

Collaboration

Tetra Pak adds remote training sessions to support dairy development

Tetra Laval Food for Development collaborates with Tetra Pak, the world's leading packaging manufacturer, in sharing dairy production expertise via Webex by Cisco

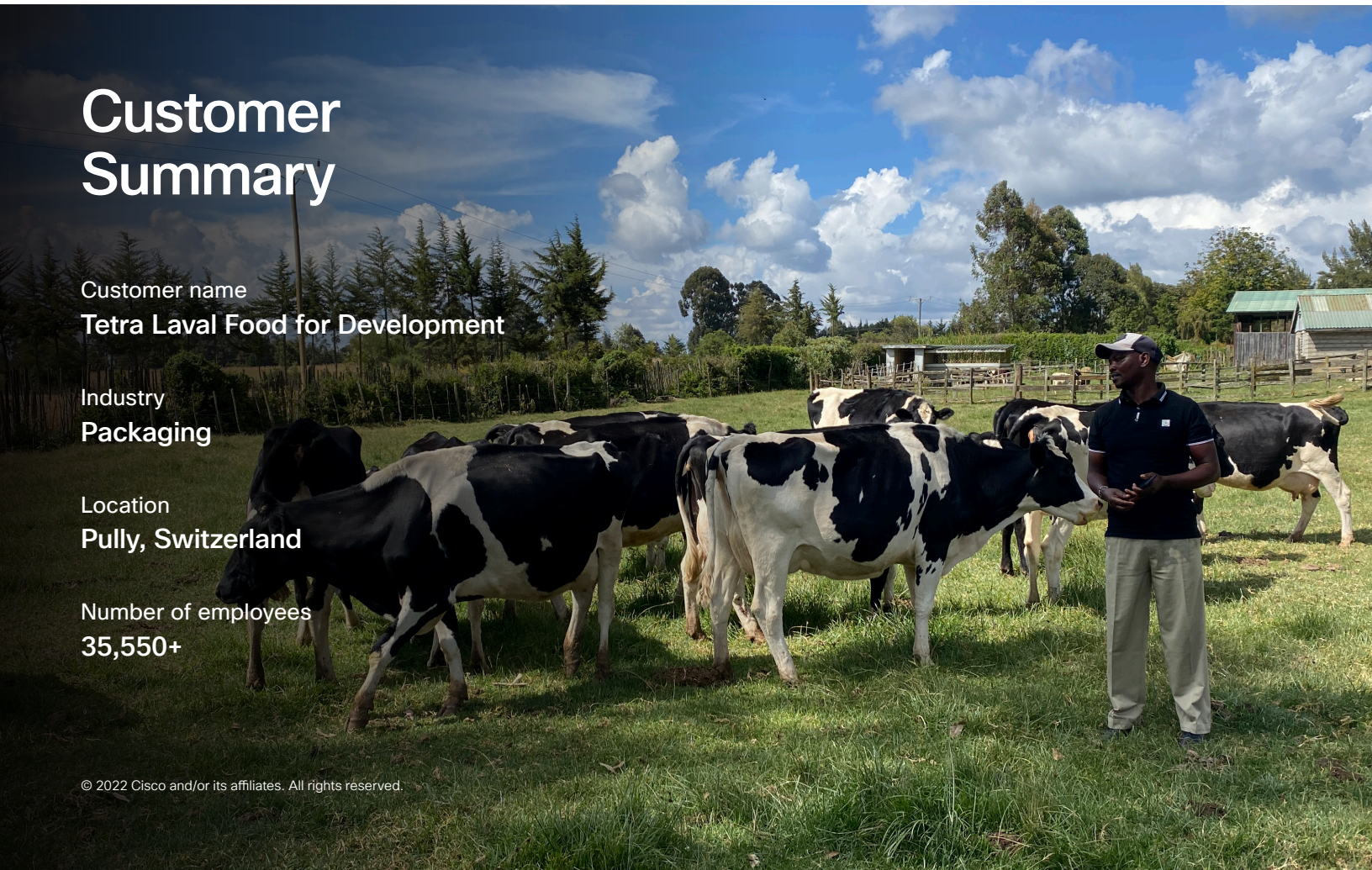
Customer Summary

Customer name
Tetra Laval Food for Development

Industry
Packaging

Location
Pully, Switzerland

Number of employees
35,550+





Challenge

Delivering remote training sessions with stakeholders worldwide during travel restrictions

Ensuring continuity of global dairy productivity projects



Solution

Workflows continue across Webex video meetings

Cloud-based platform to ensure scalability, reliability and availability

Real-time translation in Webex Meetings to overcome language barriers



Results

Elevated training experience with more global participants and greater collaboration

Reduced time and travel costs, redirecting resources to growing the program

377M

tons of milk were produced by smallholder farmers out of a global production of 920 million tons of milk²

Increasing smallholder farm yields

There are around 768 million chronically hungry people in the world.¹ Ways to address this challenge can include improving farm yields, reducing waste, organizing food distribution and supporting smallholder farmers with education and practical skills to realize greater income and profitability potential.

Tetra Pak is a global packaging leader working with processing customers, governments, non-government organizations (NGOs), farmers and schools. Tetra Pak and the Tetra Laval Food for Development team support local Tetra Pak staff and their customers to develop local dairy industries. This collaboration helps processors to develop their collection infrastructure and supplier management, and also smallholder farmers to improve their animal health, milk yields, and farm profitability.

“We needed to continue our training sessions, and we had to find a way that would work for us. This involved working with Cisco to utilize Webex for our specific global training needs.”

—Lynda McDonald, Project Manager, Tetra Laval Food for Development



“Transforming global food systems is no small undertaking. It requires long-term focus and system-wide collaboration from all stakeholders across the food value chain,” says Lynda McDonald, Project Manager of Food for Development at Tetra Laval, the parent company of Tetra Pak.

The Food for Development team supports local Tetra Pak teams and their dairy processing customers around the world in emerging countries, from Nicaragua to Senegal, to help improve local dairy infrastructure and supply chains, and to raise farm productivity.

For instance, milk yields per cow per day in the Netherlands are 25 liters compared to 0.6 liters in Senegal. Helping farmers maximize potential yields has traditionally been a ‘boots on the ground’ operation: Project managers travel to project locations around the world to meet with local Tetra Pak teams and processing customers. The Food for Development team meets with local Extension Officers (dairy farm advisors) and farmers. Farmers learn about best practices and appropriate solutions to local challenges.

“Before the pandemic, half my time was spent traveling,” says Romulo Alvarado, Project Manager, Tetra Laval Food for Development. “It is important we look our partners in the eye. We have to develop a trusted relationship.”

The effort is worthwhile. Tetra Laval Food for Development figures, gathered over a 60-month project in Bangladesh, show dairy yields up 143%, milk collection at a regional hub up 1,950% and average monthly income per farmer up 144%. A similar project in Nicaragua saw yields up 27% and income up 137%.

So, what happens when flights are grounded, countries are no longer admitting foreign visitors and travel to rural communities becomes next to impossible? The pandemic has disrupted lives globally, but it is the lives of the most vulnerable that are most at risk. The successful Food for Development Program faced new hurdles.

“The projects continue to have local resources in the country through the extension officers or farm advisors,” Alvarado says. “In normal times I would meet each of them every three months. That was now impossible.”

Accelerating Webex unites global teams

Tetra Pak and Tetra Laval Food for Development are both users of Webex by Cisco. Tetra Laval Group has more than 35,550 employees, which includes Tetra Pak, DeLaval and Sidel companies. The businesses provide sales and solutions in more than 160 countries globally. Even before the pandemic, the Food for Development projects needed a simple way to keep project groups connected and progress moving forward.



41%

of milk worldwide from
smallholder farms²

Working within the remote parts of the developing world has always required a flexible mindset, McDonald says. The team is used to finding workarounds to unexpected challenges.

“We needed to continue our training sessions and we had to find a way that would work for us,” she says. “This has involved working directly with Cisco, and our account person in particular, to utilize Webex for our specific global training needs.”

Webex ensures an equal experience for all participants, regardless of geography, language or communication style. It includes gesture recognition, noise reduction, custom layouts and automatic transcription. Meeting content can be recorded and shared internally with those who missed the session. For attendees dialing in from around the world, real-time translation in Webex Meetings allows users to instantly translate the meeting conversation to one of more than 100 different languages.

Maintaining the training momentum

For Tetra Laval Food for Development projects, Webex is instrumental in the successful continuation of global training and engagement. McDonald and Alvarado now conduct monthly training meetings with extension officers throughout the world. Documentation can be shared easily; attendees arrive at the meetings prepared and fully briefed.

“The beauty of the approach with Webex is that we can bring more people together, from different parts of the world, on the same meeting,” Alvarado says.

There is the obvious benefit in time savings, he says, and significant enhancements in collaboration. “We now have an environment where more people can share ideas, experience and insight, and learn from each other,” he says.



The real-time translation feature of Webex Meetings, he continues, has provided incredible value in breaking down barriers. Extension officers, who serve as farm advisors, can ask a question globally, in English, and have the answer translated in real-time to local languages, which helps drive engagement.

“Participants are more confident in taking part in the sessions, not simply sitting and listening,” Alvarado says. Relationship building remains at the core of training and community engagement, McDonald adds, and travel will resume when appropriate. “We’ve built our reputation on years of face-to-face engagement, and of listening to the reality on the ground.”

The future is not expected to be virtual only, but very likely more of a hybrid approach. Alvarado and McDonald will continue to travel, but trips may be less frequent. The time and cost savings may mean more resources for new projects.

Tetra Laval Food for Development hopes to scale up training and continue to initiate new projects in developing dairy industries.

“We’ve set up new projects in Bangladesh and the Dominican Republic within the last year,” Alvarado says. “It remains possible get things moving without traveling. Webex is great for providing a degree of eye contact and for maintaining the momentum.”

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Indeed, Tetra Laval Food for Development has shown a willingness to be flexible and to try new forms of engagement, which have helped strengthen relations with many local customers. Rather than visiting every three months, Alvarado and McDonald are meeting with managers and technical teams on the ground every few days. “Our local partners feel more involved and connected,” he adds.

For Alvarado, who works out of Madrid, and McDonald, in Stockholm, Webex has strengthened their own collaboration opportunities. “With all the traveling, it used to be difficult to get the project steering group together. With video calls, we meet and brainstorm more often and more consistently,” says McDonald. “It’s allowed us to have more robust conversations about the direction of the programs and really expand and strengthen the program training.”

Ultimately, this effort is all geared to increasing dairy yields and farm profitability. “By increasing production per cow, often by changing how we manage the farm, not by increasing costs, we can significantly impact the farm income and profitability,” she says, “and improve the farmer’s livelihoods.” She adds that the pandemic has been an undoubted challenge, but it has not derailed progress.

“I’ve spent more time with Romulo than anyone else during the pandemic, and we’ve only met once in real life before,” says McDonald. “More conversations means more engagement, which means we both collaborate and learn more. The necessity to work differently has been a hugely important time for the program. We’ve come out of it stronger.”

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02/22

¹2020 World Food Programme

²IFCNdairy.org 2020