



# Georgian Milk Mark Federation

# Member Survey

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June 2024

## INTRODUCTION

The Georgian Milk Mark Federation (GMMF) was created in 2019 from a coalition of twenty-four Georgian Milk Mark dairies facilitated by the Business Institute of Georgia (BIG) which administers the Georgian Milk Mark (GMM). It currently numbers fifty companies. Twenty-six are now using the mark, ten are also in the process of getting the mark the rest are planning to get it. In the current phase, since 2022, the ALCP2 has supported GMMF sustainability through improving organizational capacity and service provision to members, and advocating with government entities, financial institutions, and supermarkets.

Uniting dairies and fostering solidarity among members to ensure a unified voice and vision was a significant challenge for the Federation because many of these dairies were previously part of other associations in the dairy sector that did not provide tangible benefits. Before joining the Federation, members did not know each other well and viewed one another as competitors. They lacked connections with BDS consulting companies, input suppliers, and technicians, which limited their access to essential services and information. They avoided contact and were unfamiliar with how to communicate with the National Food Agency (NFA), Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture (MEPA), and other official entities, often steering clear of meetings with them. However, the Federation has successfully built trust among its member dairies facilitating constant communication and collaboration.

In November 2023, the executive director of the Federation created a WhatsApp group for quick communication and information sharing. The Federation has been utilizing this group for nearly seven months. To evaluate the group's effectiveness, understand members' feelings and expectations, and assess the Federation's sustainability, an online survey was conducted in June 2024.

The exact methodology and key findings of the study will be discussed in the following sections.

## METHODOLOGY

The assessment included a semi-structured survey conducted among WhatsApp user members. The survey was conducted using an online survey tool and was conducted anonymously, allowing respondents to participate without entering their names, contact information, or other identifying details. Of the forty WhatsApp user members<sup>1</sup>, twenty-six (65%) completed the online questionnaire, enabling the identification of key trends and findings during the analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> In total there are 50 GMMF members, out of which 10 do not use WhatsApp

**Representation of the Milk Sector**

87% of respondents (out of those who answered the question) believe that GMMF represents the milk sector better than in previous years. This significant majority indicates a strong improvement in the Federation's role and advocacy for the industry.

**Advocacy and Support**

A unanimous 100% of participants (out of those who answered the question) feel that GMMF is effectively advocating for their interests. This suggests a high level of satisfaction with the Federation's efforts to address and promote the concerns and needs of its members.

**Impact on Sales**

53% of respondents (out of those who answered the question) reported that using the Georgian Milk Mark has positively impacted their ability to sell products in supermarkets, hotels, and restaurants. This indicates a moderate but meaningful influence of the Milk Mark on market access and sales.

**Business Development**

87% of members (out of those who answered the question) believe that the Georgian Milk Mark contributes to the development of their business.

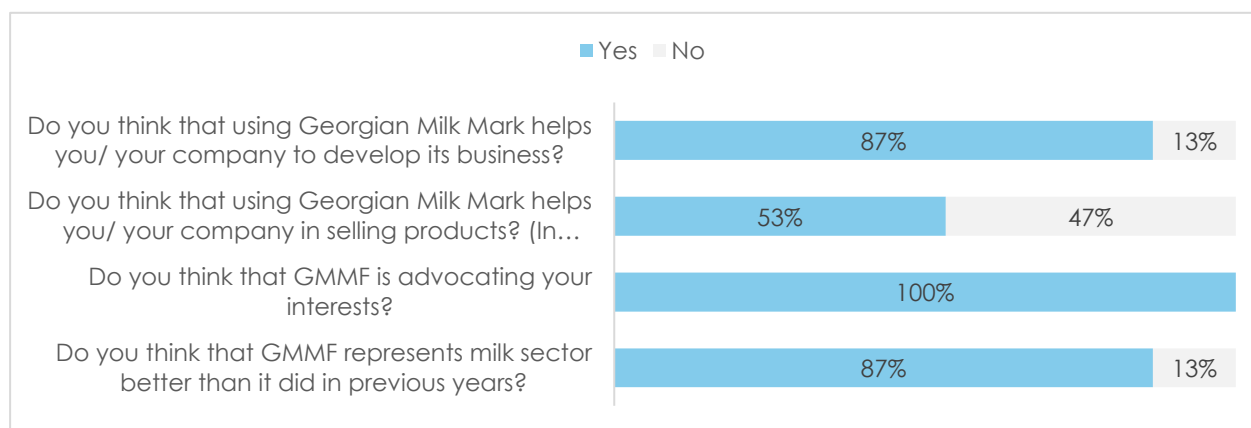


Figure 1 Distribution (%) of answers about GMMF sustainability out of those respondents who have answered to the question

## KEY FINDINGS: WHATSAPP GROUP

According to the survey, 62 % of respondents use the WhatsApp group daily, 31% use it several times a week, and the remaining 8% use it more rarely.

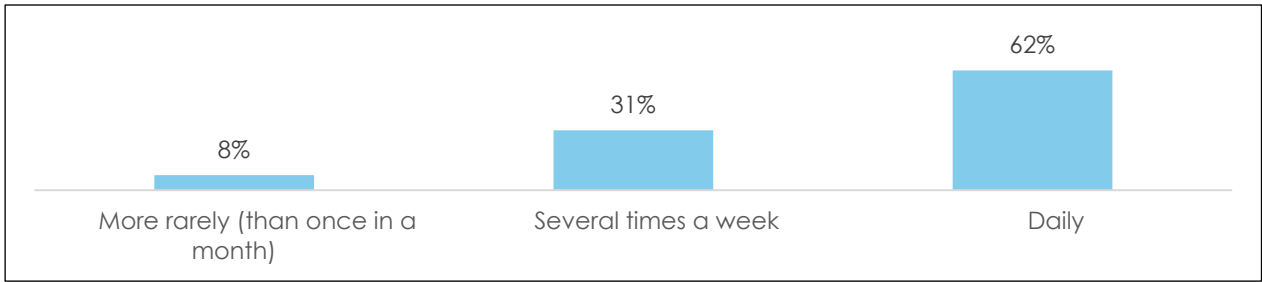


Figure 2 How often do you use the Federation WhatsApp group?

We asked the respondents if they liked the group or not. All the respondents answered positively. When asked to explain why they liked this group, most commonly, they mentioned that they received a lot of new and useful information. Additionally, they appreciated that the information (answers to the raised questions) is provided in a timely manner and that it is easy to communicate in the group. One group member stated, "I receive information at a convenient time, even when I'm busy and unable to answer the phone. The group is a good means of discussing common topics."

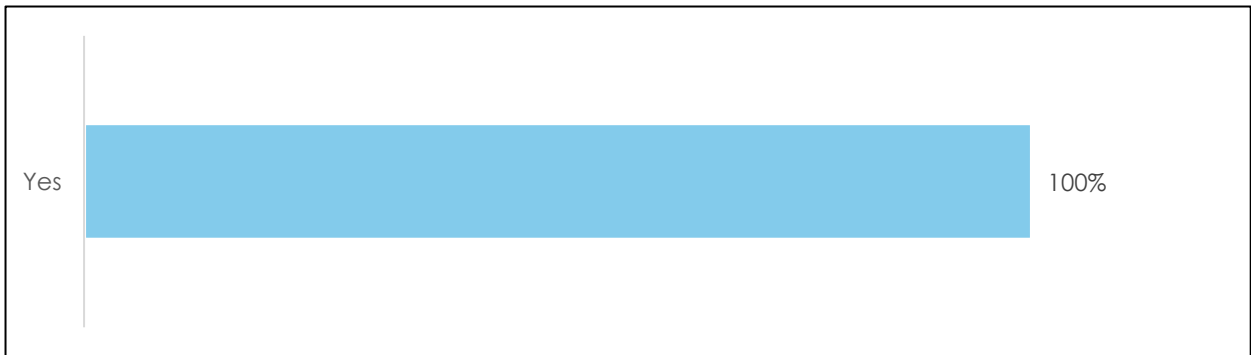


Figure 3 Do you Like this group?

The survey revealed that members use the group equally to stay informed about equipment prices and purchasing locations, as well as receive updates on upcoming festivals and exhibitions. Additionally, they use the group to exchange experiences and insights regarding cheese sales markets

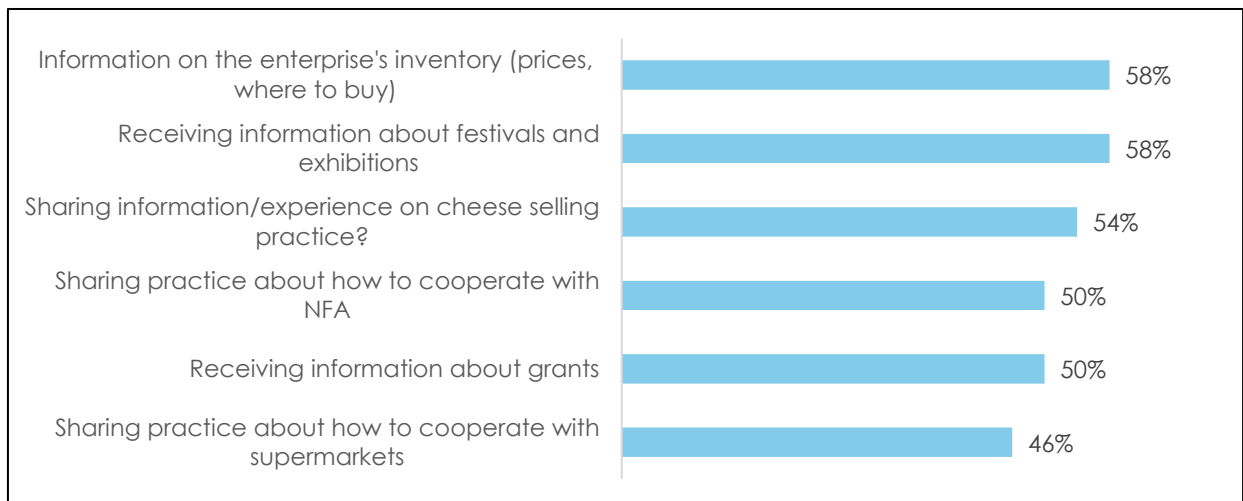


Figure 4 Mainly, why do you use the group?

When evaluating the positive aspects of the group, over half of respondents expressed satisfaction with the level of activity and responsiveness in the group. Similarly, members find it easy to connect with their colleagues and are satisfied with the quality of information shared.

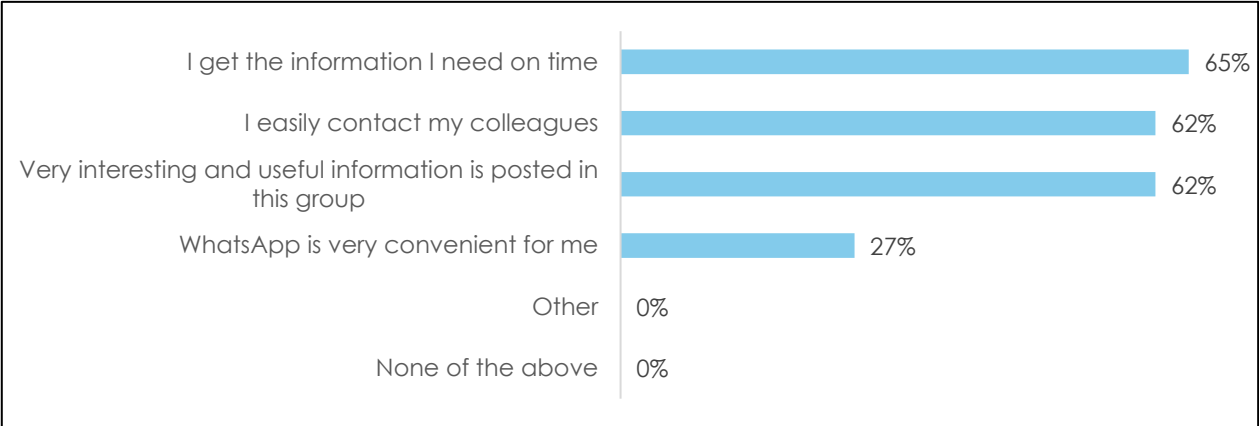


Figure 5 Please name the reason for your satisfaction with the group

When asked about the improvements they would suggest to the group, 38% of the respondents said it would be good to share more examples and cases of their cooperation with supermarkets and the National Food Agency (NFA) in the group, while about a third of the questioned encouraged their peers to be more active in responding to questions.

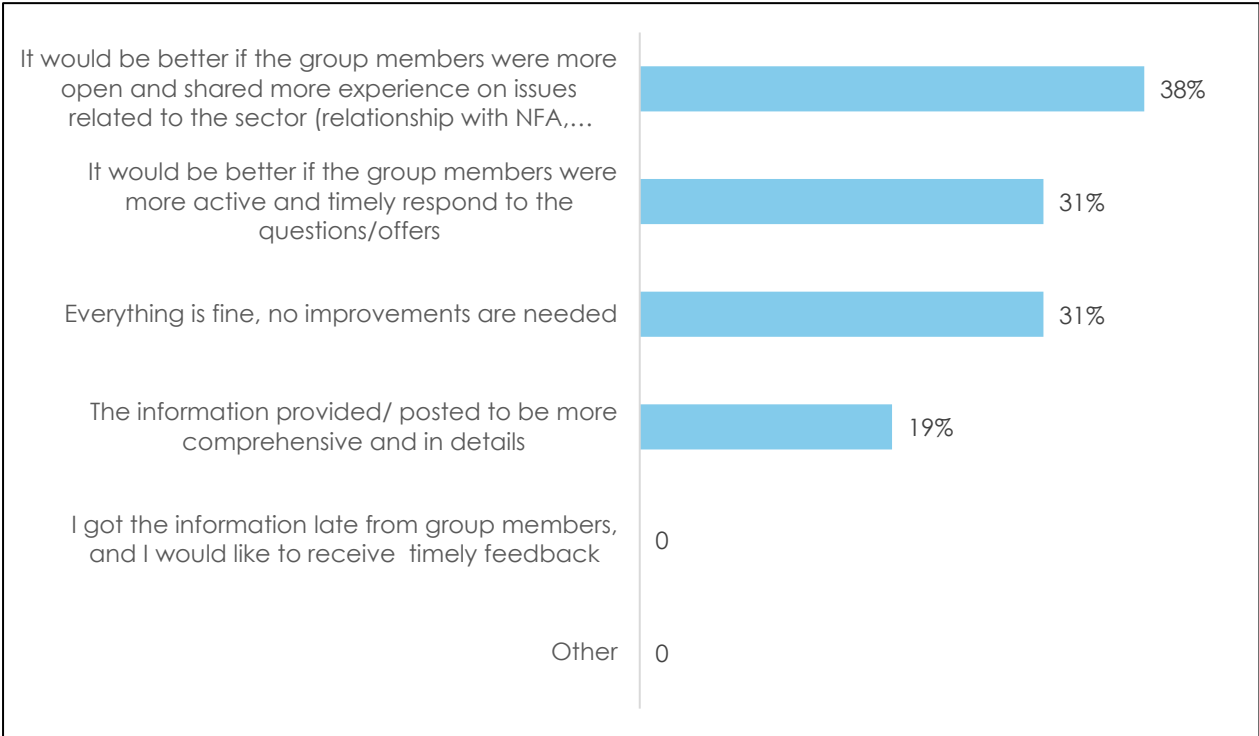


Figure 6 How would you improve the quality of the experience of the group?

## CONCLUSION

The survey results illustrate a generally positive perception of GMMF's current role and its impact on the Georgian milk sector. The Federation is seen as increasingly effective in representing its members and advocating their interests, with notable contributions to business development and market success.

The survey revealed significant progress in the organizational development of the GMMF. The Federation has made substantial strides in fostering a common vision and shared goals. Currently, the members are active and enthusiastic about collaborating, sharing ideas, and engaging in open discussions. They have built strong connections with BDS service providers, equipment sellers, and technicians. Notably, members no longer see each other as competitors; instead, they support one another on advocacy topics, resulting in increased confidence. The creation of a WhatsApp group has played a pivotal role in facilitating these positive changes.

The results underscore the Federation's growing success and provide direction for future activities. Emphasizing the continuous provision of information and services, and increasing the involvement of dairies throughout Georgia, will help sustain and enhance this success.