



6. The Hochwald Future Forum: Emotional, digital, rational Members of the cooperative consider the topics of the future

Ochtendung/Thalfang, 14 September 2022

'Emotional. Digital. Rational.' This was the title of the 6th Future Forum, which returned to the Kulturhalle Ochtendung in mid-September. The wide-ranging agenda of Hochwald Milch eG, which featured expert speakers, a supporting programme and numerous opportunities for constructive dialogue, generated high levels of interest among the membership. "Crises present a lot of possibilities. Perceiving, grasping and realising these opportunities is what defines the history of our cooperative", said Peter Manderfeld, Chief Executive Officer of Hochwald Milch eG in his opening address, putting participants in the mood for the varied day ahead.

In the morning session, Professor Wilhelm Windisch of the Technical University of Munich, contributing under the 'Emotional' heading, clearly outlined how food security, environmental protection and climate protection can work together. As Managing Director, Kerstin Wriedt confirmed in her presentation that dialogue and education are also a stated aim of the Initiative Milch. In the process, she is taking a whole new approach to communication, targeting the media with specific emotional messages and adopting the communication style used by Generation Z – 'Let's talk milk' being the main headline.

Professor Jörg Dörr of TU Kaiserslautern contended that the digital transformation of agriculture presents more chances than challenges, and cited practical examples to convey the benefits of digitalisation for farmers. Application in practice is also the major topic for the Hofgut Neumühle. For the research farm, the focus is on the availability of data and its interpretation.

After lunch together – and a trip to the market for the export regions of Hochwald – the main topic was the 'climate dairy farm' of Mario Frese, long-standing Hochwald supplier. The dairy farm in Mörshausen in the north of Hesse is Germany's first climate-friendly dairy farm,

jointly established in December 2021 by the Hochschule für Wirtschaft und Umwelt Nürtingen-Geislingen (HfWU), Nestlé Deutschland and Hochwald. The aim of the pilot project is to reduce the carbon footprint of the farm with 135 cows to net zero emissions within three years. The project team also has the support of the Thünen Institute of Farm Economics and the Bodensee foundation as advisory partners.

For Hochwald, the project constitutes an important model for other farmers. “The climate dairy farm on the land of our cooperative member chimes ideally with the strategic direction that we redefined in 2017, complementing and supporting own climate targets. Our hope is that other farmers will benefit from the things we are all learning as participants. Supporting farmers along our common path is critically important. Progress in the fields of animal welfare and sustainability should also be made clear to the public”, said Detlef Latka, Managing Director of Hochwald.

The questions asked by farmers in the concluding round of discussion, together with all of the day’s speakers, illustrated yet again how seriously future-related issues are taken.

About Hochwald Foods GmbH:

Hochwald Foods GmbH is based in Thalfang, Rhineland-Palatinate. Its production facilities in Germany and the Netherlands cover the entire spectrum of dairy products. Hochwald owns well-known brands such as Bärenmarke, Lünebest, Glücksklee, Elinas and Hochwald, as well as trademarks and international brands such as Bonny. www.hochwald.de

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