# Big dairy firms lag in tackling methane despite climate urgency



Big dairy companies are increasingly under scrutiny for their inaction regarding methane emissions, a potent greenhouse gas that significantly contributes to climate change. An assessment of 20 major dairy and coffee brands, collectively generating over $420 billion in revenue, highlights a disconcerting trend: most of these companies lack explicit methane reduction targets, viable action plans, and transparency in their emissions data.

Animal agriculture is notably responsible for 32% of global methane emissions, with the breeding of cattle for milk and meat being a primary factor. Methane's impact on climate change is severe; it is approximately 80 times more effective than carbon dioxide in trapping heat over a 20-year period and has been attributed to nearly half of the total temperature rise since 1750. As the climate crisis intensifies, identified cuts to methane emissions present a critical avenue for mitigating global heating and its associated consequences.

According to the report, Danone stands out among its competitors as the only company to set a specific methane reduction target. It aims for a 30% reduction in absolute methane emissions from its fresh milk supply chain by 2030, having already reduced emissions by roughly 14% from 2018 to 2020. This initiative aligns with a broader trend; at COP28, several leading food companies, including Nestlé and General Mills, have committed to increasing transparency regarding their dairy-related methane emissions as part of the Dairy Methane Action Alliance, which is driven by the global nonprofit Environmental Defense Fund.

Despite these commitments, the overall findings reveal a disheartening lack of action. Only Nestlé and Danone claimed to have cut their emissions, with the industry remaining largely silent on methane’s environmental impact. Nusa Urbancic, the chief executive of Changing Markets, remarked that the absence of methane-specific targets signals a reluctance among firms to confront a significant driver of climate change. The need for immediate action is underscored by the scientific consensus; experts advocate that governments must introduce science-based methane reduction mandates for the agricultural sector.

Arla, one of the assessed companies, has publicly rejected criticisms levied against its climate strategies, asserting that its commitments to sustainable dairy production and science-based targets are firmly in place. However, independent evaluations question the credibility of these claims, particularly concerning the accuracy of Arla's emissions reporting. Industry stakeholders are facing mounting pressure not only to reduce methane emissions but also to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability through concrete actions.

The focus now shifts to European governments, where leadership in the global methane pledge is crucial as new legislation looms. Dubbed a rare opportunity to effectively manage methane emissions, dairy production could be a game-changer in the fight against global warming if coupled with meaningful corporate responsibility and active governmental intervention. Urbancic emphasises, “Fine words from businesses and a few voluntary actions are little more than hot air.” With a growing severity of climate impacts, the spotlight is on the dairy industry to pivot from complacency to accountability, ensuring that promises of sustainability are backed by tangible results.

The forthcoming months will be critical in determining whether these alliances and commitments translate into significant methane reductions. For now, the industry faces a pivotal moment that could define its role in climate action and its responsibilities toward environmental stewardship.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3
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6. Paragraphs 4, 5, 6
7. Paragraph 4

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/may/13/dairy-companies-methane-emissions-climate-report> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/may/13/dairy-companies-methane-emissions-climate-report> - An assessment of 20 major dairy and coffee shop chains, with combined revenues exceeding $420 billion, found that most lack clear methane reduction targets, credible action plans, or basic transparency on emissions. Danone was the only company with a methane-specific target, while General Mills had a climate target but not one specific to methane. Nestlé and Arla were also among the companies assessed, with Nestlé explicitly supporting reduced dairy consumption. Despite acknowledging the threat of methane and livestock to the climate, only Nestlé and Danone claimed to have actually cut emissions.
3. <https://www.danone.com/newsroom/press-releases/danone-announces-an-ambitious-plan-to-reduce-its-methane-emissions.html> - Danone, a leading food company and one of the world’s largest dairy companies, announced a global action plan to reduce absolute methane emissions from its fresh milk supply chain by 30% by 2030. This ambitious plan builds on the progress Danone has been making in recent years, already reducing its methane emissions by approximately 14% between 2018 and 2020. The company aims to work with farmers to implement regenerative dairy practices and develop innovative solutions to achieve this goal.
4. <https://www.foodnavigator.com/Article/2023/12/05/COP28-Global-dairy-giants-vow-to-publicly-disclose-and-tackle-dairy-related-methane-emissions/> - At COP28, six global food majors, including Danone, Nestlé, Lactalis USA, General Mills, Kraft Heinz, and Bel Group, committed to publicly disclosing their dairy-related methane emissions and developing detailed action plans. This initiative, led by the global nonprofit Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), aims to foster transparency and accountability on methane emissions from dairy supply chains. The companies have joined forces in the Dairy Methane Action Alliance to address this critical issue.
5. <https://www.dairyreporter.com/Article/2025/02/28/arla-responds-to-damning-report-on-its-climate-action/> - Arla Foods responded to a report by the Changing Markets Foundation and Greenpeace Nordic, which criticized the company's climate action efforts. The report accused Arla of lacking methane-specific emissions reporting and questioned the validity of its in-house carbon footprint calculations. Arla disputed the report's findings, stating that it contained multiple inaccuracies and did not accurately reflect the company's science-based targets and commitment to producing more sustainable dairy.
6. <https://www.dairyprocessing.com/articles/1417-danone-plan-addresses-dairy-methane-emissions> - Danone revealed new details of its plan to reduce absolute methane emissions from its fresh milk supply chain by 30% by 2030. The company anticipates removing 1.2 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalent of methane emissions by 2030. Danone has already reduced methane emissions by 14% between 2018 and 2020. The company aims to work with farmers to implement regenerative dairy practices and develop innovative solutions to achieve this goal.
7. <https://www.dairyreporter.com/Article/2024/04/15/how-danone-is-reducing-methane-emissions-from-dairy/> - Danone is working to cut methane emissions by 30% by 2030, against a 2020 baseline. The company is collaborating with its network of 58,000 farmers across 20 countries and has accelerated methane reduction initiatives in Africa, Europe, and the US. Danone is focusing on regenerative agriculture projects, animal health and herd management, feed management, manure management, and applying new technologies such as feed additives and cow-wearables to inhibit methane production.