



FRANCE: Danone H1 sales up, bottled water gains in Q2

24 July 2009 | **Source: just-drinks.com editorial team**

Danone has reported rises in net sales and profits for the first half of 2009, with bottled water sales recovering some lost ground in the second quarter.

Net sales for the six months to the end of June rose by 1.6% to EUR7.69bn (US\$10.9bn), with profits up 7.6% to EUR722m, compared to the same period last year, Danone said today (24 July). Operating profits rose by 8% to EUR1.2bn.



Water sales boosted by sun in Q2

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Danone president Franck Riboud said that the group had moved quickly in the economic downturn to "adapt our offering to consumers". He said that the firm plans to "accelerate expansion" into new markets around the world.

Bottle water continued to blight the French firm's results, falling by 2% to EUR1.35bn for the half-year.

Danone's bottled water brands, including Evian and Volvic, continued to suffer in markets such as France, UK, Spain, Germany and Japan. Volumes for the division grew by 4.4% for the six months, driven entirely by emerging markets, and particularly Indonesia, Argentina and Mexico, the group said.

However, bottled water sales recovered ground in the second quarter, to broadly flat with the previous year.

"The softening of negative Water trends in developed markets will be a relief to the market," said independent analyst James Amoroso this morning. "No doubt the improved weather played a role but probably also more aggressive promotional activity."

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Published by Aroq Ltd. Address & registered office:

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