Dear Mrs Yu Lu,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a real pleasure to be here today. This annual meeting feels really like a family. I want to congratulate Mrs Yu Lu with again organizing such interesting seminar. I know you all have a good overview of dairy industry. Just like everywhere, also in the Netherlands the dairy sector is in development.

In my presentation I will address:

* The structure of the Dutch Dairy sector
* Dairy - Good for the environment
* Dairy - Good for health
* Dairy - Good for China

How can a small country as the Netherlands produce an amount of 14 billion milk, being the 3rd milk producer of the European Union?

The Netherlands’ mild sea climate is ideal for dairy. It allows pastures and cows to flourish and become a natural part of life.

In the Netherlands, half of our agricultural land consists of pastures for the cows. Which makes it an integral part of the Dutch landscape.

Let me start with giving you some figures of the Dutch dairy sector

* Each year the 14.300 Dutch dairy farmers produce with 1.6 million cows, 14 billion tonnes of milk.
* On average the dairy farmers own 120 cows and the business is run by one family, usually for generations.
* This milk is collected by dairy companies, of which half of them belong to cooperatives and the other half to private companies. The milk is processed in 53 factories.
* In the Netherlands, more than half of the total of raw milk is processed into the famous Dutch cheeses.

Why do we make so much cheese?

It started in 1400-1600 milk was collected but fresh milk couldn’t be stored for a long time. Cheese however could be stored for months. So Dutchmen started to produce cheese.

Dutch are good cheese producers. Cheese form the NL is famous for its quality and people worldwide are willing to pay a good price for the cheese.

* This enables dairy processors to pay a good milk price to the farmers!
* This is both good to both the dairy companies and the dairy farmers.

Let me tell you now How the Dutch agriculture and dairy production is contributing to a better environment

• In the Netherlands, we are taking the global challenges in the world into concern, for example how to contribute to a healthier life and how to help decrease the global warming. This is included in our new international agricultural strategy.

• The dairy farmers and the processors see a role for them to achieve the goals and they see it as their duty to contribute to a better world. They embraced the Sustainable Development Goals and approach each challenge in a holistic way. The global dairy community, organized in IDF, signed their global dairy declaration of Rotterdam to contribute to the SDG’s in 2016.

**A global problem, needs a global solution**. We have the responsibility to make healthy and sustainable food and we should work closely together to feed the growing global population and the growing food demand and face the challenges ahead of us.

The Netherlands has been committed to reduce the greenhouse gas emission.

I am proud to say that the production of dairy in the Netherlands has already one of the lowest CO2-footprints in the world per kg milk, but still we would like to make some steps. To achieve this, the dairy sector uses an integral chain approach.

But is not only on the national level that they want to be involved, the Dutch dairy industry also wants tois supporting the reduction of the CO2-emission on the global level, by sharing their expertise and knowledge and contribute to the work to develop standards.

But the Dutch Dairy Chain is also working to contribute to achieving the other goals set in the UN-SDG’s.

Sustainability is in the core of the Dutch dairy sector. 84% of the dairy farmers apply animal-friendly meadow grazing for their cows. Increasingly sustainable milk production practices make the dairy sector in the Netherlands future-proof. This is good for the planet, for consumers, for dairy farmers and dairy companies.

For example, since 2015, the Dutch dairy sector has used 100% responsible soy as the feed for dairy cows’ diets. By doing this, natural land has been preserved and less negative environmental impacts has been induced.

Last week, I was again in the Netherlands, and I saw that having solar panels on the roofs of the stables has become very common, Almost half of the dairy farms has solar panels on the roofs of their stables to cover their electricity.

Almost 2/3 of the dairy farmers also save energy by reusing the natural heath of their milk.

**Dairy is a part of a healthy diet**, isn’t it?

Of course, in certain stages of the live you should eat some dairy products to remain healthy. However, the dairy products offered in the shops or restaurants can be healthier. In a lot of dairy products sugar is added

Coming from Europe, I was surprised how sweet the yoghurts here are. Fortunately, it is possible to find yoghurt without added sugar. And you know, dairy without added sugar is very tasty.

The Dutch dairy sector keeps improving their products.

And also for the content of salt in Dutch cheeses, the Dutch dairy processors have reduced the content, without comprimising the taste. It remains at the highest Dutch quality.

Dairy - Good for China

Dutch dairy is in several ways also good for China.

First of all, the Dutch dairy sector shares their knowledge of dairy production with China. For almost 10 years, we had the Sino Dutch Dairy Development Center, which supports the Chinese dairy sector with Dutch dairy expertise.

Secondly, of course Chinese people enjoy the quality dairy products from the Netherlands.

This starts from the early age, as many, many babies have the privilege of having Dutch infant formula. Almost half of the imported infant formula is coming from the Netherlands.

As a Dutch person, I am glad to see that cheese is becoming more and more popular. It is getting more easy to get my Dutch cheese for my breakfast. We have about 100 Dutch dairy companies registed in Cifer to supply you with these nice products.

We also see a growing demand for functional food for elderly people, for example with additional calcium for the bones. With the aging population and the importance to become old in a healthy way, it will become more important to get access to these kind of products.

Dairy cares for us through all stages of life!

Thank you for your attention.