

Reducing the dairy industry's water footprint

## **GEA to present innovation initiative for a more sustainable dairy industry at Anuga FoodTec**

**Düsseldorf, February 28, 2024** – GEA will be presenting an innovation challenge to find forward-looking water strategies for the dairy industry at the Anuga FoodTec 2024 trade show in Cologne, Germany. Together with the startup-scouting company prototype.club, GEA is running the open innovation challenge “**Paving the way to zero-water in the dairy industry**” with the support of the German Agricultural Society (Deutsche Landwirtschafts-Gesellschaft, DLG).

GEA set participants the task of significantly shrinking the dairy industry's water footprint through innovative technologies and concepts. Essential to dairy production, water is an integral part of operating processes, from cleaning through cooling to steam heating. Researchers have calculated the water footprint of milk – comprising rainwater, process water and disposal water – to be 1,020 liters per kilogram. For cheese, the ratio of water use to milk increases fivefold.<sup>1</sup> That means saving water in dairy processing is a major factor when it comes to sustainability in the industry.

### **Innovation challenge as a catalyst for sustainability**

Dr. Stefan Pecoroni, Vice President Process Technology and Innovation Separation at GEA, stresses the urgency of developing more economical production methods: “To overcome the environmental challenges they face, dairies must be able to recycle all of their process water. Besides fostering the development of innovative approaches, this challenge also encourages cooperation within the industry to achieve our common goal of making food production more sustainable.”

This challenge underscores GEA's commitment to implementing **solutions with zero freshwater use** by 2030. By promoting water conservation and sustainable management, GEA is addressing key challenges in dairy processing as well as supporting the industry's environmental sustainability and long-term viability.

The best solutions will be presented on the **DLG Innovation Stage at the Anuga FoodTec trade show in Cologne, Germany, on March 20, 2024 from 2.05–3.40 p.m.** These solutions have the chance of being fine-tuned and implemented in real-life projects.

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<sup>1</sup> Mekonnen, Mesfin M., Hoekstra, Arjen Y. (2012): A global assessment of the water footprint of farm animal products. In: Ecosystems (2012) 15, [Mekonnen-Hoekstra-2012-WaterFootprintFarmAnimalProducts\\_4.pdf](#)

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Innovative cheese production at the Crailsheim-Dinkelsbühl dairy, Germany, equipped by GEA. Image: GEA/The Nutshell

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## NOTE TO EDITORS

- About the challenge: [GEA Zero-Water Dairy Initiative 2030](#)
- [DLG Open Innovation Showcase | Event on the Anuga FoodTec 2024](#)
- About GEA at the trade show [GEA strengthens the food industry for a change of course](#)
- GEA booth at the show: [RE:THINK FOOD TECH – GEA at Anuga FoodTec 2024](#)
- About GEA's sustainability goals: [Sustainability| Engineering for a better World \(gea.com\)](#)
- [GEA modernizes and digitalizes dairy plant in Crailsheim-Dinkelsbühl](#)
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- To the GEA [Press page](#)
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## **About GEA**

GEA is one of the world's largest suppliers of systems and components to the food, beverage, and pharmaceutical industries. The international technology group, founded in 1881, focuses on machinery and plants, as well as advanced process technology, components, and comprehensive services. With more than 18,000 employees working across five divisions and 62 countries, the group generated revenues of more than EUR 5.1 billion in fiscal year 2022. GEA plants, processes, components, and services enhance the efficiency and sustainability of production processes across the globe. They contribute significantly to the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, plastic usage, and food waste. In doing so, GEA makes a key contribution toward a sustainable future, in line with the company's purpose: "Engineering for a better world".

GEA is listed in the German MDAX and the STOXX® Europe 600 Index and is also among the companies comprising the DAX 50 ESG and MSCI Global Sustainability and the Dow Jones Sustainability World Indices.

More information can be found online at [gea.com](https://www.gea.com).

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