

Arla further strengthens innovation in dairy sector

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As Arla Foods continues its pursuit to become one of the leading dairy innovators in the world, it is taking a bold new approach to innovation and new product development, including creating a new Product and Innovation organisation and appointing a new Senior Vice President.

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Hanne Søndergaard, Executive Vice President and CMO, explains that bringing together Arla's current product management and research and development functions, which includes new product development, will better leverage Arla's technologies and competences and develop its competitive strengths. Going forward the new organisation will be responsible for all product-related activities, which encompasses research and technology development, product development and management of all product and packaging changes.

"The new set up will enable closer collaboration with our commercial zones, markets and supply chain, ensuring that we are driving our global innovation and product agendas from the strongest possible position to maximise the value of our products," says Hanne.

"With the aim for half of our growth to come from innovation, it's a key element of our strategy and an essential element in our mission to create the highest possible value for the milk supplied by our cooperative owners," she adds.

Heading up the new organisation, from 1 April 2019, is Lars Dalsgaard, who is appointed as SVP, Product and Innovation. With 35 years of experience in Arla including six years in the UK, Lars has been instrumental in developing Arla's footprint both in cheese, Ingredients and UK. He is currently head of global supply chain manufacturing for cheese, butter and powder (CBP).

On Lars' appointment, Hanne says: "Lars has the perfect combination of skills, expertise and experience within the business and is passionate about taking both our innovation and product agendas to the next level."

Complementing the creation of the new organisation is the implementation of a new innovation model, which Hanne explains will double the impact in half the time.

“We will be more experimental, faster to market and roll out successes with speed. We’re also placing innovation leadership in market and global/zone brand teams who are closest to our consumers and customers.

“As one of the world’s leading dairy companies, we must be in a position to drive and lead dairy innovation on a global scale in order to increase the value of our products and create new business for Arla worldwide.”

The recent announcement is one in a series of strategic moves by Arla to drive and lead dairy innovation on a global scale. In May 2017, it opened its DKK 270 million state-of-the-art global centre for innovation in Denmark. It is home to some of the world’s most advanced technology within food development and the epicentre for innovation at Arla. More recently, in August 2018, it announced a EUR 36.3 million investment to create a second innovation centre in Denmark dedicated to research and development innovation within whey and milk based ingredients.