



Dairy training at Kold College in Denmark

The European dairy industry needs more workforce with more skills

A 3-years research in 14 countries shows a dairy industry asking for more skills in several fields - among these a better understanding of green production and digital skills.

Representatives of international dairy companies and national education institutions gathered in November at the Van Hall Larenstein University in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands, to discuss the outcome of the EU Erasmus+ project „Mapping Skills Needs and Supply in Dairy Sector“.

The results

Statistician and dairy engineer Prof. Morten Arendt Rasmussen, Copenhagen University, confirmed at the Leeuwarden gathering that the database is really solid and provides a very good insight into dairy skills required. AEDIL was able to identify the following skills categories that are most important to the dairy industry:

- Dairy skills
- Digital skills
- Green skills
- Management skills.

Recommendations to dairy skills

AEDIL Project Coordinator Isabel Sande Frandsen (Denmark), described some of the most important findings. Employees in the dairy industry must definitely have dairy-specific skills. These can only be brought across if professional education is at a level that can fulfill industry demand.

- Do not level down on specific dairy skills training but rather scale it up, Frandsen quoted on of the key



BY LARS WINTHER



findings of the AEDIL project. Adjustment of dairy training requires a close collaboration of industry and schools. AEDIL recommends that teachers and trainers have regular internships in dairy companies to have an insight into the state-of-the-art of industrial milk processing.

Recommendations to green skills

When it comes to green skills, dairy workers must be able to assess risks associated with milk processing, they must have an insight in reuse and reduction of energy and resources and be able to understand business plans with a green focus. This is an area that is only taught very scarcely at most educational institutions and hence needs quite urgent attention. Frandsen explained that many topics that are already taught at the dairy schools can quite easily get a green twist.

Recommendations to digital skills

Digital skills rank very high in the requirements of workers' qualifications brought forward by the dairy industry. This includes the ability to understand fundamentals of automation and to use business software. Pilot plants in dairy schools should be upgraded to state-of-the-art automation to make students familiar with existing technology. Part of the required digital skills is also that workers need to be aware of IT security. Furthermore, it was recommended that students should be exposed to automation during their internships in the dairy manufacturing industry.

Recommendations to management skills

As the dairy industry also needs qualified managers, workers' education must convey special qualification. The AEDIL project identified that business and supply chain understanding as well as LEAN as a tool for controlling unit operations stand at the core. In higher level education, future dairy company managers need to understand milk markets

and consumer trends and their impacts on the industry.

Work-based learning

All these skills must be developed in a work-based (life-long) learning process. Trainers and teachers alike need continuous upskilling in dairy plants to stay on top of newest developments. This means that a greater alignment between educational institutions and the industry is required. Dairy companies may also make use of external specialists in the supplying industry to cover special and plant-related knowledge transfer requirements.

Recruitment

The AEDIL event made one thing quite clear: if the dairy industry wants to attract and employ well-skilled workers, it must invest into necessary resources. This in turn requires money. The industry and, given the importance of milk production in rural economy, governments should be prepared for investment into qualified staff. ●

Further information:

Isabel Sande Frandsen,
AEDIL Project Coordinator.
Mail: isf@maelkeritidende.dk
<https://dairysectorskills.com>

AEDIL



Facts - AEDIL

The results and recommendations of a 3-year pan-European project were presented. The recommendations are based on a very comprehensive research and analysis of the future requirements for professional education in the European dairy sector.

The project started back in 2016 born out of the realisation that the development in the dairy industry is running much faster than the teaching at dairy schools across Europe – hence, creating serious skill gaps.

The results were presented at a conference on 26 November 2019 in Leeuwarden, The Netherlands

Initiator of the project:

AEDIL (Association for European Dairy Industry Learning).

Duration: 3-years

Research:

- 117 dairy companies in 14 European countries were interviewed to identify the most important skill requirements today and in the future, specific for the milk processing industry.
- 56 educational institutions (vocational and university levels) were interviewed to identify which topics are taught and at what level.
- 65 ex-students were interviewed to verify the taught lessons with perceived teaching.

Downloads from AEDIL's project site: dairysectorskills.com

- Report with Recommendations (available in English, German, French, Polish and Turkish).
- Analysis Report with country specific data.
- Report with Best Practices on Work Based Learning.
- Report with Best Practices from global front-runners on Green and Digital skills.
- Detailed data from the research.