**Introductie**

Nice to meet all of you. With an educational background in business, supply chains and sustainability, I joined Interfood in the field of ESG and sustainability back in 2021. At that time, Interfood, a dairy trading company, was in the midst of developing its sustainability strategy. Now, four years later, we offer mature sustainability services, along with risk management, supply chain, and research and development solutions. This combination, along with our role as a 'spider in the web,' provides us with extensive knowledge of the global dairy market and its players, enabling us to unite our customers and suppliers globally to address the environmental footprint of dairy production.

Having started on the ESG and compliance side and now being part of the Sustainability Team as a Program Manager for on-farm sustainability projects, I have gained experience with various stakeholders and understand the extent to which they consider and value sustainability risks and opportunities. I look forward to discussing the future of agriculture with you from both a sustainability and trading company perspective.

**What are the three biggest challenges in the agricultural sector for Europe?**

A main challenge for the agricultural sector is feeding a growing worldwide population while simultaneously reducing the environmental impact of the sector. How can we produce more food while degrading fewer resources? This poses a significant challenge to farmers, particularly coupled with (1) Extreme weather events which influence supply security, (2) Market uncertainties stemming from geopolitical risks which cause volatile world trade and financial flows and (3) a volatile regulatory environment, which creates uncertainty for farmers in terms of what they are expected and/or allowed to do and not do.

**Are consumers willing to pay more for sustainably produced food?**

Addressing the environmental impact of the agricultural sector should be a joint responsibility. Indeed, part of the burden will lay with the consumer who may be asked to pay a higher price for its products, however, the burden should be shared by the industry. From Interfood's perspective, we do see that partners, being suppliers and customers, are willing to invest in reduction initiatives in order to reach their net zero targets. Nevertheless, these efforts are commonly driven by market mechanisms and may still translate into consumer prices. The influence of consumers should thus not be underestimated. Their willingness to pay a premium for sustainably produced food varies significantly by region and is influenced by broader economic conditions, such as inflation, which can further increase prices. Currently, the willingness to pay a premium for sustainable products is limited to a relatively small segment of society. However, through education and transparency and by everyone taking their responsibility, we could address this challenge and encourage more widespread acceptance as we move forward.

