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How can the wastewater treatment sector contribute for the sustainability of the agro-food industries?

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Over the last decades, the agro-food industry has largely intensified its production to cover the growing needs of society. The economic model based on the take-make-dispose paradigm is no longer viable due to its unsustainability. In this context, the agro-food industry has been paying attention to cross-cutting technologies to incorporate sustainability into its processes.

The water footprint is a key issue for the agro-food industry. Huge amounts of water are needed, and consequently huge amounts of wastewater are produced. Wastewater treatment processes are necessary for the preservation of water and its environmental quality. Nowadays, the implementation of greener wastewater treatment technologies, that allow for the reduction, reuse and recovery of materials is an asset. The granular sludge technology is an example of a such innovative process, robust to deal with fluctuations in wastewater composition and able to offer opportunities for more value-added processes.

In this presentation, recent data and results will be shown to illustrate how the granular sludge technology can help in the transition to achieve sustainability in the agro-food industry, especially related to its water footprint.