

“ESG Is Important to Us”: How Italgrani USA Enrolled in Demand Response as Part of Its ESG Efforts



Industry

Semolina and durum flour miller



Location

St. Louis, Missouri



Program

Ameren Missouri’s Business DR program



ESG Benefits

A greener grid; reinvestment of DR revenue into other ESG initiatives

Italgrani USA is the largest semolina and durum flour miller in North America—the company buys durum wheat from across the continent and brings it to St. Louis, where it’s milled to produce semolina flour, an ingredient in high-quality pasta. As James Meyer, President of Italgrani USA, notes, “If you enjoy pasta, we have customers that are providing you pasta in whatever form or setting you’re eating it—from frozen meals to food service.” The company also operates grain elevator services in North Dakota and full-service grain merchandising in Minnesota.

How ESG Efforts Led to Demand Response

Italgrani USA recently began a serious effort to take action on environmental, social and governance (commonly referred to as ESG) issues. They quickly realized that demand response would fit in well with this new effort.

Ameren Missouri’s Business Demand Response (BDR) program provides payments to large energy users that agree to reduce their energy demand during times of grid stress. Ameren partners with Enel X, a leading energy solutions and demand response provider, to manage the demand response program and help Ameren Missouri customers receive these simple payments.



The payments are a benefit, Meyer said, but the potential ESG benefits were what really stood out to the company.

“With demand response, rather than Ameren constantly having to try to increase their generating capacity at peak demand hours, Ameren can try to reduce demand. So we can be part of this different solution when there’s extreme pressure on the grid,” Meyer said. “That’s important for us. We’re helping to create a greener grid in the St. Louis area.”



Reinvesting DR Earnings for More ESG Initiatives

The money that they’ve earned from the program, Meyer said, has been helpful, and that extra revenue has in some ways indirectly allowed them to pursue other ESG initiatives. The business has installed automatic lights throughout their campus to minimize wasted electric use, and they’ve also created a new program to recycle food material that is left over after deliveries.

“A portion of our finished product is shipped in rail cars, and when an empty rail car comes back to the facility, there may be residual product at the bottom of the car,” Meyer said. “In order to eliminate any cross contamination of product, we have to remove that material, and previously it would go to a landfill. Now, we recycle that material in a responsible way. This has become a part of our ongoing ESG initiatives.”

“Being part of the Enel X program makes us more aware and more focused. You could say proceeds from Enel X made that opportunity to make this investment in this new program.”

Minimal Disruption to Operations

The program, Meyer said, has not been a major disruptor to normal operations, because the company is typically aware of when an event is a possibility.

“We’re helping to create a greener grid in the St. Louis area.”

“One of the keys has been advance notice,” Meyer said. “And we’re also completely aware that demand on the grid will be highest when temperatures are highest, so we can to an extent anticipate when we might get the call about an upcoming event. It’s typically a few hours during a weekday, and we can handle that.”

A Recommendation For Enel X

Meyer said he’s had a very positive experience with Enel X’s service team, who have worked closely with him and been responsive anytime questions have come up.

“Everyone we’ve interacted with has been extremely professional. If we have questions we get clear answers right away. Communication has been great—Enel X is a great partner to be working with.”

“I have recommended Enel X and the Ameren demand response program to other companies. I know a lot of different millers throughout the industry. It’s a large industry, and I’ve mentioned Enel X and the program to many others.”

— James Meyer, President of Italgrani USA