
# EcoFeed® Wins 2024 IDF Dairy Innovation Award

PARIS, FRANCE, October 18th, 2024 — In a remarkable achievement for sustainable agriculture, STgenetics'® EcoFeed® program has been awarded the prestigious International Dairy Federation (IDF) Dairy Innovation Award in Climate Action for 2024. The award, presented at the IDF World Dairy Summit on October 18th, 2024, recognizes groundbreaking approaches to improving the efficiency and sustainability of dairy production.

The IDF Dairy Innovation Awards aim to highlight the dairy sector's innovative spirit, showcasing new practices, processes, and products that enhance global sustainability and align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This year, the awards drew an impressive 173 entries from 26 countries, illustrating the global commitment to advancing sustainable dairy practices.

## A Testament to Dairy Innovation

Caroline Emond, Director General of the IDF, commented on the significance of the awards, "Innovation stands as a defining trait within the dairy sector, a cornerstone that has anchored milk and dairy in the heart of sustainable and healthy nutrition. Our focus is set on catalyzing further inventive breakthroughs."

The EcoFeed® program emerged as a leader in the "Innovation in Climate Action" category, particularly for its contributions to reducing the environmental impact of dairy cattle. Dr. Jocelyn Johnson, STgenetics® Livestock and Sustainability Manager stated, "At the heart of STgenetics®' EcoFeed® program is a strong commitment to helping our farmers feed the world today without inhibiting future generations from doing the same. EcoFeed® offers a permanent and cumulative solution that uniquely benefits both farmers and consumers, enhancing the industries social, economic, and environmental sustainability."

## Understanding EcoFeed®

Cattle consume feed that humans are not able to digest and transform it into the nutritious milk and meat products that we consume. However, not all cattle are created equal in their ability to transform feed; some require more or less feed to produce the same amount of product. Since feed makes up over 50% of input costs on farms and is closely tied to methane emissions — a potent greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming — enhancing the feed efficiency of cattle can greatly improve both the profitability and environmental sustainability of milk and meat production.

EcoFeed® by STgenetics® is a genetic selection index that identifies cattle with superior Feed Conversion Efficiency, enabling farmers to breed cattle who produce milk and meat with less feed, less methane emissions, and less water. Based on more than 14 years of research and over 28,000 progeny records for Feed Conversion Efficiency, EcoFeed® works by identifying the differences within an animal's own DNA that contribute to how efficiently they transform feed into milk and meat. With heritability over >30% and average sire reliability of >60%, producers can confidently incorporate EcoFeed® into their current selection practices to enhance profitability while promoting sustainable practices.

**Achievements and Future Potential**

Today, farmers evaluate a combination of genetic indices based on their breeding objectives and market demands to identify elite sires and dams that will pass on desirable traits to the next generation. Being uncorrelated with other economically relevant traits, EcoFeed® is easily incorporated into existing sire and female selection decisions to improve Feed Conversion Efficiency and reduce methane emissions while simultaneously improving other important traits such as milk production.

If farmers in North America utilize the top 1% of EcoFeed® sires to breed the top 35% of EcoFeed® dams, the next generation of dairy females could save an estimated $3.5 billion in feed costs and cut CO2e emissions by more than 23 million tons during their lifetime, without impacting productivity. This advancement not only translates into significant cost savings for farmers but also positions them to address potential future regulations or consumer pressures regarding greenhouse gas emissions.

**Implications for the Dairy Industry**

The recognition of the EcoFeed® program highlights the importance the dairy sector places on sustainability and efficiency. As the dairy industry faces increasing scrutiny regarding its environmental impact, programs like EcoFeed® provide vital solutions for producers aiming to maintain profitability while developing more sustainable practices.

Moreover, the EcoFeed® program not only aids farmers in reducing costs, but also enhances their ability to adapt to changing regulatory landscapes that favor sustainable agriculture. The initiative exemplifies how genetic advancements can align with economic interests, reinforcing the notion that sustainability and profitability coexist in modern dairy farming.

STgenetics®' EcoFeed® program stands as a beacon of innovation in the dairy industry, proving that with the right tools and approaches, it is possible to increase production efficiency while simultaneously lowering environmental impacts. "EcoFeed® genetics are truly good for you, good for cows, and good for the planet," says Dr. Johnson. As the global dairy community continues to embrace sustainable practices, awards like the IDF Dairy Innovation Award serve to inspire and motivate further advancements, ensuring a more sustainable future for both the industry and the world.

With the recognition from IDF, STgenetics® is poised to lead the charge in transforming sustainable dairy cattle genetics, fostering a sustainable and economically viable future for producers worldwide. For more information on STgenetics® EcoFeed® program visit stgen.com or contact Dr. Jocelyn Johnson at jocelyn.johnson@stgen.com.

Located in Navasota, Texas, STgenetics® is making the world greener, more sustainable and profitable. By improving herd genetics through science and technology, we believe that the best way to predict the future is to create it, while feeding the world with our passion for the beef and dairy industries. The STgenetics® Integrated Approach to management combines cutting edge genetics, innovation driven programs and gender-sorted semen to aid farmers in improving cattle performance to feed the world while reducing their carbon footprint.