



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REPORT

HOCHLAND POLAND 2023



PHOTO. THE LIWIEC RIVER - A NATURA 2000 AREA LOCATED NEAR THE HOCHLAND POLAND PRODUCTION PLANT IN WĘGRÓW

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NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- Reduction in Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions by **62.7%** per production volume (vs. base year 2019)
- **100%** of the purchased electricity for production at Hochland Poland plants and for use in administration buildings comes from **RES**
- **18.7 tonnes** less plastic per year thanks to the implementation of the sustainable packaging map for KANAPKOWY cheese
- **120 tonnes** of cheese donated to the Food Banks



COMMUNITY

- **90%** responses as good or very good – the result of a satisfaction survey among the local community
- **76%** Hochland Employees are trained in Sustainable Development strategies and activities



CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

- **61%** of farms supplying milk to Hochland Poland meets the highest level of cow welfare standard developed by Hochland Poland in cooperation with Poland Chamber of Milk, breeders and other milk purchasers based on the guidelines of the International Dairy Federation (IDF)
- **2,800 Hochland Poland** suppliers were assessed against the requirements of the Supply Chain Due Diligence Act (LkSG)



PRIZES

- Eco-Investor of the year 2023 in the food industry
- PARP Award for project "Returnable Cartons"
- PARP Award "Employer Of Tomorrow"
- 5 Good Practices In The Corporate Responsibility Report 2023
- POLITYKA'S CSR White Leaf 2023
- Ranking of Responsible Companies



HOCHLAND IN POLAND



Hochland is a family-owned Company that has been making cheese since 1927. The brand has been present in Poland since 1993 and its products are manufactured in Poland at two production plants - in the Wielkopolska region, in Kaźmierz, and in

the Mazovia region, in Węgrów. The cheeses are prepared according to tried and tested, carefully refined recipes. Hochland takes great care to ensure that the ingredients used are of the highest quality, the most important of which is milk from spe-

cially selected farms. Finished products are distributed under refrigeration in accordance with the principles of product safety and then find their way to the kitchens of Poles, while some products are exported to European countries and outside the EU.

HOCHLAND PRODUCTS



PRIZE

RANKING OF RESPONSIBLE COMPANIES

managed by Kozminski Business Hub
 - Hochland Poland has been recognised for its sustainability strategy and ranked **15th in the overall ranking** in 2023

1.1 HOCHLAND VALUES

The operation of the Hochland Group is based on values, the observance of which is extremely important, both for the owners and the management. In addition to the high quality requirements of our products and services, these values also include **respect for every individual, goal-oriented thinking and action by Employees, acting with**

sustainable development in mind, and the independence of our Company. Respecting and promoting the human rights of our Employees, as well as those in our supply chains and other Contractors, is an important matter. Responsibility for Employees, Contractors, the environment and the Company is taken very seriously and described

in the **CODE OF CONDUCT**, available on the website, among others:



HOCHLAND POLAND HAS IDENTIFIED THE VALUES THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO EVERY HOCHLAND POLAND EMPLOYEE.

SECURITY

Safety is key. We foster it on two levels - physical and financially, offering stable employment. This combination makes it possible for our Employees and their families to enjoy life and realise what they want to do.

PRIDE

Pride has always accompanied Hochland Employees. All thanks to the well-known and much-loved products that find their way onto shop shelves and then onto the tables of our Consumers every day!

CARE

We take care of each other because, after all, it's natural in a family! We never leave anyone in a difficult situation and try to meet the needs of Employees.

JOB SECURITY

We focus on long-term relationships with our Employees and strive to always be close to them!

READINESS FOR CHANGE

Readiness for change is born when we feel safe at work. Then, change is now that scary after all. Sure, it arouses emotions, sometimes even fears, but ultimately - mostly excitement. Ready for change, we do not stand still and look for ways to introduce new solutions and ideas that are born in our open minds.

TRUST

We know that trust is not something that is given once and for all. That is why we are constantly working to ensure that this word does not lose its

value. Confidence goes hand in hand with security and leads to a sense that the place I am in is the one where I want to work and grow.

APPRECIATION

Sometimes even a small gesture can make our day. At Hochland, we value commitment and appreciate our work. We do it every day, not just on holidays!

OPENNESS

Makes us say: **IT'S DELICIOUS HERE!** As an employer, we strive to be close to all our Employees. We focus on honesty and transparency. We are constantly developing ways to reach our people because we want them to feel that when they need us, we are there for them. Like everyone at Hochland.

1.2 PRODUCT QUALITY AND SAFETY

At Hochland, the highest standards of quality and hygiene in production are observed so that the products that are delivered to customers and Consumers are safe and meet their expectations in 100%.

“Quality is not just an action, it is a habit (the culture of the organisation)” - Aristotle

“Quality means always doing your job correctly” - Henry Ford

The above mottoes illustrate why the focus at Hochland is on Employees, Teams and product safety. Hochland pursues a com-

pany culture that enables everyone to take responsibility for both the quality and safety of its products and for workplace safety.

All Hochland Employees know and understand their responsibility in this regard as part of their job.

The Quality and Food Safety Policy is based on:

Hochland’s Mission, Vision 2025 and Company Strategy, as approved by the Management Board. The Company Strategy is regularly reviewed. Hochland’s objectives, the so-called OKRs (Objective Key Result’s), are set on this basis.

- **Management members** aware of their responsibility for the safety and legality of the products as well as for Hochland’s high quality standards. Acting together with Colleagues and Employees, in accordance with the Hochland Principles of Management and Cooperation.

- **All Employees** prepared in their area of work to take care of the quality of processes, projects, services and products. Committed to creating a positive, success-oriented working atmosphere, with consideration for job security and fair remuneration.

We use activities and systems to continuously improve the safety and quality of our products:

Qualification and personal development of all leaders and Employees	Advanced, electronically enhanced training systems to foster continuous improvement in operations and engagement
Modern means of communication	Hochland Intranet, Hochland internal information platform, Microsoft Teams
Progressive digitisation in all countries	Implementation and development of an international digital Quality Management System; MES, SAP, Digital Supplier Management
Systematic Continuous Improvement Process	QMS - the quality management system provides a systematic approach to planning, controlling, monitoring and improving processes
Increasing process orientation	Supporting networking and cooperation between departments to improve workflow and efficiency
Maintaining and improving the implemented TPM.	TPM is one of the methods of lean management to ensure maximum efficiency of machinery and equipment

1.3 DOUBLE MATERIALITY ASSESSMENT

The CSRD directive requires entities to provide information on the impact of the entity’s activities on people and the environment, as well as information on how sustainability issues affect the entity. Such a situation is referred to as double materiality (elements of double materiality – art. 19a of the CSRD).

In their management report, large entities include the information necessary for understanding:

the entity’s impact on sustainability issues (IMPACT MATERIALITY PERSPECTIVE) and the information necessary to understand how sustainability issues affect the entity’s development, performance and position (FINANCIAL MATERIALITY PERSPECTIVE).

An entity should consider each materiality perspective separately and disclose both information material to both perspectives and information material to only one perspective.

Hochland Poland participated in the development of the materiality test process for the Company under the direction of the Sustainability Coordination of the Head Office and together with other divisions of the Hochland Group. A materiality review process, based on these principles, has been in place since 2022 and the double materiality analysis is reviewed annually, involving the management and managers responsible for the various areas at Hochland Poland. The materiality assessment process also takes into account the views of relevant Stakeholders who are or may be affected by Hochland.

The materiality assessment process will be reviewed by the auditor at Hochland Group level prior to the publication of the 2025 consolidated report, at which time the detailed results of the double materiality assessment will also be presented. We can currently share general information on what topics are relevant to the Hochland Group.



1.4 ESG IN HOCHLAND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES

Sustainability issues are of interest to both the Company’s Management and management members. Responsibility for ESG issues is assigned to the Sustainability Manager, reporting directly to the CEO, who oversees the area of sustainability. The manager leads the

work of the Sustainability and Environment Department, responsible for the implementation of operational activities. As sustainability applies to all areas of the business, managers and Employees from various departments and levels (including Sales, Purchasing, Adminis-

tration, EHS, Logistics, HR) are also involved in the process and provide direct material and organizational support in the implementation of sustainability tasks. Such a structure means that the responsibility for Sustainable Development rests with the CEO.

THE STRUCTURE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUSTAINABILITY

President of the Management Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible operation of the Company in accordance with ESG
Sustainability Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinating the implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy Management of work and implementation of planned ESG activities Monitoring performance and progress against strategic objectives Reporting the results to the Management Board
Staff of the Sustainability and Environment Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperation with various organisational units Internal reporting to the Manager and external reporting to the administration Participation in strategy development, including the creation of a culture of sustainability among Employees
Managers and staff from various departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation in the development of the ESG strategy Substantive and organisational support in the implementation of various sustainable development activities and tasks Reporting of data included in the ESRS activity report

In addition, there is an interdisciplinary team within the structure – the Columbus Team – which is an initiative of Hochland Poland Employees who are involved in a wide range of pro-environmental activities. The idea was to give a new impetus to the culture of engagement and innovation at Hochland and to support the implementation of the strategy in the sustainability pillar. Entrepreneurship and valuable ideas, combined with the initiative to implement them, are the basis of the team. Only by giving space to Employees’ ideas and concepts, by involving everyone in solving problems, can the potential of capital – the people – be unleashed.



1.5 COOPERATION WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Hochland Poland wants to contribute to the responsible development of the entire industry. Experts from Hochland actively participate in industry organisations and share market practices.

The Polish Chamber of Milk and the Association of Polish Dairy Processors, together with the then Association of Sustainable Agriculture in Poland "ASAP" (currently the Polish Association of Sustainable Agriculture and Food), entered into an agreement un-

der which a task force has been set up, including **Hochland Poland, to pursue the main goals of transforming the industry in terms of sustainable development.**



Hochland Poland is a Member / Partner of:

Polish Chamber of Milk

Association of Polish Dairy Processors

Responsible Business Forum

Polish Federation of Cattle Breeders and Dairy Farmers

Polish Federation of Food Producers

1.6 ESG IN THE STRATEGY

Hochland Poland is fully aware that it is impossible to realise long-term business goals without ESG issues. The environment, the livestock, the farming community is an

unmissable and most essential part of the business. The Company is aware that if it does not take care of these elements it will not only fail to achieve its business goals,

but practically the business will cease to exist without them. This is the reason why the Company strives so strongly for full symbiosis.

MORE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT means products with minimal impact on the environment. Circular economy supports and helps protect the lives of our children and grandchildren.

Hochland’s ambitions are:



Reduction of carbon footprint by **50%** by 2025 in terms of scope 1 and scope 2 per tonne of product (base year 2019)



Reducing raw material consumption: reduction of water, energy and gas and waste generated in production facilities by **1.5% per year per tonne of product** (base year 2017)



70% of milk suppliers meet the **highest standard cow welfare** (level A) by 2025

The cow welfare standard used by Hochland was developed together with the Polish Chamber of Milk, breeders and other milk purchasers based on the guidelines of the International Dairy Federation (IDF)



100% of packaging will be able to suitable for further processing by 2025, with 20% less packaging plastic per tonne of product (base year 2018)

5 PILLARS OF STRATEGY HOCHLAND



PRIZE

The weekly magazine Polityka, in cooperation with the consultancy firm Deloitte and the Responsible Business Forum, assessed companies operating in Poland. Environmental, social and corporate governance activities were assessed. Hochland Poland was awarded in **2023 with POLITYKA’S CSR WHITE LEAF**

02

**HOCHLAND WORKS WITH
RESPONSIBLE PARTNERS**

2.1 HOCHLAND COOPERATES WITH MILK SUPPLIERS

Hochland Poland works with around 450 family dairy farms. The farms from which milk is obtained have a large cross-section of sizes: the smallest, keeping from a few to a dozen cows, and large ones with up to several hundred cows.

The purchasing region comprises provinces – Lubelskie, Podlaskie and Mazowieckie. We buy milk within a radius of approximately 100 km from the Węgrów plant.

In addition to those involved in milk analysis and billing, the Milk Supplier Cooperation Department has a group of five coordinators who work with suppliers on a daily basis to improve production by improving milk quality, ensuring appropriate hygiene standards and animal welfare.

Hochland’s milk suppliers are implementing solutions that improve energy efficiency, independence and reduce greenhouse gas

emissions and improve the economics of the farm by, among other things, installing on-farm wastewater treatment plants, photovoltaics or heat recovery, obtained during cooling process of milk.

It is also important to Hochland Poland that the welfare of the breeding animals – the dairy cows – is at the highest possible level.

PURPOSE: ANIMAL WELFARE

KPI: 70% OF FARMS IN “LEVEL A” TO 2025

The year 2023 ended with a very good result:

61% of farms meet the criteria of the cow welfare standard at level A (the most demanding) in accordance with the rules developed by Hochland Poland in cooperation with the Polish Chamber of Milk, breeders and other entities purchasing milk.

The Milk Supplier Relations Department focuses on activities to ensure:

- access to feed, water and salt,
- improving the environment in the following areas: barn, milking parlour, grazing,

- health care,
- management and care of the herd.

The Company’s support for the development of milk production and developed the welfare

rules contribute to improving animal welfare on farms supplying milk to Hochland production facilities.

2.2 HOCHLAND ON REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE SUPPORTING BIODIVERSITY

Agriculture is one of the sectors that is most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Droughts and violent weather events, compounded by the greenhouse effect, significantly affect the yield of cultivated crops. By practicing the principles of sustainable/regenerative agriculture, farmers not only reduce the damage of climate change, but also improve the health of their soil, making both it and the crops grown more resilient to the weather anomalies that occur. Moreover, the aforementioned practices promote biodiversity conservation.

Hochland invited an expert on regenerative agriculture, co-founder and board member of the Association for Sustainable Agriculture & Food in Poland, a PhD in crop protection and fertilisation with 43 years of experience in agriculture, Dr Jerzy Próchnicki, to a webinar on regenerative agriculture. In addition to Hochland Employees, milk suppliers were invited to the webinar.

The expert also shared information on regenerative agriculture in the quarterly magazine published by Hochland Poland for farmers. He talked about the benefits of sustainable agriculture.



“Changing the paradigm of thinking from ‘produce as much as possible at all costs’ to ‘produce as much as the soil/animals are capable of, using the best methods and modern technologies to support this pro-

duction’ is quite difficult, as it requires a lot of knowledge and understanding that the profitability of production is more easily improved by optimizing it than by maximizing it, which is unfortunately not common knowledge. Real farm sustainability makes it possible to achieve: sustainable and profitable production, improved crop and animal health and, in the long term, a significant improvement in the quality of the farm’s soils and the subsequent positive effects of such changes. What is more “skilful coexistence with local communities sometimes makes a huge difference to the farm’s ability to operate and continue to grow”, emphasizes Dr Jerzy Próchnicki.

BEST PRACTICE

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FOR FARMERS

WEBINAR ON REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE

2.3 STRONG SUPPLY CHAINS - DUE DILIGENCE

As a member of the Hochland Group, Hochland Poland is obliged to implement and comply with the **German Supply Chain Due Diligence Act** Lieferkettensorgfaltspflichtengesetz (LkSG for short).

The obligations under this legal regulation became binding on Hochland Poland from 1 January 2024 and their intention is to enforce **human rights and environmental protection in international supply chains**. Sound and responsible supply chain management encompasses one's own business activities as well as direct and indirect suppliers and subcontractors.

Ensuring due diligence is based on risk analysis. **Due diligence obligations** aim to identify, minimize and/or eliminate risks and breaches and take preventive actions. Risk analysis process is conducted regularly at least once a year.

The stages of the risk analysis process that is carried out at Hochland are illustrated in the diagram:



In addition to the regular annual risk analysis, there are **risk analyses related to occasional events**, which should be carried out whenever breaches of the law in the supply chain come to light or **significant changes occur in the Company's business context** (e.g. new products or services, countries, suppliers).

A 6-point scale was assumed to assess the level of risk:

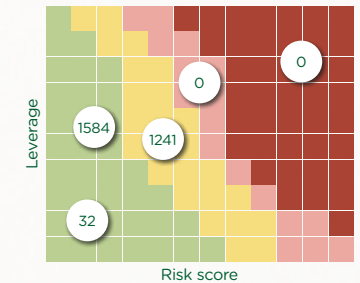
RISK LEVEL	SCALE
Very low risk	<0, 5
Low risk	0, 5- <1, 5
Medium risk	1, 5 - <3
High risk	3-<3, 5
Very high risk	>=3,5 - 6

Hochland Poland analysed 2857 suppliers. The risk was assessed as low and medium according to the graphics below:

RISK SCORES OVERVIEW



BREAKDOWN OF BUSINESS IMPACTS



There are 13 protected legal positions protected by the LkSG:

Prohibition of:

1. Soil, air, and water pollution /contamination
2. Use of persistent organic pollutants
3. Export of hazardous waste
4. Use of mercury
5. Unequal treatment
6. Forced eviction
7. Forced labour
8. Child labour
9. Slavery

Warranty for:

10. Occupational health and safety
11. Freedom of association adequate remuneration
12. Commissioning of security companies when human rights are at risk or violated

2.4 ETHICS AND WHISTLEBLOWING SYSTEM

Hochland's operation is based on values, the observance of which is extremely important to both the Owners and the Company's management. In addition to the high quality requirements of our products and services, these values also include **respect for every individual, goal-oriented thinking and action by Employees, acting with sustainable development in mind, and the independence of our Company**. Respecting and promoting the human rights of our Employees, as well as those in our supply chains and other Contractors, is an important and obvious matter.

In December 2021, a specially created **TELL US!** system was made available to all Employees. The system is used to report various types of violations and irregularities that are contrary to our culture, business ethics and the Hochland Group's principles of management and cooperation. The system is not a substitute for the standard "Employee-supervisor" communication, which would be used to report violations in the first instance. However, when the violation itself involves a superior or in the absence of an explanation for an already reported irregularity, for example, it is worth using this system.

In 2023, **2 reports:**
external and internal were received.

The system is available at:

- independent link indicated on posters and screensavers : Whistle-blower-Portal - Hochland (hochland-group.com)
- QR code indicated on posters and screen savers
- from the website, in the facts and figures section / Compliance section (hochland-group.com)
- link placed on the employee's information portal / departments: Compliance / Report a breach Compliance / report a violation



2.5 RESPONSIBLE PARTNERS

Hochland expects its business partners to act in accordance with the value system set out in **the Code of Conduct for all Employees and Contractors of Hochland Group companies**. We require that human rights and the labour code, including laws against child labour, be respected, and that remedial measures be taken to environmental protection and compliance with health and safety rules, as well as animal welfare.

Hochland’s Sustainability Department together with Purchasing Department developed a tool and gave a climate survey to suppliers of raw materials and packaging suppliers (excluding milk suppliers). The survey was designed to draw suppliers’ attention to sustainability issues relevant to Hochland, to check the degree of supplier

engagement in the ESG area and to find out what courses of action suppliers intend to take in the future.

Only by working together along the entire supply chain is real climate mitigation possible. The topics covered in the survey included: sustainability strategies, training provided to Employees on environmental issues,

calculating the carbon footprint, setting environmental goals, water use, the impact of operations on biodiversity and ongoing initiatives in this area. A total of 63 Hochland business partners took part in the survey. Below are the results of a survey of selected questions addressed to our business partners.



BEST PRACTICE
SUSTAINABILITY SURVEY FOR BUSINESS PARTNERS

03

**HOCHLAND REDEFINES
ITS ENVIRONMENTAL
FOOTPRINT**



3.1 HOCHLAND AIMS TO REDUCE CONSUMPTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

3.1.1. "LESS WATER"

PURPOSE: LIMITATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

KPI: reduction in water consumption by 1.5% per year
(base year 2017)

The production plants use water from their own deep-water intakes. Environmental permits have been issued for these intakes, ensuring that the use of water resources is respectful of the environment. Each is located on the plant premises and adequately protected. The quantity and quality of the water used are monitored at all stages.

The Company has the following tools to identify impacts on water resources:

- NMG program – a program for the ongoing monitoring and analysing of, among other things, the consumption of utilities at the Kaźmierz plant, to which data is supplied by compatible meters

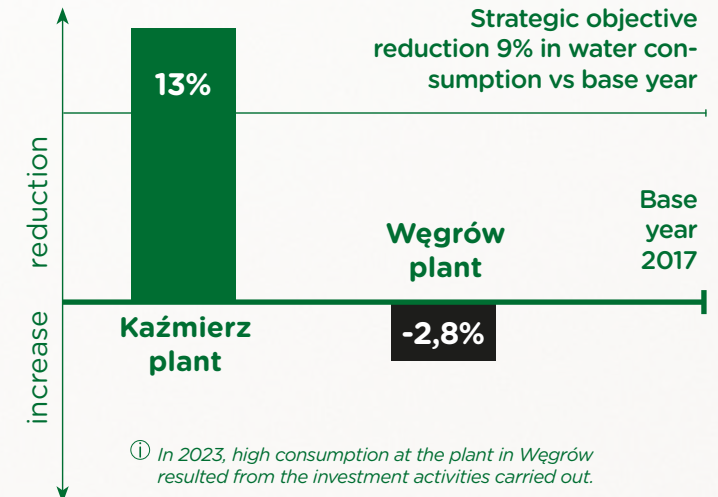
- MES (Manufacturing Execution System) program – a system for continuous monitoring production processes and the acquisition of status and quality information.

Hochland striving to keep water consumption to a minimum at its production plants, sets environmental targets to reduce consumption by 1.5% per tonne of product each year.

A number of measures were carried out to reduce water consumption, including:

AREA	ACTIONS IN 2023
COTTAGE	Reduction in water consumption for pump sealing and optimisation in the line flushing program.
PROCESSING ROOM	Reuse water from deareator.
CURD PLANT	Optimisation of cleaning processes at 12 sites (approx. 20 remaining in Q1 2024). Supply the washing station with reused water from RO.

Reduction of water consumption in 2023 vs base year 2017 [%]



Plant	Permitted groundwater abstraction in accordance with the permit [m ³ /year]	Water consumption in 2023 [m ³]
Kaźmierz	85 000	46 731
Węgrów	600 000	409 888

Hochland Poland aims to reduce water consumption per tonne of product in accordance with the goals set in their Sustainable Development strategy.

3.1 HOCHLAND AIMS TO REDUCE CONSUMPTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

3.1.1.1. WATER AND WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT

The plants generate wastewater as a result of their production processes. The waste water generated at Hochland's production plants is covered by environmental decisions and managed in accordance with the provisions of these decisions:

- at the Kaźmierz plant, wastewater is discharged after treatment at the Hochland mechanical-physical-biological treatment plant into a drainage ditch and then into the Sama River. The watercourse is subject to main-

tenance. Hochland commissions the work after agreeing the scope with Wody Polskie. In addition, in 2023, at the request of the Representatives of the Municipality of Kaźmierz, **Hochland has committed to the proper maintenance of the River Sama on an additional section from the Radzyny reservoir towards the village of Kiączyn.**

The scope of work included: mowing and removal of aquatic vegetation overgrowing the bottom of the watercourse and its slopes,

desilting and hooking the bottom in areas that are particularly overgrown and prone to siltation. The entire financial outlay resulting from the maintenance work carried out in 2023 was borne by Hochland Poland.

- at the Węgrów plant, industrial wastewater is treated in the on-site wastewater pre-treatment plant and then directed to the municipal sewage network. Wastewater treatment started at the end of 2022, with the aim of lowering the loads of discharged industrial wastewater.

Photo Conservation of the Sama River



3.1 HOCHLAND AIMS TO REDUCE CONSUMPTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

3.1.1.2. TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS IN WATER AND WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT

Hochland Poland focuses on continuous analysis of the processes in place in search of possible wastage and fields for improvement. The Company is aware that the drive to close the loop and the project implemented to this end make a measurable contribution to saving natural resources. Hence the decision to implement the wastewater pretreatment plant project at the plant in Węgrów.

Through this action, the Company is pursuing several aspects of its strategy:

- **using energy from sewage sludge** by transferring it to biogas plants to generate green energy
- **reducing demand for fossil fuels** by heat energy recovery
- **reducing pollutant emissions**, including CO₂, ammonia, hydrogen sulfide

Among the environmental effects to which the investment has contributed are:

1. Energy savings:

- From recovering heat from wastewater for heating the pre-treatment building during the heating period and for heating the screen was water: 107 317 kWh/year
- Amount of energy generated from biogas [kWh/year]: 240,000
- Reduction in eCO₂ emissions [T/year]: 204*

* a rate of 850 kg eCO₂/MWh is assumed

2. Reduction of pollutants in raw wastewater

Thanks to the technology used, the amount of pollutants in the wastewater caught in the pre-treatment process has been reduced:

Specification	Values averaged over the tributary	Unit	Actual reduction %
BOD ₅	2000	mg/l	63
COD	3000	mg/l	47
TP	40	mg/l	53
Total suspended solids	800	mg/l	29

Based on a comparison of monthly average parameter reductions from before and after the investment.

3. Reduction of foul gases

The technology used, equipped with a mineral-filled bio-filter, ensures the reduction of odour-forming gases such as ammonia, hydrogen sulphide, mercaptans, amines, aldehydes, ketones and fatty acids. The use of volcanic lava as a filter bed in the first biological filtration stage and an additional purification stage on activated carbon ensure a reduction in odours occurring in very high concentrations of more than 99%.



PRIZE

Hochland Poland was awarded the prize for the environmental effects resulting from the commissioning of a wastewater sub-treatment plant at its Węgrów plant in the “Eco-Investor 2023 in the Food Industry” competition.

3.1 HOCHLAND AIMS TO REDUCE CONSUMPTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

3.1.2 CIRCULAR PACKAGING

PURPOSE: SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING

KPI: 100% packaging suitable for further processing by 2025

It is the strategic goal of Hochland Poland to make all product packaging 100% suitable for further processing by 2025.

In pursuit of the adopted goal, a **“roadmap” for sustainable packaging** was developed in 2020, which takes into account:

- replacing laminates with mono-material structures
- optimisation of packaging to reduce the amount of raw materials used
- weight reduction – better adapting dimensions to product content
- reductions in packaging thickness
- eliminating unnecessary packaging.



In 2023, the focus was on Kanapkowy Cheese activities and the following actions were implemented:

Action: reduction in height and weight of the cup (-1g/pc)

EFFECT **18.7 TONS OF PLASTIC PER YEAR LESS** compared to Kanapkowy cheese packaging prior to change

Action: reduced carton height (-11.6g/carton)

EFFECT **25.8 TONS LESS PAPER per year compared** to Kanapkowy cheese packaging before the change

When the Kanapkowy cup was lowered, an additional benefit was achieved – in the logistics of the 8x130g carton, layers were added on the pallet. This measure has had the effect of increasing the number of cartons per pallet: **336 cartons/pallet vs. 294 cartons previously.**

3.1 HOCHLAND AIMS TO REDUCE CONSUMPTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

3.1.3 “LESS WASTE”

Hochland’s collaboration within supply chain in circular economy area.

Example of cooperation with clients

Hochland Poland’s cooperation with its Clients is based on a joint search for solutions and targeting such offers to Consumers that have the least possible impact on the environment. The use of ECODESIGN principles for Gouda 300g cheese can serve as an example. Hochland worked together with the Client to develop a solution that allowed the use of automatic packaging on a folding-press machine at Hochland’s production plant in Węgrów. This approach helped in reduction the amount of raw material used – cardboard.

Example of cooperation with suppliers

Hochland Poland implements the **REUSE** principle by working with packaging suppliers. As a result of the analysis, a project was launched in 2021, “Returnable cartons” which is a project to change the use of pack-

aging in which packaging materials for production are delivered to the production facility in Węgrów. In the first stage, return cartons were implemented (rotating min. 5 times between the packaging supplier and Hochland) for Almette cheese packaging, in the second phase **in 2023 the solution was extended to additional packaging materials** (cups and lids) used for Creme cheese. This means that the packaging is only handed over as waste after 5 deliveries have been made in it. The collection of flat blanks of returnable cartons is carried out when the packaging is delivered to the production plant, helping to minimize the carbon footprint of transport.

The practice used has resulted in real environmental benefits (reduced resource consumption) and the success of the project has become a permanent part of the cooperation between Hochland and the packaging supplier. All new packaging is offered in returnable cartons.



PRIZE

The Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (PARP) awarded Hochland for the project **in the area of circular economy “RETURNABLE CARTONS”**.



3.1 HOCHLAND AIMS TO REDUCE CONSUMPTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

3.1.3 “LESS WASTE”

PURPOSE: LIMITATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT KPI: reduction in amount of generated waste by 1.5% per year

Hochland Poland selects operators in the area of waste management who are able to offer the highest possible level of waste recycling. Waste sorting is carried out with attention to detail. Production waste is sorted into nine different fractions. Plastics are sorted and stored in specially prepared dedicated containers: separately polypropylene fractions, polystyrene waste, colourless stretch foil.

In 2023, activities were launched to separate label liners for self-adhesive labels from the waste stream intended for the production of alternative fuel. The recipient of label liners, which are collected selectively at Hochland, has developed a method of recycling them so that the cellulose fibres are recovered to make new label liners. In addition, a project to separate and return used detectable pens used in the food industry was launched in 2023. In cooperation with pen supplier PROHACCP, a system was organised for the cyclical collection of used pens in order to produce new auxiliary

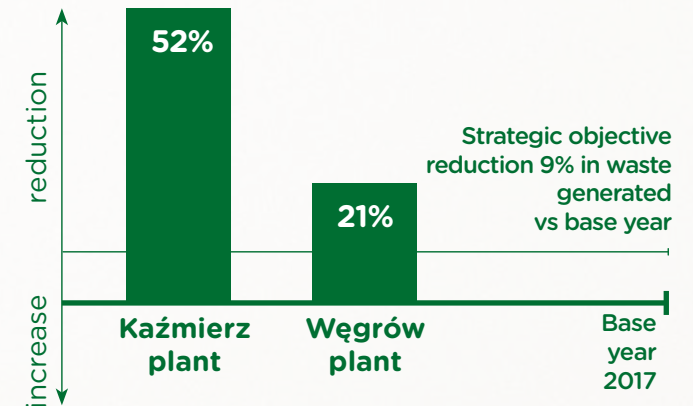
materials from the recovered raw materials. During the year, a total of 7 kg of detectable pens was separated from the waste stream and sent for recycling.

The above activities and the waste management investments implemented over the years 2017–2023 allowed to reduce the amount of waste generated.

WASTE SEPARATION RULES IMPORTANT NOT ONLY AT WORK

The Company works to raise awareness among Employees not only in the workplace, but also at home. Thanks to the cyclical, once-a-year “Flowers for Electrograts” campaign, Employees separate electro-waste from the municipal waste stream throughout the year and collect it to donate as part of a campaign organised by Hochland. Recipients of electro-waste treat it at specialized recycling facilities. In 2023, 200 Employees joined the campaign. A total of 675kg of e-waste was donated.

Reduction in waste generation in 2023 vs. base year 2017 [%]



BEST PRACTICE

DETAILED SORTING OF PLASTICS

SORTING OF LABEL LINERS

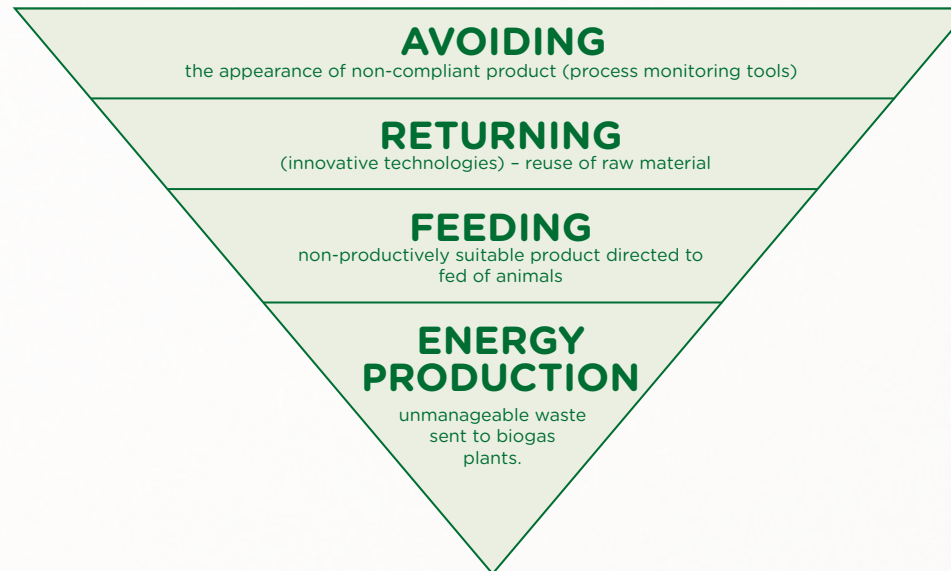
DETECTABLE PENS RETURNING

3.1.4. HOCHLAND SAYS STOP FOOD WASTE

Hochland counteracts food waste by implementing quality and product safety standards and optimizing and automating production processes, based on by-products hierarchy:

Hochland Poland is constantly working to reduce the amount of waste generated at its production plants in order to reduce its environmental impact and consumption of raw materials.

Waste prevention also applies to finished products. Ensuring optimal use of raw materials, utilities, as well as tailored stocks of finished goods is a key task of the Planning Department.



BEST PRACTICE

STOP WASTE

BY-PRODUCTS
HIERARCHY

COOPERATION WITH
FOOD BANKS

Most significant actions implemented in 2023 to prevent food waste generation:

1. Implementation of modern technology for the management of whey from cottage cheese production.
2. Implementation of software for the day-to-day monitoring of the animal by-products storehouse.

3. The improvement of recipe management allowed a reduction of animal by-products in 2023 vs. 2022:
 - 20% reduction at the Kaźmierz plant,
 - about 60% reduction at the Węgrów plant.
4. Cooperation with Food Banks, 120 tonnes of donations of finished products were made in 2023.



3.2 HOCHLAND IS COMMITTED TO REDUCE CARBON FOOTPRINT

PURPOSE: CARBON FOOTPRINT REDUCTION

KPI: emissions reduction in scope 1 & 2 by 50% until 2025 [t CO₂e/t FG]

(base year 2019)

Scope 1 and 2

The entire Hochland Group has made a commitment to climate protection. **Hochland Poland is actively pursuing the target in Vision 2025 to reduce CO₂e emissions from its production plants (Scope 1+2) per tonne of finished product produced by 50% by 2025 compared to the base year 2019.**

Thanks to the measures implemented, CO₂e emissions (calculated for Scopes 1 and 2) were **reduced by 62.7% in 2023** compared

to the 2019 base year per tonne of finished goods.

Emissions from the Scope 1 and 2 by component, including fuels consumed in production processes, fuels for company cars, and the amount of released refrigerants found during cyclical leakage checks are presented in the table:

Emissions in scope 1 and scope 2 [t CO ₂ e]	2019	2023
Natural gas		10 088,97
Stationary combustion of diesel		8,80
Woodchips		0,15
Company cars - Diesel		59,40
Company cars - Petrol		333,93
Refrigerants		0,00
Total Scope 1	9 101,00	10 491,24
Consumption of purchased or acquired electricity (location based)		0,00
Total Scope 2 (market based)	16 581,90	0,00
Total Scope 2 (location based)		15 503,80
Scope 1 and 2 (market based)	25 682,90	10 491,24

Hochland Poland aims to reduce energy consumption by 1.5% per year. Over the years from 2017 (base year) to 2023 energy consumption has been significantly reduced. Optimisation process is continuing through implementing of the decarbonization roadmap, developed in 2022, for production plants.

Technical and organisational measures implemented at production plants in 2023 to reduce CO₂e emissions:

Energy efficiency: e.g. replacement of compressors with highly efficient ones, replacement of blowers at the Kaźmierz wastewater treatment plant with highly efficient ones with low noise levels, modernisation of the burner at the Kaźmierz gas boiler, purchase of an acoustic monitoring camera to reduce compressed air losses

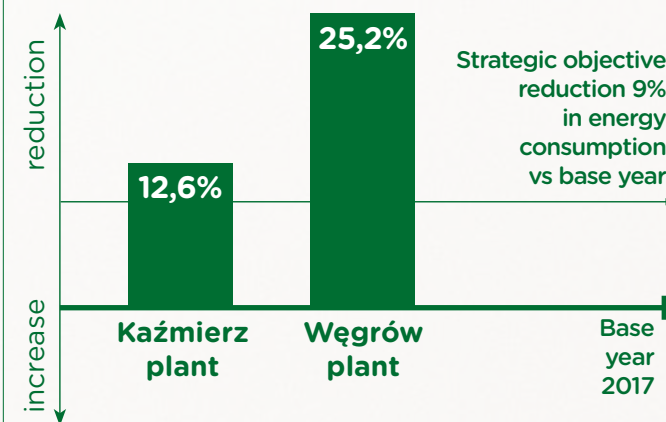
Replacing conventional sources of electricity and heat with renewable sources (such as photovoltaics)

Heat recovery (e.g. compressor heat recovery)

Cogeneration - efficient use of source fuel

In 2023, the purchased electricity and consumed at the Kaźmierz and Węgrów plants and at the Poznań headquarters come from 100% renewable sources: a mix of RES sources.

Reduction in energy and gas consumption per tonne of product in 2023 vs. base year 2017 [%]



3.2 HOCHLAND IS COMMITTED TO REDUCE CARBON FOOTPRINT

Scope 3

Most of Hochland's CO₂e emissions, around **90%**, come from the raw materials used in production, mainly milk. Dairy farms are therefore Hochland's most important partners in implementing the decarbonisation strategy.

Together with selected milk suppliers, new concepts are being tested that will enable a sustainable reduction in emissions, in particular: carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane and nitrous oxide.

The calculation of the Corporate Carbon Footprint in terms of emissions from scope 3 for year 2023 is in progress. Planned completion in the second half of 2024.

PILOT

In 2023, Hochland, in collaboration with 10 milk suppliers, piloted a carbon footprint calculation on farms to estimate emissions per kilogram of milk. The farm owners provided the primary data for 2022 necessary for the carbon footprint calculation. Milk collection coordinators were also involved in the process to support our Partners and provide clarification on an ongoing basis.

On-farm emissions (Scope 3 emissions) from raw milk were calculated using a methodology in line with the Greenhouse Gas Protocol (GHG Protocol).

Milk emissions are mainly influenced by the following factors:

- digestive process of cows,
- production and purchase of feed,
- manure storage,
- energy consumption.

An important factor influencing emissions is the feeding of cows. Emissions related to feed include fertilisers for own and purchased feed and the transport of purchased feed. Manure storage can cause methane and nitrous oxide emissions. The magnitude of emissions varies depending on the manure management: whether the manure is covered and used for biogas production. Nutrition and calf rearing issues were also taken into account for the calculation. The results obtained form the basis for Hochland to implement the next steps in terms of calculation and reduction measures for emissions from milk.



**HOCHLAND STRIVES
TO BE A FRIENDLY PLACE
TO WORK FOR EVERYONE**

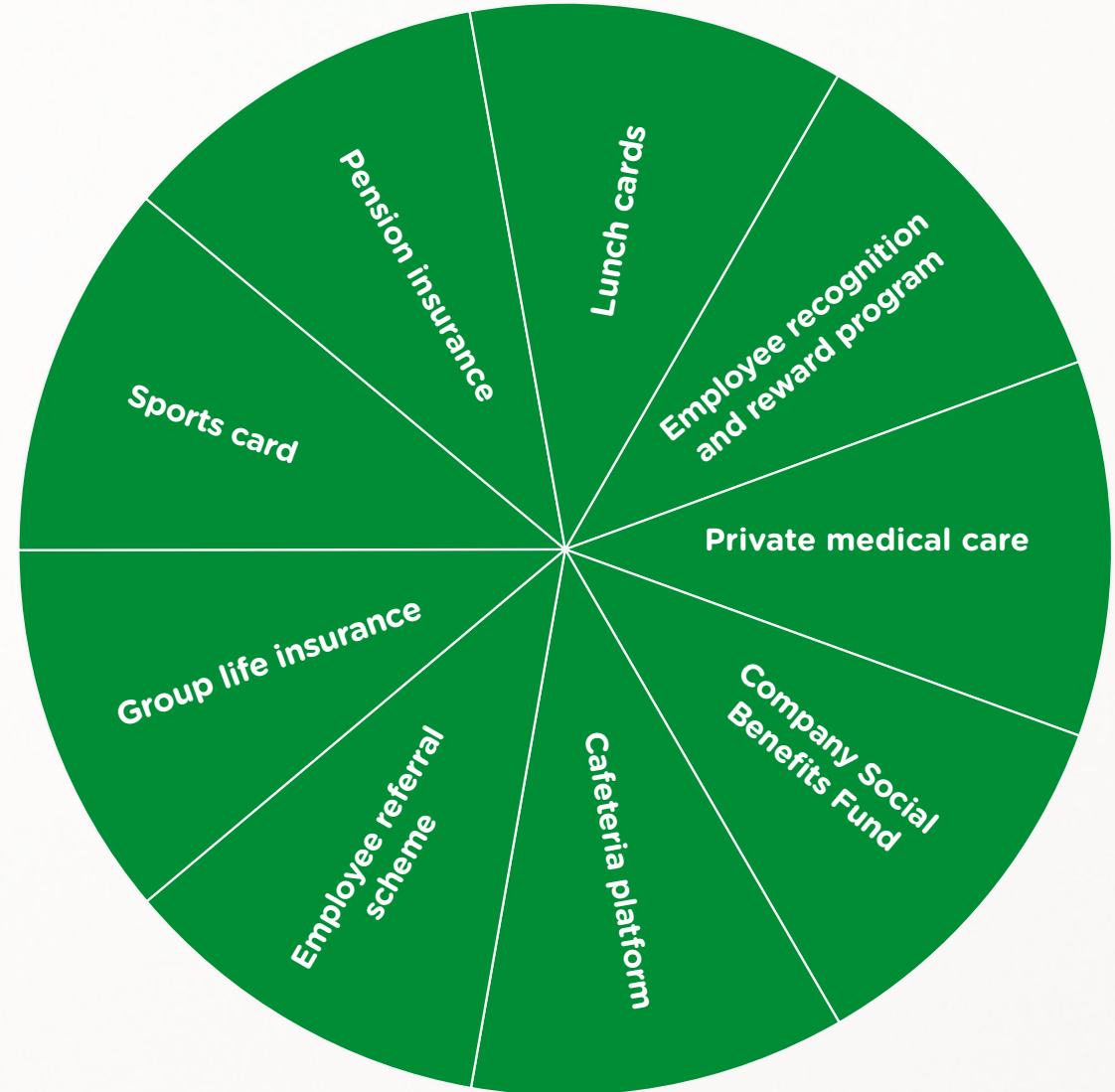
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HOCHLAND STRIVES TO BE A FRIENDLY PLACE TO WORK FOR EVERYONE

4.1 EMPLOYEES

Hochland Poland had **834 Employees** in 2023, of which **386 Employees were women (46%)** and **448 were men (54%)**. Hochland creates interesting and attractive jobs, as evidenced, among other, by the average length of service at Hochland Poland, which is **13.6 years**. The attractive salary is complemented by a variety of non-wage benefits.

LIST OF BENEFITS



4

HOCHLAND STRIVES TO BE A FRIENDLY PLACE TO WORK FOR EVERYONE

4.2 LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

In 2023, the **Leadership Program** was launched at Hochland Poland.

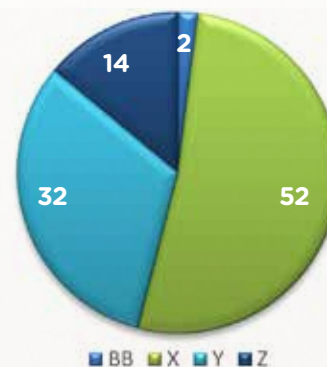
The project used a design method called Design Thinking, there is a step in it that talks about “empathising”, that is, “stepping into the shoes” of the other person, understanding the process, the situation, the environment. The diagnosis (empathisation stage) was built on interviews, conducted by the **“Leadership Ambassadors”**.

One of the 6 leadership areas identified for further work was identified as generational management. Every generation has own unique and unrepeatable value. The generations that are active in Hochland Poland are: the **BB generation (1946-1964)**, **generation X (1965-1979)**, **generation Y (1980-1994)**, **generation Z (1995-2009)**. The aim of the project is to identify the advantages of employees diverse in terms of age and seniority, and to create conditions for even better management of generational diversity in Hochland and to promote mutual sharing of knowledge and experience.

AREAS OF LEADERSHIP	PURPOSE
LEADER PROFILE	a common understanding within the organisation of what qualities a leader should possess
POWER OF MOTIVATION	updating the set of instruments with which Leaders can keep motivation at the right level
COMMUNICATION/FEEDBACK	equipping Leaders with tools for effective communication and feedback skills
GENERATION MANAGEMENT	developing a set of tools/activities for generational management, knowledge transfer and increasing awareness in Hochland about generational management and diversity
SHARING OF OBJECTIVES	creating a system for mapping, aligning, cascading and communicating, and ultimately clearing key objectives for teams/departments at different levels of the organisation taking into account the specific work/challenges of interdisciplinary teams
INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAMS	training leaders to work effectively in multidisciplinary teams based on project management principles

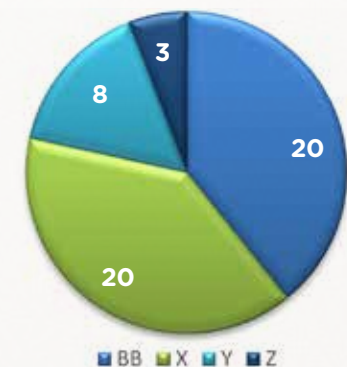
Work on the various projects is ongoing and should be completed by the end of 2024 year.

The generation in Hochland Poland [%]



BB (1946-64), X (1965-79), Y (1980-94) i Z (1995-2009)

Job seniority by generation [years]



BB (1946-64), X (1965-79), Y (1980-94) i Z (1995-2009)

4.3 TRAININGS

Employee competence development is seen by Hochland as an essential element for the development of the entire organisation. The opportunity to improve professional and leadership competences make Hochland Poland a very attractive employer. Hochland employees have access to an internal e-learning platform and can take part in external training.

In 2023, the Company offered training to develop both professional competences, which are necessary for the performance of daily duties, as well as training to strengthen socio-personal competences.

2023 IN FIGURES

External trainings	Total number of trainings hours:	5096 h*
	Average per Employee	6 h
	Trainings to develop professional competences	73%
	Trainings to develop social and socio - personal competences	22%
	Other trainings	5%
Sustainability Trainings	Number of Employees trained in sustainable development (internal training onsite and online)	614

* only applies to external trainings, excluding webinars and trainings conducted by Hochland employees

In 2023, at Hochland, we focused on the development of professional competences, including entitlements. The levelling of knowledge and the level of technical skills at our production sites, among others, was a priority, but this does not mean that only this training was carried out. Our training policy is flexible enough to also respond to the training needs of Employees that arise during the year and are justified and necessary for development. We can see the reflection of our approach in the figures in the table above. This is definitely an element that contributes to strengthening Hochland's attractiveness as an employer.



PRIZE

“EMPLOYER OF TOMORROW” award

Award in the high-quality food sector (in the “Employee Development” category) for the “First Time Line Manager” Academy educational initiative for employees from the production plants in Kaźmierz and Węgrów.





4.4 HEALTHY AND SAFETY

Hochland Poland strives to ensure that working conditions are in line with best practices, strategies and systems. The Company monitors H&S indicators on an ongoing basis. In 2023, the Company achieved an LTA accident frequency rate (LTA is an important parameter to assess the number of accidents in relation to the number of people working) of 7.67, a decrease of 21% compared to the previous year. None of the accidents were fatal or serious. There was also no reported incidence of an occupational disease. The consequence of half of the accidents was a lower limb injury and one of the most common causes was a slip or trip.

After a stoppage during the pandemic period, when the number of roundings was reduced, Hochland Poland returned to the EVA process in 2023. The process is a tool for behavioural safety and supports managers in identifying risks from the way they do their work. The observations are being translated into concrete actions, aimed at facilitating work in a safer way than before. As part of the process, we conducted 87 roundings.

Hochland’s ambition is to record all hazardous incidents that could lead to injury and

put in place measures to reduce the risk. Any Hochland Employee can easily report a near miss and each incident is analysed, after which risk reduction measures are put in place. In 2023, 47 reports were made, an increase of up to 74% year-on-year.

One of the pillars of safety is proper training. In 2023, training courses on EHS, fire protection and first aid were delivered to Hochland Employees. Contractors providing services to Hochland and visitors to the plants were also trained during this time.

2023 IN FIGURES

LTA indicator: 7,67 | EVA roundings: 87 | Near miss: 47

05

HOCHLAND SUPPORTS COMMUNITIES

5.1 HOCHLAND SUPPORTS LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Hochland Poland has facilities in two locations in Poland: Kaźmierz and Węgrów, where it joins in and co-organises events for local people. These include:

Festival of Bread and Cheese in Kaźmierz and Węgrów



The Kaźmierski and Węgrów Bread and Cheese Festival has become a tradition for local people – a time for families to relax together and for many activities, including those related to promoting pro-ecological attitudes. The event has also been promoting culture and local customs and traditions for years. Hochland is the main partner of the event.

World Environment Day On the occasion of World Environment Day, Hochland Poland invited its Employees to take part in competitions and actions related to shaping pro-environmental attitudes.



World Environment Day is currently celebrated in more than 100 countries from around the world! The event aims to make people aware of the problems associated with exploiting and protecting the environment and to encourage the search for environmentally friendly solutions.

Hochland Poland traditionally organised plenty of activities for its Employees to mark the occasion. The World Environment Day was prepared by the Trainee Team of the “Delicious Start” Programme and was celebrated at Hochland for 2 weeks. During this time, Employees were able to take part in competitions, quizzes and a webinar and field game on sustainable agriculture. On 5 June, the winners of the environmental competitions were announced and so:

- the best idea regarding optimization of resources – concerning water saving – winner Katarzyna Mikołajewska from the Laboratory department in Węgrów,
- the best rhyming slogan promoting resource conservation **“Resources are saved, the future is made”** – winner Mateusz Małecki from the Purchasing Department,



- the greatest activity and participation in the “Hidden Link” and “Lost Savings” competition – winners: Arkadiusz Wnuk from the Administration Department in Poznań, Paulina Kupisz from the Production Settlement Department in Węgrów and Kamila Musiał from the Warehouse Department in Kaźmierz.

In addition, a field game on sustainable agriculture was organised in Kaźmierz “Nad Stawami” and Węgrów “Nad Zalewem”, in which as many as 13 teams with a total of 67 participants took part, providing an excellent opportunity to raise awareness but also to integrate as a team.

5.1 HOCHLAND SUPPORTS LOCAL COMMUNITIES



vited to take part, as well as: in Kaźmierz – pupils from the Technical School Complex in Tarnowo Podgórne, and in Węgrów – pupils from the Primary School No. 1 of Jan Dobrogost Krasiński. In Kaźmierz, the clean-up campaign was conducted along



the route of the Hochland Half Marathon through the Sama Valley, which takes place annually in September. In Węgrów, students together with Hochland Employees cleaned up Kościuszki street. A total of 100 people, including 40 primary school pupils, 45 secondary school pupils, and 15 carers and Hochland staff, took part in the

world clean-up at both locations. The following quantities of waste were collected during the event: 17 yellow bags, 11 black bags, 8 green bags, 3 blue bags.

11th Hochland Sama Valley**Half-Marathon****and the Pyrlandzka Dycha**

The Sama Valley Half-Marathon and the Pyrlandzka Dycha are organised by the Kaźmierz Association. Hochland Poland has been its co-organiser since the very beginning. The 11th edition of this run took place on Sunday, 24 September 2023.

**International Earth Day 2023****at Hochland Poland**

International Earth Day, established by the UN General Assembly, was celebrated on 22 April. To mark the occasion, Hochland Poland organised a tree-planting campaign under the slogan **“DON'T SIT, PLANT A TREE”** at its production plants in Kaźmierz and Węgrów. This is a way of taking care of nature and promoting pro-environmental attitudes among the Company's Employees.

Hochland in action - Clean up the world!

Traditionally, the World Clean-up campaign takes place on the third weekend of September. Hochland Poland joined the event as part of activities planned under the slogan **“HOCHLAND IT IS CLEAN”**. All Employees of Hochland Poland were in-

5.1 HOCHLAND SUPPORTS LOCAL COMMUNITIES

BEST PRACTICE
SATISFACTION SURVEY

Satisfaction survey on Hochland Poland’s local activities

For the sixth time in 2023, Hochland Poland conducted a satisfaction survey on the Company’s community initiatives. The survey was addressed to the inhabitants of the Kaźmierz Commune and the Węgrów Commune, where the Company’s produc-

tion plants are located, as well as to the Employees of Hochland Poland.

The survey was planned to feature in the local newspapers and made available on the Internet. In 2023, 660 questionnaires were correctly completed, of which 84 were completed by Hochland Poland Employees. The responses were analysed in

TOP BOX terms, i.e. the “rather yes” and “definitely yes” options were summarised. The results obtained in this year’s survey show that the measures taken by Hochland Poland are noticed and well appreciated.

The local community is satisfied and appreciates Hochland Poland’s involvement in the development of local initiatives.

Question 1	Is Hochland Poland an environmentally friendly company?	95,2%
Question 2	Does Hochland Poland support socially important initiatives?	95,8%
Question 3	Does Hochland Poland support the education of young people?	93,5%
Question 4	Does Hochland Poland support activities promoting physical activity?	95,9%
Question 5	Is Hochland Poland involved in the development of the commune?	92,6%
Question 6	Overall level of satisfaction with Hochland Poland initiatives?	96,2%

5.2 SUPPORT MEASURES

Hochland is a strategic partner of the Pajacyk Program.

The Pajacyk Program is implemented by a Polish non-governmental organisation, a well-established Partner, which has been operating since 1992 and has knowledge and experience – the Polish Humanitarian Action. The partnership is based on long-term cooperation. The common goal is the proper development and health of children through the provision of school and community meals and psychosocial support aimed at the development of life skills, social skills and interests. In 2022, the Pajacyk Program financed hot meals for 10,185 children – a total of PLN 5,733,571, including PLN 127,000 from Hochland Poland as part of the **“We share what’s good”** campaign.



The Hochland program “We share what’s good” was also continued in 2023. Hochland focused on organising **educational and culinary workshops for primary school.**

In addition, Hochland became involved in the Good Town project on the Roblox platform by creating the Hochland Land, where young people could support a noble cause through virtual play and fund 3,000 hot meals for children in need. Through its collaboration with the Polish Humanitarian Action, Hochland wants to draw attention to the problem of malnutrition and the related developmental barriers for children. The logo has been placed on the packaging of Hochland’s cheeses so that consumers know that, by choosing the product, they are making a contribution to supporting children in need.

BEST PRACTICE

“WE SHARE WHAT’S GOOD”

5.2 SUPPORT MEASURES

SUPPORT FOR THE “CUKIERASY”**ASSOCIATION**

Hochland Poland in 2023 was also involved in the Sweet Poland project, which it has been supporting for years. Sweet Poland is a Polish football team of children suffering from diabetes. The project coordinator and president of the Association of Parents and Guardians of Children with Diabetes “CukierAsy” is Mikołaj Illukowicz. This year, Sweet Poland’s young players completed further challenges – a match against Manchester City Academy players and the first international meeting between Germany and Poland.

**“ALMETTE PROTECTS MEADOWS”**

Meadows and flower strips are crucial for the maintenance of biodiversity as an important part of the landscape in cities as well as in fields and industrial sites. They provide the natural habitat of animals, especially insects. They help retain rainwater in the soil and clean the air. Compared to a traditional lawn, they require much less maintenance, including mowing, watering and fertilising. In addition, they take care of our mental well-being, stimulate our senses, thanks to which we experience pleasure and a sense of harmony with nature.

Since 2021, the Almette brand has been conducting the pro-ecological CSR program “Almette Protects Meadows”. The project is supported by experts with their knowledge and experience: Maciej Podyma President of the Łąka Foundation and prof. dr hab. Piotr Tryjanowski (University of Life Sciences in Poznań).

The main objectives of the project are:

- educating, including emphasizing the importance of meadows for the ecosystem,
- inspiring,
- taking action to promote meadow seeding.



5.2 SUPPORT MEASURES

PURPOSE: FLOWER MEADOWS**KPI: transfer of seeds for sowing 150,000 m² by 2024****2021**

- educational workshops and seeding of meadows in major cities: Warsaw, Częstochowa, Katowice,
- seeding of meadows on the premises of the Węgrów and Kaźmierz production plants,
- seeding of flower strips on the fields of some of the Węgrów plant milk suppliers.

**2022**

- meetings, educational workshops and sowing meadows in Łódź, Warsaw and Wrocław,
- participation in a discussion panel on the role of meadows in the ecosystem, during “Influencers Live Wrocław”,
- seeding of meadows by employees and volunteers at the Hochland Poland production plant in Kaźmierz,
- putting the first two free seeds dispensers in Warsaw for those willing to sow their own flower meadow in their garden or on their balcony,
- providing and shipping packages with flower meadow seeds for Hochland Poland employees and public and private institutions interested in sowing meadows in their area.

2023

- meetings and educational workshops in other cities: Płock, Białystok and Warsaw,
- putting up seeds dispensers in Płock, Białystok and Warsaw and inspiring together with Influencers to collect seeds and sow their own meadow,
- providing and shipping packages with flower meadow seeds for Hochland Poland employees and public and private institutions interested in sowing meadows in their area.

In total, for the entire duration of the project until 2023, Hochland Poland has provided seeds to cover the area of 112,800 m².