



UCD Michael Smurfit
Graduate Business School

GLOBAL NETWORK FOR
ADVANCED MANAGEMENT



THE FUTURE OF FOOD AND AGRIBUSINESS: POLICY, TECHNOLOGY AND SUSTAINABILITY

BMGT45150

CLASSES MEET VIA ZOOM ON WEDNESDAYS

<https://ucd-ie.zoom.us/j/67063402157?pwd=shcPcSCQtxqkqnTQDymRuTbEo7T5qG.1>

Meeting ID: 670 6340 2157

Passcode: 737485

22nd January to 23rd April
[Spring break 12th / 19th March]

1230-1430 GMT / 0730-930 EST / 2030-2230 CST

INSTRUCTOR: PROF. DAMIEN P. MCLOUGHLIN
UCD MICHAEL SMURFIT GRADUATE BUSINESS SCHOOL, IRELAND.

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EXECUTIVE IN RESIDENCE: Hans Weaver, Vice President, Consumables at Clark Associates,
Yale SOM MBA and GNAM Alum.

PROGAM MANAGER: Lidija Balija

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This survey course address the main questions and controversies facing the leaders of global food and agribusiness firms and organisations. The course reaches from the primary

producer/ farmer to the consumer and takes a global perspective. While this makes the module of specific interest to those working, or with a specific interest, in the food and agribusiness chain, the range of topics covered and the leadership perspective taken also makes this module one of general interest to those with ambitions in consulting, investment, private equity and entrepreneurship.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand the dynamics of the food and agribusiness supply chain.
2. Evaluate the strategies of key firms in that chain.
3. Address key controversies and leadership challenges of the chain and the actors within it.
4. To build a community of food and agribusiness within GNAM.

PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

- Short lectures from Damien
- Plenary case study discussions
- Commentary from Hans
- Case study guest commentators
- Student one pagers
- Recorded student presentations of final projects
- Creation of a learning community

COURSE MATERIALS

A student case pack is available for purchase from Harvard Business School Publishing at the following link:

<https://hbsp.harvard.edu/import/1261532>

Additional reading related to each of the course themes will be made available via the course website.

Students are suggested to have a copy of the following book:

Goldberg, Ray A. (2018) *Food Citizenship*, Oxford University Press, New York.

GRADING

The objective of the assessment process is to establish the level of knowledge and fluency of course participants but also to lay the foundations for a community of knowledge sharing in food and agribusiness themes which will continue after the course is concluded.

Students will be graded based on:

1. **Class attendance and participation (20%)** At the core of an outstanding MBA experience is the interaction between students in the classroom. It is imperative that you view class not as an opportunity for someone to provide a review of material for you but as a chance to test the ideas and questions that you have formulated during your private study time. Recognising this, a significant percentage of the final grade will be awarded for class attendance and participation. Class participation is measured by the quality of your contribution to the debates that arise in class. You should seek to use quality preparation and pre-class discussion with your study group to identify specific topics to contribute on as well as important qualitative or quantitative issues that arise. Each comment should seek to move class discussion forward. Isolated, obvious or confusing points should be avoided. Quantity of participation is no indication of quality. Grading will be in three bands:
 - 1: Present, active contributor leading and directing discussions
 - 2: Present, active contributor
 - 3: Present, passive contributor
2. **One pagers (15%)** Each student will individual submit a single one page summary on **any one** of the twelve course themes and make this available to the wider class group 24 hours prior to the relevant class. The purpose of these one pagers is primarily to assist you in preparing class discussion and to provide other students with provocation for discussion and to develop practical skills in analysing the challenges of global food and agribusiness.

These papers should be provocations for the wider group and reflect some thought on your part about the theme of the week. These provocations will most likely come from your reading of the assigned case and readings and the identification of 2-3 ideas of your own. Diagrams or bibliography do not count towards the one page limit. Grading will be in three bands:

- 1: Active review of course materials with evidence of reasonable (given student workload) outside understanding and insights resulting in the generation of 2-3 insights or observations of us to the class group and discussion.
- 2: Summary of course materials with good attempt made to integrate materials and present some insights
- 3: Summary of course materials

3. **Student group questions for speakers (15%)** Each participant is allocated to a group. Each group is asked to conduct some background research on the company and/or sector/geography the company operates in and to meet for an hour or so prior to class to prepare discussion questions that could be posed to the CEO guest. **Please send your prepared questions to me not less than one hour before class**
4. **Group Industry analysis (50%)** Working in groups, with students across the GNAM network, conduct an analysis and prepare a powerpoint presentation on the dairy industry, specifically identifying an innovative dairy firm driving industry success.

Innovation and Competitive Advantage in the Dairy Industry: A Case Study Analysis

Assignment Brief:

The global dairy industry is undergoing significant transformation due to changing consumer preferences, sustainability challenges, and technological advancements. Some dairy firms have successfully leveraged innovation, sustainability, and differentiation strategies to drive growth and profitability, setting themselves apart from competitors.

Your task is to identify an exciting and innovative dairy firm (from any geography or any part of the dairy value chain) with an annual turnover exceeding \$250 million and analyze the qualities that have contributed to its success.

Assignment Requirements

1. Selection of a Dairy Firm (10%)

- Choose a dairy company that operates in any part of the value chain (e.g., dairy farming, processing, alternative dairy, distribution, retail).
- The firm must have an annual turnover of at least \$250 million USD (cite sources).
- Provide a brief company background, including its history, key products, geographic reach, and market position.

2. Analysis of Innovation & Competitive Advantage (40%)

Examine how the company has demonstrated innovation and differentiation in one or more of the following areas:

- **Product Innovation:** New product development (e.g., functional dairy, plant-based alternatives, novel dairy formulations).
- **Sustainability & ESG Leadership:** Circular economy practices, carbon reduction, water conservation, ethical sourcing.

- Technology & Digital Transformation: Automation, AI, blockchain in traceability, precision dairy farming.
- Business Model Innovation: Unique go-to-market strategies, direct-to-consumer channels, partnerships, and acquisitions.

Provide specific examples and data to support your analysis.

3. Market & Financial Performance (20 Marks)

- Evaluate the firm's financial performance, including revenue trends, market share, and profitability (if publicly available).
- Compare its growth trajectory with industry benchmarks.
- Assess how its innovative strategies have contributed to its financial success.

4. Strategic Implications & Lessons for the Dairy Industry (20 Marks)

- What lessons can other dairy firms learn from this company's success?
- How can its innovative strategies be applied across different markets?
- What potential risks or challenges could impact its future success?

5. Presentation & Referencing (10 Marks)

- Clear structure and professional writing style.
- Use reliable data sources (e.g., company reports, industry publications, market analysis).
- Cite all references using a recognized citation format (APA/Harvard).

Submission Guidelines

- Slide count: 20-25
- Deadline: 30th April 2025
- Submission: email Damien.McLoughlin@ucd.ie and Lidija.Balija@ucd.ie

Evaluation Criteria:

Section	% Marks	Key Evaluation Factors
Selection of Dairy Firm	10	Relevant company choice, meets turnover criteria, clear background.
Innovation & Competitive Advantage	40	Depth of analysis, use of data, examples of differentiation.
Market & Financial Performance	20	Industry benchmarking, financial trends, impact of innovation.

Section	% Marks	Key Evaluation Factors
Strategic Implications	20	Practical lessons, industry-wide applications, risk assessment.
Presentation & Referencing	10	Professional writing, logical structure, proper citations.

Potential Companies for Analysis (Examples)

Students may consider innovative dairy firms such as:

- **Fonterra (New Zealand)** – Global dairy co-op leveraging R&D for functional dairy.
- **Danone (France)** – Innovation in plant-based dairy and sustainable packaging.
- **Lactalis (France)** – Expanding through acquisitions and product diversification.
- **Arla Foods (Denmark)** – Leading in sustainability and organic dairy.
- **Chobani (USA)** – Pioneering the Greek yogurt revolution and social impact initiatives.
- **Oatly (Sweden)** – Disrupting the dairy industry with oat-based dairy alternatives.

I have used ChatGPT to develop this assignment. This is part of my experimentation with AI tools, if you wish to make any changes to the content or structure of your presentation please let me know. If you have other views on the use of AI please also let me know.

If you wish to use AI tools please let me know what you used them for, any prompts that you think worth sharing. Please do not use AI to write your presentation.

Friends, the class schedule is below. The order of classes is subject to change and one case is to be confirmed. Lidija, Hans and I are working with a global group of speakers and trying to tie everyone in, it is little tricky but we are nearly there. Thank you!

CLASS SCHEDULE AND TOPIC LIST

DATE	TOPIC	CASE STUDY
22 nd January Y	<p>1. The future of food and agribusiness: Health, technology and sustainability</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p>Goldberg, R. (2018) 'Future trends and the impact on the global food system', <i>Food Citizenship</i>, Oxford University Press, New York, Chapter 10, pp. 1-59.</p> <p>Goldberg, R. (2018) 'Health and Nutrition', <i>Food Citizenship</i>, Oxford University Press, New York, Chapter 1, pp. 1-59.</p> <p>CEO Guide to Food System Transformation, October 2019. World Business Council for Sustainable Development https://docs.wbcsd.org/2019/10/WBCSD_CEO_Guide_to_Food_System_Transformation.pdf</p> <p>Laborde, D et al. (2020) 'COVID-19 risks to global food security' <i>Science</i> 31 Jul 2020: Vol. 369, Issue 6503, pp. 500-502</p>	
29 th January Y	<p>2. The future of food and agribusiness: Industry structure and geographic insights</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p>Goldberg, R. (2018) 'Future trends and the impact on the global food system', <i>Food Citizenship</i>, Oxford University Press, New York, Chapter 10, pp. 1-59.</p> <p>CEO Guide to Food System Transformation, October 2019. World Business Council for Sustainable Development https://docs.wbcsd.org/2019/10/WBCSD_CEO_Guide_to_Food_System_Transformation.pdf</p>	

	<p>Tam V. and C. Mitchell (2020) <i>A New Paradigm of African Agricultural Development</i>, Bain Insights https://www.bain.com/insights/a-new-paradigm-of-african-agricultural-development/</p> <p>Huang, J. and G. Yang (2017) 'Understanding recent challenges and new food policy in China' <i>Global Food Security</i>, Volume 12, March 2017, Pages 119-126.</p> <p>Xu, S-W and Zhemin (2015) China agricultural outlook for 2015–2024 based on China Agricultural Monitoring and Early-warning System (CAMES)', <i>Journal of Integrative Agriculture</i>, Volume 14, Issue 9, September 2015, Pages 1889-1902.</p> <p>Haile-Gabriel, A. (2021) FAO: Agriculture will make or break free African trade https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/may-2021/agriculture-will-make-or-break-africas-free-trade</p>	
5 th Februa ry	<p>3. Exploring the future of the food and agriculture supply chain: Understanding farmers and the recalibration of farming in the future of food and agribusiness</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p>Goldberg, R. (2018) 'Large-scale farming', <i>Food Citizenship</i>, Oxford University Press, New York, Chapter 6, pp. 153-172.</p> <p>Goldberg, R. (2018) 'Small-scale farming', <i>Food Citizenship</i>, Oxford University Press, New York, Chapter 7, pp. 153-172.</p>	<p>Required Case: New Fashion Pork (Group 1)</p> <p>Guest: Brad Freking</p>
12 th Februa ry	<p>4. Exploring the future of the food and agriculture supply chain: Scientific research as a driver</p> <p>Required reading:</p>	<p>Required case: Pairwise (Group 2)</p>

	Goldberg, R. (2018) 'Technology-Coding life', <i>Food Citizenship</i> , Oxford University Press, New York, Chapter 4, pp. 130-145.	Guest: Haven Baker, COO, Pairwise
19th February	<p>5. Exploring the future of the food and agriculture supply chain: Farm inputs</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p>Scott, K. (2020) Chapter 4: The Intelligent Farm, <i>Reprogramming the American Dream</i>, Harper Business.</p>	<p>Case: Alltech (Group 3)</p> <p>Guest: Susanna Elliott, CMO, Alltech</p>
26th February	<p>6. Exploring the future of the food and agriculture supply chain: Assembly</p>	<p>Case: Bunge: Building a Sustainable Future? (Group 4)</p> <p>Guest: Marina Negroponte, Bunge and Yale SOM/GNAM Alum</p>
5th March	<p>7. Exploring the future of the food and agriculture supply chain: The future role of coordinators</p>	<p>Case: Rabobank and the Food System Transition (Group 4)</p> <p>Guest: Marjan Van Riel, Rabobank</p>

<p>26th March</p>	<p>8. Exploring the future of the food and agriculture supply chain: Supply Chain Resilience</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p>Djanian, M. and N. Ferreira (2020) 'Agriculture sector: Preparing for disruption in the food value chain' https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/agriculture/our-insights/agriculture-sector-preparing-for-disruption-in-the-food-value-chain</p>	<p>Case: Building Resiliency in McDonald's Supply Chain</p> <p>Guest: Nick Kearvell, Senior Director, Global Supply Chain Strategy, McDonalds</p>
<p>2nd April</p>	<p>9. The Policy Environment of Global Agriculture</p>	<p>Guest: Grainne, Agricultural and Food Counsellor, Embassy of Ireland to the United States</p>
<p>9th April</p>	<p>10. Exploring the future of the food and agriculture supply chain: New food</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p>Smil, V. (2013) 'Possible Futures' in V. Smil <i>Should We Eat Meat</i>, Chapter 5, Wiley-Blackwell, London, pp. 177-216.</p> <p>The future of food: Meatless? McKinsey & Co, October 2019 https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Featured%20Insights/The%20Next%20Normal/The-next-normal-The-rise-of-Alternative-proteins-February-2020-Collection</p> <p>Lutz Goedde, Joshua Katz, Alexandre Ménard, and Julien Revellat (2020) <i>Agriculture's Connected future: How</i></p>	<p>Case: Impossible Foods (Group 5)</p> <p>Guest: TBC</p>

	<p>technology can yield new growth. McKinsey Quarterly, October</p> <p>https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/agriculture/our-insights/agricultures-connected-future-how-technology-can-lead-new-growth</p>	
17 th April	<p>11. Exploring the future of the food and agriculture supply chain: Sustainability and navigating the social licence for food and agribusiness industry</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p>The net-zero transition: What it would cost, what it could bring (2022) McKinsey https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/mckinsey/business%20functions/sustainability/our%20insights/the%20net%20zero%20transition%20what%20it%20would%20cost%20what%20it%20could%20bring/the-net-zero-transition-executive-summary.pdf</p> <p>Moore, H. and Tai, H. (2023) 'Net Zero: Next moves for CEO's', McKinsey. https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/electric-power-and-natural-gas/our-insights/net-zero-next-moves-for-ceos</p>	<p>Case: Marfrig's quest for sustainable beef (Group 6)</p> <p>Guest: TBC</p>
24 th April	<p>12. Exploring the future of the food and agriculture supply chain</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p>"Origin Green: When your brand is your supply chain", Shelman, M., McLoughlin, D. and M. Pagell. (2016) in <i>Organizing Supply Chain Processes for Sustainable Innovation in the Agri-Food Industry Organizing for Sustainable Effectiveness</i>, Volume 5, 205233</p> <p>Please review the Origin Green website https://www.origingreen.ie/what-is-origin-green/</p>	<p>Case: Boortmalt</p> <p>Guest: Yvan Schaepman, CEO Boortmalt</p>

	<p>Courtney White, C. (2020) 'Why Regenerative Agriculture?', <i>The American Journal. Of Economics and Sociology</i>, Vol. 79, Issue 3. PP. 799-812.</p> <p>Newton, P. et al. (2020) 'What Is Regenerative Agriculture? A Review of Scholar and Practitioner Definitions Based on Processes and Outcomes' <i>Frontiers of Sustainable Food Systems</i>, 26 October.</p>	
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CASE STUDY ASSIGNMENTS

Case (to prepare) New Fashion Pork

Brad Freking reflects on his life as a swine farmer in the United States and considers his options for growth.

Study Questions

1. Why has Brad been so successful?
2. What advice would you offer to Brad on his future development of his business?

Case (to prepare) Pairwise

Pairwise discusses the strategic approach of a company aiming to "snackify" fruits and vegetables by using CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing to create nutritious, bite-sized foods that could compete with packaged snacks. The company is confronting a number of challenges, including distinguishing their approach from that of GMO foods, which had a mixed public reception.

Study Questions

1. What are the greatest challenges facing Pairwise in commercializing their products?
2. Do you think their plans for overcoming these challenges are sufficient?
3. What would you do differently to ensure success?
4. What do you think the company is worth?

Case (to prepare) Alltech

Alltech was a Lexington, Kentucky-based producer of supplements for animal feed, with revenues of over \$2 billion (projected to reach \$3 billion in 2018), sales in 120 countries, 5,000 employees, and 100 manufacturing plants worldwide. For nearly four decades, Alltech had been defined by its focus on innovation and marketing as well as the entrepreneurial spirit and vision of its founder, Dr. Pearse Lyons, who

remained intimately involved in company operations and in managing relationships with key customers. This case finds Alltech in the midst of a new growth strategy-downstream integration, specifically buying up feed companies-which marked a stark departure from the company's longtime emphasis on organic growth. The decision to buy feed companies had been controversial within Alltech: feed was a low-margin, rather traditional commodity business, while Alltech earned relatively high margins on products rooted in science and innovation. However, Lyons believed downstream integration would allow Alltech to better communicate with its end customers (farmers), increase sales of its supplements, and help protect the firm from industry dynamics such as consolidation and cost pressure. Was he right, or should Alltech take a different approach?

Study Questions

1. What are the skills and capabilities that have allowed Alltech to flourish to date?
2. Why are they now buying feed companies?
3. Do you think it is a good idea? If yes, how far would you go with it? If no, how would you grow the company?

Case (to prepare) Bunge: Building a Sustainable Future?

Greg Heckman became CEO of Bunge in early 2019, after months of negotiations between the company and new investors led to a change in management. After a successful turnaround, Bunge had surplus cash to invest, but dealt with another complex issue: what role should the company's sustainability initiatives play in its future? The case finds Bunge in 2021, after the successful turnaround has led to record results and left the company with surplus cash to invest. In the meantime, Bunge has kept advancing in its deforestation-free value chain. As the world focuses on ESG issues and pays special attention to climate change, the company's management realizes that sustainability has become an integral part of the company's strategy and even its capital structure. As they adapt to this new world, Bunge's leaders also consider that sustainability might be a profit maker for the company. Aligned to each of these, Bunge saw another emerging growth opportunity: providing sustainability services to help farmers lower their carbon index. The question was: at the farm gate, were farmers going to pass their carbon reduction along with the beans at a premium, so that Bunge could crush it and sell the oil and meal to somebody who wants a lower CI product? Or would farmers separate

the carbon credits, sell them, and lose the opportunity to offer a lower CI crop?

Study questions

1. Is Bunge's goal of having a deforestation-free value chain by 2025 sensible?
2. How could Bunge best work with farmers to achieve its objectives? What incentives could it offer them?
3. Are consumers prepared to pay more for lower CI products? What about Bunge's immediate customers?
4. Will sustainability prove to be a profit maker for Bunge, or just a cost of doing business?

Case (to prepare) Rabobank and the Food System Transition

Rabobank has historically been a leader in the system that provides financing to the world's food and agriculture system. Its leaders now assert that fundamental transformation of that system is necessary and that Rabobank intends to lead it.

Study questions

1. Why has Rabobank been successful?
2. Do you expect that Rabobank will reach "net zero emissions," including financed emissions, by 2050 (page 10)? Why or why not?
3. Rabobank's leaders talk about not one but three transitions (page 10): "the food system, energy, and creating an inclusive society." What is the relationship among these transitions? Can society achieve one or two without achieving all three? What happens if it achieves none of them?
4. For which of Rabobank's clients is "physical risk" a bigger problem than "transition risk" (see pages 7 and 8)? For which clients is transition risk bigger? What about for Rabobank itself? How do the answers to these questions affect the optimal strategy for Rabobank?
5. Is Rabobank's cooperative governance structure a competitive advantage in the food transition context or a disadvantage? Does it make it easier to make and justify tough decisions or force the bank to make decisions that erode its competitiveness?
6. How should Rabobank's loan portfolio change over the next decade?

Case (to prepare) Building resiliency in McDonald's supply chain

McDonald's is the leading global QSR business and asks questions about how to manage the future of its supply chain.

Study questions

1. Please read the case in detail

Case (to prepare) Impossible Foods

Impossible Foods is one of the most buzzed-about players in one of today's biggest trends in food: plant-based meat alternatives and the flexitarian diet. In mid-2016, the Silicon Valley-based company launched its flagship product, a plant-based imitation of ground beef, into the U.S. foodservice channel. The product is now in 17,000 restaurants, mostly in the U.S. but also Hong Kong, Macau, and Singapore. In September 2019, Impossible launched its first grocery product. (This is mentioned in the case but occurs after the case's timeframe.) Impossible does not disclose financials, but it has raised \$750 million from investors such as Bill Gates and various venture capital firms. The publicly listed company Beyond Meat, generally considered Impossible's main competitor, had \$67 million in revenue in the second quarter of 2019. Impossible's founder and CEO, Pat Brown, started the company out of concern over livestock production's impact on climate change. Impossible's mission is to eliminate human consumption of animals by 2035, and its strategy is to develop and market plant-based foods that are so similar to meat that carnivorous consumers will happily switch. The "magic" ingredient in Impossible's "beef" is heme, the molecule that carries oxygen in blood. In taste tests, some consumers cannot distinguish between a burger made with Impossible's product versus ground beef. Company analyses show its product requiring 89% fewer greenhouse gases, 87% less water, and 96% less land to produce than beef. While seemingly not motivated by profit, Brown believes business success is critical for mission success. This alignment has enabled Impossible to easily raise money to date, but the company is at an inflection point in its growth, and much more capital will be needed to increase production, enter new markets, and launch new meat-substitute products. There is speculation about a potential public offering. How should Impossible fund its growth? What will it mean for a company born in Silicon Valley and fashioned in

opposition to “big beef” to become big itself, and potentially accountable to Wall Street? Does the firm need a different profile of CEO to drive its next phase, or would something essential to its success be lost without Brown at the helm? Is Impossible’s strategy the right one for pursuing its mission? Is its mission achievable? What level of market share do you believe meat substitutes need to achieve before the incumbent meat supply chain is disrupted ?

Study Questions

1. Globally, what percentage of meat sales will plant-based products represent in 10 years?
2. What percentage of meat sales will they represent in your home region?
3. What will the path look like to get to that level of sales?
4. What do you see as the biggest obstacles to growth for Impossible Foods?
5. How should company leadership deal with these obstacles?
6. Is Pat Brown and the leadership team on the right track?

Case (to prepare) Marfrig’s Quest for Sustainable Beef

Marcos Molina, chairman and controlling shareholder of Marfrig, founded the company in 2000 and grew it through a series of acquisitions. By 2022, Marfrig was the world’s second largest beef producer, but had to deal with several complex issues regarding sustainability. The company had made important commitments to fight deforestation and reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, but to advance further, it needed to work together with other stakeholders in the Brazilian beef industry. Still, ranchers, governments, NGOs, and other meatpackers had diverse interests and agendas. How could Marfrig work with these other players to achieve its goals?

Marfrig was an early adopter of environmental goals: in 2009, along with some competitors and NGOs, the company signed the so-called “beef moratorium,” an agreement whereby some of the world’s largest meatpackers committed to monitoring their supply chains and not to buy cattle linked to recently deforested land in the Brazilian Amazon. In the following decade, Marfrig established a number of requirements to be met by its cattle suppliers—including not producing in

environmentally protected territory, indigenous lands, or Amazon areas deforested after 2009— and these conditions were checked before every new cattle purchase. In 2010, the company started to monitor around 30 million hectares in the Amazon—an area larger than the U.K.—via satellite in real time. Despite some advancements, tracing, and monitoring indirect suppliers (providers of cattle to Marfrig’s direct suppliers) was still challenging, and cases of cattle ‘laundering’ (the moving of cattle raised in illegally deforested areas to compliant farms) were not uncommon. Pressures from NGOs, customers, and foreign governments also kept mounting.

Marfrig responded to these pressures by ramping up its sustainability efforts. To oversee all the group’s initiatives in the area, it established a Sustainability Committee, an advisory board to its board of directors, in 2019. The committee, which counted among its members the former head of Greenpeace in Brazil, helped to push the company to adopt bolder goals. In mid-2020, Marfrig announced a commitment to have all its supply chain in the Amazon, including indirect suppliers, monitored, and traced by 2025, and to have all of its supply chain fully free of deforestation (illegal or legal) by 2030. In 2021, it pledged to reduce direct GHG emissions from its operations (Scope 1) and from its energy purchases (Scope 2) by 68% by 2035, based on 2019 levels. The company also pledged to reduce 33% of emissions from partners in its value chain . One challenge the company faced was that 95% of the emissions in its value chain came from methane emissions from the cattle's digestive systems. (

The case finds Marfrig in late 2022, right after the run-off vote in Brazil’s polarized presidential election. Marfrig had committed to having a deforestation-free value chain by 2030, and to reducing its emissions of greenhouse gases to combat climate change. International pressure from customers and foreign governments over Brazil and its meatpackers, though, was on the rise, in part due the policies of outgoing President Jair Bolsonaro. Could the return of former president (2003-2010) Luiz Inácio “Lula” da Silva, the president-elect, turn the tide against deforestation? How could the company work with the new government and the beef industry’s other stakeholders to find solutions to the sector’s challenges? How could it overcome the resistance of some ranchers in order to achieve full traceability and monitoring of indirect cattle suppliers?

Study Questions

1. Can Brazil's meatpackers be part of the solution to curb deforestation and combat the climate crisis?
2. What would need to be true for this to happen?
3. How might Marfrig advance this agenda?
4. How might the industry engage ranchers to produce more sustainably?
5. How can Marfrig get consumers to value their sustainability efforts and pay for the investments needed to produce low- or zero-carbon products?
6. How might the change in government help the sector's—and the country's—image and prospects abroad?

Case (to prepare) : Boortmalt: The Master Malster

Boortmalt is the leading global malt producer, based in Belgium. They have grown rapidly in recent years and are contemplating next steps.

Study questions

1. What are the key success factors for a malt producer?
2. What explains Yvan Schaepman's motivation to be the market share leader in malt?
3. Are Boortmalt's customers (which customers?) likely to be pleased that Boortmalt is getting bigger?
4. Do think Yvan has the right instincts as a leader?

1.

INSTRUCTOR BIO

Damien

Damien McLoughlin is Anthony C. Cunningham Professor of Marketing at UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School in Ireland. Since 2014 he has been a visiting professor of marketing at the Stern School of Business at New York University and was previously a visiting professor of marketing at the S.C. Johnson Graduate School of Management at Cornell University (2004) and the Indian School of Business (2007). For more than 15 years Damien's research and teaching has specialized at the intersection of strategy and agribusiness, he is one of a very small number of professors globally with this expertise. Since 2011 Damien has contributed to the Harvard Business School Agribusiness seminar, originally as an instructor and as a researcher. Recent contributions have been C-suite case studies of McDonald's, Rabobank, Zoetis and ADM. Damien has also delivered executive programmes in agribusiness at both Purdue University and IMD in Switzerland. Damien has published more than seventy papers and two books on strategy and marketing issues. He has also written more than thirty case studies dealing with issues facing senior leaders in the food and agribusiness supply chain, covering all geographies and major sectors.

Damien has a long track record and expertise in the design of in-company executive programs and senior leadership retreats, both face to face and online, for food and agribusiness firms. Since 2010 Damien has designed and led talent development programs for more than 600 executives on behalf of the Irish Food Board (Bord Bia) in the areas of sustainability, business development, market diversification and retail/food service account management. For the past 15 years he has designed and led the Alltech Mini MBA, a unique four-year program preparing Alltech executives for progress to senior leadership roles. Damien's wider client list includes some of the worlds' leading organizations: Agricultural Bank of China, Aurivo, Bunge, Charoen Pokphand Group (CP), Dairygold, Danish Crown, Dawn Farm, DeLaval, Dogpatch Labs, HelloFresh, FAO, Kerry Group, McDonalds (global), New Zealand Beef & Lamb, Normet, OSI (Europe), Rabobank, Ridley, Smurfit Kappa Group and Zespri. Damien has also worked with a number of other firms including Allianz, Bobst, EY, Eversheds, Google, Hewlett-Packard, ICON, Independent News & Media, Microsoft and Ryanair.

An experienced board member, Damien has served several public and private sector organisations as a director and consultant. In 2014 Damien was appointed to the board of Bord Iascaigh Mhara, the body responsible for innovation in the Irish sea fisheries sector, a post he held until 2020. In 2021 Damien joined the board of Kepak, one of Europe's largest food firms.

Damien holds a Bachelor of Business Studies degree from Dublin City University, a Master of Business Studies degree from University College Dublin and PhD in Marketing from Lancaster University (UK).