

**SUMMARY:**  
*Sustainability at erlenbacher -  
tangible, comprehensive and active*  
2017



## **Sustainability at erlenbacher – Tangible, comprehensive and active**

### **Introduction**

erlenbacher Backwaren GmbH in Groß-Gerau is one of the leading manufacturers and distributors of deep-frozen premium cakes and cream products in Germany and Europe for the out-of-home market.

For many years, erlenbacher has pursued the aim of practising sustainability as a broadly conceived corporate culture and quality strategy throughout all the company's departments. As a medium-sized company, it has established the topic of sustainability as part of its company philosophy and it is much further ahead with its efforts in this regard than many a large group. The implementation of sustainability objectives is seen as a continuous learning process in which all employees as well as all partner companies are involved.

From monitoring and management of the supply chain to the development of strategic partners on a contract cultivation basis – sustainability topics and projects are a fixed component of an operational masterplan (OMP) not just in procurement, but in all company areas.

In 2010, erlenbacher backwaren GmbH joined the partner network of the Centre for Sustainable Corporate Management [Zentrum für nachhaltige Unternehmensführung(ZNU)] and subjected itself to a sustainability analysis. Regular sustainability checks ensure continuous development. Via the ZNU, erlenbacher is also in intensive dialogue about sustainability topics with other producers of the food industry.

Since 2010, erlenbacher employees have been trained as sustainability managers at the ZNU and all erlenbacher trainees as sustainability ambassadors. In annual workshops, the new trainees are familiarised with the topic of sustainability and the projects that have already been implemented as well as those in the planning and implementation stage are presented to them.

### **A. Balanced diet**

Since 2008, erlenbacher backwaren has purposefully occupied itself with the topics of nutrition, health and wellness and aims to reduce the use of salt, sugar and fat in its products. In 2016, for example, the shortcrust recipe was changed in such a way that the reduction of saturated fatty acids (SFAs) and sugar by approximately 10% did not involve any losses in taste or quality. Since 2008, artificial flavours and declarable colourants as well as hardened fat and oils have not been used. The proportion of trans fatty acids is less than 1%.

## **B. Environment – responsibility for nature**

The company has set itself the objective of saving more energy and resources on a year-on-year basis each year. Power consumption decreased by 5.7% year on year, while drinking water consumption decreased by 16.2%. erlenbacher also achieved record environmental figures in gas (- 9.8%) and cooling supply (- 10.6%). In addition, from 2017 erlenbacher will use 100% eco-power pursuant to the Renewable Plus standard via corresponding certificates. Measures such as the investment in excellent cutting technology are contributing to improved waste management.

erlenbacher was one of the first companies in the baked goods industry to create a CO<sub>2</sub> footprint (PCF) for deep-frozen cakes and cream slices. The sustainability efforts also include keeping the impact on the environment as low as possible by curbing the consumption of resources as much as possible while at the same time using modern production technology. For instance, at the end of 2012, the company converted from heating oil to heating and operation with gas, leading to an annual reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 25% to 790 tonnes. Additionally, the conversion to a condensing boiler resulted in an additional saving of 340,000 kWh of natural gas and 34 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. The cleaning programmes for the CIP cleaning (cleaning in place) were optimised further at the end of 2015. Thus, in 2016, 3,400 fewer cubic metres of freshwater were consumed. Thanks to heat recovery from the refrigeration plant of Nordfrost, the neighbouring storage service provider and deep-frozen-goods shipping company, erlenbacher saves 1,476 MWh per year in heating energy. Heat exchangers are also in use, with the warm burner exhaust air used to heat water, for example. Annual savings: 1.1 m kWh, equating to 99,000 m<sup>3</sup> of gas.

In 2013, erlenbacher introduced an energy data management system to monitor the flow rates of water, natural gas, power and compressed air, as well as to detect problems. Measures carried out in this connection in the water treatment for the steam boiler in 2016 led to approximately 700 m<sup>3</sup> of water being saved.

Further projects are continuously being advanced that lead to resources being spared – for example, from changes in defrosting the freezers (- 330,000 kWh of power p.a.) to the alteration of the conductivity measurement on the steam boiler (- 420 MWh of natural gas and - 4,300 m<sup>3</sup> of water p.a.) to insulation measures on the oven of the ground line and on the steam lines (-110,000 kWh p.a.).

However, the ideas on more sustainable solutions go beyond production technology. The possibility is being considered, for example, of replacing some of the plant vehicles for special use with electric pool cars.

erlenbacher also focuses on sustainability in purchasing and collaborates only with audited suppliers. For instance, exclusively fresh whole eggs, from free-run hens, are procured from a few selected producers. The KAT certification guarantees complete traceability up to egg production and ensures the method of rearing. All the suppliers that use egg as a component for an ingredient used by erlenbacher also work with fresh whole eggs from free run. erlenbacher was the first company in the food industry to launch a pilot project in collaboration with the chicken farms and egg producers focusing on animal welfare. The breeding of the male chicks is supported; erlenbacher enables this by tolerating higher purchase prices.

In addition to UTZ-certified cocoa, the palm oil RSPO variant segregated is also used on an almost exclusive basis. erlenbacher buys nearly 100% of its German dairy products - used on 5 different production lines every day - fresh on the given day. Nuts are obtained mainly from Europe; here, too, the suppliers are certified. Only UTZ-certified hazelnuts are purchased. erlenbacher uses exclusively beet sugar for sweetening; the cereal products are mainly of local production.

The company places great importance on ensuring that packaging of all types is resealable, recyclable and as thin as possible in nature in order to save plastic. All printed paper comes almost exclusively from sustainable forestry and is certified according to FSC or PEFC. This includes environmentally friendly paints and printing techniques. Additionally, all textiles used meet the Bio Tex Standard 100. In stand construction, focus is placed on modularity, reusability, recycling and sustainability. Plastic tarpaulins are converted into erlenbacher bags – sought-after unique items.

### **C. Society – responsibility for people**

At erlenbacher, acting sustainably does not just mean bringing ecology and economy into harmony. Social sustainability and involving all employees in company processes, further professional training and securing jobs also play an important role. In 2016, with the social project “Boxing Day”, the employees were called on to support the “Children’s Future” project in Bosnia and Romania by means of package donations.

The Sustainability Day 2016, which the erlenbacher sustainability ambassadors held for the second time, focused on sustainable actions not just at work, but also at home. The topics and suggestions include ideas on do-it-yourself alternatives for arranging one’s personal environment in a more sustainable manner as well as for refuse separation, saving energy, sustainable housekeeping

and recycling at home, but also information on blood and organ donation, as well as on a beekeeper partnership for setting up beehives on the company site or the Christmas elves for all employees.

Erlenbacher offers a variety of health initiatives and precautionary measures to protect its staff, including free flu vaccinations, adapted hearing protection, sight tests and vein screening, but also examinations to prevent coronary heart diseases. Through regular nutrition training, the erlenbacher employees are introduced to the topic of healthy eating. For example, fresh fruit is part of the trade fair stand food. For years, attention has been paid to ensuring that all employees consume sufficient liquid every day. There are water dispensers for free self-service at 22 places, while each employee has received a reusable 0.5-litre drinking bottle from the company made of recycled, food-safe plastic. In a next step, it is planned to replace the water dispensers gradually with water tap points with a filter from the local drinking water supply. There are further considerations regarding the introduction of a drinking app to remind employees to drink fluids regularly.

The health initiatives at erlenbacher include massage days, a children's sports club for the employees' children, the Mobility Audit 2016, the "Groß-Gerau läuft" race and participation in the Global Corporate Challenge with GCC pedometers. Participation of the company in e-bikes for the employees, a partnership with two regional fitness studios, further information events and training sessions on varying topics in the areas of health, hygiene and occupational safety.

erlenbacher invests in the training of its employees by means of internal and external training sessions and also grants training subsidies. Information – including on topics related to sustainability – is provided by means of table displays made of recycled plastic at the company restaurant, an intranet as well as the erlenbacher Facebook page, as well as varying pop-ups on the screensavers.

It was in 2012 that erlenbacher initiated the idea of the sustainability ambassadors in its own company (cf. introduction), who were trained on a cross-company basis in both the commercial and industrial areas.

#### **D. Products and their safety**

Quality and product safety are among erlenbacher's most important corporate objectives. Good quality is the result of an active company philosophy, a reliable control system and constantly working on improvement processes.

Quality is more than just buying the best ingredients. Protecting the environment and the transparency of the supply chain are also important. Erlenbacher has set itself the goal of being able to document completely and verify each production step with the different materials and products.

For years, the company has worked with selected producers that are not just certified according to the British Retail Consortium (BRC) or International Features

Standards (IFS) audit, but have also been audited according to the Nestlé Food Safety Standard.

From farm to fork - for erlenbacher, sustainability begins with farming. Therefore, collaboration with farmers around the world was intensified. The company uses a very high proportion of freshly harvested and immediately delivered fruit, such as freshly harvested berries frozen individually in the Individually Quickly Frozen (IQF) process that are not heated for further processing.

The aim of this measure is to provide comprehensive training in the country of origin of the fruit for the entire workforce as far as possible – from the harvest workers in the field to the packers at the parcel station – in collaboration with farmers and producers. The awareness is to be created that each individual person in their post along the entire supply chain has a weighty influence on product quality and food safety. For this, materials including posters, displays and a training folder in a total of six languages were produced. With the help of the code of conduct and corresponding support with checklists, information, as well as training and providing insight to field workers and pickers, compliance with very high standards for maximum product reliability in the countries of origin is to be ensured.

In future, this aimed-for closer cooperation with the farmers is to lead to contract cultivation through the supplying partners, including farm and plant audits such as the SMETA Audit (responsible sourcing: working conditions that are also demanded by suppliers).

At erlenbacher, nothing is delivered that does not meet the high erlenbacher product standards. All products are tested regularly, comprehensively and scrupulously - including in 60/40 taste sessions. The high customer satisfaction and the large number of awards are confirmation of the successful erlenbacher corporate philosophy, based on the principles: natural, honest and passionate.

**erlenbacher backwaren GmbH - January 2017**