



Success Story Berglandmilch

Berglandmilch forges forward with pioneering glass packaging from Vetropack

Top-quality dairy products in sustainable packaging

Berglandmilch eGen, Austria's largest dairy company, showed that it was truly moving with the times when it decided to reintroduce glass bottles for milk in 2018. After starting out with one-way containers, Berglandmilch now supplies 1-litre and 0.5-litre returnable bottles – as well as a range of other glass containers for dairy products in various sizes, including some with foil lids.



Austria is home to one of the largest dairy cooperatives in Central Europe. Berglandmilch has grown steadily since its foundation in 1995, and now incorporates over 8,800 farmers. What's unique about it? All of them are direct owners of the registered cooperative society (eGen) – although each farmer only looks after about 20 cows on average. With a turnover of around EUR 1.2 billion (2022), a portfolio of brands known throughout the country including Schärldinger, Tirol Milch, Latella and Stainzer, and around 1,500 employees, Berglandmilch supplies milk and dairy products such as cheese, butter and

yoghurt to Austria and beyond, including countries such as Germany and Italy. It processes around 1.3 billion kilograms of milk across its eight plants each year.

The issue of sustainability is, of course, crucial for a company like Berglandmilch that prides itself on its close-to-nature credentials. "As an industry leader, we want to be pioneers here," says Josef Braunshofer, Executive Director of Berglandmilch, who has been with the company for 21 years. "This includes GMO-free products, concern for animal welfare, and ensuring



Josef Braunshofer
Geschäftsführer von
Berglandmilch

Good cooperation ensures success with glass

Today, just five years into the collaboration, a total of more than 50 different products with glass packaging are currently in production. A particular highlight for Elisabeth Eckmayr, Product Manager at Vetropack, was the development of the snack-sized yoghurt jars: "The jars are not closed with a traditional twist-off cap, but with a foil lid. The product is still securely sealed, but the overall packaging weight is reduced

that our dairy farmers do not use feed from overseas. It goes without saying that packaging also plays a major role within the value chain."

Milk is back in an environment-friendly returnable bottle

These factors prompted Berglandmilch to return to glass for its packaging back in 2017. Glass packaging manufacturer Vetropack was awarded the contract for the collaboration. The first containers the two companies developed and launched on the market were a 1-litre one-way bottle for milk and a 450-gram yoghurt jar. "It was more successful than we had expected," Braunshofer continues. "Many customers were particularly impressed with the taste. Since glass is inert, it does not react with the contents at all. Some customers have returned to drinking milk simply because of this bottle."

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The first yoghurt jar produced as part of the collaboration between Vetropack and Berglandmilch was also very well received – just two years on from its launch, a total of more than 25 million glass containers were being produced annually. But that was only the first step in a remarkable success story: "Glass is, of course, even more sustainable in terms of recycling. Although we were sceptical at first due to factors such as the more intensive cleaning required for dairy products, we finally made the switch and have no regrets – sales have even increased," Braunshofer is delighted to report. The glass containers are produced, cleaned and refilled (at least 12 times) at three locations in Austria (Wörgl, Aschbach and Voitsberg) so they never have to travel further than 250 kilometres – another advantage in terms of resource efficiency.





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significantly.” The project was even nominated for the Austrian State Prize for Smart Packaging in 2022. “The benefits of glass are obvious,” Braunshofer adds, “and the younger generations in particular see it as the highest-quality packaging that best protects and shows off the contents.”

Berglandmilch wants to continue moving ahead with glass packaging and aims to expand both the range of items and the markets where they are used. As Braunshofer sums up: “Our aim now is to do even more to highlight the advantages of glass and optimise our existing product range. I also see further potential in continuing to develop our partnership with Vetropack. The cooperation with our colleagues there is very flexible, straightforward and customer-oriented. If we succeed in coordinating the processes between Berglandmilch and Vetropack even more closely and plan ahead, further gains in efficiency and sustainability are certainly possible. Although glass is a niche in our portfolio, it is a big one, and we are very satisfied with it. And going forward, we will continue to put our trust in glass.”

