the **interview**

Andreas Jeppsson, CEO, BoMill, Sweden

Andreas Jeppsson has been CEO of BoMill since 2020. With over 25 years of international experience, he held various technical and managerial roles, including Managing Director for Ecolean in China and the USA. He studied Business Economics at Executive Foundation in Lund and completed the General Management Program at INSEAD.

What inspired you to enter the grain sorting industry, and what drives your passion for it?
Grain is one of the most important food commodities, and it has a huge impact on the lives of many people, from farmers to food processors to end-consumers.

I feel privileged to be part of disrupting how such an important and crucial industry can operate more sustainably and efficiently using our unique technology. I am convinced we are only at the beginning of revolutionizing the grain industry globally and making it more sustainable, efficient, and profitable for the whole value chain.

How do you see the future of grain sorting technology evolving, and what role do you envision BoMill playing in that evolution?
Climate change, geopolitics and regulations, such as reduction of nitrogen input, are already affecting grain availability and quality, leading to volatility in price. With a growing demand for food supply and pressure from urbanization on arable land, the agriculture and food industries face rising challenges to meet the demand in quantity and quality. It is essential that all what is produced today gets used in the most efficient way.

Traditional grain sorting technologies have not evolved much during the last 50 years, focusing on grain size, density, shape or color. To support the grain industry, it is essential that sorting capabilities evolve towards grain's inner characteristics - what is inside each individual kernel, which defines its functional properties - what it is suitable for. At BoMill, we have started this revolution, by offering a new dimension to grain sorting. With our solution, customers are now able take advantage of the quality variation within a batch and sort wheat or barley, based on protein content. This is a breakthrough, offering new opportunities to the grain industry.

Could you elaborate on why protein content is a crucial factor for optimizing wheat supply, especially in the context of fluctuating harvest quality?
Protein content is a key parameter used to assess quality at harvest. Therefore, it is also an essential parameter for pricing wheat. In general terms, for milling wheat, the higher the protein level, the greater the premium applied on the reference price. And with fluctuating harvest quality, when the availability of certain grades is low, the premiums increase accordingly. Because they don't have access to them locally, some flour mills may also need to purchase these protein grades from other regions or country, adding extra transportation cost.

How does BoMill InSight™ specifically address the issue of fluctuating quality of harvests and the shortage of high-protein wheat?
In the grain sector, one element that is generally overlooked, when relating to the quality of a batch, is that we always talk on average. But if we look at the kernel level, each batch of grain shows variation, and the spread can be great. For instance, a batch of wheat labeled at 11% protein has typically kernels from 9.5 to 12.5 percent. This means a portion of batches that are out of specifications because of protein could be recovered and not wasted, or high protein premium fraction could be extracted from a standard grade. Industry does not exploit this opportunity today.

By sorting kernel by kernel, at industrial speed, based on protein content, our BoMill InSight™ solution can take advantage of this variation. It gives a way for grain producers and processors to optimize the value of their wheat but also allows them to access specific grades when availability is scarce.

With a focus on maximizing the value of wheat supply, how does BoMill InSight™ contribute to sustainability in agriculture, particularly in terms of reducing waste and optimizing resource usage?
When a batch of wheat (but also barley) is downgraded due to protein content not meeting the specifications, our solution gives the capability to recover a portion of that batch. That way we optimize the usage of our resources. Each kernel should be used for what it is best suited for.

Also, by recovering or upgrading grains that are produced locally, BoMill InSight™ can reduce the dependence on import, lowering overall cost and environmental footprint.

Furthermore, the trends on reducing levels of nitrogen input, to limit environmental impact, will lead to lower protein in wheat. This has been seen previously in countries where regulations had drastically lowered the allowed levels, to the point that the quality needed by the flour industry was not met. It is thus essential to offer solutions supporting these environmental initiatives by mitigating their potential negative effect on grain quality. BoMill InSight™ is one of those solutions.

As BoMill continues to grow and innovate, what are the key areas of focus for the company in terms of research, development, and market expansion?
Our solution is available for sorting wheat and barley based on protein content or DON level, so naturally at this stage our focus is on flour mills, malt houses and grain handlers such as elevators or cooperatives, supplying these industries. Since the launch of BoMill InSight™ last year, we get a strong interest in those segments.

As we are introducing a disruptive technology, it is essential that we collaborate closely with our customers and partners to identify the opportunities for their specific business. With the support of our distributors in key countries, we currently focus on Europe and the Americas. We know the solution has great potential globally, and we need to understand the dynamics and needs for each market to develop our future offering.