3.1 HOCHLAND AIMS TO REDUCE CONSUMPTION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

3.1.1. „LESS WATER”

PURPOSE: LIMITATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

KPI: reduction in water consumption by 1.5% per year
(base year 2017)

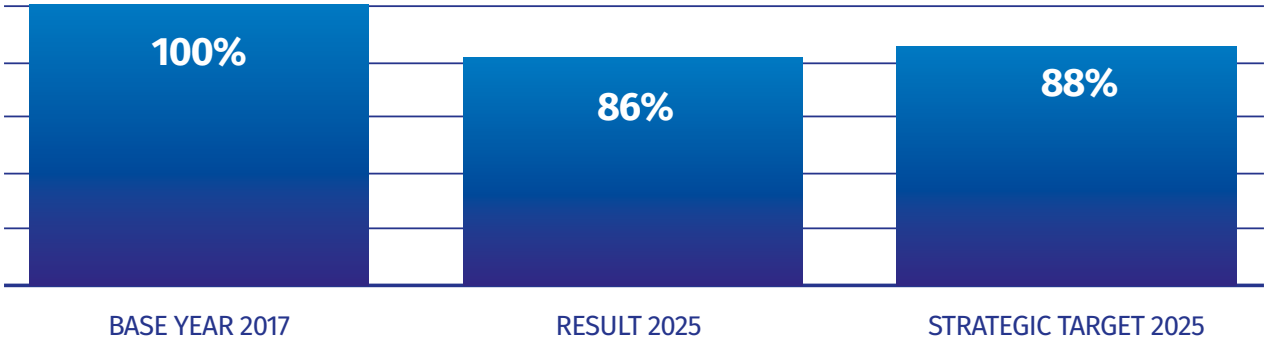
For years, Hochland Polska has consistently pursued a sustainable development strategy, in which the prudent management of water resources is one of its key pillars.

Despite the relatively low unit cost of purchasing water, its importance in the food industry is immense – both in terms of production safety and product quality. Water is an essential resource for maintaining hygiene, cooling, cleaning and industrial processes. Its availability and quality have a direct impact on production continuity and food safety.

It is still often underestimated as a resource, even though in practice, its cost should be understood as the combined cost of water supply and wastewater treatment. From this perspective, it becomes a significant item in the operating balance sheet of a plant, particularly in the context of increasing environmental requirements, energy costs and the need to ensure regulatory compliance.

Photo: Water treatment plant and deep well

Reduction of water consumption in Hochland Polska in year 2025 vs baseline year 2017 [%]



Plant	Permitted groundwater abstraction in accordance with the permit [m³/year]	Water consumption in 2025 [m³]
Kaźmierz	**85 000**	**43 534**
Węgrów	**600 000**	**534 409**

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The company has implemented a range of technological solutions reducing water, energy and chemical consumption in its production and cleaning processes.

Examples of completed projects:

1. Modernisation of the CIP system

The modernisation of the CIP (Cleaning in Place) system, which enables the automatic cleaning of production facilities, played a key role in achieving the environmental benefits. This system uses controlled rinsing and washing cycles, using carefully selected chemicals, temperatures and pressures, which enable the effective removal of contaminants while minimising the consumption of water, energy and cleaning agents.

New machinery and equipment are designed and installed with integration into the CIP system in mind, while older machines are incorporated into the system following prior consultation with the safety and product quality teams, in order to maintain the required hygiene standards.

2. Recovery of water used to cool the seals on VR melt tanks and product pumps, and its diversion to the condenser evaporation

A system has been implemented at the plant in Kaźmierz, used to recover the cooling water used to seal the melt tanks and product pumps. This water, once used for cooling, was previously discharged as waste water. It is currently being captured and redirected for reuse in the process cycle. Instead of being discharged into the sewer system, the cooling water is collected and used for evaporation in the condensers and replenishing the secondary water tank. It is important to note that this water, coming from the cooling process, it does not require any additional heating, which translates into energy savings.

Annual savings: 7,500,000 l of water

3. Automated washing of crates, buckets and pallets

The project involved two automatic chamber washers installed at the Kaźmierz plant, used for and with: small equipment and plastic pallets.

The washing process is carried out using a closed-circuit water system, followed by a rinsing cycle and finally by thermal disinfection. The automatically controlled and repeatable process ensures the correct quality and safety of the product by ensuring good microbiological parameters of the cleaned equipment.

Water and detergent consumption has been reduced to a minimum. The real saving is the reduced load of the sewage treatment plant and a reduction in water consumption by **2,062,000 litres**

Photo: Washing facility for auxiliary equipment, mobile pressure washers

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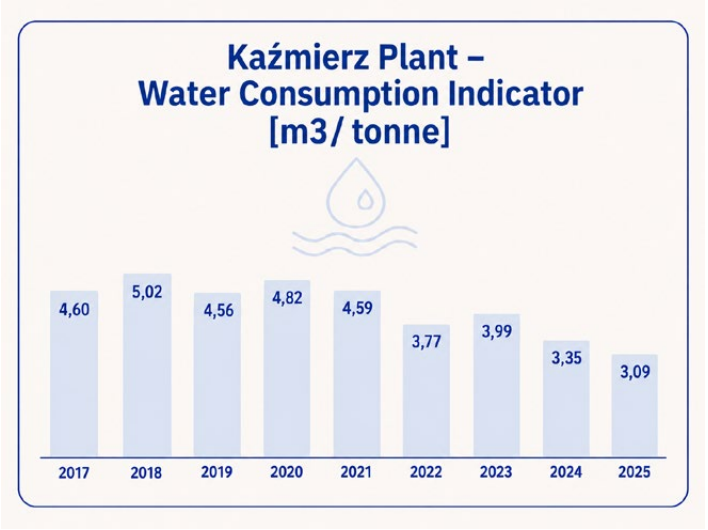
Best practices – real savings without major expenditures

But it was not just the investments that led to real savings. Organisational changes and ensuring that infrastructure is operated correctly can also yield significant environmental benefits, without the need for major capital expenditure. Hochland Polska knows this very well. The interdisciplinary collaboration of the production, technology and sustainability teams was a key element of success.



Resource conservation and awards

The results of the undertaken investments and initiatives were reflected in the recognition of the work of our team in Kaźmierz. The efforts of the plant have yielded tangible results, including a 20% reduction in water consumption between 2017 and 2025, despite a steady increase in production.

This trend has continued in recent years — in 2025, water consumption fell again, just as it had in 2024 compared with 2023.

This responsible water management has been recognised – the Kaźmierz plant was awarded the title of “Eco-Investor of the Year” in the Polish food industry in 2025 for its consistent efforts to reduce water consumption.

Photo: Eco Investor of the Year 2025 award ceremony during the Polish Cheese Congress

AWARD

EKOINVESTOR OF THE YEAR 2025 Award

For the Kaźmierz plant, in recognition of its investments in water savings and efficient wastewater management.

Investment cost: over PLN 1,100,000

Total reduction in water consumption: over 11,000 m³ per year