



Project News

Equipped with Bühler Technology: LSDH's new Soybean Factory in France is ready for Operation

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Uzwil, Switzerland -

French beverage producer LSDH Group's new greenfield soy plant in Saint-Denis-de-l'Hôtel is now fully operational. The plant, located in the municipality of Loiret in central France, utilizes state-of-the-art dry-processing technology from Bühler. The plant is part of Atelier INOVé, a new industrial facility owned by LSDH in partnership with Sofiprotéol, an investment company dedicated to the production of plant-based beverages and to development of local supply chains for agricultural raw materials.



The LSDH Group's new soybean factory uses innovative storage and processing technology from Bühler, which supplied and commissioned

the dry processing part of the plant. (Pictures ©Bühler AG)

LSDH Group's new soy plant utilizes innovative pulse storage and processing technology from Bühler, which delivered and commissioned the dry-processing section of the facility. The cleaning and dehulling process line has an output capacity of 3 tons per hour while the soybean storage capacity is 240 tons. "It was quite reassuring for us to work with a partner who knows the business well, who has a strong background in soybean dehulling and experience in processing soybeans for plant-based beverages. We knew that there were already lines and plants equipped with Bühler technology for this type of application," explains Thibaud Bombart, Project Manager within LSDH Group. "Therefore, Bühler's experience and know-how in this field were determining factors in our decision."

For this greenfield industrial facility, Bühler supplied the complete cleaning section including its MTRB separator, the MTSC destoner, the SORTEX A optical sorter, the OTW fluid-bed heat-exchanger, the MHSA dehuller, the MOZJ dampener, several aspiration channels and all the process auxiliaries such as mechanical conveyors and pneumatic lines. "We were delighted to take part in this innovation journey with LSDH, combining our forces to develop sustainable value chains, as Bühler has many years of experience and solid expertise in processing pulses," says Frederic Bobineau, Sales Manager at Bühler Group. "The installed plant is specific for soy processing, however, there is space for installing additional processing lines for other raw materials, such as oat flour and oat flakes, and we have the technology." This future expansion is in line with LSDH's plans.



The installed line is specifically designed for processing soybean, but additional processing lines for other raw materials can also be installed.

Initially established as a dairy company, the French family business employs 2,000 people in its two business areas: the liquid and the vegetable. Salads and aromatic herbs are packaged in the two production sites of the vegetable business area. The five sites of the liquid business area are in charge of the

production and packaging of various beverages and liquid foods. These products are sold mainly as store brands in the country's major supermarket chains and generated for the company a turnover of EUR 965 million in 2021. Atelier INOVé, where the Bühler-equipped soy plant is located, is part of the company's recently opened innovation ecosystem.

More sustainable Value Chains

"Atelier INOVé is not only a factory, but an experimentation center," says Thibaud Bombart. Behind the investment of EUR 32 million in this new facility is the company's ambition to be a key player in the plant-based beverage ingredient market in France. According to a recent study by Persistence Market Research, the global soy beverage (milk) market is predicted to rise at 9.1% (compound annual growth rate, CAGR) and reach a revenue of USD 11.8 billion by 2031. Plant-based beverages, such as soy, oat, and almond drinks, have also gained traction among foodservice providers, due to increasing consumer demand for plant-based milk in restaurants and cafes, according to the study.



Covering an area of 9000 square meters, Atelier INOVé started production in January 2023 with a team of currently 14 people.

To address this increasing demand, LSDH has been prioritizing the close cooperation with local farmers for the supply of agricultural raw materials, supporting the local communities and reducing, when possible, the overall environmental footprint, therefore, creating a positive impact throughout the value chain, from the field to the finished product. "We have been carrying out many trials with farmers in the region to have local production of soy and oats – it is more complicated for rice," explains Bombart. "Developing the supply chain and being able to control the entire chain, from supply to the finished product, is

important to LSDH, especially because we work with distributors and want to be able to offer them local soy ingredients that can be used in their products such as plant-based yoghurts, ice creams, and cheeses.”

With a surface area of 9,000 square meters, Atelier INOVé started production in January 2023 and currently has a team of 14 people. The plant has a production capacity of 100 million liters of plant-based beverages per year and will produce raw juices for the food industry and finished products (fresh juice and long-life juice) for mass distribution. Sofiprotéol, a financing company that supports the development and innovation of agro-industrial and agro-food sectors, acquired a 15% minority stake in the new project.

“We have now installed the line for the processing of soybean, but we do not intend to stop there. Besides soy there are many other ingredients, such as quinoa, spelt, buckwheat, barley, and sunflower, that can be used for plant-based beverages, and we want to find the best way to produce them, especially those with high levels of protein. For that, we count on Bühler’s expertise and technology going forward,” says Thibaud Bombart, with an eye to the future.