

## Saipol, an Avril Group subsidiary, has invested €28.5 million in Sète to give the site a new biodiesel production unit and biomass boiler

During a press conference at its Sète site, Saipol, an Avril Group subsidiary, presented two major industrial investments with a total value of €28.5 million. These investments have reaffirmed the commitment of Avril, and its subsidiary Saipol, to Languedoc-Roussillon and the Mediterranean region, and their intention to develop the production of Diester biodiesel and rapeseed meal at the Sète plant. A declaration of faith in the future of the French biodiesel sector, in a currently unfavourable regulatory and market context.



*Above: the new esterification unit for biodiesel production*

The first investment of €13 million concerns a **new esterification unit**. It was designed to refocus the activities of the site, which counts 87 employees, on the production of Diester biodiesel and rapeseed meal, both by-products of the crushing of protein-rich oilseed grain which is an important component of livestock feeds. This investment has provided the site with a cutting-edge tool that will enable the processing each year of 600,000 tonnes of rapeseed grain and the production of 280,000 tonnes of biodiesel, 340,000 tonnes rapeseed meal and 28,000 tonnes of vegetable glycerine.

Thanks to this new facility, biodiesel production by the Sète site will be in an optimum position to develop its reputation in France (for biodiesel) and internationally (for rapeseed meal). Indeed, the site is very well situated on the Mediterranean coast, and its activities are wholly integrated in Sète's cutting-edge multimodal infrastructures; i.e. direct access to the A9 motorway, a branch rail line to the Saipol site that enables the transport of 4500 tonnes of goods, and direct connection to the grain terminal on the port. This terminal, which was opened in 2008, is crucial to all the agribusiness companies present on the port and enables a synergistic approach to the storage and handling of cereals, grain, oilseed meals, oils and Diester biodiesel.



Above: the new biomass boiler

The second investment of €15.5 million included €4.2 million in the form of a government grant under the "*Biomass Heating for Industry, Agriculture and Services*" call for projects (*Biomasse Chaleur Industrie Agriculture Tertiaire*, BCIAT) issued in 2012. This has enabled the **construction of a biomass boiler** fuelled by hulls from the sunflower hulling plant at Bassens (Gironde) which opened in 2013, producing steam to process rapeseed grain into vegetable oils, oilseed meals and biodiesel. Started in 2014, work on the boiler was completed in early October 2015.

This new investment will enable a 90% reduction in the site's annual greenhouse gas emissions, and a 75% reduction in its requirements for energy, which is now generated using renewable resources.

*"Through these investments, we wish to reaffirm our regional roots and our trust in the future of a French biodiesel sector at the cutting edge of renewable energies in Europe",* declared **Jean-Philippe Puig**, Manager of SCA Avril. *"At a time when the sector is emerging from a restructuring which led to the closure of several industrial units, and in a French and European regulatory context that is less than favourable towards us, it is essential to preserve an activity that represents 20,000 jobs in France. That is the ideal that underlies our commitment to Sète."*

For **Yves Delaine**, Deputy CEO of the Avril Group and Chairman of Saipol, *"Thanks to the unstinting efforts of the Site Director and his teams, Sète can now play a central role in the long-term future and reputation of this French sector. Refocusing and up-scaling the activities of this site will allow us to prepare for a future in which we believe, despite a growing number of competitors in the Mediterranean region who are making use of external agricultural resources. This constitutes a real threat which is becoming a concern to both our site and farmers in the region."*

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### **About Saipol:**

An Avril subsidiary and member of its Oilseeds Division, Saipol produces and sells in France its refined vegetable oils which are used for human foods, protein-rich oilseed meals for livestock feeds, biodiesel under the Diester® brand (which is incorporated at a rate of 8% in the fuel used by all French diesel vehicles) and vegetable glycerine that has numerous industrial applications.

### **About the Avril Group:**

Set up in 1983 at the initiative of French farmers in order to assure the future of the vegetable oils and proteins sector, Avril has become a major industrial and financial group that is developing in France and internationally. Present in sectors as diverse as human foods and animal feeds, renewable energies and chemistry, Avril owns a portfolio of strong brands that are leaders in their markets: Diester®, Sanders, Lesieur, Puget, Matines, Bunica, Taous, etc.

In more than 30 years, the Group has changed in size but its purpose has remained the same: to create sustainable value in the vegetable oils and proteins sector while contributing to better foods for humans and preservation of the planet. To fulfil its mission, Avril draws strength from its industrial activities organised in two clusters - the Oilseeds Division and the Animal Products Division - and from its financial arm, which operates through Sofiprotéol, its finance and development company.

In 2014, the Avril Group achieved turnover worth €6.5 billion. As at 31 March 2015, it counted 7200 employees working in 22 countries. [www.groupeavril.com](http://www.groupeavril.com) | Twitter: @Avril

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