



Inauguration of the Luçon cheese factory: Agrial reasserts its commitment to the backbone of the regions and strengthens its position in a growing mozzarella market

On 21st October 2022, Arnaud Degoulet, Chairman of Agrial and Ludovic Spiers, Chief Executive Officer of Agrial, inaugurated the new cheese factory in Luçon (85), rebuilt after an accidental fire in February 2020, in attendance of Lydie Bernard, vice-Chairman of the Pays de la Loire region, Gérard Gavory, Prefect of the Vendée department, Dominique Bonnin, Mayor of Luçon, as well as many elected representatives, employees and partners present. Through this new site and its synergies with the cheese factory in Herbignac (in the Pays de la Loire region), Agrial is strengthening its position as leader in the production and processing of mozzarella (pizza cheese) in France, with a total production of 70,000 metric tons per year.

With this reconstruction, the production capacity of the Luçon plant increases by 50%, i.e. 24,000 tonnes of mozzarella in a full year (compared to 16,000 tonnes previously). This represents a collection of 200 million litres of milk, or the equivalent of the milk production of 300 farmer members from the south of the Pays de la Loire region and the north of the Nouvelle Aquitaine region. This project strengthens the Co-operative's local roots, as close as possible to its farmer members.

Agrial's Dairy division markets mozzarella under the Maestrella and Cantadora brands, and under private label, to industry and catering sectors, in a market growing by 3% per year in France and abroad. This new site will enable the Co-operative to strengthen its position in the manufacturing of ingredient cheeses, supplementing its cheese factory in Herbignac (in the Pays de la Loire region). Herbignac provides for mass production and Luçon, which is more agile, allows us to respond to new customer expectations in terms of packaging and recipes, by offering smaller production series to target new markets.

The industrial process has been completely redefined to be at the cutting edge of technology, from the cheese workshop to packaging. The dairy plant maintained a partial activity during these 2 years of reconstruction, all in safety, priority of Agrial. Products are now certified by the IFS (International Featured Standard) and the BRC (British Retail Consortium), which are internationally recognised standards that ensure the quality and health and safety of food products sold under distributor labels. The new equipment also makes it possible to optimise energy consumption per kilo produced and to make external discharges more reliable.

The cheese factory employs 130 people. 60% of them have seen their positions evolve to ensure the management of new equipment and the operation of automated lines. New positions have been created around operational excellence and Luçon is currently recruiting maintenance technicians.

The reconstruction of the site benefited from the financial support of the Pays de la Loire region, as part of the recovery plan and from the insurance company's coverage of the damage.

Arnaud Degoulet, Chairman of Agrial

“In June 2020, three months after the fire, the Board of Directors of Agrial took the strong decision to rebuild the site, significantly increasing its production capacity. This investment will ensure the continuity of an outlet for local dairy farms and strengthen Agrial's anchoring in the heart of the territories. This reconstruction fully illustrates the vivacity of our co-operative values: long-termism, proximity, solidarity, and boldness.”

Ludovic Spiers, Chief Executive Officer of Agrial

“We are very proud to inaugurate this new processing site. With the Herbignac dairy factory and the reconstruction of the Luçon plant, Agrial now produces nearly 70,000 tonnes of mozzarella, pizza cheese, and consolidates its position as the leading French producer. Faithful to our “sell to produce” logic, we wish to answer to the growth of a market in development in France and abroad.”

About Agrial

Agrial is a French agricultural and agri-food co-operative that provides daily support to its 12,000 farmer members in the northwest region of France and the Rhone Valley to develop and market their production. Relying on strong brands, the Group develops its agri-food activities in the dairy, fresh produce, beverage, and meat sectors. As a committed company, Agrial develops high-performing and responsible farming, offering consumers healthy, safe and tasty food. More information: www.agrial.com

Financé par

