Knowledge for Sustainability
Stakeholder engagement at the local level

A significant amount of stakeholder engagement takes place at local sites with employees, suppliers, authorities, neighbours, community, trade unions and non-governmental organisations. This year, like last year, a questionnaire was sent to sites asking for details concerning their efforts in the sustainability area. Listed below are some of the results concerning stakeholder engagement:

- In Danisco India, immunisation of all factory personnel was carried out by the resident doctor. Regular safety meetings are held for employees, as well as training on handling chemicals.
- Danisco Chile conducts tours of the plant for school children, and arranges visits to other companies for its employees to increase knowledge-sharing.
- Since 1999, Danisco Brazil has dedicated one day per year to discussing improvements related to safety. This year’s Safety Day for employees covered safety at work, food safety, and environmental aspects. As part of the social integration of Danisco into the local community, computers are donated to educational institutions, and lectures are given to schools concerning environmental issues.
- Danisco Sugar Næskov educates its employees in environmental matters, and twice a year invites its neighbours from the local community to discuss the factory’s production and its environmental impact.

Malaysia Stakeholder Workshop - reviews and actions

In our 2002 Sustainability Report we mentioned the focus workshop which took place at our site in Penang, Malaysia. The stakeholder workshop focused on identifying and prioritising the following corporate responsibility areas:

- The workplace (HR development, health and safety at work)
- Product/Food safety
- Knowledge sharing
- Co-operation with authorities
- Environmental management

Danisco Malaysia has initiated and implemented a number of programmes in these areas, of which some were shared with SHEQ personnel at the SHEQ conference. Danisco is continuously discussing the development of internal and external workshops focusing on relevant issues for sites.

Danisco’s work in Armenia

In the spring of 2002, Dr. Lars Petersen from Danisco and Dr. Mickhail Chikindas from Rutgers University in the USA initiated contact with the University of Yerevan in Armenia. The reason for their contact was to explore the possibilities of collecting and analysing unique strains of dairy microorganisms that are used in the production of local dairy products in the rural mountain areas of Armenia. The aim was to determine whether these strains could be used in the fermentation of novel dairy products.

During their visit to the university, Dr. Petersen and Dr. Chikindas met with Professor Popov from the Department of Microbiology to discuss the possibilities of developing a project for collecting these strain samples. Eventually, a three-way collaboration was established between Danisco, the microbiology department at the State University in Yerevan and Rutgers University Food Science. A select group of students from Yerevan State University were then trained in collecting strains of lactic acid, cataloguing them, and finally recording their history and geographic location. After this process, the collected cultures are then shipped to Danisco’s dairy culture innovation group in Niebüll, Germany to be further characterised and evaluated for potential commercialisation. Since the inception of the project 100 isolated cultures have been received.
Some of the benefits of the project to the local community are:

- the funding of the project enables the students to earn money and the university to purchase much-needed equipment.

- the students are exposed to modern methods of research that give them valuable experience they can use in their future work for the local food industry.

- our contact with local food industries and households brings them to a new level of understanding of international standards of food quality and safety. This should also enable local businesses to produce high quality and competitive products for the country and this region of the world.

- a close working relationship has been established between the university and local industry, making both parties aware of the advantages of synergy.

Danisco has also benefited from the project. Some of the collected strains have been scaled up and will likely end up in new cultures for fermented milk/cheese. Danisco has also received a request to help the largest dairy/ice cream producer improve its products.

Danisco hopes that this project will enable local dairy products to compete against the arrival of standardised fermented milks on the market. At the same time, we hope that this cooperation will make local businesses more competitive and aware of opportunities both at home and abroad.

A farmer’s wife in northern Armenia giving a sample of Matsoni milk to a student from the University of Yeravan. The same bacterial culture has been used at the farm for more than 50 years.