

I wasn't expecting that!



Roger Gilbert

the lid fully on what our industry – food and feed milling in addition to others – is facing in the immediate future in terms of climate change and the work we will have to do to play a leading role in tackling the problem.

The 1000-plus invited customers plus Bühler staff from around the world (and invited participants who presented from the podium), faced the reality that our industry must step up and take responsibility for the reduction in its carbon footprint, with the goal of achieving net-zero by 2050. And that action has to start now at every mill.

However, this is the challenge we as an industry face – how to provide the food for 9.5 billion soles on the planet and yet eliminate the production of climate damaging gases at the same time? Yes, that is what we have to do if we are to avoid the disaster that has been forewarned by our scientific community.

Whilst we have been encouraged in the past to 'follow the money' we must now divert our attention and resources and 'follow the science!'

As invited press we were overwhelmed with the detailed program set up for us: the number and value of the presentations; the numerous press conferences that focused on almost every aspect of these challenges; the interviews with both company leaders and key presenters and the discussions with new partners and successful start-ups related to and supported by the company.

This conference dealt with the whole host of topics from

How could a company exceed its own high threshold of achievement so easily, yet it did and convincingly so. What I am talking about is the outcome of the Bühler Networking Days held in the last week of June.

The three days I spent with colleagues at the company's head office in Uzwil, Switzerland lifted

climatic change and sustainability, to the need to cut waste and reduce water and energy usage in addition to topics on leadership, plant-based protein foodstuffs, laboratory grown meats (that do not involve harm to the animal involved), new protein sources (including one from a carbon capture process) and the maintenance of bio-diversity.

We talked about human health, obesity, equality and poverty and the role our industries must play in all these areas. We heard from individual millers what they were doing to meet these challenges. The list goes on.

In all there were over 50 partnerships and start-ups announced and/or discussed in addition to lectures and presentations on topics from leadership, management, training, education and learning, from a range of industry CEOs or noted specialists in their fields.

This was a most stimulating event, an immersion in not only the technology that is milling today, and the advances being made in all areas of grain handling and processing – and should not to overlook the mobility sector of Bühler which is involved in vehicle component manufacture and battery processing technology – but covering all things interconnected with the jobs we hold in the production of our foodstuffs.

Has the message reached the production plant operators of the world?

Maybe not yet, but the impact of the Bühler Networking Days 2022 will be felt for many months, and it will bring about a greater understanding and recognition of the issue confronting us and provide the incentive to take action.

As I have said in the past and it was repeated in the conference hall – once you understand a situation you have an obligation to take

action. You may choose to take no action, but you will be held accountable for your decision at some time in the future.

As Bühler's CEO Stefan Scheiber says: The planet is not ours, we have only borrowed it from our children. Now is the time to take action and make an impact!



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