

Westfleisch excels in Sustainability



Westphalian meat marketer honoured with „Meat Vision Award 2013“ / German trade press approves pioneer role / Sustainability core topic at IFFA-Congress in Frankfurt

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Münster | Frankfurt/M. The Deutscher Fachverlag Media Corporation appreciates the pioneer role of the Westfleisch-Group: Germany's No. 3 meat marketer has been honoured on Friday, 3 May 2013 in the frame of the opening event of this year's IFFA in Frankfurt Main with the „Meat Vision Award“ for its „exemplary signals“ in terms of sustainability. Dr. Helfried Giesen, spokesman of the Westfleisch eG Executive Board, welcomed the prize for the sustainable enterprise strategy.

Sustainability is one of the central topics in the meat industry, laudator Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Branscheid, long-term Head of Max Rubner Institute (MRI), commenced the gala event for the international guests. With „value-oriented thinking“ the cooperative consequently progressed the „Westfleisch Partnership for Quality“ since 2007 with its mission statement aiming at sustainability, as the 12 jury members reasoned their vote for Westfleisch. The sector prize was jointly granted for the first time by the two professional trade magazines „afz - allgemeine fleischer zeitung“ and „FleischWirtschaft“.

„As a corporation of farmers we have already acted sustainable even when the term did not even exist“, the Westfleisch Head expressed his thanks. „Farmers have always known that they must not consume but only use their farms and resources in each generation.“ Westfleisch has followed this principle of sustainable economic activities for more than 80 years.

Westfleisch was the first company in the meat industry to establish its independently certified „Partnership for Quality“ during the recent six years. Economic, ecological, and social aspects being considered equally ranking is the core element of the now awarded „signal“, which Westfleisch sends out into the branch.

Since the implementation of the sustainable established partnership it has caught much attention from experts, the markets and retailers. With the secured process chain from the family farms to the distributors and end-consumers, the farmers accept responsibility for their products. They ensure safety and quality of high-class meat and sausage products, leading them out of anonymity. Counting amongst the most long-standing German meat companies, the cooperative is borne by more than 3,500 farmers in Northwest Germany. In view of the recent social queries to the meat sector, it is becoming apparent how resilient the established Partnership for Quality is with its neutrally routine-checked criteria.

A special success of Westfleisch's strategies is „Aktion Tierwohl“, initiated three years ago. It is the pioneer programme of the German meat industry in terms of animal welfare and becomes increasingly relevant in the international competition in Northern Europe. As current studies prove, this is because animal welfare and animal protection are even more important to consumers than regional origin. Meanwhile more than 120 Westfleisch-cooperation farmers produce far more than half a million pigs p.a. complying with the „Aktion Tierwohl“ criteria exclusively for the label. Westfleisch hereby successfully serves the market segment between standard and organic, the products are currently available nationwide in more than 1,500 retail shops.

The requirements of the “Westfleisch Partnership for Quality” definitely exceed the statutory standards. The significantly reduced emission of the climate-wrecking carbon dioxide CO₂ shows how effective the Westfleisch sustainability strategy is. As pioneer of the German meat industry, the Group determined in the previous years for the first time the objectively checked emission data, the so-called carbon footprint for pork, beef, and veal.

The current revision of the values for pork – undertaken after three years – revealed an annual reduction of 3 % of greenhouse gas emitted into the atmosphere; that is almost twice the amount of the reduction target determined by the German Government. Westfleisch achieved this noteworthy decrease because the breeding rate of piglets, the daily weight growth, and the feed conversion in pig husbandry are constantly being improved. But

also the many biogas plants in the region provide a valuable contribution to environmental protection.

Westfleisch has adjusted many screws for this considerable reduction: the “widely travelled” soy as part of the feed has been replaced e.g. by domestic rapeseed, wheat exchanged against barley, liquid manure substituted chemical fertilisers. The number of piglets per sow increased, the mortality rate of newborn piglets decreased and the feed conversion advanced. The CO₂ balance for the complete red meat sector of the Westfleisch group has been included into the now third sustainability report complying with the guidelines of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI level: B+).

Due to the success of this reflected process of modifications we are certain: Consumers too can - similar to a company - adjust many screws and have a positive impact on the environment by a conscious life and selective shopping. People who buy meat not only price-oriented and in appropriate quantities already make a great contribution to improve the environment. Any climate balance needs to be seen in context. Just one long-haul flight less will improve people’s personal climate balance tremendously. Abstaining from meat does not necessarily help creating a better environment.

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Pleased with the award and approval of the „most convincing sustainability strategy“ the „Meat Vision Award 2013“ granted by Deutscher Fachverlag: Dr. Helfried Giesen, Spokesman of the Westfleisch Executive Board (left), and Jörg Bartel, Head of the Westfleisch Central Quality Management.

