

FROM PLASTIC TO FIBER

HÉBERT GROUP AND ANDRITZ PIONEER DRY MOLDED FIBER TECHNOLOGY

In the push for plastic-free packaging, French specialist Hébert Group has teamed with ANDRITZ to scale up Dry Molded Fiber production. Located in Orgelet, France, the family-owned company has long championed responsive, high-quality consumer packaging.

Consumers and brand owners are increasingly demanding alternatives to conventional plastic packaging. The Hébert Group specializes in the development and manufacture of custom-molded packaging solutions for leading European and global brands across the food, dairy, cosmetics, and reuse sectors. The group is acutely aware of the challenges being faced to offer more sustainable packaging.

Julien Hébert, Chief Commercial Officer at the Hébert Group, says, "We listen closely to our customers to create products that are chosen by the top names in the food and cosmetics industries. In the course of these discussions, we have gained a deeper understanding of their expectations regarding sustainable development.

"This approach has naturally driven us to diversify our technologies, creating new opportunities and strengthening our position as a pioneer into other raw materials and environmentally friendly processes." →



After intense market analysis in 2020, the company began to look deeply into the groundbreaking technology of Dry Molded Fiber (DMF) made from natural cellulose fibers. By 2023 the group had set up a dedicated building and ecosystem along with installation of its first DMF line.

"We pride ourselves in our approach to sustainability in our manufacturing processes, which are energy and water efficient and where we can use materials of renewable or recycled origin that are free from fossil fuels," continues Julien Hébert. "And this is why we have made the decision to add Dry Molded Fiber (DMF) to our process offerings."

HÉBERT GROUP AND ANDRITZ NONWOVEN & TEXTILE TEAM

To launch its DMF journey, the group formed a separate business unit in 2023 – Herpulp – and since then has invested in several first-generation Modula lines incorporating ANDRITZ Dan-Web mill-to-web forming technology. In 2024, ANDRITZ stepped in to support the group with a dedicated expert team to complete the commissioning and stabilize process and product consistency. Throughout 2025 the Hébert Group benefited from technical visits, parameter optimization, and process upgrades including the signing of a comprehensive service contract.

The service contract enables ANDRITZ to continue supporting the Hébert Group during the commissioning of the lines, with the objective being to

achieve a Site Acceptance Test (SAT) and ensuring proper and reliable operation of the lines.

Mathieu Hébert, Chief Operating Officer at the Hébert Group says, "Fiber integration began even before the installation of our first line in Orgelet, with the construction of a dedicated facility designed to prevent any risk of cross-contamination. Today, we are incorporating this activity into the scope of our standards and, in the long term, aim to position this technology as a complement to our core business, allowing us to extend our product portfolio and meet a wider range of customer requirements."

"We have been supported in this process by the experienced ANDRITZ team that is highly dynamic, motivated, and committed. Customer feedback is already highlighting the cost effectiveness, high quality finishing, and unique premium perception of our DMF products."

The company currently produces trays and lids using DMF technology under its Herpulp brand name and is investigating deep-draw products for production in the future.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: PARTNERSHIPS ARE ESSENTIAL

Regulatory pressure to phase out single-use plastics, rising customer expectations, and the need to maintain cost and performance standards

are all challenges for the future. Packaging specialists are on the front line. Success requires strong technology partners who not only supply equipment but actively support optimization and long-term service.

"We strongly believe in the DMF concept as a way to scale up sustainable packaging, even more so since we started working with ANDRITZ," says Julien Hébert. "For us, this partnership represents an excellent opportunity for several reasons: ANDRITZ's extensive experience in providing complete industrial solutions to the pulp and paper industry, technical support in project management, and strong market demand for this type of packaging solution."

"Our next ambitions together include lowering the cost to the market, securing the stabilization of production lines, and co-developing molds tailored to DMF technology."

The Hébert Group-ANDRITZ collaboration is a clear example of how targeted investment, technical expertise, and shared vision can deliver truly sustainable packaging that is better for the planet – without compromising quality or speed.

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WHAT DOES ANDRITZ OFFER FOR SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING SOLUTIONS?

Bruno Roche, Senior Vice President, ANDRITZ Nonwoven & Textile, explains:

Replacing single use plastic by natural cellulosic fibers is definitely the most sustainable path forward for packaging. Dry Molded Fiber (DMF) is made industrially possible by combining well-known, proven technologies – Airlaid forming, nonwoven converting, and thermo-forming – all recognized solutions within the ANDRITZ portfolio, now integrated into a seamless industrial process that significantly reduces water and energy consumption while supporting recyclable and circular packaging solutions.

For ANDRITZ, DMF a natural extension of its long-standing DNA, rooted in decades of expertise in pulp, paper, and tissue technologies. The opportunity is substantial: even a fraction of single-use plastic packaging converted to fiber would justify new pulp mill investments – at the core of ANDRITZ's businesses. Economically viable DMF starts with affordable, fit-for-purpose raw materials, where ANDRITZ brings both vast expertise and a full suite of sustainable energy solutions. Add to this our proven industrial know-how in scalable pressing and molding – drawn from our position in the automotive sector – and ANDRITZ is uniquely placed to industrialize DMF at the scale brand owners require. With pioneers like Hébert Group, we are building this value chain together, with ambition and humility.

To accelerate DMF industrialization, ANDRITZ has invested in a complete Airlaid DMF Technical Center in the "Cellulose Valley" in Grenoble, France, purpose-built to support pioneers like Hébert Group from day one. Proximity and deep collaboration between our teams create a unique advantage: solutions validated in a full industrial environment in Orgelet, from fiber formulation and forming through to mold validation and end-product applications.

Through its Solution as a Service concept, ANDRITZ de-risks innovation under strict confidentiality – helping producers move with confidence from pilot trials to full-scale turnkey DMF lines, and from ambition to market.



Mathieu Hébert, Chief Operating Officer and
Julien Hébert, Chief Commercial Officer