



‘Not all that waste is ours, and we could ignore it, but the Planet is ours. And we want to be a part of the solution.’

As one of the leading companies in the leather industry in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Koteks has decided to make an even greater effort for the environment, by solving the pressing issue of inadequate animal waste management practices.

Environmental pollution poses a serious threat to our Planet. Insufficient treatment and illegal dumping of excess animal waste in Bosnia and Herzegovina has reached a worrying level. According to Central Bureau of Statistics in BiH, annually, more than 80,000 tons (around 55 per cent) of animal waste ends up in the nature, causing severe pollution problems.

Over the last 25 years, Koteks has been successfully doing business in purchase, processing of raw leather and creating semi-finished products for EU market. Having witnessed inadequate management practices of animal waste in the landfills and yards, lured Koteks to take a stand and make concrete action. According to Adisa Karahodžić, Koteks CEO, such an issue presents a burning problem and needs immediate attention:

‘When you do business within this industry as we do, you cannot escape thinking what happens with all that animal waste after we purchase the raw leather. Although disposal of animal waste is regulated by strict legislation, the evident data shows that a large portion of such waste is not disposed in accordance with the law. Finding out about such frightening data made us realize that we as the industry leaders in our country can make a significant contribution and be a part of the solution. Not all that waste is ours, and we could simply ignore it, but the Planet is ours, and we are willing to utilize our experience and skills to tackle it appropriately.’

Sustainable Development Goals at play

SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production

Tackling inadequate management practices of animal waste.

Target 12.5: By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.



The decision to take on this challenge did not come overnight. As a part of the SDG Accelerator Programme, Koteks has run an internal initiative to engage its employees into thinking outside the box in order to identify untapped opportunities that they as a team can exploit.

‘Besides the fact that this field of working with animal waste management is something rather new for us, it is also a challenging, but rewarding opportunity for our employees as well. While looking at the ways of how we can use our capabilities and know-how to boost our business, we also always emphasized the fact that our next endeavor must address a sustainability challenge. Such a way of sharing a mutual goal has helped us unite and witness the power of different ideas’, says Adisa.

Leveraging on their existing supply chain for raw materials, Koteks would also source animal waste parts, so called by-products categorized under Category 3. The animal by-products under this category are classified as low risk parts of animals and carcasses that have been deemed fit for human consumption in slaughterhouses, but are not intended for end-consumption for commercial reasons. That way, Koteks would ensure to only source animal waste that has 2B form, a proof that guarantees that such animal waste poses no threat to or endanger human health. Accordingly, Koteks would perform a waste selection and cleaning, after which the waste would be kept in saltwater pools to be enriched with iodine, thereby preserving its quality.

‘Following such a process, the waste will be cooked and packaged according to our customers’ instructions. The packaging form will involve vacuuming, maintaining it frozen, or in a case of dried intestines, it will be packed in boxes’, Adisa explains. Taking on this solution, however, requires considerable investments and modifications to existing equipment:

‘We have at our disposal a whole team of veterinarians, both local and cantonal, who will help us in the implementation. However, we will need to invest in the new trucks with refrigerators, cooking boilers, intestine cubic machines, hermetically sealed containers, drying racks etc. We already have a dedicated space that we could turn into a drying hall, but we would need to accommodate a salt-water pool as well.’

Nonetheless, all these investments and modifications will pay off considering the existent demand and common interest to handle the waste properly. So far, Koteks has had many conversations with their existing suppliers along with ones who stopped operating due to the current COVID-19 situation, says Adisa:

‘We received an excellent feedback. In fact, more than 15 of our current suppliers and 7 of our suppliers that had faced difficulties in their operations have agreed to purchase our semi-products. Having a guaranteed demand, we plan to start setting up our dedicated facility, accommodating all the necessary equipment and training our staff at the beginning of 2021. If all preparations go as we plan, we are expecting to set off with our full operations by the end of the 2021. But what is more impactful is the fact that we expect to be able to dispose 10 tons of animal waste weekly, around 50 tons monthly, and approximately 480 tons annually in the first year of our operations.’

Sustainable Development Goals at play

SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation

Target 6.3: By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally.



This is how Koteks contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals

- Koteks has developed a solution to contribute to the significant reduction of the inadequate disposal of animal waste through repurchasing and processing of animal waste from Category 3 - the type of animal waste that is suitable for further processing.
- The projections for the impact in the first year of the operation involve disposal of 10 tons of animal waste weekly, between 40 and 50 tons monthly, and approximately 480 tons annually.



Facts about Koteks

- Founded in 1994.
- Located in Tešanj, at the crossroads of central and northeastern Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Part of the Apparel Manufacturing Industry, specializing in repurchase and processing of raw skin/leather in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region, as well as the production of leather and textile clothing, fashion, work clothing and footwear.
- Approximately 200 employees.

Being part of the SDG Accelerator for SMEs in BiH has helped Koteks analyze various business potential and untapped opportunities, as well as how to make the company's long-term vision more sustainable and commercially viable in the future.

'Our vision is to be a leader in the leather industry in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the aim of producing high quality products, creating new values and taking care of our environment. We are planning to achieve such goal by applying modern technology, meeting and improving environmental standards, creating an educated and quality workforce, all whilst fulfilling obligations to our suppliers and customers, timely and responsibly. But above all, we really intend to spread a good example to other countries so they can start similar processes, be the change makers and take a stand to tackle this burning problem', concludes Adisa.



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*Adisa Karahodžić,
CEO, Koteks*