

Pre-starter line hits all yield and quality targets with perfected pellet production



Customer Story
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Piglet-food plant – focussed on product quality, consistency and durability – finds a perfect partner in ANDRITZ

THE CHALLENGE

- Greenfield plant
- Output measured and driven by product quality, durability and consistency

THE SOLUTION

- OptiMill* hammer mill
- Conditioning solutions
- Two PAL2000 pellet presses
- Local distributor support

THE RESULT

- Consistent quality levels
- 95% pellet durability (93-94% was expected)
- Room to expand built into the project

INTRODUCTION

FARM FAES develops tailor-made nutritional solutions to improve the health and welfare of swine, ruminants, poultry and aquaculture.

Comprising four companies, INGASO FARM, TECNOVIT, ISF by FARM FAES and iTF – all of which are references in the Animal Nutrition and Health sector – its wide range of products and services make the group the ideal technology partner for sustainable animal nutrition, guaranteeing the highest quality and safety.

ISF is FARM FAES' specialized plant for manufacturing early-age piglet feed. Located in the heart of the Huesca Province in Northeastern Spain – a key hub of swine production – it has a clear mission to provide high-quality, customised and sustainable nutritional solutions that ensure animal welfare and productive efficiency.

With state-of-the-art technology, full process control, and the backing of decades of experience from the FARM FAES group, ISF brings together science, innovation and service to feed the future of livestock farming.

In this project, ANDRITZ enjoyed comprehensive support from Imago S.L., ANDRITZ's local partner in Spain.



CHALLENGE

The greenfield feedmill facility in the Huesca Province started from a completely clean slate and was built so FARM FAES and IFS could bring piglet pre-starter-feed manufacturing in house, instead of its previous model, which saw it using external manufacturers to bring its industry-leading recipes to life.

According to Xavier Bosch, General Manager at IFS: “Our model was, until now, to outsource recipes, but the market is changing and we spotted both a need and an opportunity to sell products directly to our customers, while also giving us the ability to differentiate ourselves and expand into other markets.

“We are not a volume business, but pellet quality and durability (95%) are paramount. The pre-starter we manufacture is essential for the healthy development of piglets in the first four to six weeks of their lives. As such, we must ensure that every pellet is the same: the same optimised ratio of ingredients, the same shape, the same size and the same consistency.

“One of our primary ingredients we use is from human food manufacturing and supply chains, comprising ingredients meant for human food that did not meet quality standards for humans, but are nevertheless premium for animal feed. This can introduce processing variability, but it also means that our operations are more sustainable, as we are able to use raw materials that would otherwise have been disposed of.”

SOLUTION

The Huesca plan is the first pre-starter facility ANDRITZ has supplied, but in terms of the rigorous production and quality metrics demanded by the new operation, it is no different from any other.

“I have had experience with solutions from ANDRITZ in previous roles,” Bosch explains, “and we were fortunate to have great support from its Spanish partner, Imago.”

“We did look at several other suppliers, but the operational characteristics, machine quality, personal experience of its solutions and the support of the ANDRITZ personnel swung it for us.”

Imago played a key role in the project, where it managed commercial negotiations, undertook plant design, manufactured and supplied other elements of the plant, undertook assembly, and led commissioning alongside engineers from ANDRITZ.

ANDRITZ and Imago worked closely together to design, supply, install and commission the core processing equipment for ISF’s Huesca plant, including an OptiMill* hammer mill for grinding, solutions for condition and two PAL2000 pellet presses.

In operation all the raw material grains – maize, barley, wheat and soya – are fed into the mill and converted to meal. These can be extruded and steamed or passed to a mixer. ISF also sell the extruded raw materials to other companies.





The meal is used as the base for the piglet food, where the ingredients are tightly measured and controlled typically in 3,000 kg batches. This mix is then sent to the pelleting machines – one of which is 16 T the other 8T. One is used for 3.5 mm starter feed pellets and the other for 2.2 mm pre-starter feed. Once it is all pelletised and dried is either sold in bulk bins, or in various sizes of bags, from 25 to 1,000 kg.

In addition to integration with the company's ERP suite, the ANDRITZ solution also had to integrate with the third-party automation architecture and other machines. "There were a few fears around integration," Bosch explains, "but it was all seamless thanks to the professionalism of all parties on the project and the close working ties they established."

"We have reached all the promised yield levels on our machines, and I have only ever seen ANDRITZ achieve that."

Xavier Bosch, General Manager at IFS

RESULTS

"As I mentioned earlier, we are not focussed on volume production," Bosch explains. "We're producing around 8,000 metric tons (MT) per month, even though we have a 10,000 MT ton capacity. We are more focussed on pellet quality and the reliability and consistency of the yield."

"Most machine sellers will tell you they are capable of producing X metric tons of product per hour, when in fact they can't. This is what I like about ANDRITZ, if it says 16 metric tons it means 16 metric tons. Indeed, we have reached all the promised yield levels on our machines, and I have only ever seen ANDRITZ achieve that, most others are 10-15% below."

"We were not looking for a high-tech solution; anything more sophisticated would price itself out of the market," Bosch adds. "This technology is easy to use,

is uncomplicated and uses proven core operational principals that have not changed in years, they simply don't need to. What ANDRITZ has done is boost the quality of the machines and controllers undertaking the processes, backed by easy-to-follow instructions and paperwork and supported by well-delivered and comprehensive training."

Marc Oliva Alfonso, Chief Executive Officer of Imago S.L., adds: "This is a perfect example of the design, execution, integration, assembly and commissioning of a turnkey processing plant, where industry-proven technology is combined with strong partnerships and domain expertise to increase productivity and quality for important end users."

ISF is already looking to expand its operations. "We are at 80% and growing," Bosch concludes. "It's getting a bit tight on site, but we went with ANDRITZ and Imago as we knew their plant design and solution incorporated room to grow – for a third pellet machine and additional storage."

"We expect to start the works at the beginning of 2027, two years ahead of our original business plan, which were delighted about. It will deliver a 35% capacity expansion, allowing us to produce up to 14,000 MT per month, making it the biggest plant in Europe for pre starters."

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