

# Activity Report **2020**





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# Foreword from the CEO



**Eric Lauwers**  
Chief Executive  
Officer

## Growing together, with our farmers and horticulturists

Increasing the profitability of our farmers and horticulturists – so that we can grow together – is the reason we at Arvesta come to work each day. Because it is our ambition to prepare them for the agriculture of the future thanks to our sustainable and innovative smart farming solutions.

Growth is central at Arvesta. We grow together with our Experts in the field and our customers. We started the Stronger Together transformation process at Arvesta in 2017 to get back on track with growth. Since then, we have been working continuously towards a unified organisation with more than 40 strong brands. From separate entities, we have evolved into one company, one team, one dream.

A lot has changed in the last four years, but always in a positive sense. Today, we can proudly state that Arvesta is there and is growing! On the one hand, we are growing organically for the fourth year in a row - you will see the figures further in this report. At the same time, we have grown inorganically through acquisitions and participations.

To illustrate this with a figure from HR: of our 2000 experts, 500 were recruited in the last three years and 200 were added via acquisitions. But growth is about more than turnover and the number of employees. There is another growth spurt underway at Arvesta, namely among our people. The employee satisfaction score within Arvesta rose from 64% to 71% in 2020. That is not just a figure; experience shows that people



engagement is an important indicator for the future of a company: it goes hand in hand with its success. If people grow, the business grows; if the business grows, we can invest in people. Everything indicates that we have started a positive evolution and can continue building a bright future together.

The growth of our organisation also means that we can now offer all our employees a nice package of benefits: a new group insurance policy, an Employee Assistance Programme and a Fit@Arvesta platform. In short, measures that are more important than ever and enable us to give back to our people what they give to us.

## **We are more relevant than ever**

The relevance of what we do at Arvesta has become even more significant. We are experts in agriculture, horticulture, animal nutrition, machinery, flour and retail with our Aveve and Eurotuin shops. As a result, everything we do leads to what you and I get on our plates. From the seed that goes into the ground somewhere, to sustainable follow-up of the crop, to harvesting with the right machine and the storage and processing into the final product, our Experts in the field guide the entire process, from start to finish, meticulously and with passion. The same goes for the production of healthy milk and a tasty piece of meat

## **Sustainable innovation is crucial**

What we do is develop solutions for changing challenges. A solution-oriented focus makes agriculture and horticulture one of the fastest innovating sectors.

Digitalisation, technology and R&D are needed to accelerate the innovations with which we help prepare agriculture and horticulture for the future. That is why we make long-term investments (CAPEX) of over 40 million euros annually, not only in renewing IT systems and production sites, but also in developing sustainable innovations. This makes us the best in the world. We absolutely believe that we are part of the solution for a world in change. We are building sustainable greenhouses all over the world with mobile gullies that reuse up to 90% of the water. We developed a cattle feed

with local raw materials - and thus a low ecological footprint - that reduces methane emissions in cattle by up to 30%. We are committed to animal welfare thanks to our cattle feed and a world-first called Taintstop, which means that pigs no longer need to be castrated. And we continue to work tirelessly towards a strong antibiotic reduction of -80% already. This Activity Report 2020 illustrates what we at Arvesta strive for every day. But it offers only fragments, for there is much more going on than we can discuss here. In any case, this report shows how **we are building the agriculture of tomorrow thanks to the outstanding expertise of our Experts in the field. And we are doing this for our farmers, horticulturists and consumers.**

*Eric Lauwers, Chief Executive Officer*

# Looking back on 4 years Stronger Together

## ORGANIC GROWTH

Net result  
2016-2020:  
**+74%**

## CAPEX INVESTMENTS

2017-2020:  
more than  
**155** million  
euros

## ANORGANIC GROWTH



**Vaesken**

With **500** new  
employees in the  
past 3 years

+ **200** new  
employees through M&A

↓  
**2000**  
Experts in the field

## PEOPLE MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Set up



**arvesta**  
academy

Launch  
group insurance  
& Employee  
Assistance  
Programme

People  
Engagement  
increased from  
64% to **71%**



## SIMPLIFICATION

Payroll:  
**48 → 1**

Companies:  
**79 → 48**

Time registration systems:  
**7 → 1**

## FOOTPRINT

Growing  
international footprint

	2016	2020
Abroad	10%	20%
Belgium	90%	80%



# About Arvesta



**2000**

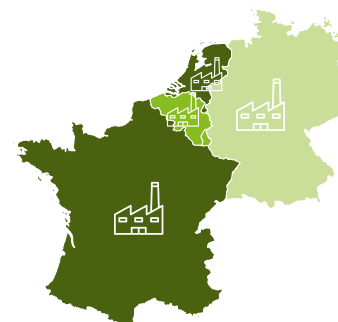
Experts in the field



More than

**40**

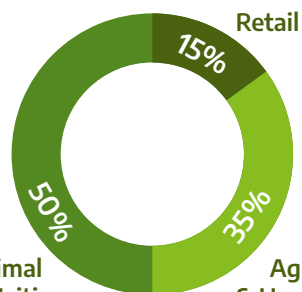
strong brands



Branches in Belgium, France,  
the Netherlands and Germany



Consolidated turnover



Animal  
Nutrition

Agri  
& Horti

Revenue per Business Unit



Investments in innovation, IT  
and production sites for 2021



of the raw materials  
are transported by barge



1 million tons per year

**250**  
Aveve shops



**50**  
directly  
owned stores

**210,000** m<sup>2</sup>  
of shopping pleasure

For  
**13**  
years  
running



# History

This is the story of a business that started small but has since grown into a strong player with more than a century of expertise in the agricultural sector. As a full-service provider for farmers and horticulturists, Arvesta is the market leader in Belgium and operates internationally with branches in the Netherlands, France and Germany.

As a result, we achieve an annual turnover of 1.5 billion euros.

Backed by 120 years of expertise in agriculture and horticulture, we offer the best solutions to our customers around the world. With our advice, we help our customers shape the agriculture of the future.

## Ready for the future

Here at Arvesta, we are building a business that is ready for the future. Ready for the agriculture of the future, not just for this generation, but for all future generations too. Arvesta believes in strong entrepreneur-

ship, the achievement of short-term results and the achievement of long-term dreams. A clear vision of the future with a solid plan of action, and always with respect for our values.



## 1901

Establishment of purchase and sales company AVV as a separate limited liability company.  
As a successor to the Consumption Committee of Boerenbond, AVV started to develop commercial operations.



## The first half of the 20th century

The agricultural market grows after the 1920s.

AVV establishes warehouses all around, with 190 warehouses established by 1929.

The company opens its own animal feed factory in Merksem, a dairy auction in Hasselt, and a butter market in Brussels.



## 1950s - 1960s

Modernisation of the Merksem animal feed factory.

Construction of the animal feed factory in Aalter.

Start-up of the cereals reception and sorting station in Landen.



## Never-ending

2020 is not the stopping point, on the contrary. Arvesta's story continues to grow with the ambition of shaping the agriculture of the future through our expertise and innovative smart farming solutions so that our farmers grow and stand firm in a global market.

We want to grow together with our farmers and horticulturists and enable them to maximise their profitability. To achieve that goal, we are continually investing and innovating in the agricultural sector.

## 2018

After more than 100 years of history, it is time for a new umbrella name:



## 2020

The strong Aveve brand gets a new logo, ready for the future and with a strong connection to nature.



## 1970s - 1980s

1970: first garden centre opens in Kampenhout.  
AVV strives for economies of scale and starts acquisitions in agriculture-related companies (including Cofabel).  
1976: purchasing departments are separated from Boerenbond.  
1984: the 'Aveve' brand is introduced as a brand for own animal feeds and other products.



## 1990s

Aveve focuses on animal feed and cultivation products.  
Direct sales to farmers gain importance.  
Diverse acquisitions and investments are made in Belgium, the Netherlands and France (including Hermoo, Scoriethom, Brichart, Servagri, Sabé and Huntjens).



## 2000

Aveve grows to more than 50 entities.  
Turnover of €880 million with 1900 employees in 2004.  
Focus on core tasks of animal nutrition and cultivation products.  
Some larger acquisitions such as Spoomans, Sanac, Dumoulin.



## 2019

Stronger together philosophy, introduced in 2017, starts to bear fruit.  
1900 Experts in the field across 48 entities with one vision and the same values.







# Our cultural values

## QUALITY

**We value quality and we only sell products we would buy ourselves**

As a market leader, we are a company of experts, driven by a passion for our strong brands. We offer our customers expertise and advice and are true partners who provide a comprehensive solution.

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP

**If we can't find a way, we make one**

We drive change, have open minds, and are daring and innovative. We get results in the short term and achieve our dreams in the long term. We keep our focus on the priorities while doing this, using simplification and specialisation as the guidelines for everything we do.

## INTEGRITY

**We act with integrity, we fulfil our promises, and we don't take any shortcuts**

Our work is ethical, fair, and transparent. We do what we promise, respecting the right way of working. We believe in hard work and common sense.

## LEADERSHIP

**We grow to grow our customers**

Our people make the difference. Our leaders are motivated people with a passion for the job and a clear purpose: coaching teams and bringing them to the next level.

Because if we grow, our customers grow too. Growing together, that's what it's all about.

## TEAM SPIRIT

**We are a team: we work together, and we celebrate together**

We work together with a strong team to achieve results that no one's ever dared to dream of. We fight together and we win together.

We can go faster on our own, but we will only be able to go the distance as a team.

## CUSTOMER FOCUS

**We say what we do, and we do what we say**

We walk the walk and talk the talk, in a transparent and consistent manner, with our employees, customers, and suppliers. We accept our responsibilities and we never give up our search for solutions.







# About us

## Experts in the field

### Stronger Together

**At Arvesta, everything revolves around our Experts in the field.** They are at the heart of our business. It is no coincidence that they are at the centre of the logo of our Stronger Together philosophy. Our 2000 experts constitute Arvesta's unique knowledge centre of agriculture and horticulture with their advice, knowledge, and passion.

It is because they grow that Arvesta grows; and when Arvesta grows, they grow.

### Arvesta, a house of strong brands and 2000 experts

Arvesta is more than the sum of its parts. We are one house of more than 40 strong brands that, in turn, are represented by 2000 Experts in the field. Our umbrella name — Arvesta — connects our people through our strong brands. Regardless of whether you work for a brand in animal feed, seeds or John Deere, **every expert stands behind the values that Arvesta embodies: quality, integrity, leadership, team spirit, entrepreneurship and customer focus.** Arvesta is a strong quality label that we make a reality every day together with all our experts. The fact that people are at the heart of our business is not only reflected in our logo, with 'Experts in the field' as a permanent baseline, but also in our media campaigns; we always put our own people in the spotlight, along with their area of expertise. Because that is the most beautiful thing there is: people who work with passion for agriculture and horticulture every day.



**Karin Van Roy**

Chief Human  
Resources  
Officer

### People want to make a difference

Building the agriculture and horticulture of tomorrow is something very concrete. All around them, our experts see the impact of what they get up for every day. They see the result of their work at home on the table, in the shops where they do their shopping, in the landscape... That is what makes their job so valuable. It gives them the energy to take on the challenges of tomorrow's agriculture and horticulture together with their colleagues. Because Arvesta is a pioneer in the field of sustainability and our people help to make a real difference every day.

### We cherish our people

At Arvesta, we do everything we can to give back to our people what they give to us. We listen to them, protect and train them. We organise satisfaction surveys. We provide for the well-being of our experts through the Employee Assistance Programme. We encourage them, both individually and together, to live a fit and healthy life via Fit@Arvesta. The new group insurance is now available to everyone. And today we are further organising the New Way of Working. Arvesta makes a point of being a leader, also in the way we treat our people.

*Karin Van Roy, Chief HR Officer*







# Financial results & corporate governance

## Key figures over five years

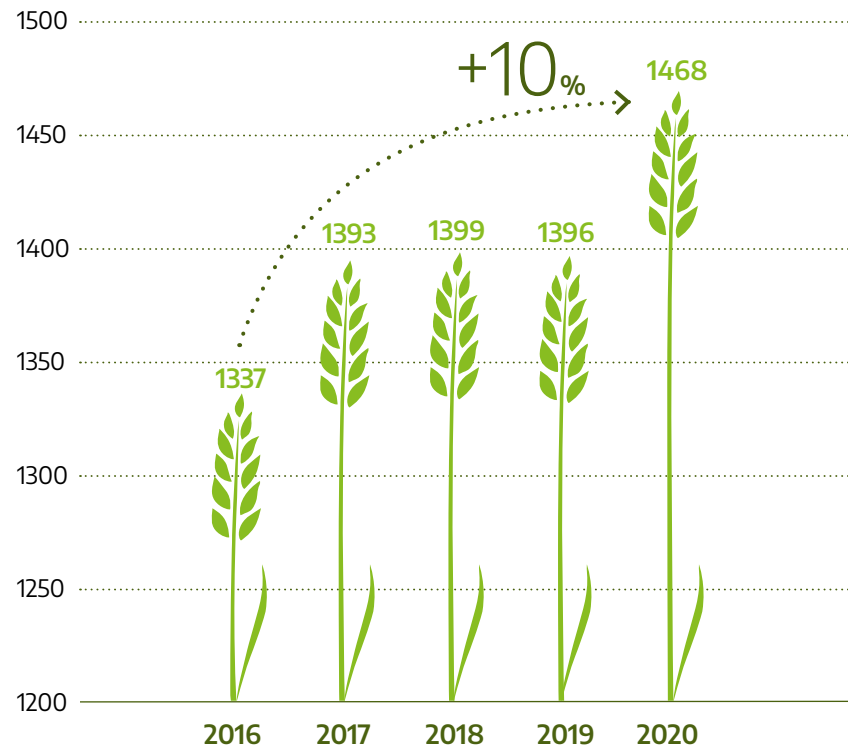
(in million EUR)	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Turnover	<b>1468.0</b>	1396.0	1399.0	1393.0	1337.0
Gross margin	<b>324.9</b>	306.3	304.1	298.6	286.5
EBIT (Operating profit)	<b>40.6</b>	35.9	44.0	34.7	30.1
EBT*	<b>41.0</b>	36.6	34.4	31.1	27.5
Net Profit	<b>29.1</b>	26.2	24.2	21.2	16.7
Number of employees in FTE	<b>1995</b>	1869	1883	1799	1883
EBITDA	<b>73.7</b>	67.1	73.9	66.7	63.2
Net financial debt	<b>113.5</b>	99.4	113.8	80.0	79.5

\*incl equity method

# Organic growth

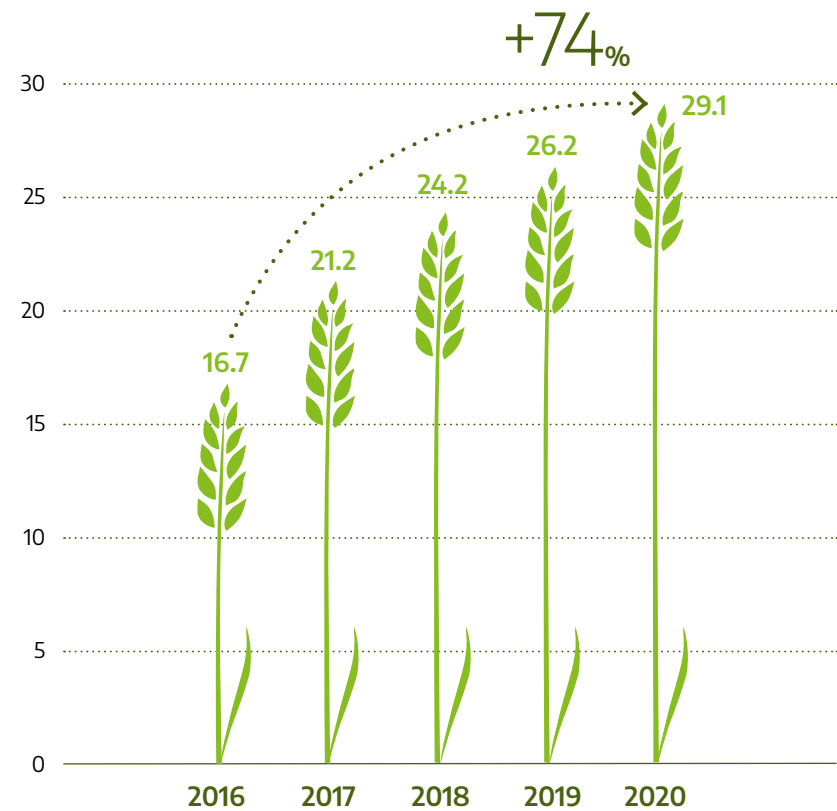
## Turnover

(in million EUR)



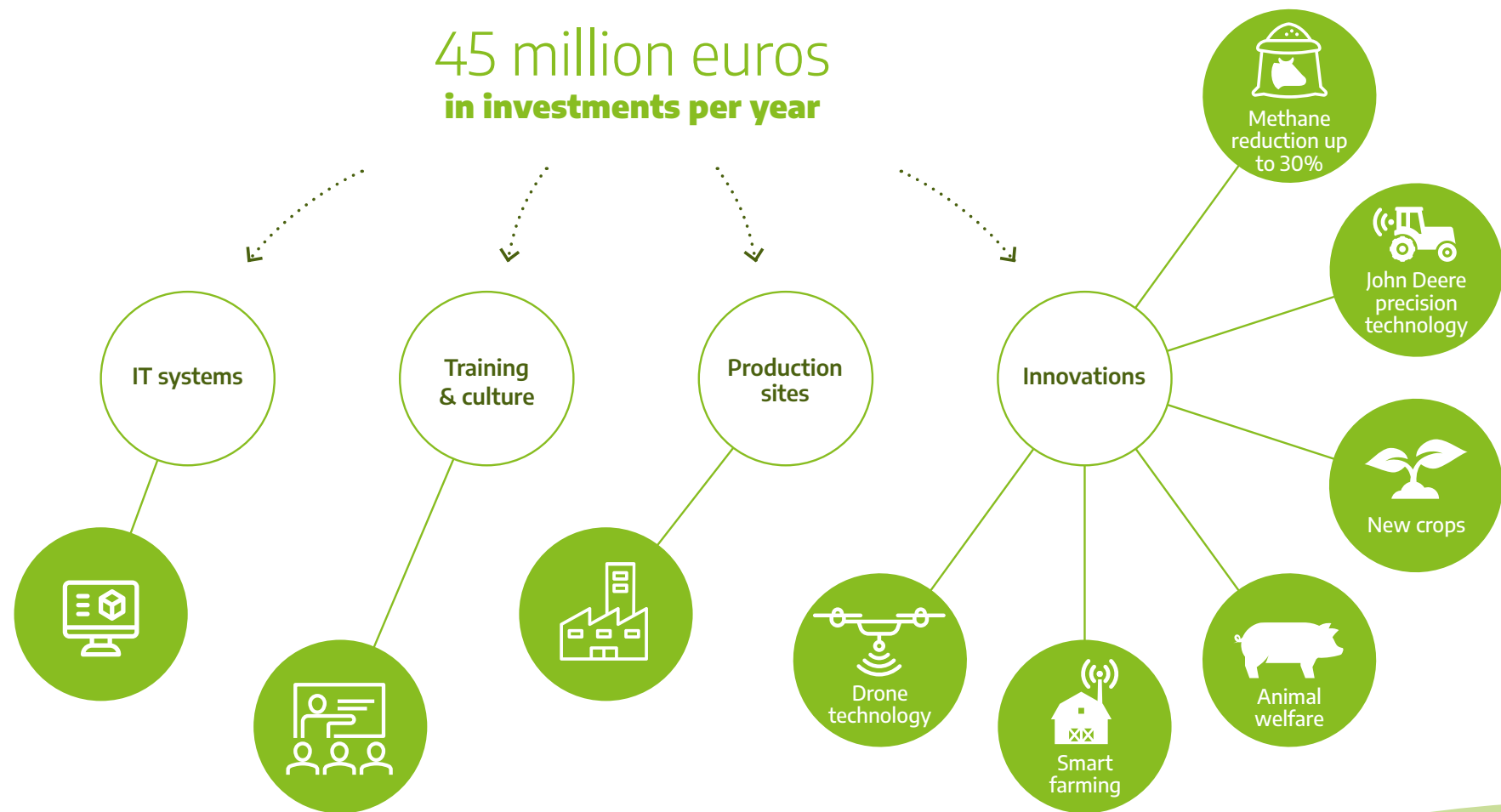
## Net Profit

(in million EUR)





# Investing in the future



# Notes about the financial figures

The consolidated financial statements of Aveve bv (the “Company”) include the financial statements of the Company and its subsidiaries (hereinafter referred to as the “Group” or “Arvesta”).

The consolidated financial statements provide a general overview of the Group’s activities and the results achieved.

The financial statement is prepared in millions of EUR in accordance with BE GAAP.

The annual and consolidated accounts have been audited by EY Bedrijfsrevisoren bv, De Kleetlaan 2, 1831 Diegem, represented by Wim Van Gasse (A-02276).

More information can be found on the website [www.nbb.be](http://www.nbb.be).



# Consolidated profit and loss account

(in million EUR)	2020		2019	
Consolidated turnover	1467.7		1396.3	
Cost price of goods sold	-1142.8		-1089.9	
<b>GROSS MARGIN</b>	<b>324.9</b>	<b>22.1%</b>	<b>306.4</b>	<b>21.9%</b>
Services and other goods	-151.3	10.3%	-156.8	11.2%
Remunerations	-127.9	8.7%	-126.3	9.0%
Provisions	0.2		7.1	
Other operating expenses	-6.6		-10.1	
Produced tangible assets	25.0		19.6	
Other operating income	9.5		27.2	
<b>EBITDA consolidated</b>	<b>73.7</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>67.1</b>	<b>4.8%</b>
Amortisations	-35.8		-34.0	
Depreciations	2.6		2.7	
EBIT (Operating profit)	40.6	2.8%	35.8	2.6%
Financial result	-3.4		-1.7	
Goodwill amortisation	-5.1		-3.9	
<b>EBT (Earnings before tax)</b>	<b>32.1</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>30.2</b>	<b>2.2%</b>
Tax	-11.3		-9.8	
Change in equity	8.9		6.3	
Minority interests	-0.6		-0.5	
<b>Net profit</b>	<b>29.1</b>	<b>2.0%</b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>1.9%</b>

# Consolidated balance

<b>ASSETS</b> (in million EUR)	<b>31.12.2020</b>	<b>31.12.2019</b>
Intangible fixed assets	69.6	32.4
Tangible fixed assets	199.2	215.3
Financial fixed assets	20.0	15.4
Consolidation differences	9.5	4.7
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>	<b>298.3</b>	<b>267.8</b>
Receivables (long term)	3.7	4.8
Inventories	252.6	233.9
Commercial receivables	191.1	190.7
Other receivables	25.3	22.1
Liquid assets	23.3	10.7
Deferred charges and accrued income	6.1	2.3
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>502.1</b>	<b>464.5</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>800.4</b>	<b>732.3</b>

<b>LIABILITIES</b> (in million EUR)	<b>31.12.2020</b>	<b>31.12.2019</b>
Equity	389.5	374.9
Third-party interests	5.9	4.3
Provisions	13.9	14.4
Long-term financial debts	109.5	81.9
Short-term financial debts	27.3	28.2
Trade payables	151.1	150
Other debts	27.0	25.8
Social and fiscal debts	53.3	35.1
Other payables	22.9	17.7
<b>CURRENT PAYABLES</b>	<b>281.6</b>	<b>256.8</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>800.4</b>	<b>732.3</b>



# Consolidated cash flow

(in million EUR)	2020	2019
Net Profit	29.1	26.2
Minority interests	-8.3	-6.3
Depreciations	41.2	39.6
Provisions	-3.3	10.2
Earnings from sale of fixed assets	-5.1	-2.9
Working capital	13.8	-10.4
<b>Cash flow from operating activities</b>	<b>67.4</b>	<b>56.4</b>
Investments	-43.4	-38.1
Disinvestments	10.9	5.0
Mergers and acquisitions	-22.8	0.0
<b>Cash flow from investment activities</b>	<b>-55.3</b>	<b>-33.1</b>
Dividends received	5.0	3.2
Dividends paid	-13.1	-12.1
Debts related to mergers and acquisitions	-18.1	0.0
<b>Cash flow from financial activities</b>	<b>-26.2</b>	<b>-8.9</b>
<b>Net cash flow</b>	<b>-14.1</b>	<b>14.4</b>
Net financial debt (on January 1)	99.4	113.8
Net financial debt (on December 31)	113.5	99.4
<b>Net cash flow</b>	<b>-14.1</b>	<b>14.4</b>

# Composition of the Executive Committee



**Eric Lauwers**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Paul Deleu**  
Secretary General

Arvesta is a private company with an Executive Committee and an independent Board of Directors. Arvesta commits itself to the principles of corporate governance as described in Belgian legislation, the Buyse III Code and the Arvesta Code of Conduct.



**Stefan De Clercq**  
Business Unit Director  
Franchise & Retail



**Niek Depoorter**  
Business Unit Director  
Agri- & Horticulture



**Sabine De veilder**  
Chief Marketing  
Officer



**Kris Geysels**  
Chief Financial  
Officer



**Filiep Messiaen**  
Chief Business  
Solutions



**Karin Van Roy**  
Chief Human  
Resources Officer



**Dirk Van Thielen**  
Business Unit Director  
Animal Nutrition



# Composition of the Board of Directors



**Georges Van Keerberghen**  
Chairman of the Board



**Eric Lauwers**  
Executive Director



**Marc Wittemans**  
Director for MRBB



**Kurt Deketelaere**  
Director for MRBB



**Luc Gijsens**  
Independent Director

At the general meeting of 25 May 2021, the mandates of Mr Georges Van Keerberghen, Mr Eric Lauwers, Mr Marc Wittemans, KDK bv, with Mr Kurt Deketelaere as permanent representative, were renewed for a period of 4 years.

The general meeting also appointed three new directors, for a four-year term, until after the general meeting in 2025.

The newly elected directors are Ms Marleen Vaesen, nominated by MRBB, Ms Rianne Covens-van Tilburg and Mr Stefaan Gheeraert, who both represent the agriculture and horticulture sector.



**Sophie Dutordoir**  
Independent Director



**Patrick Horten**  
Director



**Patrik Haesen**  
Director for MRBB



**Pieter Verhelst**  
Director for MRBB



**Marleen Vaesen**  
Director for MRBB



**Rianne Covens-van Tilburg**  
Director
































**Stefaan Gheeraert**  
Director

# Operational situation

**Arvesta consists of three business units with a total of over 40 brands**

Farmers and horticulturists are genuine entrepreneurs who have to remain flexible in our global marketplace. That is exactly where Arvesta can help. We support our customers by providing innovative solutions that make a real difference. By creating synergies between our strong brands, we are a complete supplier of advice and solutions.

Business Units	 <b>Animal feed</b>  <b>Agriculture and Horticulture</b>  <b>Retail</b>		
Turnover distribution	<b>50%</b> <b>35%</b> <b>15%</b>		
Brands	                 		
From field to fork	        		
Info	<p>Founded in 1901 A part of the MRBB group</p> <p>Turnover 1.5 billion euros Market leader in Belgium</p> <p>2000 employees 250 shops</p>		

Arvesta bv and Aveve bv are 100% owned by MRBB (cvba), a financial holding company with Belgian decision-making powers.

# Animal Nutrition Business Unit

## PROFESSIONAL FEEDS



## HOBBY FEEDS



## FEED ADDITIVES



Our Animal Nutrition Business Unit is the market leader, serving all animal groups. Our products are available for both professional and hobby feeders. Our 14 production sites located in Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands achieve annual global sales of more than 1.8 million tons per year. The Aveve brand products are sold through a specific distribution network of our own stores, franchisees, and via direct approach by commercial managers and Key Account Managers. The other brands are sold through other proprietary distribution channels. In addition to the pure feed activities, we are also very active in feed additives through Aveve Biochem and Palital.



# Agriculture and Horticulture Business Unit

## SEEDS AND SEED POTATOES



## PLANT NUTRITION



## PLANT PROTECTION



## AGRICULTURAL AND HORTICULTURAL MACHINERY



JOHN DEERE



## HORTICULTURE



VAN DER HOEVEN  
Horticultural projects



Our Agriculture and Horticulture Business Unit is Belgium's specialist and market leader in seeds, cereals and plant nutrition, as well as protection for all crop types. For its Agriculture and Horticulture Business Unit, Arvesta has various production and storage facilities in Belgium, the Netherlands and France, and about 50 grain depots in Wallonia. We are also active in agricultural and horticultural machinery as an importer and distributor of John Deere.

Sustainability and innovation also go hand in hand within our Agriculture and Horticulture Business Unit. For example, Hortiplan is the global market leader in the Mobile Gully System (MGS), we are the most modern computer-controlled seed company in Europe, and we have an innovative concept in which residual flows from agricultural products are converted into sustainable fertilisers for arable farming and vegetable cultivation.



## Business Unit Retail

Our Retail Business Unit brings quality products to the end consumer. With 250 Aveve stores and agrarian centres as well as three Eurotuin shops, Arvesta is active all over Belgium. In addition to 50 directly-owned Aveve shops within this network, we can also rely upon 200 passionate Aveve business managers with an understanding of the profession. Every franchisee is an independent businessman/ woman functioning as a person of trust farmers, horticulturists and consumers can count on for a complete and extensive range of high-quality products. Arvesta will continue to grow with them every day. Aveve is Belgium's market leader in the sale of flour and flour mixes to consumers. We also distribute Niamh (inspiring bread and baking mixes with a worldly touch) and Soezie, with which we have been developing and producing high-quality flour and flour mixes for more than 100 years.







# Research, development & innovation

R&D is crucial at Arvesta. The R&D is managed from Belgium and we can be proud of that. Our Experts in the field put their heads together every day to develop innovations that are both sustainable and economically profitable. This is how we are building the agriculture of the future.

## This is how ecology and economy go hand in hand

If the focus of R&D used to be on improving technical performance resulting in higher economic performance (e.g. optimising feed conversion or piglet production), then that focus has now been reinforced with sustainability and its impact on economic performance. Let's be clear: **sustainability and economy do go hand in hand**. That is exactly what we aim for with our R&D — **sustainable animal husbandry, agriculture and horticulture that give the farmer a fair price and a correct valuation**. Innovation must be feasible and affordable if it is to have any value.

## Applicability and feasibility, Arvesta's domain

By definition, R&D is a long-term investment. The development of a new product or new solution easily requires three to five years of research, and that research occurs in various phases. Arvesta runs its own research and/or carries it out together with major research institutes, such as Inagro and ILVO, and with universities. After preliminary research, further testing takes place on our experimental farm and in Poppel, Neerhespen and Ath. Practical tests are carried out there on applicability and feasibility; that is Arvesta's domain.



## What does R&D of the future look like?

Sustainability, technical results, traceability, animal welfare and the connection between farmer and consumer are five of the most important themes for our businesses. Attention to emission reductions in production and transport, greater independence from imports and from one particular crop, respect for the global environment and the rainforests in particular, the possibilities of local crops, consumer demands... To be successful in all challenges, different disciplines must work together because everything is linked to everything else. That is precisely Arvesta's strength — that we are at home in all markets and have an overarching vision. At Mondelez, for example, we already guarantee traceability from seed to biscuit via the Harmony charter. Optimal feed composition, solutions for water shortages, healthy soils and plants... all of that is our business. For our customers in agriculture and horticulture, it comes together with all other aspects of the business, such as animal-friendly and environmentally-neutral housing, and manure and environmental legislation. We and our experts offer the right advice, the overarching vision. These evolutions will also impact the further development of our offering: more attention to products with more added value, more specialities, more additives, more local crops.

## What will the animal husbandry, agriculture and horticulture of the future look like?

Scaling-up will continue, and we see the importance of the short chain increase. The future will feature both of these because they are both valuable. The consumer remains the driving factor for animal husbandry, agriculture and horticulture. Producing in a market that is polarised and focused on price on the one hand and quality on the other poses a double challenge. Just as consumer products have been carrying a nutritional score for some time now, we are now seeing the addition of an eco score, a label that both raises awareness and meets consumers' needs. Because this consumer asks questions, such as where does my food come from? How healthy and sustainable is it? Questions that we at Arvesta answer from our important role from the beginning to the end of the food chain. How we at Arvesta, with innovative solutions and progressive advice, are partners with animal husbandry, agriculture, horticulture and consumers is illustrated in the stories further on in this report. They are concrete examples of sustainability initiatives. We are sure that many more will follow.



**Niek Depoorter**  
Business Unit Director  
Agri & Horti



**Sabine De veilder**  
Chief Marketing Officer



**Dirk Van Thielen**  
Business Unit Director  
Animal Nutrition







# Sustainability at Arvesta

Arvesta was supported by a working group of sustainability ambassadors, in formulating an overarching sustainability vision based on the Arvesta mission.

With concrete ambitions in three pillars, we focus on farmers, horticulturists, the planet, and our employees and consumers.

Together with more than 50 of our experts, we converted these ambitions into 36 commitments (see overview on pages 34-35).

From these commitments, ten ambitious priorities were subsequently launched and major steps have already been taken. 'We Act, We Care' is our leitmotif.

The 17 stories with numerous achievements and actions on pages 40-65 show that our ambitions are not the end of the story.







## ARVESTA 'S MISSION

Increasing the profitability of our farmers and horticulturists in a sustainable and innovative way – so that we can grow together – is the reason we come to work each day. Through our agricultural expertise, we also want to give our customers the best professional advice in our Aveve and Eurotuin shops.



## SUSTAINABILITY VISION

Arvesta will be more than ever a sustainable and innovative partner for the farmer, horticulturist and consumer of the future by 2025.





## AMBITION

Arvesta will be a leader in sustainability for the farmer, horticulturist and consumer through each of the three pillars by 2025.



### Pillar 1 | Sustainable agriculture and horticulture

As an expert in agriculture and horticulture, we offer the most sustainable and innovative solutions and services that guarantee farmers' and horticulturists' profitability. This is how Arvesta builds the agriculture and horticulture of the future with its customers and partners.

### Pillar 2 | Sustainable entrepreneurship

Together with our employees, partners, and customers, we work on sustainable, safe, and high-quality solutions and services.

### Pillar 3 | Care for our people and consumers

We work together for the well-being and safety of our employees. We strive for the best customer experience through our expertise and are committed to sustainable consumption.

# Our 36 commitments and progress

Progress of our commitments

●○○ New ●●○ Busy ●●● Achieved

## Pillar 1 | FOR FARMERS AND HORTICULTURISTS

### Develop sustainable agriculture and horticulture



#### Offer sustainable and high-quality solutions

- Develop sustainable offerings
- Increase advice on sustainable agriculture and horticulture
- Promote the use of low impact crop protection products
- Optimise the composition of products
- Improve the traceability of products



#### Develop smart agriculture and horticulture

- Use technology for efficient agriculture
- Use data responsibly



#### Reduce the climatic and environmental impact of agriculture and horticulture

- Improve the carbon content of the soil
- Conduct R&D on sustainable agricultural and horticultural practices
- Reduce methane emissions
- Consult with chain partners regarding sustainable and innovative agriculture

## Pillar 2 | FOR OUR PLANET

### Promote sustainable



#### Focus on animal welfare and animal safety



#### Focus on efficient production



#### Focus on efficient distribution



## entrepreneurship

- Install a charter on animal welfare and safety for directly owned animals
- Present ourselves as a leading discussion partner regarding animal welfare and safety
- Reduce antibiotics in animal feed

- Optimise energy consumption
- Optimise water consumption
- Optimise CO<sub>2</sub> emissions linked to production
- Reduce waste / recycle more
- Bring new buildings up to BREEAM standard
- Make company fleet more sustainable and promote sustainable alternatives

- Develop a sustainable purchasing policy
- Reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from own transport
- Push for alternative transport modes
- Optimise the load and fill factor of freight transport

## Pillar 3 | FOR OUR SOCIETY

### Care for our people and consumers



#### Increase the safety, health and well-being of employees

- Raise awareness about safety with a view to 'zero accidents at work'
- Apply a uniform EHSQ approach
- Continue to develop our health policy
- Develop a policy related to 'corporate volunteering' for employees / employees volunteer work



#### Focus on sustainable employability

- Continue uniform policy concerning diversity and non-discrimination
- Develop training and development opportunities
- Raise awareness and provide training on sound business operations



#### Focus on sustainable and high-quality solutions for the end consumer

- Deliver excellent quality in products and services
- Supply certified sustainable products
- Reduce sugar and salt content
- Promote local products / short chain
- Raise consumer awareness regarding sustainable consumption

# Our ten priorities

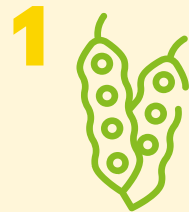
## Pillar 1 | FOR FARMERS AND HORTICULTURISTS

### Develop sustainable agriculture and horticulture

We offer the most sustainable and innovative solutions and services that guarantee the profitability of farmers and horticulturists. This is how Arvesta builds the agriculture and horticulture of the future together with its customers and partners.



Offer sustainable and high-quality solutions



100% certified soy by 2026



Develop smart agriculture and horticulture



Global water savings of 3 billion litres by 2025



Reduce the climatic and environmental impact of agriculture and horticulture



Nitrogen reduction to -15% by 2024



Yearly reduction of 250,000 tons CO<sub>2</sub> by 2025

## Pillar 2 | FOR OUR PLANET

### Promote sustainable entrepreneurship



Focus on animal welfare and animal safety



Focus on efficient production



Focus on efficient distribution

Together with our employees, partners, and customers, we work on sustainable, safe, and high-quality solutions and services.

5

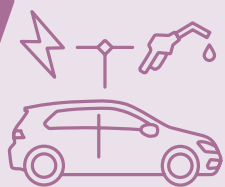


6

Transport  
>50% of raw materials  
by water



7



20% of  
company vehicles  
are hybrid/electric  
by 2024

### Pillar 3 | FOR OUR SOCIETY

## Care for our people and consumers

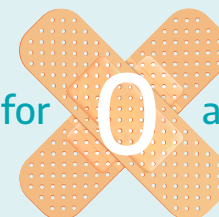
We work together for the well-being and safety of our employees. We strive for the best customer experience through our expertise and are committed to sustainable consumption.



Increase the  
safety, health  
and well-being  
of employees

8

Aim for **0** accidents



Focus on  
sustainable  
employability

9



Fit@Arvesta  
100% participation



Focus on sustainable  
and high-quality  
solutions for the end  
consumer

10



100% consumer packaging bread  
and baking mixes packaged  
with recyclable monoplasic film by 2023



# Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals

Since 2019, we have aligned Arvesta's sustainability approach with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations.

We focus primarily on the following SDGs:



For each of these SDGs, we have determined which underlying sub-goals we are specifically focusing on.



## Arvesta will work towards sustainable and productive agriculture and horticulture

- Arvesta is committed to pursuing sustainable innovation and using new technology with a view to **more efficient and effective agriculture and horticulture**.
- Arvesta focuses on continuous **advice** to the farmer and horticulturist and pays special attention to sustainable agriculture and horticulture.
- Arvesta invests permanently in products and concepts with a view to improving **animal welfare** and safety in the food chain.



## Arvesta will realise economic growth in a responsible way with satisfied and engaged employees

- Arvesta is committed to developing **sustainable solutions and services** (B2B/C) that are good for people, the environment and animals and at the same time improve the farmer's and horticulturist's yields.
- All companies within Arvesta apply **a uniform EHSQ approach**.
- The **satisfaction** ('employee satisfaction') and **engagement** ('employee engagement') of Arvesta employees increased by 7 pp in 2020.



## Arvesta will innovate sustainably in its own operations

- Arvesta undertakes to guarantee better traceability of its products.
- Arvesta commits to 250,000 tons **less CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2025**.
- Arvesta makes consumer packaging for bread and baking mixes with 100% recyclable monoplasic film.
- All new Arvesta buildings meet the **BREEAM standard**, with performance level 'Good' as a minimum.



## Arvesta will work with its customers and partners to make the food chain more sustainable, from field to fork

- Arvesta commits to creating more **transparency** about the sustainability aspects of its value chain and to communicate more/better about this to its stakeholders.
- Arvesta, together with its 2000 experts, commits to **advising and supporting farmers and horticulturists** to continue to build the agriculture and horticulture of the future.
- Arvesta undertakes to develop a **sustainable purchasing** policy and to apply it in all companies



## Arvesta will increase capacity to combat climate change and its impact

- Arvesta commits to 250,000 tons **less CO<sub>2</sub> emissions** by 2025.
- Arvesta undertakes to make 20% of its company cars hybrid or electric by 2024.



## Arvesta will work together with its employees, partners and customers to make a meaningful contribution

- Arvesta undertakes to work with chain partners to make the **agriculture and horticulture** of the future as **sustainable as possible in an innovative way**.
- Arvesta participates actively in **R&D related to sustainable agricultural and horticultural practices** with a view to reducing the negative impact of agriculture and horticulture on the environment and climate.
- Arvesta presents itself as **an important discussion partner for governments, media and civil society** concerning sustainable agriculture and horticulture.









For our farmers and horticulturists:

# **Agricultural and sustainable**

We offer the most sustainable and innovative solutions and services that guarantee the profitability of farmers and horticulturists. This is how Arvesta builds the agriculture and horticulture of the future together with its customers and partners.



100% certified soy by 2026



**Filip Vanmeirhaeghe**  
Raw Materials Buyer  
Animal Nutrition  
Arvesta

# More ambitious than the sector. 100% certified soy by 2026

## AMBITION

When the Belgian Feed Association, the professional federation that represents more than 95% of feed manufacturers, endorsed the Amazon Memoratorium in 2006, Arvesta played a pioneering role. Arvesta, as the largest compound feed manufacturer, with almost 20% market share, aims to have 100% certified soybean meal in all its feeds by 2026. This is four years faster than the sector, which set itself the goal of 2030.

## ACTORS

**The entire sector is involved via the Belgian Feed Association, and Arvesta is a pioneer**

Soybean meal is the most balanced protein source. This makes soybean meal the best vegetable raw material, accounting for about 50% of protein needs. But soy cultivation has been the subject of public debate for 15 years. Brazil increased its production from about 20 million tons to 130 million tons per year in two decades. This phenomenal growth was partly achieved at the expense of the Amazon rainforest. This prompted the European animal feed industry to work with other stakeholders to develop a system of certificates that supports and stimulates sustainable soy farming. In Belgium, the Belgian Feed Association was behind this, and Arvesta acted as the pioneer.

## ACHIEVEMENTS

- By 2020, **50%** of the soy used in Arvesta feeds in Belgium and the Netherlands was already certified soy. The ambition of Arvesta is to reach 100% by 2026.
- “Pure soybeans form part of the raw materials for our animal feeds – about 5%. Arvesta buys that share exclusively from **Europe**. As such, we invested in **our own processing of pure soybeans, which is unique in the sector.**” *Filip Vanmeirhaeghe, Raw Materials Buyer Animal Nutrition Arvesta*
- Agri & Horti is conducting **tests on trial fields for soy farming in Belgium.**

## ACTIONS – IT DOESN'T STOP HERE

Arvesta next intends to stop using soybean meal in balanced dairy feed by 2023; this will result in fewer soy imports, reducing the pressure of deforestation on the Amazon rainforest. Consideration is also being given to certificates based on “mass area balance” and possibly how to manage the physical flows of sustainable soy as an alternative or supplement to certified soy.

# Arvesta guarantees: 50% of the raw materials for animal feed comes from by-products

## AMBITION

“The continuous challenge for Arvesta’s feed business is meeting the need for protein and starch in the most efficient way, i.e. by valorising as many residual products as possible from other industries into high-quality animal feed. This is how we supplement 50% of the composition of our animal feed. We supplement the other part with cereals, but not high-quality wheat,

barley or maize suitable for humans. So we are achieving valorisation here too. But... climate, (geo)politics, new industries, the reality of price volatility, etc., **everything is changing constantly. This means we are constantly looking for maximum valorisation.** It also means that, for example, despite a fall in the price of cereal (with the subsequent pressure to increase its

share in the feed), we are nevertheless committed to continue to achieve the 50% processing of by-products. This commitment and continuous effort makes our ambition sustainable. As the largest compound feed manufacturer, we are still fulfilling our pioneering role.”



**Patrick Boone**

Procurement Director  
Animal Nutrition Arvesta

## ACTION

### We continue to look for industries that have by-products that are unfit for human consumption but fine for animals

Nutritionists are to animals what dietitians are to humans: they work out the ideal nutritional composition of a diet in order to achieve optimal performance. On the one hand, our nutritionists know the needs of the animals – which are different for each animal species – and age category – and they continuously analyse the nutritional values of the available

raw materials. Protein and starch are the most important demands; protein as the basis for muscle mass, starch as fuel.

For proteins, Arvesta currently valorises by-products from the food industry, more specifically the vegetable oil industry. This includes rapeseed meal, soy meal, sunflower meal, linseed meal, palm kernel expeller,

etc., which are by-products that are unfit for humans but good for animals. For starch, we make use of by-products from the food industry (e.g. biscuit and bread mix). Bran is valorised from flour mills, beet pulp and molasses from the sugar industry.





Global water savings of  
more than 3 billion litres  
by 2025



**Emanuel Marreel**  
Managing Director  
Hortiplan

# Hortiplan and Van der Hoeven are shaping the future of greenhouse farming worldwide

Thanks to the rapid growth of Hortiplan, the number of new Mobile Gully System projects for leafy crops will more than double every year. Arvesta's ambition is to achieve global water savings of more than 3 billion litres by 2025.

## HORTIPLAN ACTION

### Less labour, less space and less water thanks to Hortiplan's Mobile Gully System

"Hortiplan's Mobile Gully System reuses the maximum amount of water by up to 90%, the other 10% is absorbed by the plant. Thanks to the Nutrient Film Technique, the plants get the exact nutrition they need. The Mobile Gully System is therefore a perfect example of a successful marriage between high-end technology and horticulture, with a higher yield for reduced expenditure. "Input" refers to labour, space and consumables (water, electricity, nutrients, crop protection, etc.). After all, the Mobile Gully System is fully automated, so the space required adapts to the growth of the plants, and all the parameters required for the optimal climate are controlled.

### Save even more water

Mobile Gully System horticulture is the future. The advantages compared to traditional soil farming are numerous and, above all, very sustainable.

Today, our 60 ha Mobile Gully System

saves no less than 1.2 billion litres of water worldwide when compared to conventional farming methods. By 2025, we aim to use our Mobile Gully System to save more than twice as much water worldwide by more than doubling our building capacity; in particular, with the further expansion of the crop types grown using the Mobile Gully System. As a result, we will save up to 400 million extra litres annually, which equates to a total global water saving of more than 3 billion litres by 2025."

*Emanuel Marreel, Managing Director  
Hortiplan*

## VAN DER HOEVEN ACTION

### High-tech greenhouse cultivation from Canada to Australia thanks to Van der Hoeven

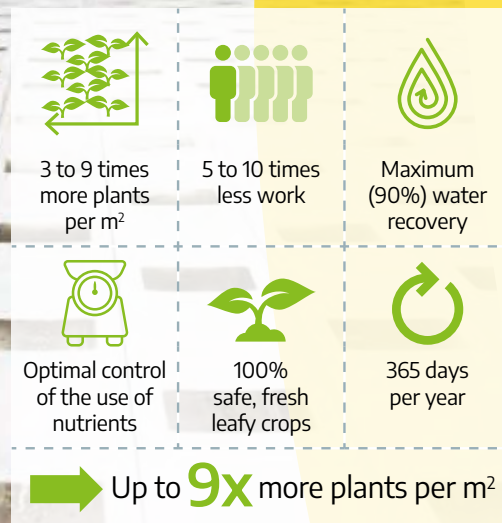
By using the latest technology over the years, Arvesta has modernised its innovative cultivation system, with the smart use of LED lighting for example. And consumers are constantly challenging the technology by demanding organic, increased variety and ready-to-use products, etc. 365 days a year, all over the world. Working closely with Van der Hoeven, the global

player in greenhouse horticulture, Arvesta has the answer. Farming in a protected atmosphere makes local farms possible and sustainable everywhere. By focussing on automation, renewable energy, climate control, cooling, efficient water and nutrient use and new crops, we can achieve sustainable greenhouse farming from Canada to Abu Dhabi. Van der Hoeven built a 100% sustainable ModulAIR greenhouse in Australia. We are absolutely convinced that this high-tech, innovative, sustainable cultivation is the answer to the challenge of feeding the world population.

## ACTORS

Geographically, there are no restrictions for greenhouse cultivation, Arvesta has customers all around the world, with more and more interest in recent years coming from difficult climate environments where they rely on greenhouse horticulture. We have also noticed that more and more countries want to be self-sufficient. And we see governments setting stricter environmental requirements everywhere. With Hortiplan and Van der Hoeven, Arvesta can respond to every one of these demands by taking greenhouse cultivation to the next level.

## RESULTATEN





## Sustainable precision technology on the tractor

**Accurate use of fertilisers and crop protection means less waste, less environmental impact and increased yield.**

### ACTION

John Deere has been committed to precision farming since 2000 and is a global leading player. Arvesta's Cofabel has been the exclusive importer of John Deere in Belgium since 1972 and is therefore playing an important role in the implementation of John Deere technology in Belgian crop farming. Current precision farming technology includes a super-accurate (down to 2 cm) GPS system, a self-steering system for agricultural vehicles, section control for seeders, fertiliser spreaders and sprayers, and site-specific crop monitoring and yield measurement. In short, the objective for any new development in precision farming is to reduce input – less fuel, less labour, fewer fertilisers and pesticides – in order to achieve increased profit for the farmer to the advantage of the environment and the consumer.

### ACTORS

“In the short-term, increasing efficiency means more can be produced with the same amount of pesticides and fertilisers. We are confident precision farming will mean more homogeneous harvests with better quality products, benefiting both farmer and consumer. By working closely with the food and retail industry, we hope to be able to provide farmers who deliver a more sustainable and high-quality product with better rewards for their efforts, while simultaneously achieving more sustainable crop farming and horticulture and a more sustainable food chain, because they are inextricably linked.”

*Yannick Hardy, Product Manager Pomagro*

### RESULT

“Precision farming is already in place on more than 50% of the arable plots in Belgium, resulting in 10 to 15% input savings.”

*Bavo Vangoidsenhoven, Marketing & Operations Manager Cofabel*

### ACTION - IT DOESN'T STOP HERE

In the future, data – yield measurements, positioning, machine data, etc. – will help refine crop farming further.

Arvesta is running a pilot project to provide farmers with an “all-in” plan for the optimal use of their land based on the available data.



**Yannick Hardy**  
Product Manager  
Pomagro



**Bavo Vangoidsenhoven**  
Marketing & Operations  
Manager Cofabel





Nitrogen reduction  
up to 15% by 2024



**Dirk Van Thielen**  
Business Unit Director  
Animal Nutrition





## The reduction of nitrogen emissions is a priority for Arvesta

### AMBITION

Arvesta leads its sector (via BFA - Belgian Feed Association) in making the transition to animal feeds with lower crude protein contents in order to reduce nitrogen emissions. It is our ambition to achieve a reduction of almost 10% for the entire livestock farming sector by 2024 with pig and poultry feed alone.

For cattle, we are seeking cooperation with dairies and slaughterhouses to reduce the overall protein content of rations. With the reduction of crude protein in pig and poultry feed, together with adjustments in cattle rations, the overall global nitrogen reduction from these feed measures could be as high as 15%.

### ACTION

#### **Animal feed is part of the solution**

In recent years, much attention has been paid to limiting the phosphorus content in low-nutrient feeds in an effort to reduce phosphorus emissions. The aim is also, at the same time, to reduce nitrogen emissions. Nitrogen is produced when the proteins required in animal feed are digested.

In order to reduce nitrogen emissions, it is important to adopt a global approach consisting of feed measures, management measures (e.g. low-emission spreading of manure, reduction of stall stocking density) and low-ammonia emissions stalling systems.

“The reduction of nitrogen emissions is a real priority for Arvesta. We are the industry leader in this area thanks to our own R&D activities. By way of animal feed, we ensure that nitrogen emissions are effectively reduced. We do this by reducing the crude protein content of the feed, which results in less nitrogen being emitted. In addition to this, we must also make a distinction between pig and poultry feeds on the one hand and cattle feed on the other. For pigs and poultry, we are aiming for a total reduction of nitrogen emissions of almost 10% on the total emissions due to livestock farming by 2024.

For cattle, we must move to a chain approach, because there the mixed feeds make up only a limited portion of the global rations. In this case, too, we can shift to feeds with a lower protein content, but the global ration must also have a lower protein content. This can only be achieved in consultation with the purchaser of the farmers' end products, namely the slaughterhouse and the dairy. If we use the chain approach to successfully shift to rations with a lower crude protein content, then nitrogen emissions from livestock farming can be reduced by 15%.”

*Dirk Van Thielen, Business Unit Director  
Animal Nutrition*



a reduction of 250,000 tons  
of CO<sub>2</sub> by 2025



**Evy Jacobs**

Marketing Manager  
Animal Nutrition

# We are taking a holistic approach to greenhouse gas emissions

**by achieving a reduction of 250,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> by 2025**

## AMBITION

One of Arvesta's broader ambitions is to help our partners reduce their emission of greenhouse gases. The goal is to move towards a full set of measures that allow the farmer to produce as sustainably as possible. We currently do this through two concepts, Euroclim and Haspargit. A third concept concerning carbon farming is in full development, while other innovative greenhouse gas-saving solutions will follow. With such innovative solutions, Arvesta can achieve more than just a drastic reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, we can also support the farmer in marketing sustainable and profitable products with added value for the consumer.

## EUROCLIM ACTION

### Up to 30% less methane emissions thanks to Euroclim animal feed

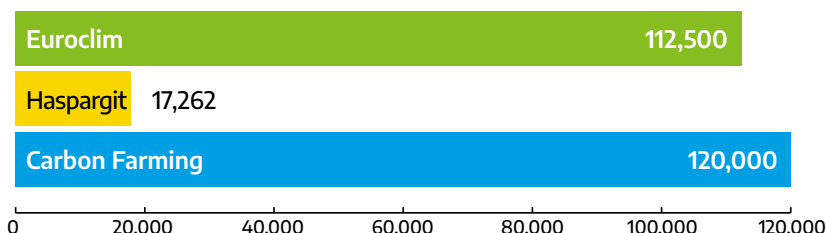
Methane is a greenhouse gas, and livestock farming is the main source: methane is produced during the digestion process of ruminants. Most of the gas is exhaled by the cow through the nose, a smaller part is released through manure. The share of methane in greenhouse gases may only be 6%, and Belgian agriculture and horticulture may be responsible for "just" 10% of the greenhouse gases produced by our country; however, methane is 25 times more harmful in the short term than CO<sub>2</sub>, so any reduction will have a major impact.

"This is why methane reduction is an absolute priority for Arvesta. Our Euroclim feed boasts a reduction in methane emissions: up to 30% from beef cattle and up to 15% from dairy cattle. Our ambition is to achieve at least 50% of Arvesta's dairy cattle customers in Flanders working with a methane-reducing feed or additive by 2025. The day that all beef and dairy cows in Belgium are fed with Euroclim would mean a reduction of 225,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, which corresponds to an annual reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions equal to the emissions of 130,000 cars."

*Evy Jacobs, Marketing Manager Animal  
Nutrition*

## Annual CO<sub>2</sub> reduction in tons/year

Forecast 2025





## EUROCLIM AMBITION

**Arvesta's ambition with this innovative animal feed is not limited to a reduction in methane emissions**

"We are proud Arvesta has not simply chosen to be the first in the market to introduce a feed (Euroclim) that contributes to the Vlaamse Convenant voor Enterische Emissies Rundvee [Flemish Covenant for Enteric Emissions from Cattle] and increase profit for the farmer, but they are also daring to go further. On the one hand, Euroclim feed demonstrates our ambition to use raw materials that do not compete with food for humans. On the other hand, the use of European raw materials means soy associated with deforestation of the Amazon forest is not used, which potentially means a reduction of another 4 to 5 times more greenhouse gases."

*Quinten De Witte, Innovation & Sustainability Manager*



**Quinten De Witte**

Innovatie &  
Sustainability Manager



**Yannick Hardy**

Product Manager  
Pomagro

## HASPARGIT ACTION

**Haspargit fertiliser achieves a CO<sub>2</sub> reduction equivalent to the annual emissions of 10,000 cars**

"Haspargit is an innovative fertiliser for crop farming and is mainly used for potatoes, vegetables and beets. The innovation is as follows: Haspargit saves energy during production compared to a classic fertiliser. Haspargit is actually not a traditional fertiliser, it is a circular product produced with by-products from the food industry. The nutrients in these residual flows are recovered and re-valorised for agriculture and horticulture. Nutrients from and for crop farming. In 2020, Arvesta affiliate Pomagro produced enough fertiliser for approximately 60,000 ha of agricultural land in Belgium, as well as the Netherlands, France and Denmark. For 2020, this resulted in a CO<sub>2</sub> reduction of 17,262 tonnes, the equivalent of the annual emissions of 10,000 cars. In addition to the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, the use of Haspargit also contributes to the transition towards a circular economy and sustainable crop farming because there is no need to mine non-renewable raw materials."

*Yannick Hardy, Product Manager Pomagro*

## CARBON FARMING ACTION

**120,000 tonnes reduction due to fewer CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and more CO<sub>2</sub> capture; and excellent motivation for continuing with CO<sub>2</sub>-efficient farming**

Farmers can keep CO<sub>2</sub> emissions under control in two ways: they can emit less CO<sub>2</sub> and/or they can store more CO<sub>2</sub>. Carbon farming is an agricultural practice that contributes to this. The role Arvesta wants to play in this is crucial. We want to build a certified traceability system that measures the result of efforts to reduce greenhouse gases by the farmer and offer rewards in the form of carbon credits, which can be commercialised by Arvesta on a large scale. This would mean greenhouse gas-efficient business operations would be an extra source of income for the farmer. Moreover, many of these practices also contribute to improving the soil condition in the long term, resulting in profit on several fronts. The ambition is to use this method to reduce emissions and/or store 120,000 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> by 2025. Arvesta is currently working on getting the carbon credits system certified in collaboration with other European agricultural cooperatives.

*Carbon farming with flowers amongst the crops →*

## ACTORS

Arvesta has joined everyone involved in the greenhouse gas story: farmers, the European arable farming industry, the food industry, governments at different levels (to get agreements on environmental objectives, e.g. the European Green Deal, the Flemish Covenant for Enteric Emissions from Cattle) and the consumer.







Hier groeit  
plezier





For our planet:

# **Sustainable entrepreneurship**

Together with our employees, partners,  
and customers, we work on sustainable, safe,  
and high-quality solutions and services.



# Taintstop, the animal-friendly alternative to castration

## AMBITION

3 to 5% of the meat of boars has a distinctive odour if they are not castrated. To counteract the typical boar taint in pork, the following options are often used: surgical or chemical castration, or the selection of boars with a distinctive odour on the slaughter line. But these solutions are neither animal-friendly or conclusive and feasible. Taintstop allows Arvesta to offer a natural feeding alternative that keeps boar taint to a minimum, making chemical or surgical castration unnecessary. Feeding the boars this natural feed two weeks before slaughter is sufficient.

**Our ambition is to provide meat from non-neutered animals to as many end consumers as possible. By 2022, we want to have Taintstop mentioned in the production specifications of one large retailer and thus help farmers find an animal-friendly solution.**

## ACTIONS

“Dumoulin of Arvesta came up with this at the beginning of 2017: Taintstop, a feed that avoids boar taint without neutering. We have been busy refining Taintstop to meet pig genetics over the past few years, and we have also been raising awareness among retailers, farmers and end consumers.”

*Werner Reuter, Director Nutritional Solutions*

## RESULTS

The specifications published in 2020 “Le cochon bien-être”, homologated as “Qualité Différenciée”, focus on stopping castration and utilising Taintstop. It now only accepts intact (non-neutered) boars that have been fed Taintstop. The meat products from those animals will be on the Belgian market from the summer of 2021.





## Arvesta is a forerunner in the sector when it comes to reducing antibiotics

### AMBITION

Using an antibiotic-medicated feed on sick animals is an adequate solution: the dosage is correct, the mixture is homogeneous, and the production is professional. But, because treatment is administered per pen, the feed also reaches healthy animals or animals that do not need it. The problem here is that resistance to antibiotics has become a global concern and must be reduced. Arvesta's ambition is to achieve 0% antibiotics in animal feed by 2028, which is 2 years faster than the sector's ambition. Produce good food by developing good feed.

### RESULTS

Arvesta is already a forerunner in the sector today: in 2020, we saw an 80% reduction of medicated feeds being used (based on active substance) compared to 69% in the sector. The Antimicrobial Consumption and Resistance in Animals vzw (Amcra), knowledge centre of feed and food stakeholders in Belgium set out its ambition in Vision2024 by aiming to reduce the use of antibiotics by 75% in 2024 compared to 2011. Arvesta started antibiotic reduction in 2011 and has already exceeded the Vision2020 target (50% reduction) and has therefore already achieved the Vision2024 target.

### ACTIONS

#### **The ambition of 0% antibiotics requires simultaneous effort on prevention**

"Antibiotic reduction goes hand in hand with prevention. Arvesta is therefore strongly committed to raw material selection, raw material control, and production stability. We continuously monitor the (hygienic) quality of raw materials in our own lab. We make it as easy as possible for our farmers by offering young animals a sophisticated feed line with three consecutive feed types. And we continue to optimise these feeds. We count on the knowledge of our experts and the experience we gain – by continuing to develop and produce

tailor-made feeds on the one hand, and through feed trials on the other. The aim is to use natural ingredients to increase the animals' resistance at the intestinal level by manipulating the intestinal flora and good bacteria, which is a much more sustainable solution. At the same time, it is very important to use our experts – veterinarians, nutritionists, agricultural and horticultural professionals – to advise farmers and raise awareness about biosafety, vaccination and genetics. There is no single solution for antibiotic resistance, which is precisely why we have to be innovative on several fronts."







# Energy monitoring: every kilowatt hour is counted/counts



**Geert Van Hurck**  
Lead Utilities



**Cedric Jacobs**  
Indirect Procurement  
Manager

## **AMBITION**

### **We will continue to focus on more energy-efficient production**

Every year, Arvesta produces a report of the Energy Performance Index (EPI) for each energy-intensive location, which shows how well a location uses the available energy. For our largest energy consumer, Aveve Animal Nutrition in Merksem, we now use almost 20% less energy compared to 2005 for the same amount of animal feed. We want our continuous monitoring to make our work even more energy-efficient, and it is paying off.

## **ACTION AND RESULTS ANIMAL NUTRITION**

“Arvesta Animal Nutrition registers the energy consumption for each product category separately – grains, meal and flakes. We analyse each result that does not meet the expectations until the exact cause has been found. The cause may be a positive one, e.g., optimising the quality of a product can require more energy. Quality gains and energy consumption can then be weighed against each other.

In any case, we are constantly monitoring, which means we can adjust our processes and strive for maximum efficiency. 70 to 80% of the energy consumption at Arvesta comes from Animal Nutrition, so it is important to stay on top of it. We have been doing this follow-up activity for 18 years now. The big energy savings have already happened, but every detail counts. For example, Arvesta has taken 20 concrete energy-saving actions in the past 3 years. One of these is the purification of water for steam production before the steam boiler instead of in the steam boiler. Result: 156 litres of water do not need to be reheated from 15 °C to 165 °C, resulting in gains in natural gas consumption. The most recent action is the installation of a new compressed air power plant in Aveve Animal Nutrition in Merksem, from which we expect to see a reduction of 154 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>/year through lower electricity consumption.”

*Geert Van Hurck, Lead Utilities*

## **ACTIONS AND RESULTS AVEVE**

“Out of the 50 Aveve self-operated shops, we have investigated which ones are suitable for solar panels. And in 2020, solar panels were installed on 17 stores (as well as on the production site at Aveve Seeds). We now produce our own green energy here, and what we do not use, we inject back onto the net. We also started a pilot project (Nanogrid) in 2019 to centrally monitor and control the consumption of gas and electricity in stores. Our ambition is to control the heating in our stores to the degree and not have one single bulb – all LED – on for one second too long! In 2020, the project was expanded to 10 stores.”

*Cedric Jacobs, Indirect Procurement  
Manager*



20% of all our commercial vehicles  
will be hybrids/electric by 2024

## On the way to fewer kilometres and reduced CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

### AMBITION

Thanks to the Mobility Plan 2021, everyone at Arvesta will make a very concrete contribution to CO<sub>2</sub> emission reduction because they will be able to consciously choose whether and how to move around. **By 2024, 20% of all our commercial vehicles will be hybrids/electric.**



**Perihan Silay**  
Reward Manager

### ACHIEVEMENTS

Arvesta reimburses subscriptions to public transport in full; those who come to work by bicycle receive the maximum bicycle allowance; and we corrected the reimbursement for the use of the private car from a flat rate per month to a flat rate for every day worked. In Arvesta's mobility vision, the car is not king; we are also looking at other solutions. One of these came from an unexpected corner in 2020: working from home. Working from home has evolved from an exception to a mandatory corona measure, to a well-deserved place in a hybrid work form, which we intend to keep at Arvesta. Teleworking works, and it includes a mobility solution. **In 2020, our people used 40-50% less diesel in their passenger cars compared to 2019.**

### ACTION

"Sustainability is an automatic parameter when it comes to Arvesta's unified car policy. When deciding upon the type of car wanted, the lease cost is not the only consideration. "Total cost of ownership" is taken into account and automatically leads to CO<sub>2</sub>-favourable options, and therefore choices.

But Arvesta will not limit itself to that; we intend to develop a long-term vision for mobility in 2021 in line with the sustainability strategy. To this end, we will investigate which sustainable solutions work for Arvesta and the time frame within which we can implement the solutions. We want to make everyone aware and involved in this. Arvesta wants to achieve two goals: **sustainability** and the **flexibility for Arvesta experts to choose** sustainable mobility solutions. The first steps have already been taken. On the one hand, we analyse the requirements and on the other, we analyse the market to get the best deal, detailed in a Flexplan. The bicycle pilot project for employees at the Merksem and Aalter sites is already a first test."

*Perihan Silay, Reward Manager*





Already > 50% of raw materials transported over the water

## AMBITION & ACHIEVEMENT BY ROAD

“Our ambition for 2020 was to maximise the volumes per trip to 25.3 tons. We reached almost 25.5 tons/trip.”

*Dave Vervoort, Supply Chain Planning Director*

### Our trucks run fuller and shorter

“For the optimisation of road transport, we are making efforts in all areas:

- Our planning focuses on kilometre efficiency and on coordinating deliveries and deliveries.
- The multi-purpose production in our 14 animal nutrition sites makes it possible to deliver orders from locations as close to the customer as possible.
- Our drivers receive training in efficient driving.
- External freighters receive a tariff that rewards efficiency for kilometres driven and for avoiding empty runs.
- We are launching incentives for customers to accept larger deliveries per unloading location.
- Extra-Arvesta: we are striving to achieve joint optimisation of our transport requirements with other production companies.
- In future tenders, Arvesta will take account of the ecological footprint of the invited suppliers by asking them to complete a questionnaire so we can compare the answers and make an objective decision that is not just based on price alone. This is how General Procurement wants to contribute to achieving Arvesta's CO<sub>2</sub> targets.”

*Henk Declerck, Procurement Specialist*

## AMBITION AND ACHIEVEMENT OVER THE WATER

**More than 1.3 million tons of raw materials are transported by ship annually**

Waterways are an excellent method of sustainable transport to our production sites. We transport 50% of the raw materials for the production of animal feed (900,000 tons), 57% of the cereals, and 49% of the solid fertilisers of Agri & Horti (228,000 and 110,000 tons respectively) by water every year. Water transport is a strategic choice that yields a 50% gain in our ecological footprint. We continue to work to further increase that.

“To achieve this, Arvesta is building a network of sites along the Sambre, Maas and Scheldt rivers. In 2020, we were able to add another important link to the border with France: A depot at Pecq, a major project that was started in 2011, is good for 10,500 tons of flat storage space, 11,000 tons of silo storage, and a goods handling capacity of 300 tons/hr.”

*Ricardo Pacico, Marketing Manager Agri & Horti*



**Henk Declerck**  
Procurement Specialist



**Ricardo Pacico**  
Marketing Manager  
Agri & Horti









For our society:

# Care for our people and consumers

We work together for the well-being and safety of our employees.  
We strive for the best customer experience through our expertise  
and are committed to sustainable consumption.



Towards zero accidents at work



**Paulien Hofmans**  
EHS Officer Arvesta

  
**ATTENTION  
=  
RESULT**

## All together towards zero accidents at work

### AMBITION

“Zero accidents at work, this ultimate goal of Arvesta’s EHS policy is as clear as it is ambitious. Anyone who leaves home for work healthy and well should be able to return home healthy and well after the working day. One accident is one too many. We did, however, agree on a path to achieve this ambitious target with clear objectives to which the sites are committed, because it is important to be realistic. The danger is to end up with a culture of concealment, which would be detrimental to achieving the results we ultimately want.”

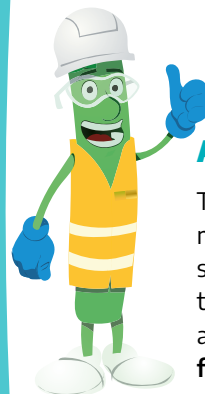
*Paulien Hofmans, EHS Officer Arvesta*

### ACTIONS

#### Sharing and discussing information creates attention and results

If the theme of safety is to be a priority in day-to-day operations, it must be treated that way. This starts with talking about mistakes, as well as best practice. At Arvesta’s animal feed sites, this is structurally embedded in our way of working:

- Each production and/or logistics meeting starts with safety.
- Every week, the prevention advisers from different sites hold a (virtual) meeting for half an hour to share safety issues from the past week; after which they take the information to plant managers who pass it on to the people on the shop floor.
- Four times a year, we boost the safety theme through a communication campaign about a specific safety theme, supported by all kinds of communication tools (posters, stickers, etc.)
- To measure is to know: every accident, accident that causes absence, first aid intervention, near-accident, incident with third parties or other safety issue is registered, no detail is ignored.



### ACTORS

The prevention advisers, plant managers and EHS Officer are simply facilitators. Safety and the objective to achieve zero accidents at work is **a matter for everyone.**

### ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2020, the **number of accidents at work at Arvesta Animal Nutrition decreased by 30% in one year.**

### LESSON TO SHARE

If you want to make something a priority, make sure it’s always at the top of everyone’s mind. Think about it, talk about it, share experiences.





Fit@Arvesta, 100% participation



## FIT@Arvesta for everyone

### AMBITION

Fit@Arvesta is an online platform Arvesta set up to promote health and well-being for its employees. We are professionally supported in this by Energy Lab. However, they are only facilitators; the real success of Fit@Arvesta lies with the people. They are the ones who, stimulated by Fit@Arvesta, achieve small and large goals concerning exercise, nutrition and sleep.

### ACTORS

Fit@Arvesta is not aimed at marathon runners – although they too will find like-minded people here – every employee belongs to the target group. About 500 employees were registered in 2018; now there are more than 1000. **A 100% adoption rate is the ambition.** This is why we keep the threshold low and the offer wide.

### ACTIONS

#### Walk to the moon together

Every year, Fit@Arvesta makes a sporty start with a programme of four challenges in which colleagues can get together in teams of 3 or 4 to participate. We set ourselves an imaginative, common goal, our “global challenge”. In 2020 we walked from the earth to the moon together. A goal we achieved with flying colours.

Not all initiatives are do-it-yourself initiatives; awareness raising and information are equally important. For example, a webinar about healthy sleep was delivered by sports coach Paul Van Den Bosch; a session on nutrition by sailor Evi Van Acker, etc. The approach is professional, the speakers and supervisors are too, but the threshold for the participants must remain low. By the way, the offer is only a first step, employees can introduce initiatives themselves.

### RESULT

*Lore Coomans, Content Manager:*

“Fit@Arvesta has the additional positive effect that you suddenly have very different topics of conversation to discuss with your colleagues than just work.”

*Jolien Eeckhoudt, Store Manager:*

“Fit@Arvesta is a place where we connect with each other. And this can be with people you do not work with, but with whom you share an interest – sometimes surprisingly.”

### LESSON LEARNED

The biggest challenge for a platform like Fit@Arvesta is: how do you reach everyone? Reaching our 2000 Experts in the field requires a permanent, conscious effort. This is the case for all communication, projects and goals at our company.



**Lore Coomans**

Content Manager



**Jolien Eeckhoudt**

Store Manager

# At Arvesta, we want to become the employer reference for the agriculture of the future



**Tracey Serruys**  
HR Business Partner



**Luna Daenen**  
HR Officer

## AMBITION

Arvesta is a unique knowledge centre in agriculture and horticulture, with 2000 experts and the ambition to continuously make a difference. It makes Arvesta the ideal place to discover and develop their passion. We want to offer this opportunity to as many people as possible, from vocational training to university studies. There is one important condition: candidates must share our drive. We will turn these high-potential individuals into the best performers, and we want to cultivate them to become Experts in the field.

## ACTIONS AND RESULTS

“Arvesta takes students under its wing every year in the form of a school internship, dual learning, as a study-relevant part-time job, as a voluntary intern, through YouthStart vzw that helps socially-vulnerable young people, etc. We have collaborations with various (secondary) schools and universities where students learn the theory. They then come to the right place to put their knowledge into practice. Even during the year of corona, we guided around 100 trainees and students in dual learning with their first work experience.”

*Tracey Serruys, HR business partner*

## ACTIONS – IT DOESN'T STOP HERE

### High-potential programme for generalists and specialists

“In 2019, four newly-graduated bio-engineers joined a 19-month Young Graduates Programme at Arvesta. In 2020, all four of them found a position with us that suits them best. We too learned a lot from the process, and it initiated a new story: we will roll out the Young Graduates Programme and broaden it into a High Potentials Programme. We offer the participants a generalist path or a very specific track to turn them into seasoned experts.”

*Louise De Wulf, Talent Acquisition Lead*

## ACTORS

“We make sure new people really become part of the team they find themselves in. Inclusion is not a hollow concept. They cooperate, participate in the same training courses provided to our permanent employees, and they are given a role and the opportunity to make a difference. Because if we expect entrepreneurship, the talent must be given the opportunity to shine. We want them to believe their passage through Arvesta matters. Of course, this can only be achieved with the right mentor. And we can always find colleagues who are willing to coach young talent. The dynamics work in both directions.”

*Luna Daenen, HR Officer*





## Buy Belgian at Aveve: plants, flowers and food

### AMBITION

At Aveve, the customer enters and exits through Belgian catchment areas: 85% of all plants and flowers come from Belgium; our “local markets” have fruit and vegetables from our growers (and these can even differ by shop); as many shops as possible work with farmers from the neighbourhood; 90% of Aveve’s “Landelijk Lekkers” catchment area is Belgian. In addition, our baking mixes are made in our own Merksem production site. And a few small-scale tested short-chain concepts are ready to be rolled out. Belgian products are and remain an important focus of Aveve.

### ACTIONS

“More than the end customer realises, Aveve is playing the Belgian card. We will increase the percentage of “Belgian”, but we also want to involve our customers more by communicating more and better about our Belgian focus. We want to portray our local suppliers – crop farmers – to the end customer in a warm, more personal way. We do this by portraying the growers in the shops, on packaging, on our website, via social media, and through labels such as “Van bij ons”, as well as through collaborations with Belorta and Boerentrots, among others.”

*Christel Berings, Business Development Director Aveve*

### SPECIAL RESULT

Aveve wants to buy locally as much as possible, as long as Belgian growers can meet our demand. For 2020, we have 85% Belgian plants in our range.

### LESSON LEARNED

**Don’t forget to communicate about what seems obvious**

Consumers are becoming more focused on buying Belgian; after all, consumers rightly want to know where their food comes from. But this had been a theme for Aveve for a much longer time. Only we sometimes forgot to communicate clearly about it. Sometimes the obvious needs to be highlighted.



**Christel Berings**

Business Development  
Director Aveve



Aveve

Niamh  
-BAKE IT, LOVE IT-

Soezie  
lekker  
thuisbakken!

100% of consumer packaging of bread and baking mixes  
will be packed with the new, recyclable monoplastic film by 2023







**Annie Vermeire**

Quality Manager  
Aveve Flour



**Stijn Donné**

Director Aveve Bloem

# Recyclable is not enough

**enter Aveve Flour's, Niamh's and Soezie's innovative monoplatic**

## AMBITION

In parallel to the switch to the new packaging design, 100% of consumer packaging of Aveve Flour's bread and baking mixes will be packed with the new, recyclable monoplatic film by 2023. By that time, the baking mixes of Niamh and Soezie will also have a completely recyclable packaging. Niamh is a pioneer since today a large part of its packagings are already fully recyclable. In addition to more sustainable packaging materials, we are also striving to use less packaging, and a reduction of 10 to 20% should be possible.

## ACTIONS

"Aveve Flour manufactures all its bread and baking mixes at the Merksem production site. Aveve Flour had brand new packaging developed for these products. It not only had to be recyclable, it had to be much more. Aveve Flour does not want to make concessions in terms of quality and shelf life because that leads to food waste, which is at odds with sustainability. When it comes to food, sustainability is a complex matter. We have taken all aspects into account and have arrived at the best solution for our packaging: a monoplatic consisting of one type of plastic, making it more recyclable."

*Annie Vermeire, Quality Manager Aveve Flour*

"The consumer is the engine that drives Aveve Flour, but the consumer is also the target group that we, as experts, want to inform and raise awareness. The fact that plastic is being increasingly contested as a packaging material has accelerated our switch to the new packaging and has made us even more critical. This is because our consumers force us to reply to their demands. Having the answer is not even enough, we also have to be able to explain it and justify it. We can only do this with good, clear communication."

*Stijn Donné, Director Aveve Flour*

## ACTIONS - IT DOESN'T STOP HERE

The most sustainable packaging is the packaging you do not use. Arvesta is therefore conducting further research into options for reducing packaging, but without compromising on quality or shelf life. And this is not limited to flour, animal food packaging is also being critically reviewed.





# Looking forward

We are on the right track. We can definitely be proud of what we have achieved so far. More than ever, we are Stronger Together. Focus, simplification and specialisation, that's what we continue to strive for. Because that has ensured that we have evolved into a unified and, above all, more efficient organisation. And that can only benefit the farmer, horticulturist and consumer.

But we continue to look ahead. As a unique knowledge centre for agriculture and horticulture, we are determined to continue on this path. It is our ambition to be the sustainable and innovative partner of choice for farmers and horticulturists. We will therefore continue to act as a pioneer for the challenges we face in this constantly changing world. Cultivating new crops, optimising agricultural land thanks to vertical farming, concentrating on local crops, reducing CO<sub>2</sub> and nitrogen, analysing and correctly using data, and so on. We are part of the solution and together with our 2000 Experts in the field, we continue to help build the agriculture of the future every day.

*The Executive Committee*



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