

C4. The milks worldwide - Importance of milk and dairy products from non-conventional species

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In the world, the part of milk consumed by human coming from other species than cattle was 17% in 2012, i.e. 128 million tons. This non-cattle milk appears more linked to a specific territory: sheep in Mediterranean basin, horse in Central Asia, yak in Himalaya, camel in desert, buffalo milk in humid tropics. These close links associating one determined dairy species to a particular space contribute to the building of dairy ecosystems characterized by traditional identity products, farmer know-how, landscape maintenance, cultural activities, and commercial productivity. Elsewhere, according to the variability in milk composition, their nutritional value, dietetic interest and medicinal properties (true or postulated) could be potentially an important added value for producers and the dairy sector. Last, most of the non-cattle milk production occurs in emerging or developing countries where the animal protein demand is growing highly. Facing the western model (typically Holstein-soya-silage), the development of production systems, more or less intensive, based on “minor dairy species” could appear as a sustainable alternative in terms of quantity and quality.