



Plant i.T.

Process Control Systems. MES inside.



Success Story // Dairy Industry // Andechser Molkerei Scheitz, Germany

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ProLeiT

by Schneider Electric

No tradition without the present: The Andechser Dairy aims to be fit for the future with new software.

That Germany as a business location does not currently offer the most favorable conditions for small and medium-sized enterprises requires no further explanation at this point. The anticipated growth rate of 0.5 percent speaks for itself. While associations, politicians and business leaders continue to debate how to achieve the turnaround, the private sector urgently requires effective solutions to stay competitive. From a technological perspective, embracing and advancing automation and digitalization is essential. This is the only way companies can continue to thrive despite high electricity costs, rising wages and increasingly strict regulations, including those related to environmental issues.

A company that already demonstrates how this can be achieved within the strictly regulated food industry is Andechser Molkerei Scheitz GmbH. In collaboration with the German software company ProLeiT, the renowned traditional dairy has elevated its plant automation, process control technology, process planning, cleaning systems, and traceability to a new, fit-for-the-future level.

**ANDECHSER
NATUR**

Info

Company:
Andechser Molkerei
Scheitz
Sector:
Dairy Industry
Location: Andechs
Country: Germany



Andechser Dairy in Scheitz, Germany

Andechser Dairy – organic and modern

Nestled in the rolling countryside between Lake Starnberg and Ammersee, the Andechser Dairy has been producing dairy products since 1908. Without artificial additives or flavorings, the family business processes fresh cow's and goat's milk into products sold throughout Germany, such as raspberry-elderberry yogurt, mango lassi and mountain flower cheese. Since 2009, the entire range of milk, cheese, quark and yogurt products has displayed the renowned 'Andechser Natur' label, which stands for certified organic, non-GMO quality.

To this day, the regionally sourced raw milk is processed at the state-of-the-art premises in Andechs. Since 2019, numerous systems and production components that were previously operated manually, including an inline mixing system in conjunction with a yogurt heater, have been fully automated or completely reconstructed. A new integrated process control and manufacturing execution system (MES) from ProLeiT is now being utilized throughout the plant, thereby significantly improving efficiency, enhancing reliability and paving the way for paperless production and filling processes.

Technology and capability

As a developer of process control systems, software producer ProLeiT is well established in the German SME sector. In Germany, nearly every liter of milk or beer is bottled or packaged using a



Andechser Product range

system from the industry leader, which is now part of Schneider Electric. ProLeiT is, therefore, well aware of the challenges facing SMEs, in particular when it comes to digitalization. "What you need to realize: The key to transformation lies not only in the technologies. Just as important is the capability of the business," claims Annika Bauer, Head of Product Management at ProLeiT. "A digitalization project only provides the required results if it is genuinely tailored to the specific circumstances and markets. What is right for one customer may not be the best for another customer."

ProLeiT's experienced process engineers apply their in-depth knowledge of processes and industry expertise to every single project. This ensures that, rather than simply selling software, a comprehensive and customized strategy for specific project implementation is developed in collaboration with each customer. "It was crucial for us that ProLeiT specialists were so deeply involved in the modernization of our plant," explains Dr. Dominik Antoni, who, as Plant Manager at Andechser, played a leading role in the plant conversion. "When making such a significant investment in the modernization of your plant, it is essential to have a partner who is completely reliable and trustworthy. We now have a fully digitalized plant that is perfectly tailored to our needs. Not simply a proof of concept, but a solution that allows us to remain competitive in the long term."

It is all about the context

In addition to automating further process steps, a key aspect of the plant modernization project was the integration of a new MES solution. To coordinate production and filling processes, a version of Plant iT customized for liquid handling and operating data acquisition is now in use. This system integrates traditional process control technology with MES functions (MES inside). It is thus possible to capture all plant transaction data in detail – such as temperature, pressure and media consumption – and to contextualize these data by linking them to the relevant orders from the detailed planning system. To do so, all the relevant data are collated on a single data server. And this approach offers numerous advantages. This intelligent transparency not only ensures strict monitoring of recipe compliance but also enhances material and order management efficiency, which allows for rapid adjustments in response to changes in demand or production conditions. Depending on the actual order situation or material availability, the sequence of operations can be altered spontaneously and flexibly. This helps to improve plant resource utilization while reducing planning effort by roughly 50 percent.



Production/Filling



Organic Yogurt Production

Seeing as errors or defects can be recorded and communicated instantly, the newly created data transparency also helps reduce the number of failures. Whenever something goes wrong, it is now immediately clear which order, which plant component and which recipe are involved. All the information is readily accessible at every workstation thanks to clear visualization, allowing any problems to be identified and addressed precisely.

Traceability and clean-in-place

Two issues that are currently prevalent in the food industry are product traceability and plant hygiene. Both are governed by strict legal requirements and can be managed much more efficiently with digital technologies. Just as in Andechs. Thanks to the newly established data transparency, it has been possible to reduce water consumption in clean-in-place processes by approximately 20 percent. Other cleaning media can now also be utilized more efficiently.

The traceability of individual products has also been enhanced due to the introduction of the new process control and management execution system. Since 2008, customers of the Andechser Dairy have been able to trace many of its organic dairy products online and access detailed information about their origin and processing methods – and the data collection process behind this has now been fully digitalized.

Flexible, efficient and reliable – in other words: sustainable!

The Andechser Dairy is a prime example of the challenges and opportunities associated with digital transformation in the SME sector. For a company to succeed in today's complex food

industry, its processes need to be highly flexible, efficient and reliable. The dairy in Andechs is an excellent example of how this can be achieved. And there is another key factor, too: As the aforesaid characteristics are not only reflected in the balance sheets. “When we talk about organic or natural food, it is not just some advertising slogan,” explains Dr. Dominik Antoni. There is more to it than that: “Our entire identity as a company, along with the trust our customers place in us, is built on our commitment to producing goods according to values and principles we genuinely believe in. This applies not only to the raw materials we use but also to how we process them. And this is one of the reasons why we chose to work with ProLeiT. By making our plant more flexible, efficient, and reliable through Plant iT, we have also accomplished another very important milestone: We have made it more sustainable.”

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