

Brand new system version

ProLeiT AG will showcase a new version of its MES system Plant Integrate iT in Cologne

Plant Integrate iT from ProLeiT AG is a high-performance MES reporting and workflow management system increasingly used in the dairy industry. This key component of the Plant iT system has been given a completely new look for the leading global trade fair Anuga FoodTec in Cologne. The German company will present a brand new version of the system at this year's event.

Andreas Brülls, Head of Product Management at ProLeiT AG, said: „An excellent MES solution provides a standardised user interface to present key figures and critical information at a glance. It displays orders that are not running to plan and indicates any production process deviations. Ninety-nine percent of orders that run to plan are basically uninteresting, it's the one percent that doesn't go to plan that's of particular interest.“

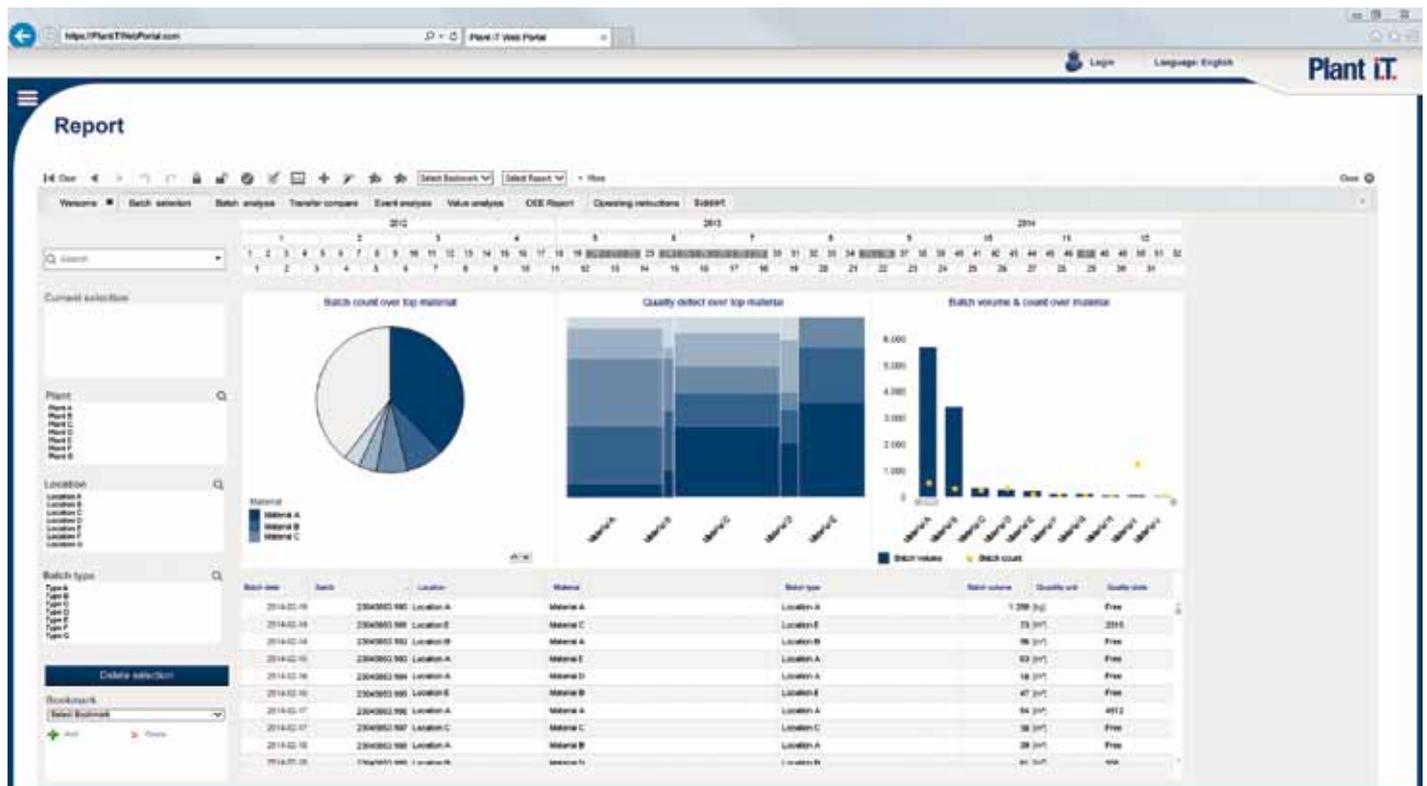
ProLeiT AG, which has been providing the food and beverage industry with process control systems for over 25 years, plans to cause a great deal of excitement at Anuga FoodTec in Cologne by unveiling a brand new system version. „Our MES solution Plant Integrate iT has been completely redeveloped – from the user interfaces to the data structure,“ says Dr Thomas Wunderlich, Head of the Dairy Industry Centre of Excellence at ProLeiT AG.

Production plant operators face numerous challenges today. Many of the available systems generate extensive data but fail to ensure its uniform, efficient and comprehensive presentation as actionable information. Paper documents, which are transactional, unreliable and susceptible misinterpretation and damage, are still regularly used at system interfaces. This naturally leads to multiple data input and manual management of various systems. A further aspect is the volume of data which all

these systems combined produce. More often than not, there is simply not enough time to comb through all this data to find the relevant information. Luckily, MES reporting and workflow management systems provide much needed help.

These systems are seen as essential and desirable for production plants since they enhance energy efficiency, reduce raw material and resource waste while improving asset utilisation. Speaking to the German trade magazine DMW – Die Milchwirtschaft,

Everything at a glance: The latest version of Plant Integrate iT records all the batch processes...



He claims it has never been easier or quicker to display such a huge amount of information in such a structured and concise way with just a few clicks. „Our technology allows us to generate real-time reports and dashboards and to display them in high image quality on PCs, tablets and mobile phones. A further key factor is that our new MES solution can be used with or without our process control system Plant iT.“ This is guaranteed by employing, among other things, standard Microsoft components (e.g. SSIS) with predefined interfaces to other systems. This ensures the new solution has a flexible and open structure for use in almost all production plants.

Andreas Brülls adds: “The solutions that I have seen during exhibitions at trade fairs or other commercial events fail to compete with our solution in terms of evaluation speed or reporting flexibility. The advantages are obvious and not just for dairy facilities; as our system allows users to create individual reports and evaluate production data. This real time information can be used to optimise production processes much faster than without an MES.” The system offers a uniform web-based user interface that can also be utilised on mobile devices. The proactive database structure means the displayed information is relevant and of interest to the system operator while increasing effectiveness



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Andreas Brülls

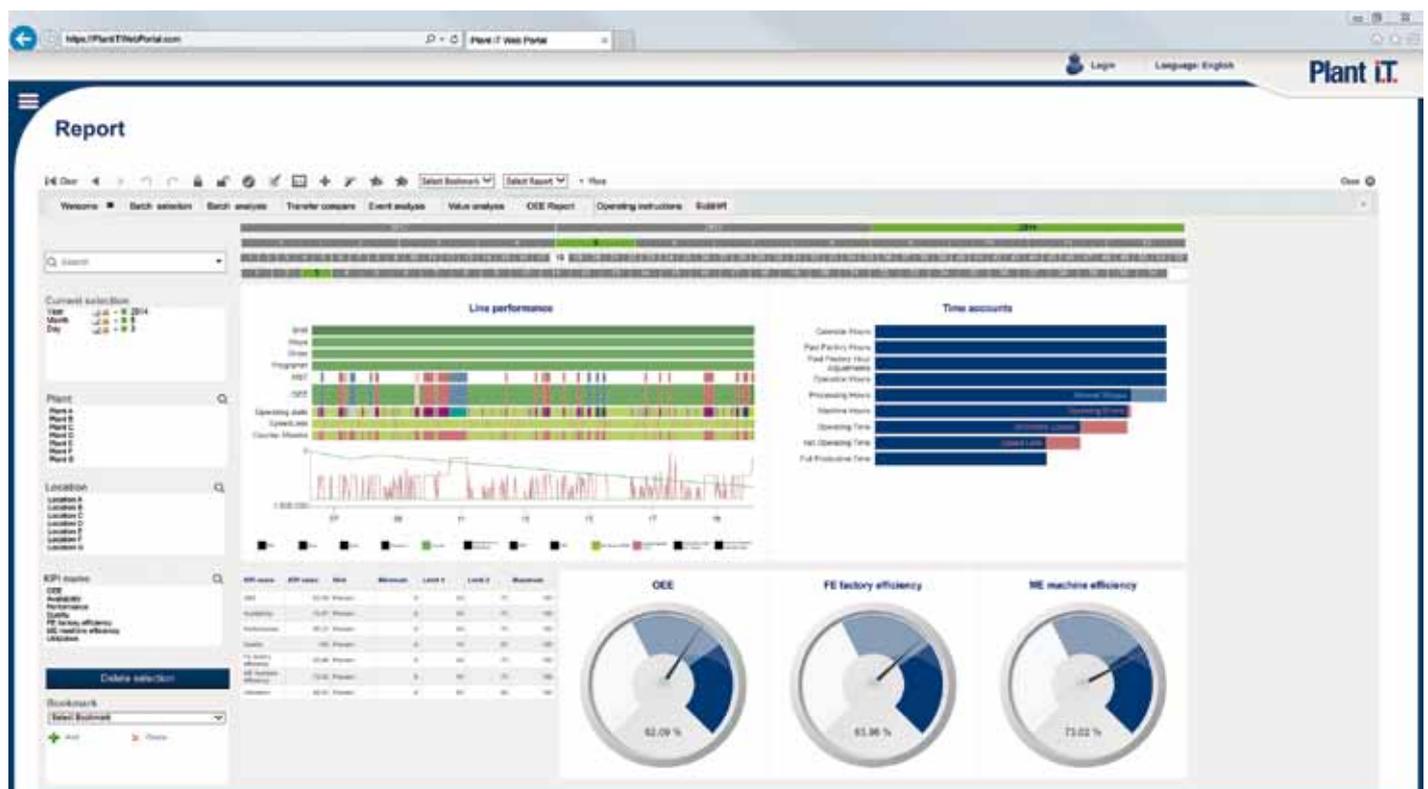
across the entire plant. Information can be transferred simply via a link or as an interactive report. ProLeiT customers have the ability to discuss and approve solutions and advancements where others fail to realise there is even a problem or a potential for improvement. It allows dairy facility operators to identify and respond to production

problems quickly and decisively. “This is the true benefit of the experience we have gained over the years. ProLeiT’s experience allows it to provide a fuller and more comprehensive project service than MES providers that address projects from a horizontal, neutral industry perspective.”

Cloud-based solutions, as yet, unrealised

The advantages outweigh any weaknesses by some distance. “It may not be possible to meet all the needs of all the customers all the time with our MES solution. Over the past few years, it has become increasingly apparent that our customers have different views of what an MES is there to do or should do,” says Andreas Brülls. Customers often only express a wish for further services during the commissioning phase. Prior to implementation, many people are unaware of just how positive an MES actually is. “It’s not always easy as the provider of a standard solution, but we have the ability to meet the most demanding challenges. What we cannot provide at the moment is a function for cloud-based solutions. This is, however, not currently of interest to the majority of operators in Germany due to the country’s strict data security and privacy policies.”

... as well as the performance of the individual production lines (photographs: ProLeiT AG)



Application with and without a process control system

A key aspect of Manufacturing Execution Systems (MES) is their seamless integration into the process control system. However, in spite of this fact, stand-alone use is often desired and – as stated above – also possible with the new version. “Plant Integrate iT is extremely flexible and can be integrated into almost all existing external systems. During the commissioning process, customers who already utilise one of our process control systems obviously benefit from the fact that the PCS offers all the required interfaces for the MES. Further, customers with our PCS also continue to use the consistent and familiar user interface to control processes via the MES. Apart from that, customers without a ProLeiT PCS profit from the exact same benefits,” stresses Andreas Brülls.

Last piece of the puzzle for the time being

The enhanced MES solution is the brand new and, for now, final part of the process control system Plant IT, which consists of five basic systems and two modules. “The other basic systems for production data acquisition and for controlling processes, materials and liquids were updated as part of the V9 release at the end of 2012. Redevelopment of the MES component took a bit longer as we wanted to ensure the right technology and the right partners,” explains Andreas Brülls. This involved the extensive testing of various systems. “Even though it took a little longer



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Dr. Thomas Wunderlich

than expected to arrive, the current version was definitely worth waiting for.”

And a lot of potential customers see it the same way. Dr Thomas Wunderlich says: “Besides demonstrating the potential of the new technology through a pilot project, interested dairy and cheese-making facility operators have been eager to learn more about MES. I have the feeling that dairies, in particular, have paid less attention to this area in recent years than other sectors of the food and beverage industry. We are therefore delighted by the increased interest and pleased to be able to offer an innovative and future proof MES solution.” The new MES solution has been in use at selected customers from

various fields of business since mid-2014. Nonetheless, the company still carried out a number of test projects to examine the level of acceptance and effective implementation of the new technology before any wider roll-out was considered. “Since one of these pilot projects involves a renowned customer from the dairy industry, Anuga FoodTec is a wonderful opportunity to bring these new and innovative features to a wider audience.”

Continuous further development

This latest innovation is obviously not the end of the story, as all the systems are being further developed all the time. To this end, ProLeiT runs its own development department with 20 staff at the corporate headquarters in Herzogenaurach, Germany. The development team is currently working on combining the basic functions of the individual systems. A major step in this direction is the bringing together of the two main products Plant Liqu iT and Plant Batch iT. From the company’s point of view, differentiating between batch and continuous processes from the operators perspective is not only outdated but also undesired. Andreas Brülls says: “We believe the process engineering method should be determined by the manner of operation and not by the software. In terms of software engineering and operation, another key factor is our tireless pursuit of ways to enhance and facilitate the software’s use and effectiveness.”

More space for dairy applications

The dairy industry will play an even more important role in the future for ProLeiT AG. Dr Thomas Wunderlich has become the head of the Dairy Industry Centre of Excellence and has seen the number of staff almost double. “There are a number of reasons for strengthening the department with new staff from the dairy and still beverage sectors. We see it is a strategic response to the increasing demand over recent years with the number of global investments in dairy processing increasing as result of the EU’s current plans to abolish the milk quota system.” Since our efforts to bring the Plant iT basic systems closer together, aligning our features with the Dairy Industries needs, increased manufacturers are recognising the value in using our integrated system for operating their mix of continuous and batch processes. ▲

NEWS

DSM's Delvotest T official antibiotic residue test in the Netherlands

DSM Food Specialties’ Delvotest T was chosen by QLIP, Dutch partner in quality assurance in the agrofood chain, as the national reference test to detect antibiotic residues in milk. The broad spectrum test was selected because of its high sensitivity and reliability. The test is fully compliant with Dutch dairy regulations, promoting a high quality milk supply throughout the whole dairy chain, from farmer to dairy to consumer. QLIP is commissioned by Dutch dairy companies to determine the composition and quality of farm milk samples. The analyses they perform meet the specific requirements of the official Dutch dairy regulations and detect the most relevant residues at or below the European Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs). Delvotest T is a broad spectrum test which identifies a variety of antibiotics at or below EU MRLs with higher sensitivity for tetracyclines than any other microbiological screening test. QLIP selected Delvotest T because the test is closest to the aimed detection level and because of its robust performance and consistent results. ▲



(photograph: DSM)