradually increase the scale of the assessment pool and review the core focus areas to ensure optimal assessment of the sustainability of the cheese pool.

Building on communication and data collection has been critical to Glanbia Cheese, helping to form the basis of a long-term farm sustainability strategy. With continued action, the business hopes to have even greater clarity and to further improve its approach to sustainable practices.