

## Media release

*Ad hoc release pursuant to Art. 53 of the Listing Rules*

### **Emmi acquires number 1 feta business in the US feta market**

Lucerne, 2 September 2021 – **The Emmi Group has acquired Athenos, the leader in the US feta market, strengthening its biggest export market and most important business segment in specialty cheeses. In 2020, Athenos generated net sales of almost USD 90 million and perfectly complements the extensive range of Emmi's high quality locally produced and imported specialty cheeses in North America. With the acquisition of the Athenos business from the Lactalis Group, Emmi further strengthens its position in the US market and creates additional export opportunities for Swiss cheese due to its strengthened distribution. The Athenos business will be managed by Emmi Roth USA, which has been part of the Emmi Group since 2009. The transaction remains subject to approval by the US competition authorities.**

Feta cheese is growing in popularity in the United States and Athenos has developed itself over many years into the leading feta brand. Last year, Athenos achieved net sales of almost USD 90 million.

“With Athenos the number 1 in the US feta market will be joining Emmi. We are well suited for further developing this business successfully. It will strengthen our position in the strategically important US market and therefore also our growing export business from Switzerland as we can offer our customers an even more extensive and attractive range of products,” says Matthias Kunz, Executive Vice President, Division Americas at Emmi.

#### **Strengthening the product range**

Athenos enjoys a broad presence in the US retail sector and is also sold in the food service sector. With this strong market position, the Athenos business optimally complements Emmi's specialty cheese business in the US. At the heart of this strategic pillar is Emmi Roth USA, which has been part of the Emmi Group since 2009. Today, Emmi Roth USA operates three production facilities in the state of Wisconsin and supplies retail and food service customers nationwide with high-quality specialty cheeses produced locally as well as imported from Switzerland.

2/3

Kraft Heinz agreed to sell the Athenos business to a US affiliate of Lactalis Group in autumn 2020 as part of a natural cheese transaction previously announced by Kraft Heinz and the Lactalis Group. In fulfilment of conditions identified during the customary antitrust review by the US regulatory of that transaction, the Lactalis Group has agreed to sell the Athenos business on to Emmi. Emmi's acquisition of the Athenos business remains also subject to final approval by US regulators.

The parties have agreed not to disclose the purchase price.

### **An attractive growth segment**

Feta cheese has benefited significantly from the trend towards healthier eating and further changes in consumer behavior over the past two years. Emmi expects the popularity of feta cheese in the US to grow even further.

The acquisition of Athenos and the integration of this business into Emmi Roth USA also offers growth potential in complementary distribution channels. In addition to a strong retail business, Emmi Roth USA has established close customer relationships in the food service sector. In this segment, feta perfectly complements Emmi Roth USA's cheese specialties that are suitable for hot dishes. Simultaneously, the export business is expected to profit from the additional sales offering and therefore continue its positive trend from previous years. At the same time, Athenos can benefit from Emmi Roth USA's marketing expertise and thus address new consumers through digital marketing and social media.

### **Preserving the proven value chain**

The transaction between Emmi and Lactalis essentially comprises the rights to the Athenos brand as well as other existing rights and contracts in connection with this business. The products themselves have been contract manufactured, processed and distributed to order for some years, and Emmi is keen to preserve this established value chain.

3/3

## Downloads and further information

Athenos website: <https://www.athenos.com/>

Emmi Roth USA website: <https://www.emmiroth.com/>

## Contacts

For media representatives: Group Communications,  
Sibylle Umiker, Head of Media Relations  
[media@emmi.com](mailto:media@emmi.com), +41 (0)58 227 50 66

For shareholders: Ricarda Demarmels, Group CFO  
[ir@emmi.com](mailto:ir@emmi.com)

## About Athenos

Athenos comprises a range of Mediterranean-style foods available in the US market, including feta cheese, hummus and pita chips.

## About Emmi Roth USA

Emmi Roth, a subsidiary of Switzerland-based Emmi Group, is a leading producer of specialty cheeses in the United States. Roth Käse USA Ltd. was founded in 1991 by Fermo Jaeckle and Felix and Ulrich Roth with the aim of producing high-quality specialty cheeses and distributing them on the US market. In 2006, Emmi entered into a strategic partnership with Roth Käse USA Ltd. in order to optimally position Swiss cheese specialties on the US market. In 2009, the company was acquired by Emmi. Today, Emmi Roth USA employs around 300 fulltime equivalents at its locations in Monroe, Platteville, Seymour and Fitchburg, Wisconsin.

## About Emmi

Emmi is the leading milk processor in Switzerland. The company dates back to 1907, when it was founded by 62 dairy farming cooperatives around Lucerne. Over the past 20 years, Emmi has grown into an international, listed group. It has for many years pursued a successful strategy based on three pillars: strengthening its Swiss domestic market, international growth and cost management. Throughout its corporate history, Emmi's keen awareness of its responsibility to society, animal welfare and the environment has been fundamental to its mission.

In Switzerland, Emmi manufactures a comprehensive range of dairy products for its own brands and private label products for customers, including leading exports such as Emmi Caffè Latte and Kaltbach. In other countries, its products – mainly speciality products – are manufactured locally. Alongside cow's milk, it also processes goat and sheep milk.

In Switzerland, the Emmi Group has 25 production sites. Abroad, Emmi and its subsidiaries have a presence in 14 countries, eight of which have production facilities. Emmi exports products from Switzerland to around 60 countries. Its business activities focus on the Swiss domestic market as well as western Europe and the American continent. Half of its CHF 3.7 billion in sales – over 10 % of which stems from organic products – is generated in Switzerland, the other half abroad. Almost two-thirds of its roughly 8,900 employees are based outside of Switzerland.