Adding taste to life
Unternehmensgruppe Theo Müller (UTM) is a privately owned dairy, deli and services business founded in 1896.

We employ more than 24,000 people in 19 sites worldwide and our shared purpose is simple – we are focused on adding taste to life.

This report is designed to give you a flavour of who we are, what we stand for and where we are going in the future.

It will demonstrate our consumer centric approach, showing how we are bringing our brands to life in lots of new and exciting ways.

Lastly, it will give you an insight into what it is like to work with us.

Our culture is entrepreneurial and collaborative. We are creative, disciplined and we actively share our successes and our failures so that we can learn from them.

We call this the Müller way.
Our history

When Ludwig Müller founded a small village dairy in Aretsried in Bavaria around 125 years ago, he couldn’t have imagined that one day, it would grow to become an international food business with a purpose to add taste to the lives of millions of people.

His grandson Theo Müller took control of the family business in 1971 with just four employees. He saw the potential and Müller grew to become the first dairy in Germany to offer nation-wide distribution of fresh milk products.

In the 1980’s, Müller established Culina, the logistics provider and Optipak, its own packaging business, increasing control of its supply chain to assure quality. Müller also entered the UK market for the first time.

Müller continued to expand in Germany with the acquisition of Sachsenmilch AG in 1994 and invested substantially in its Leppersdorf dairy, widely regarded as the most advanced in Europe.

The business has since further developed its dairy footprint through the acquisition of acid curd cheese dairy Loose, the management of premium dairy brand Molkerei Weihenstephan, taking over the Almhof brand in the Netherlands, acquiring Robert Wiseman Dairies, Dairy Crest’s dairy business and two additional yogurt processing sites in the UK.

UTM has also built a major presence in the salad and dressings market in Germany and continues to successfully develop its HOMANN business. More recently in Poland, the Lisner fish processing company owned by Müller acquired Nordfish-Foodmark.

Today, UTM is a business that is driven by consumer orientation, high quality standards and innovation. That’s the Müller Way.

All of these developments helped Müller to become the organisation that it is today, driven by consumer orientation, high quality standards and innovation.

Did you know? -
UTM’s businesses operate in dairy, chilled gourmet salad, sauces, fish specialities, fruit-processing, packaging and logistics?

Our Purpose & strategy

The world around us is changing at a rapid pace. We are shopping in different ways and looking for food which meets our own particular aspirations, like never before.

The choices we make are informed by our lifestyles, our attitudes and our personal goals. These include convenience, indulgence, health and nutrition.

We aim to meet all of these needs with food that tastes great. This is our purpose. At UTM we are adding taste to life.

In every country and every market we serve, we place our consumer first. Decisions are based on consumer needs and trends. We blend this with a ‘make it happen’ attitude. Our private ownership structure and our entrepreneurial spirit means that we take decisions fast and we are courageous in trying new things.

We have a very simple and focused plan. We aim to strengthen the leadership we have in our core branded dairy and deli businesses, and to lead in the manufacture of private label and ingredients products.

We will expand by entering high growth segments where we don’t currently have a presence and as an entrepreneurial business, we will also explore new and exciting avenues to grow.

A heavy focus on innovation and the maintenance of highly advanced and well invested production and supply chain capabilities, alongside developing and leveraging the talent we have in our business, will ensure that we meet our obligations to customers.

“At UTM we are adding taste to life.”
An overview of our business

LUXEMBOURG
Unternehmensgruppe Theo Müller, Luxembourg

UK & Ireland
Müller Milk & Ingredients, Market Drayton
Müller Yogurt & Desserts, Market Drayton
Milk & More, Aldenholt

CZECH REPUBLIC
Müller, Prague
Milčárna Pragolaktos, Prague

GERMANY
Molkerei Alois Müller, Aretsried
Molkerei Weihenstephan, Freising
Sachsenmilch, Leppersdorf
Käse- und Läppchenl衰老, Leppersdorf
TMA, Leppersdorf
Milk & Whey Ingredients, Leppersdorf
Homann, Dissen
Optipack, Aretsried & Leppersdorf

ITALY
Müller, Verona

THE NETHERLANDS
Almhof, Veenendaal

POLAND
Lisner, Poznan
Northfish, Chorzyno
Müller, Poznan

CHINA
Müller Asia, Hong Kong

ROMANIA
Müller, Bukarest
Optipack, Aretsried & Leppersdorf

ISRAEL
Müller, Tel Aviv

Production and Sales
DE, GB, NL, IT, PL, CZ/SK, RO, IL, HKG/CHN

Export
A, BIH, CH, HR, HU, IRL, L, SLO, UAE, CN, TW, KR, NZ, US, OZ, Oceania
Continental Europe

Throughout Continental Europe, UTM operates a number of businesses in the areas of dairy products, convenience food and services.

Our dairy operations include strong brands like Müller, Weihenstephan, Sachsenmilch and Loose, as well as a wide range of private label, commodities such as butter or UHT milk and high-quality milk and whey derivatives.

Outside of dairy, we operate in the chilled deli salad, sauces and fish deli segment and are responsible for well-known brands like HOMANN Nadler and the HOMANN Group.

Our packaging company Optipack, our own logistics company Culina and Müller Naturfarm, one of the largest fruit processing companies in Germany, are also part of UTM.

Dairy

The Müller Dairy - Where it all began

The Alois Müller Dairy has been based in Aretsried, near Augsburg, since 1896 and is the birthplace of UTM.

Today the site processes around 140 million kilograms of milk every year into branded and private label dairy products like buttermilk, kefir, yogurt, and flavoured milk.

Around 1,300 employees work here, across seven varied businesses. For example, alongside the dairy, our own fruit processing facility Naturfarm, logistics business Culina and packaging company Optipack are all located here.

Weihenstephan - Attention to every detail

The roots of the Weihenstephan brand go back to 1021. Since the end of the 19th century, the dairy, formerly owned by the State of Bavaria, has been producing top-quality dairy products. Since it became part of Unternehmensgruppe Theo Müller in 2000, the Bavarian brand has conquered all of Germany with its quality, exceptional values and unique positioning. Like no other dairy brand, Weihenstephan stands for sophistication and special care. Over 130 million consumer units of the core product, UHT milk, are sold annually and 52% of all German households buy one of the Weihenstephan products (UHT milk, fresh milk, butter, cream, cocoa, cream yogurt, mascarpone yogurt and fruit quark) at least once a year.

Germany and beyond

Our Müller branded dairy product range has also enjoyed growing popularity beyond Germany’s borders. The test phase for Müller products in the UK & Ireland, which began in 1987, was so successful that a production facility was set up in 1992 in Market Drayton, England.

Since the early nineties, we have been exporting products, such as Müller Corner, Müller Rice and Müllermilch throughout Central and Eastern Europe, and we opened a sales office in Verona, Italy, in 1995.

By working in collaboration with Central Bottling Company, the Müller brand made the leap into non-European countries by entering the Israeli market in 2008.

Key to our success has been the adaptation of our product range, to national taste preferences.

We also own the Czech dairy Mlékárna Pragolaktos, which is based in Prague. The company mainly serves the Czech and Slovak markets with UHT milk and cream. Pragolaktos currently has the largest production capacity of UHT milk in the Czech Republic and is one of the largest dairy companies in the country.

Germany and beyond
A focus on our Leppersdorf site in Saxony
Since 1994, more than 1 billion euros has been invested in the construction and expansion of Europe’s most modern dairy, the Sachsenmilch plant in Leppersdorf near Dresden. Around 3,000 people are employed at this location.

From the milk delivered - around 1.8 billion kg per year - a wide variety of products are manufactured in a highly automated plant. In five production areas, milk is processed into basic and fresh products, cheese, milk, whey derivatives and even bioethanol fuel.

Leppersdorf unites numerous competencies across the entire value chain on one site: Optipack GmbH supplies the packaging, the in-house freight forwarder Culina GmbH is responsible for logistics, and the vehicles are serviced internally by FTA GmbH.

Müller Naturfarm GmbH produces the fruit preparations, and is one of the largest fruit-processing companies in Germany and number three in Europe with production of 110,000 tonnes a year.

Sachsenmilch
The Sachsenmilch brand, whose promise is “Taste like home”, is one of the most successful brands in the Eastern part of Germany. The brand comprises over 60 products in nine different segments ranging from all kinds of yoghurt, UHT-Milk, butter, spreadables and desserts.

Competing not only with local dairies but also with internationally well known brands, Sachsenmilch established itself in the Top 10 ranks in the four most relevant market segments regarding sales.

Cheese
From Gouda, Maasdam, Edam, Fontal, Mozzarella to Butter Cheese: Sachsenmilch offers all the cheeses that German consumers like in different packaging concepts and sizes, in slices to portions, and in different degrees of ripeness.

Gouda, which is particularly popular with German consumers, is now offered naturally matured. The wheels are placed on spruce wood in our naturally matured warehouse for four to five weeks until the cheese has developed the excellent taste that consumers expect.

And this is what makes Sachsenmilch’s cheese range so special: in addition to the near fully automated production of foil-aged cheese, we also offer naturally matured cheese. This means that customers from the food retail and B2B sectors can choose from a broad portfolio with “Made in Germany” quality.

A total of around 100,000 tons of cheese leaves the Leppersdorf plant each year: 45,000 tonnes of semi-hard cheese, 35,000 tonnes of mozzarella and 20,000 tonnes of acid curd cheese. 70% of cheese we produce is exported to Europe, Japan, South Korea and China.

Surely every German household has already eaten cheese from Sachsenmilch: on its own, in a sandwich, from a food retailer or grated on a frozen pizza.

Did you know? - Energy production at Leppersdorf comes from a highly efficient €60 million combined gas and steam turbine process which provides the plant with all of its requirement for electricity and steam?

Did you know? - 2 out of 3 people in Saxony buy Sachsenmilch products on a regular basis.

Here is a snapshot of what we produce at Leppersdorf every year:
Milk and Whey Ingredients

Our milk and whey ingredients are the basis of outstanding products all over the world: from infant and sports nutrition to dairy, food and special health care products.

The MWI team prides itself on delivering high-quality milk and whey derivatives such as lactose, whey proteins, milk proteins and milk calcium. The ingredients are produced under the most stringent safety standards by using state-of-the-art membrane technology to meet high requirements such as for dry blend infant nutrition.

All ingredients are “Made in Germany” and meet the international quality standards of the globally recognized FSSC 22000 certification system for food safety. Furthermore, all MWI ingredients are Halal, Kosher and vegetarian.

Loose acid curd cheese - a truly German cheese tradition

Acid curd cheese is one of the oldest cheeses in the world and Loose ensures that this German cheese culture remains alive - with great success. German cheese first appeared in the work of the Roman historian Tacitus. In his work “Germania”, he describes the eating habits of the “wild” Germanic people, who among other things live on “lac concretum”, solid milk or quark.

Thanks to its variety, Loose appeals to different target groups. The traditional “Hausmacher” (”homemade”), after a traditional recipe, captivates with its hearty, spicy taste. A real original for connoisseurs.

With around 30% protein and only about 0.5% fat, Quäse is the ideal choice for nutritionally conscious people. The balanced protein supplier also supports both recreational athletes and professionals in their training. A real fitness food.

Private label by TMA

With the exception of our trading partners, few will have heard of TMA. But many German and European consumers regularly have TMA milk products in their refrigerators or pantries.

This is because TMA develops and produces dairy products such as yogurt, desserts or UHT milk for its numerous retail food customers, manufactured using their own private labels. By producing products of the highest quality standards, TMA not only meets the expectations of its business customers for their private labels, but also those of consumers.

TMA offers a high level of expertise in the private label sector and develops innovative dairy products for its customers or optimises existing recipes with both great commitment and passion.

Experts across many parts of our business contribute their experience and know-how to the product development process. This ranges from the analysis of the market by our category management team, to the development of recipes, packaging and logistics.

A total of around 100,000 tons of cheese leaves the Leppersdorf plant each year!

45,000 tonnes of semi-hard cheese

35,000 tonnes of mozzarella

20,000 tonnes of acid curd cheese

70% is exported

Convenience food

HOMANN

In 1876, Fritz HOMANN founded a meat and sausage factory in Dissen am Teutoburger Wald, and a few years later he started producing margarine there too.

After 20 years, the expansion of margarine production lead to the discontinuation of meat and sausage production and HOMANN expanded its range to include deli salads, fish deli, remoulades, spreads, dressings and seasoning sauces.

The company opened its first deli plant in Dissen in 1961 and one of the most modern salad factories in Europe in 1993. From 2007, the HOMANN portfolio expanded following takeovers of the Hamker Group, Weser Feinkost and Rügen Feinkost GmbH. Since 2011, HOMANN Feinkost GmbH has been part of UTM.

Today, HOMANN holds leading positions in the deli salads, fish deli, dressings and sauces segments.

The company includes well-known brands HOMANN, Nadler, Pfennigs, Hamker, Weser-Feinkost, Hopf and Rügen-Feinkost as well as the Polish brands Lisner, Nordfish and Polarica. Numerous private labels as well as food service products complement the portfolio.

Production takes place at the German sites in Dissen, Lintorf, Rogätz and Bottrop and at the Polish sites in Poznan and Charzyno.
OPTIPACK

With plants in Aretsried and Leppersdorf, we have more than 35 years of experience in the production of packaging for the food industry. We are able to produce high-quality products on a wide variety of state of the art machines, for end use both within UTM and with external customers.

In doing so, Optipack always focus on the efficiency of development and costs at projects. Our teams consist of experts who gladly support customers’ goals in product development.

Culina Group

We also operate a food and drink logistics business, which operates in the German and UK markets. Culina Group operates ten distinct business units, and has a fleet over 1750 trucks and 3000 trailers, with an average age of just 16 months.

Our large operation completes over two million orders per annum, and with a 99.99% pick accuracy, our 9,000 employees have won numerous industry awards in recent years, across various sectors.
Müller UK & Ireland

In the UK, Müller develops, manufactures and markets a wide range of branded and private label dairy products, made with milk that is sourced from 1,600 farmers in England, Scotland and Wales. Dairy is one of the largest and most important categories in the UK food and drink sector and we are the nation’s favourite dairy brand. The Müller brand first appeared on supermarket shelves in 1987 and since then, the business has continued to grow naturally, and through acquisitions, into an organisation that today operates three business units: Müller Milk & Ingredients, Müller Yogurt & Desserts and Milk & More. Our customers in the UK benefit from first class marketing campaigns, customer service, industry leading capabilities and product innovation.

Yogurt & Desserts

Yogurt is at the heart of the UK dairy category. It is worth £2.6 billion. And Müller is the pioneering brand in the category, with state-of-the-art facilities in Market Drayton, Telford and Minsterley in England. Home to the nation’s favourite yogurt brand, we are responsible for major brands like Müller Corner, Müllerlight and Müller Rice. We also produce branded products like Müller Milk, the milkshake FRijj, chilled desserts under licence from Mondelez International and supply the UK private label yogurt market from a dedicated, state of the art yogurt facility.

Following unprecedented investment in our capabilities and people, the strategy is to strengthen core brands like Müllerlight and Müller Corner, develop a leading private label proposition and innovate to target parts of the category where we have limited or no presence. We are also inspiring happier and healthier lifestyles through our successful partnership with British Athletics, where we sponsor major athletics events, create athletics inspired multimedia marketing campaigns and take our popular activation zones to athletics events across the country.

Milk & Ingredients

Milk is an essential part of British life and is found in 96% of the nation’s fridges. Müller Milk & Ingredients aims to be Britain’s private label dairy leader and is focused on becoming the partner of choice for customers, farmers and suppliers. Working directly with farmers across the country, we buy a fifth of all milk that is produced in Britain. The milk then enters Britain’s best invested, vertically integrated dairy processing network, which includes modern, efficient and state-of-the-art dairies and depots, in the right locations, before being delivered to customers. We are able to lead the way in plastics reduction due to our on-site bottle manufacturing capabilities, and our logistics partnership with Culina Group gives us an unbeatable end to end solution for customers.

Milk & More

Our home delivery service is on a journey to revitalise the milkman, a great British icon. Milk & More delivers daily essentials like milk, bread, dairy alternatives, fruit and bacon, from trusted, local and British suppliers to 500,000 homes in England. To secure the future of the milkman, Müller has taken the much-loved traditional delivery service and modernised it. Customers are now able to benefit from pre 7am deliveries, an easy-to-use website and a wide selection of premium, local and fresh produce. And, it is delivered using the largest fleet of electric vehicles in the UK – fuel efficient, quiet and reliable!

And the strategy is working, in the first 8 months of 2020 alone, 85,000 new online customers signed up.

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Building a consumer centric business

We work hard to understand the attitudes, lifestyles and aspirations of shoppers, and then make decisions which meet these needs. This allows us to put the consumer first in every country and market that we serve.

We recognise that consumers are increasingly thinking more about what they buy, how it was made, its nutritional benefits, how it is packaged and the value it represents.

So to become a truly consumer centric business we are finding solutions which meet the needs of the markets we serve. As a result, we are increasingly investing in our capabilities and challenging ourselves to operate as efficiently as possible. Our plans are under constant review to ensure that we continue to make significant progress in this area.

Energy management

Gas and steam power plant

In the summer of 2014, the company’s own gas and steam power plant (combined gas and steam turbine process) started production, thereby providing almost 100% of the Leppersdorf site’s supply of heat in the form of steam and electricity. This investment project cost around 60 million euros. The two gas turbines are fuelled by natural gas and the biogas generated at the site.

Thanks to the highly efficient cogeneration of heat and electricity, the fuel requirements have almost halved in comparison to conventional condensing power plants, thus making an important contribution to the turnaround in energy policies. Or in other words: The combined generation of heat and electricity achieves an efficiency ratio of > 80% in terms of fuel use. Normal power plants achieve an efficiency ratio of about 43% in terms of the type of fuel used.

The considerable flexibility of the power plant also contributes to power grid stability, which is of particular interest in view of the steadily growing share of energy derived from renewable energy sources.

The power plant has a total electrical output of 34 megawatts, which is sufficient to meet the annual needs of more than 60,000 private households.

Water management

Where possible, we aim to recycle our own water, rather than having to draw from local supplies.

Making it happen – Müller Milk & Ingredients

Our state-of-the-art dairies in Bridgwater and Droitwich, England, account for 60% of the total water used across our UK network.

Using on-site effluent treatment and reverse osmosis plants we are able to recycle water to drinking water standards for reuse in our dairies in processes such as cleaning and filling lines.

This investment allows our Bridgwater site to reuse half of its annual water requirements.

Recyclable packaging

Our priority is to make sure that our packaging is fit for purpose, and recyclable where possible.

We own our own packaging company (Optipack GmbH) which gives us a significant advantage. With this capability, we are able to pursue innovative new packaging solutions, working in partnership with our customers.

Since 2000, across UTM, we have removed 50,200 tonnes of plastic from our packaging. And we’re going further; by 2025 100% of our packaging will be recyclable, we will reduce virgin packaging material and our packaging will include, on average, 50% recycled material.

Making it happen – Müller Corner packaging optimisation

We have optimised our famous Müller Corner packaging. We now use less plastic, and they are more efficient during transportation.

Every Müller Corner pot has been lightweighted, removing 0.6g per pot. Not only does this mean we have used 2,600 less tonnes of plastic, but during transportation, we can increase our pallet loads. Since we made this change, we have used 65,000 less pallets, which results in less transportation emissions.
Greenhouse gases

By using efficient modern production systems and technologies, which help use less energy and fossil fuels, we are reducing our carbon footprint.

Making it happen – Leppersdorf, Culina and Milk & More

When we make cheese at our Leppersdorf site in Germany, at our bio-ethanol plant, we are able to process the by-product into bio-ethanol: an in-house alternative to bio-mass based fuel.

Our logistics business Culina has introduced liquified natural gas vehicles and encourage their drivers to adapt a more fuel-efficient style of driving. Modern technology optimises routing, they use energy efficient lighting and 0% of their waste food ends up in landfill.

“Milk & More, our doorstep delivery business in England has the largest electric fleet of vehicles in the UK”

Our people

Our people are crucial to the success. So we aim to make each day better than the last for our 24,000 employees throughout Europe, by building a better business from the inside out.

Our employees are empowered with the correct skills and accountability so that they know their individual role can make a big difference to our success of the business.

We offer various apprenticeships and trainee programmes, alongside both in-house and external training and development opportunities for employees.

Our approach is to provide a comprehensive and holistic education programme which allows us to promote from within, meaning that our employees are able to grow alongside a growing business.

Making it happen – Company training

A cornerstone of our success is our vocational training. We have more than 300 apprentices across our Germany locations, and we offer 14 different training paths for our employees.

We also offer a 24-month trainee programme which offers graduates, earmarked for various relevant target positions, an extensive training programme, which prepares them for a successful career within the business.
For further information about Unternehmensgruppe Theo Müller, please go to https://www.muellergroup.com/en/