

39. Nijsen/
Granico



Keep believing
in it, working
hard and telling
everyone

recentre



“I think this is something for us!” With these words, an employee of animal feed producer Nijsen/Granico in Veulen (province of North Limburg) walked into the company in 1989. In his arms he held a bag of dough from a company that produces puff pastry. Normally speaking, that dough would be dumped as waste. “We then started looking at whether we could make animal feed from rest products such as dough. At the time we had no idea how big the market was, how to approach it and, with an eye towards the increasingly strict criteria of the Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority, the snags and catches involved,” says Karel van der Velden, Head of Feed Sales at Nijsen/Granico. Until then the company had above all ground cereals to make animal feed. “When we had charted the possibilities, we soon came to the conclusion that in fact it was a fantastic product. After all, the raw materials were all meant for human food, had passed the test of the Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority and there was a lot of it. So we took the plunge and simply started. First on a small scale and in the meantime it has developed into a processing company that collects over fifty thousand tonnes of rest and return products from the food industry, for example confectionery, biscuits, bread, cake and sauces and processes them into semi-finished products that form the basis for our animal feeds.”

At the beginning of the nineties we were already aware that it was necessary to offer transparency and show how the animal feed industry works with its operations.

////////////////////////////////////

At the time there were only a few companies in the Netherlands doing so and even now the large scale on which Nijsen/Granico does it is still almost unique. That applies for the raw materials they produce as well as the animal feeds themselves. What is more, Nijsen/Granico reuses the process water that is discharged when cleaning the boxes in which the rest products are collected (that have



↑
Silos © Nijsen

to be spotless) to make the raw materials. So sustainable in two ways! Karel: “This fits nicely in our ‘cradle to cradle’ principle whereby as little is lost as possible.” Nijsen/Granico has the Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP+) certificate. This is a certification that guarantees good quality and care. Karel: “The certificate is a requirement for being allowed to work with these raw materials. This means that all the companies that we work with also have such a certificate or obtain one, assisted by us.” Although legislation

In order to reduce energy consumption when drying a number of our raw materials, we replaced two drying ovens a few years ago by one new large one with a higher return and clearly lower natural gas consumption.

////////////////////////////////////

increasingly steers manufacturers such as Nijsen/Granico in that direction, they realised early on that it was important to introduce social corporate responsibility in their processes. Karel: “At the beginning of the nineties we were already aware that it was necessary to offer transparency and show how the animal feed industry works with its operations. We knew that our industry was critically viewed and saw it as our task to offer insight in the processes.” “In addition to the recycling that we do on a major scale, we are also consciously working to implement corporate social responsibility in other areas of our operations. For example we are participants in the Nevedi (Netherlands Association for the Animal Feed Industry) ‘Multiyear Energy Agreement’ which contains a number of agreements between the government and companies, institutions and municipalities about improving energy efficiency. And some two and a half years ago we also started dealing with ‘reactive power’ by means of ‘CosinusPhi’ batteries. And our trailers are being replaced by trailers with three axles, of which one is a steering axle. This reduces the axle pressure so that there is less of a load on the roads and

energy consumption (diesel) for transport is lower. In order to reduce energy consumption when drying a number of our raw materials, we replaced two drying ovens a few years ago by one new large one with a higher return and clearly lower natural gas consumption. And in addition to the plastic containers that are used to collect products (which are washed and reused) we also use ‘Octobins’. These are cardboard boxes that we above all use for products that we store temporarily,” Karel says. “We continue to constantly look for ways to show that we are extremely careful and do things as consciously as possible.” According to Karel it is not easy to obtain information in order to work in a sustainable way, they still have to do a lot for that themselves. Karel: “We are at the start of the process to arrive at a standard (international) methodology in the animal feed industry for calculating the carbon footprint of the raw materials used. Since this process only started recently, we can still determine some of the direction in that ourselves. On the other hand, we still communicate too little about what makes us different. It’s not easy, because you have to communicate concrete things, not just a “woolly” story. We create a certain cycle that is very special and it is a pity that this is not always visible on the outside or recognised. A great deal has been invested in collecting the products, processing them and using them as animal feed in a responsible way as well as in being able to guarantee the hygiene and logistics involved. This is not visible on the outside; people often think we get products for free. The consumer and user’s ignorance is a bottleneck for us. Even though the current developments are leading to a sudden change. An increasing number of suppliers are becoming aware that it is wise to dispose of their refuse remaining after separation of recyclable elements through us. That awareness is still present a little less amongst farmers, who had too many other things on their minds, but during the past few years this has improved too. More and more pig farmers are looking at what they can do, for example by purchasing led lighting for in the sties, handling manure and the minerals it

Reactive power: Reactive power is electrical energy that is used to generate a magnetic field of inductive user. The reactive power runs between the generator and the end user and does not have any real power. Reactive power places an unnecessarily high burden on the network (cables, transformers, distributors) and leads to higher electricity bills as a result of high loss of energy within the installation.



contains in a more efficient way and using energy-saving ventilation methods.”

Another bottleneck for Nijssen/Granico in their striving for sustainability is the fact that the legislation cannot keep up with the developments. Karel: “The sector is ahead, which means that we have to explain each step in the area of sustainability, elucidate and defend it before we can tackle it. That’s a pity and it costs a great deal of time. There are many initiatives but not enough money. We are part of a chain in which a great deal of corporate social responsibil-

A great deal has been invested in collecting the products, processing them and using them as animal feed in a responsible way as well as in being able to guarantee the hygiene and logistics involved.

////////////////////////////////////

ity is applied in major processes, but there is no financial room to manoeuvre in that chain. There is still too little support for corporate social responsibility; it means we have to work on that but in the end we will succeed. It’s a matter of making sure you keep believing in it, working hard and telling everyone...”

•

Sanne Tummers for REcentre
Interviewee /
Karel van der Velden, Head of Feed Sales

Nijssen/Granico
 Veulenseweg 20
 5814 AC Veulen
 Nederland

www.nijssen-granico.nl

 Year of foundation • 1854

 Number of employees • 70

 Turnover (2010) •
 N/a