

Henrik Halken, Chief Operational Officer at Aller Aqua Group as well as member of the board at Aller Aqua Egypt and Aller Aqua Zambia is the person I had the pleasure to speak with during his visit to the Polish Aller Aqua factory in Golub-Dobrzyń.

He is the man responsible for all operations of the Group, for instance, procurement and assurance that Aller Aqua acts in line with the spirit of sustainable development. While staying in Golub-Dobrzyń, Henrik spared some time to talk to me about his role in the organization and how Aller Aqua fulfils the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations.

PR: Welcome to Poland, and we are glad that our office in Golub-Dobrzyń can serve as a "hot spot" for meeting with companies we cooperate locally.

HH: Hello, thank you. Yes, the primary purpose of my visit to Poland is meetings with representatives of locally active companies which supply us with raw materials. It's always good to meet face-to-face and talk about our further steps.

PR: That's right, especially since it has not been possible in recent years. What is your impression so far?

HH: Well, the first thing I noticed after getting off the plane was the heat wave. Generally, everything's okay. I like to be here very much because I fondly remember Poland. Did you know that I was the one to employ Jacek? (*Jacek Juchniewicz – CEO of Aller Aqua Poland*). I met him in 1990 when he came to Denmark for a training course for Polish fish farmers. Then we started working together, and the cherry on top of our activities was establishing our factory in Golub-Dobrzyń in 2001.

PR: What was the purpose of the Polish farmers' visit to Denmark?

HH: At Aller Aqua, we have always aspired to offer fish farmers a helping hand. Besides delivering the best feed, we support them with our know-how and courses. That was the case after 1989, after the fall of the Soviet Union. The Polish market opened its doors to the world, and Aller Aqua offered its support to Polish fish farmers who wished to work in aquaculture. That process lasts until today. The activities we conducted in Poland then, we carry out in Africa now. It perfectly fits in with our philosophy revolving around sustainability and, at the same time, aligns with goals set by the UN.

PR: That's true because even today, fish farmers look back at their cooperation with Aller Aqua with a smile. It's good that those farmers who remember the old days appreciate our collaboration and have stayed with us until today. On the other hand, we also offer such possibilities to the younger generations, and it's also appreciated, but the market has changed a lot, and not everything is as black and white as it used to be.

HH: You are correct, the world has changed in the last thirty years, but we are always open to taking up new initiatives with fish farmers.

PR: Can you tell me a little about the beginnings of our actions regarding the Sustainable Development Goals?

HH: Our business has always been about something more than just selling fish feed. Fish are part of the ecosystem, so fish farming should comply with principles which allow us to preserve that ecosystem. We were among the first fifteen companies in the world to start working with goals set by the UN. In Denmark, we were rewarded for that in 2017 when Hans Erik (*Aller Aqua Group President*) received the EY Entrepreneur of the Year Award. It's worth mentioning that leaders of 1361 companies were considered for the award.

PR: It is an awe-inspiring achievement and appreciation of Aller Aqua's input in its strivings to create sustainable aquaculture. Is there anything else worth mentioning regarding sustainability and Aller Aqua?

HH: I believe we do not have enough time to cover everything, but it's worth mentioning that we cut carbon dioxide emissions. Through our pro-ecological approach, we've reduced the generated CO₂ by 17%. Interestingly, the greatest amounts of that gas are generated while obtaining raw materials and not during transportation or production, which is the core belief of many people worldwide. We conducted tests, and it turned out that as much as 85% of CO₂ emission comes from raw material mining, 10% is created during transportation, and 5% is the outcome of raw material processing.

PR: It's a fascinating fact, and I agree that most people are unaware of that. What is the connection between that and Aller Aqua's reduction of CO₂ emission?

HH: In the past, we obtained most soybean from South America. However, we decided to change our way of conduct due to the deforestation of rainforests (which are "the lungs" of the Earth and absorb large amounts of the generated CO₂) to create new soybean farms. We started procuring raw materials locally, which translates not only into benefits for local suppliers and shorter delivery times but also into reducing the mentioned emission. Our actions were appreciated once again because we can now declare the reduction of CO₂ by 17% on our products as the first aquaculture feed company in the world!

PR: Apart from pure ecological goals, what sustainable actions do we take up?

HH: Education is another field in which Aller Aqua leads. In Denmark, we host seminars and sessions where we share our experiences and knowledge. The target group are our clients, to whom we communicate our vision of sustainable aquaculture, or young generations, in whom we want to "inbreed" the sensitivity to such matters. We also talk to journalists because we

believe we should always speak openly about such issues. Moreover, we offer local communities new opportunities by constructing our factories in Egypt and Zambia. Especially in Zambia, our factory opened up new workplaces for local inhabitants, who, by earning money, can send their children to school, and, who knows? Maybe in the future, they will come back to us as educated young people willing to develop sustainable aquaculture.

PR: I also believe that it is an essential aspect of activities extending beyond conventional business practices, and you are right, it is a kind of investment, both in the future of the local community, which gets to know our expectations by working with us, obtains knowledge and support, but also an investment in the future of young people, who are part of that community. Come to think of it, I believe it's the right moment to mention the Bylling Foundation, which is vibrantly active in such initiatives.

HH: Yes, that's right. The Bylling Foundation helps developing countries by offering all kinds of support. Be it constructing a school or hosting courses and sessions during which people are educated and made aware of various crucial matters.

PR: It's always nice to hear about such activities, and it's even better to belong to an organization which carries them out. Whether as an employee, a farmer, a non-government institution or a supplier cooperating with Aller Aqua. Then you feel that you are part of an organization, or a process, which leads to the creation of a better tomorrow. Thank you very much for talking to me, and until we meet again!

HH: Likewise, and see you soon!