

DATE 05/08/2025

TransformDairyNet

Uniting Europe for Sustainable Dairy Innovation in Thessaloniki

Following its successful launch in 2024, the **TransformDairyNet (TDN) project** reached another milestone in May 2025 with its first in-person General Assembly and **European Knowledge and Innovation Network (EKIN)** meeting. Held in Thessaloniki, Greece from 21–23 May, this gathering marked one year of collaborative work to transform dairy farming through support of the wider adoption of Cow-Calf Contact (CCC) systems across Europe.

Nearly 60 in-person participants and 57 online attendees from 14 countries came together to assess progress, share knowledge, and inspire one another in the drive toward more sustainable, ethical, and economically viable dairy practices. In the coming months, TDN will continue to collect insights on best practices for Cow-Calf Contact (CCC) systems. **The stakeholder survey is now open** and will remain available until the end of October — **[take the survey here](#)**.

First Hybrid EKIN Meeting: A European Network Comes to Life

The Thessaloniki event hosted the first of three EKIN meetings planned for the project's duration. EKIN—TransformDairyNet's European Knowledge and Innovation Network—is designed to amplify cross-border exchange between farmers, researchers, advisors, NGOs, supply chain actors, and policymakers. The Thessaloniki meeting delivered on this mission with a vibrant programme of presentations, case studies, and panel discussions.

Topics ranged from ethical dairy management and welfare assessment to market positioning and farm-level innovation. Speakers included representatives from The Ethical Dairy, Four Paws International, Aarhus University, UCD, ELGO, VetmedUni Vienna, and other leading institutions. Their insights highlighted the practical, ethical, and commercial dimensions of CCC implementation, and demonstrated how diverse European contexts are shaping the future of dairy farming. Recordings are now available to watch online! (**[watch here](#)**)

"These face-to-face conversations have played a crucial role in reinforcing our network across Europe," said Charles Ellett, Dairy Manager at The Ethical Dairy. "The benefits of farmer-driven innovation are clear, and the Thessaloniki workshop has already inspired fresh cross-border partnerships and ideas."

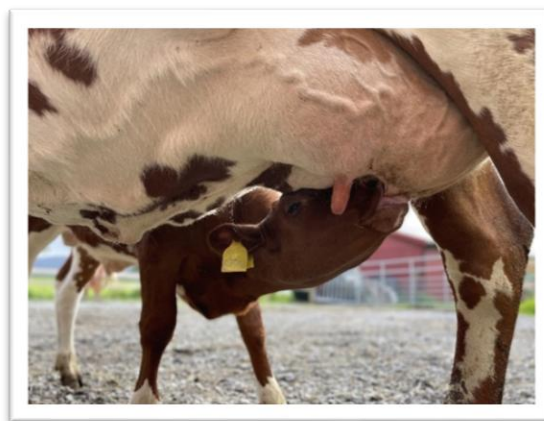


Photo credit: Stine Grønmo Kischel

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DATE 05/08/2025

Notes to editors

General Assembly: One Year On

The Thessaloniki meeting also hosted the first in-person General Assembly of the project. Partners reviewed progress across work packages, including regulatory mapping, stakeholder engagement, farmer knowledge exchange, and the development of CCC tools and metrics. Importantly, the meeting provided space to align on key priorities for the upcoming months, including preparation of the project's first formal reports and scientific publications.

"We are proud of the momentum we've built in just one year," noted Prof. Siobhan Mullan (UCD, Project Coordinator). "This project is not just about research, it's about delivering real support for farmers, enabling change, and securing a future for ethical, sustainable dairy across Europe."

What's Next for TransformDairyNet?

With its first EKin meeting complete, TransformDairyNet now looks ahead to consolidating insights from across the National Innovation Practice Hubs, strengthening digital knowledge sharing tools, and preparing its mid-term outputs. The next EKin workshops will take place on **20 May 2026 in Bucharest**, Romania and in 2027 in Italy.

The first call for **Living Lab** (LL) applications closed on 26 April 2025, with **10 proposals submitted**. These proposals have either been accepted or are currently under review for improvement by the WP Leaders and the Project Advisory Board. The approved Living Labs (LLs), which are eligible for financial support, will launch later this year to trial CCC innovations in real-life farm settings. The second application round is open until 1 September 2025. The LLs will run until May 2027, the end of the project and they are, led by farmers and coordinated by National Network Facilitators (**NNFs**) with support from researchers and advisors. Following the recent publication of the **report on regulatory frameworks**, the next step is the release of a **report on knowledge gaps around CCC systems** this summer.

TransformDairyNet remains committed to supporting farmers—both experienced and new to CCC—in co-developing scalable, high-welfare, and economically viable systems. "This is a journey of learning and innovation," said Janina van der Drift, entrepreneur of Kalverliefde Dairy. "We are not just changing practice—we're changing the culture of dairy."

About TransformDairyNet

TransformDairyNet is a €3M European initiative funded under the Horizon Europe program, dedicated to transforming dairy farming through the adoption of Cow-Calf Contact systems. The project unites stakeholders from across the dairy sector to enhance animal welfare, sustainability, and profitability in line with the EU's Farm to Fork Strategy.



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