



One planet
inform with care

ALQUERÍA

Sector: Food

Location: Colombia



Alquería manufactures and sells dairy products (milk, yogurt, condensed milk, powdered milk, among others). The organization aims to reduce its ecological footprint in order to be carbon neutral by 2030 by implementing the *Planeta Larga Vida* (PLV) sustainability strategy, which addresses the entire value chain from raw materials to the final consumer. The company has developed initiatives based on the four pillars of the PLV strategy: (1) Sustainable livestock, (2) Energy and climate change, (3) Circular economy, and (4) Water. These initiatives reduced the company's carbon footprint by 20% between 2017 and 2019. In terms of the consumer, communication regarding sustainability has focused on the following messages, which are shown in the following products packages and their communication pieces:

- Three carbon-neutral certified products: “Avena auténtica” (*Original oatmeal*), “Avena con canela” (*Cinnamon oatmeal*) and lactose-free milk.
- Campaign “Open, wash and recycle” for products with flexible packaging.
- 18% less plastic in the same products with flexible packaging.

The sustainability paradigm

Life cycle approach: As part of its efforts to measure its impacts, Alquería conducted a greenhouse gas inventory by identifying its impacts in obtaining raw materials, manufacturing, packaging, and transportation, consumption, and final disposal. It also developed a Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) to estimate the carbon footprint of three of its products with the consulting firm Gaia Servicios Ambientales.

Critical points analysis: The company identified the life cycle stages of raw materials and manufacturing as the critical points in its value chain. Alquería has developed sustainable livestock initiatives with its suppliers in the area of raw materials, and, in manufacturing, it has developed projects to optimize its resource usage.

Integrating sustainability: At organizational level, sustainability is an important criterion in decision making and is represented through Alquería's corporate strategy Planeta Larga Vida (PLV), which is also aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals

Principle 1: Reliability



Alquería's sustainability messages reliable as proven via internal and third-party validation. The company conducted an internal greenhouse gas inventory (GHG) using a life cycle approach based on the GHG Protocol methodology (WRI, WBCSD). Alquería also performed an LCA to estimate the carbon footprint of three of its products with the consulting firm Gaia Servicios Ambientales. The results were quantified using the Umberto LCA software under the ISO 14067 standard. The remaining emissions were compensated through Fedemaderas' PROCLIMA carbon credit program. This process led to the company being granted the international Carbon Neutral certification granted by ICONTEC.



Principle 2: Relevance



Alquería identified the raw materials and manufacturing stages as the critical points in the dairy value chain. In raw materials, the brand developed sustainable livestock initiatives intended to reduce deforestation and promote dairy productivity.

In 2019, Alquería was one of the signatories of the Acuerdo Cero Deforestación y Transformación de Páramos - ACDTP (Zero Deforestation and Transformation of Paramos Agreement) between the dairy sector and Colombia's Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development. In manufacturing, the organization developed process optimization initiatives in factories that allowed for an 11% reduction in water consumption and 10% in electrical energy, implying a 20% decrease in its corporate carbon footprint between 2017 and 2019. The company also identified packaging and consumption issues as opportunities for the development of other improvement initiatives. Between 2018 and 2019, Alquería reduced the amount of plastic in packaging by up to 18%, which meant a saving of 120 tons of material. In terms of consumption, in 2018, the organization launched the "Abre, enjuaga y recicla" (Open, rinse and recycle) campaign to promote consumer recycling of its milk bags.

The organization uses videos published on social networks such as Instagram and YouTube to raise consumer awareness of issues related to its sustainability messages, including the video: What is a Carbon Footprint?¹ These communication actions also contribute to achieve principles 7 and 8.

Principle 4: Transparency



Alquería offers public information on its website, social networks such as YouTube and Instagram and in its sustainability report that reinforce its sustainability message. The organization includes details about the initiatives it develops and the actors involved. Alquería's sustainability report lists the partners, including the actors involved in the Planeta Larga Vida program.

Alquería made a textual and explicit publication in its web page blog about how it obtained the Carbon Neutral certification.

Principle 5: Accessibility



Alquería transmits its sustainability messages and certification icon via channels such as its website, sustainability report, social networks, and packaging. On the packaging of its 3 carbon neutral products Alquería displays written messages on the front and a combination of seal and text on the back, in order to optimize its visibility. The company also makes explicit and textual mention of the link to its website on its packaging and social networks, promoting access to the product's sustainability messages.

The sustainability report includes QR codes that allow access to the publications on the website.



The company assesses the emissions neutrality of three of its products by addressing performance across the value chain based on ICONTEC's Carbon Neutral certification.



Principle 3: Clarity



Alquería displays the Carbon Neutral certification seal on the back of the packaging of its three certified products: its original oatmeal drink, its cinnamon-flavored oatmeal drink, and 0% fat lactose-free milk. The caption reads: "This oatmeal drink/milk is carbon neutral certified." This makes a direct connection between the sustainability claim and the product and drives consumer understanding.

The company's sustainability messages use simple, non-technical language, and the organization uses symbols, examples, and equivalents that promote consumer understanding.



1. https://www.instagram.com/p/B7lc3Qtnwoq/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Principle 6: Three Dimensions of Sustainability



Environmental:

Alquería's sustainability affirmations encompass the optimization of production processes. In so doing, the company has reduced energy and water consumption, and the production and use of packaging and waste to support the circular economy. In addition, Alquería communicates its sustainable livestock and forest related initiatives in packages of carbon-neutral products, in the web page and in the sustainability report. Examples are the installation of solar panels on the farms of their suppliers to refrigerate the milk and geo-referencing its cattle ranchers to determine possible conflicts in land use related to deforestation and paramo transformation. This initiative is also related to Alquería's signing of the ACDTP agreement (Agreement for zero deforestation and moorland transformation) between the dairy sector and the Colombian Government.

Socioeconomic:

The strategy *Planeta Larga Vida* includes the *Formación Campesina* (Farmer Training) program, through which the organization seeks to increase the productivity of its livestock farmers, improve their living conditions, and raise awareness among them regarding moorland conservation, water sources, and soil conservation. This program has benefited more than 5,500 families.

Principle 7: Behaviour Change and Long-Term Impact



The "Abre, enjuaga y recicla" message promotes the recycling of its packaging as part of a more sustainable lifestyle. In 2019, Alquería developed a publication to promote washing and storing its bags in plastic bottles for later applications. On World Environment Day 2020, Alquería developed a publication to raise awareness about biodiversity in Colombia².



2. https://www.instagram.com/p/CBD0Kv9FtuL/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

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Principle 8: Multi-Channel and Innovative Approach



Alquería has conveyed its messages of sustainability in events such as the following (1) Environment day, (2) Reforestation days with collaborators, using recycled milk bags, (3) Delivery of plastic posts to farmers, and (4) the Annual Asoleche Fair with a PLV stand.

Interaction with customers and final consumers takes place through social networks, contact centers, and call centers.

Principle 9: Collaboration



Alquería was the first production company involved in collaborative initiatives for sustainable livestock production, such as Asoleche and the ACDTP in the dairy sector.

In 2019, Alquería established a chain with 15 of its suppliers in the Sustainable Business Network Program - RedES-CAR to promote cleaner production in its supply chain. The company also designed Industrial Symbiosis and Integral Water Management projects as part of the same program. This year, the organization won the RACES Environmental Award from the Regional Autonomous Corporation - CAR for reducing the caliber of its milk bags.

In 2020, together with the World Wildlife Fund and ONF Andina, Alquería developed an Accountability Framework-AFi analysis to adapt the proposed principles to the Colombian context, especially in the implementation of conservation for the dairy sector.

Principle 10: Comparability



Alquería currently claims to use 18% less plastic in its packaging, and advertises this in commercials, its website, social networks and the organization's sustainability report.