# Dairy and coffee giants largely fail to tackle methane emissions, report finds



A recent report from the Changing Markets Foundation has unveiled a shocking complacency among major dairy and coffee brand leaders regarding the urgent need to curtail methane emissions. Titled "Running Latte," the exposé highlights that amidst the heightened scrutiny of climate impact, only two of the twenty companies evaluated have genuinely committed to significant reductions in these harmful emissions. Combined, these giants generate approximately 8% of the world’s methane emissions, an alarming figure considering methane's potency—being over 80 times more effective than carbon dioxide in trapping heat over a two-decade span.

The assessment, which included industry heavyweights from Europe and North America with collective revenues exceeding $420 billion, painted a grim picture: only six companies even engaged meaningfully with the Changing Markets Foundation during the evaluation process. Notable absentees, like Starbucks and Kraft Heinz, failed to offer any substantial feedback or demonstrate accountability in their emissions tracking. Of those that did respond, a mere six track their methane emissions directly, with only four going further to publish their data. This lack of transparency raises significant concerns as the world grapples with the climate emergency.

The report's scoring system starkly illustrated the shortcomings within the industry. Eighteen out of the twenty companies scored below 50 out of 100 for their practices surrounding methane accounting, reduction targets, and commitment to transparency. Danone emerged as the frontrunner with a score of 59, primarily due to its concrete, time-bound goal of achieving a 30% reduction in methane emissions by 2030—a commitment that aligns with the Global Methane Pledge initiated by over 150 governments aiming for similar reductions. General Mills and Nestlé followed, the latter having publicly supported a reduction in dairy consumption without yet committing to a decrease in sales.

However, the report's findings were particularly disheartening regarding the coffee industry. Dunkin’ received a zero for not setting any targets or proactively addressing its methane emissions, while Starbucks, despite being one of the largest consumers of dairy milk in the U.S., failed to release a methane-specific strategy. This oversight represents a glaring gap in awareness and responsibility, as dairy is estimated to be Starbucks' most significant emissions source.

Amidst discussions at COP28 regarding the establishment of the Dairy Methane Action Alliance (DMAA), the report suggests that the reality of corporate engagement has been far from impactful. Of the eight founding members of the DMAA, only three had established methane reduction targets as of April 2025, calling into question the efficacy of such alliances. Although three new members have since joined and made some progress by releasing emissions data and plans, many others remain non-compliant with the accountability requirements.

The Changing Markets Foundation’s chief executive, Nusa Urbancic, remarked, “The near-total absence of methane-specific targets and credible action plans sends a clear signal: companies are turning a blind eye to emissions of one of the most potent and solvable drivers of global heating.” This reflects a broader trend where industries are prioritising public relations over real, substantive action towards climate mitigation.

Urbancic further warned against the phenomenon of “agricultural exceptionalism,” where the agriculture sector is largely exempt from stringent climate regulations imposed on other industries like energy and transportation. The wide failure to tackle methane emissions, in comparison to the vigorous initiatives targeting fossil fuels, showcases a troubling inconsistency in climate policy. The report calls for dairy companies to align with global emission targets and urges coffee chains to equalise the pricing of alternative milks to promote sustainable consumer choices.

In summary, the findings present a strong case for an urgent shift in how major dairy and coffee brands approach their methane emissions. As these sectors are unveiled as significant players in driving climate change, the need for accountability and concrete action has never been more pressing. The report makes it clear that while promises are plentiful, the industry must back them up with real, measurable changes to protect our planet for future generations.

### Reference Map

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

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