

Diverting surplus dairy products to animal feed – and saving money



Arla Foods previously separated surplus packed milk and dairy products from their packaging and sent the liquid as waste to Anaerobic Digestion (AD) plants. As part of their Sustainability Programme they wanted a better use for the material, and to reduce the costs of separation and disposal. From 2014, Arla have worked with partners to find a way that prevented waste by sending the surplus food to animal feed, and achieved:

- 100% of surplus from Arla Foods' largest UK factory now goes to animal feed instead of to AD;
- A significant cost reduction compared with AD costs;
- A controlled and replicable process, that diverts the surplus products to a safe animal feed, and which is audited and approved by competent authorities.
- The project is on track to send over 1,000 tonnes per year to animal feed, and it is intended to roll out this process to other Arla Foods sites.

Arla Foods now collates the surplus packed products at their largest UK factory and the farmer collects two to three times per week, separating the food from the packaging.



"Arla Foods is the largest dairy processor in the UK, with one of the biggest and most complex sites. We are delighted to have worked with partners to divert our surplus products to animal feed which benefits both of our businesses and the environment"

Richard Laxton, Sustainability Manager, Arla

Summary

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[Process diagram](#)



Surplus packed product can result from labelling problems or other production issues. The previous process recovered some value through biogas production from AD but it was costly to Arla.

As well as sending packed product, if packaging was damaged, Arla Foods had also to try to pre-crush the packed products, separating as much liquid product as possible, send the liquid to an AD plant, and separate the packaging streams for onward recycling.

- This required additional labour and machinery, and incurred costs of transporting to the AD plant and the gate fees.
- Although some value was recovered through biogas produced at the AD plant, the environmental and economic benefits from using the material as animal feed are far greater.

The new process benefits both Arla and the farmer:

- Arla Foods now collates the surplus product into cleaned one tonne containers and the farmer collects these two or three times per week.
- The frequency of collection means that the product is still suitable for animal feed.

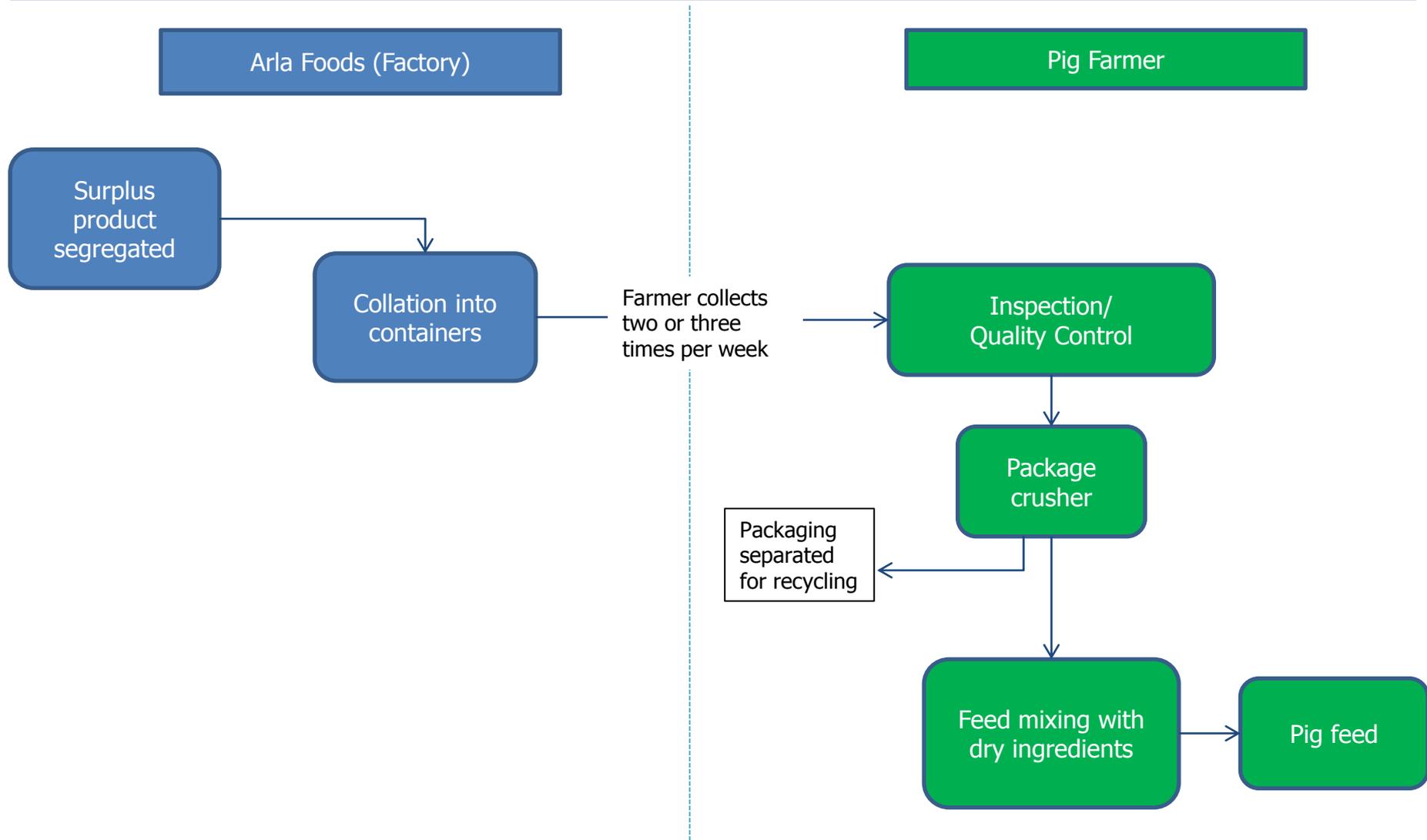
- With a consistent supply, the pig farmer is able to invest in crushing and washing equipment and separate the product which is then mixed with dry ingredients to make up the animal feed.
- The process is certified by the Animals Feed Material Assurance Scheme (FEMAS) which is the approved standard used by the Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC).
- Arla Foods has reduced costs involved in managing the surplus products while the farmer has a consistent supply of safe, nutritious feed which offsets the costs of collection and handling.

"This arrangement has to be right. We are keeping good food in the human food chain, and it's benefitting everybody"

W.Rigby Ltd (agricultural feeds and processors of food co-products)



The process has been refined to be robust and efficient



Process diagram

[Summary](#)

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Our mission is to accelerate the move to a sustainable resource-efficient economy through:

- re-inventing how we design, produce and sell products,
- re-thinking how we use and consume products, and
- re-defining what is possible through recycling and re-use.

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