

Responsible Care case studies

Astellas – a journey towards sustainability

Eamonn Foley, Environmental and Health and Safety Manager at Astellas, talks about the company's pioneering approach to sustainability and their strides in energy self-sufficiency

Astellas Pharma, a global leader in pharmaceuticals, has a major presence in Ireland, with Plants in both Dublin and Kerry. Since it set up its facility in Killorglin, Co Kerry in 1992, the site's primary focus has been producing immunosuppressants and secondary packaging of biological products, employing over 400 staff.

Eamonn Foley, in his role as the Environmental and Health and Safety Manager, speaks about the site's sustainability initiatives.

Eamonn says, "The culture of sustainability at Astellas has been embedded since the early 2000s. The first initiative started when the Killorglin site implemented the environmental standard ISO 14001 in 2003 and continued through achieving ISO 50001 certification in 2011. It is not just about achieving the standards but also the continuous pursuit of excellence required to further promote change and ensure the sites long term sustainability goals"

Astellas' journey in Killorglin began with a vision to integrate sustainable practices into its core operations. This has led to significant achievements, such as a 98% reduction in CO2 emissions and a 70% reduction in the generation of non-hazardous waste since 2005.

The initiatives at Astellas not only benefit the environment, but also positively impact employees and the local community. Eamonn says, "One of industry's biggest challenges is to develop manufacturing processes that do not unnecessarily burden the environment and to develop sustainably within the local community. Astellas's proactive approach incorporates all of our key stakeholders our patient, our employees, our community and our company in the understanding of the need for the site to grow and expand but to do so

sustainably, reducing energy intensity and decoupling site activity from energy use, waste and carbon emissions.”

This consciousness extends to their latest projects and continuous improvement in waste management and energy efficiency.

Sustaining energy

Their journey toward this goal is marked by the adoption of innovative and sustainable energy solutions.

A key aspect of their sustainability strategy is their energy sources. “The biomass boiler is doing 98% of our thermal load, and all the biomass comes from within 50 kilometres of the plant and is harvested from FSC certified forestry”. This supports sustainable forestry and Astellas in partnership with Coillte saw the establishment of South Kerry Woodchip which provides 6 local jobs within the community.

An impact on the environment

As well as the Biomass boiler, Astellas also has a Wind Turbine and has embraced solar energy, installing photovoltaic panels on the LEED ARK building. These moves have provided a substantial portion of the site’s energy needs.

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“120kWp of Solar PV is installed on the roof of the ARK building providing 10% of that buildings electrical requirement. The wind turbine does about 20% of the base load here in Kerry and we’re up to 65% of our on-site energy coming from renewable resources.

“We’ve had a 95% reduction in our CO2 emissions since 2016. We implemented waste handling changes that enabled up to 80% of solid hazard waste generated to be incinerated in Ireland, and we reduced the amount of water we use per million units packed, by 40%.”

They have implemented the Water Stewardship programme and have Green Labs Certification, which certifies the company’s dedication to minimising the negative environmental impact of laboratory work.

Eamonn says so many companies in Ireland are now looking at the green space and the journey towards sustainability. Astellas’ energy self-sufficiency showcases the feasibility and benefits of these sustainable practices in the industry.

“We’re trying to show Ireland as a green hub, and that it’s a good place to do business where you have the ability to reduce your carbon footprint.

“Astellas have signed up to science-based targets for CO2 reduction and are looking at different sources of energy, so we can handle new products efficiently. The only sustainable development is no development, and that’s never going to sustain us. It’s about how we can do more with less, keeping our outputs high but keeping our inputs as low as possible.”

Eamonn adds, “Our increased investment in renewable energy sources underscores our commitment to a sustainable future.”

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**Eamonn Foley,
Environmental and Health and Safety
Manager, Astellas**