

Criteria Overview for the DSF Criteria: Water Availability and Quality

Strategic Intent: Water availability as well as water quality is managed responsibly throughout the dairy value chain.

DSF Indicator Metric: At Farm Level: The *development and implementation of an effluent management plan (EMP)*. **At Processing Level** – *calculating and reporting of water use efficiency for production and processing*.

About this Criteria: Water is a critical requirement in the production of milk and dairy nutrition. It is required for the health and wellbeing of animals, the growing of the plants that animals eat, the cleaning of milking and milk processing equipment, milk cooling and the generation of steam to produce milk and dairy products. Water is also extracted from milk during for example, milk powder manufacturing.

The word '*availability*' in the Criteria also includes the efficient use of water by the DSF member, be it at farms or processing sites – i.e. '*availability*' also includes '*utilization*'.

The Criteria includes all water that is on, passes through or is used by the farm or business premises including rivers, streams or water that is extracted from any natural source.

Aspect to consider, include:

- The use, maintenance and quality improvement of the water that is accessed and used
- Understanding the catchment from which water is sourced through 'Catchment mapping'
- The volume of water used by the enterprise
- The volume and quality of water that is returned to the environment
- Pollution risks - Manure/silage effluent/ chemicals (inc. fertilizers)/ fuels/lubricants sprays/pesticides/cleaning detergents etc.
- The impact of the operation's water use on the region (and beyond if applicable – e.g. feed inputs) in-which it is operating
- Livestock drinking water quality and quantity – This must never be compromised

Interlinkages: This Criteria is linked with the criteria – **Waste, Soil Quality and Retention, Biodiversity, Animal Care, Product Safety & Quality, Rural Economies, Market Development and GHG Emissions**