

New 10-point Programme for the Future: Westfleisch itself will hire all employees in future



The programme focuses on more responsibility for people, animals and society / "The bar is rightly higher"

Münster, 23 June 2020. Westfleisch, one of the leading meat processors in Germany, wants to bring about an elementary change: "Today, with the 10-point Programme for the Future, we are initiating a process with which we want to set the right standards in our industry in a trusting and reliable manner," explains Carsten Schruck, CFO of Westfleisch SCE. "The focus of our programme, which is an important development of our mission statement, is on taking significantly more responsibility for people, animals and society. We want to take even better care of the employees, increase animal welfare, provide greater security for farmers and better integration of local interests on site."

In recent years, Westfleisch has already taken many steps in the right direction, "but we have too often allowed ourselves to slow down in implementation," says board colleague Steen Sönnichsen. "For the future of our farming cooperative, it is crucial that we get started and actually take the necessary steps more consistently than before."

In concrete terms, for example, Westfleisch plans to employ all staff by the end of the year. "And that applies regardless of what legislators will decide on this issue in coming months", explains Johannes Steinhoff, who is responsible for the processing division on the Executive Board. All employees and their families will thus be offered a future and prospects within Westfleisch; the integration process will be carried out in coordination with the long-term contracting companies. Other points on the Programme for the Future include the widespread introduction of digital time recording, ensuring adequate living space, and strengthening regional agriculture.

Steinhoff also refers to years past: "As a cooperative, we have a different basic understanding and pursue a different philosophy than many of our competitors." For example, over 2,000 external contract workers have been reintegrated into the company in recent years and many animal welfare projects have only been started at Westfleisch's initiative. "However, in the past few weeks we were forced to learn that it is not enough 'to do more' or to be 'better than many others'. The bar is rightly higher."

Press release

WESTFLEISCH SCE mbH
Brockhoffstr. 11
48143 Münster
Germany

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Press office
presse@westfleisch.de

www.westfleisch.de

This 10-point Programme for the Future resulted from many discussions over the past weeks: "This 10-point Programme for the Future gives us the guardrails for our future actions," says Carsten Schruck. "Some of them are ambitious goals and we need the support of our many, very diverse partners to achieve them." Steen Sönnichsen adds: "We are pleased if we can now, step by step, implement this future programme in collaboration with our agricultural members, employees, retail customers, works councils, the representatives of the unions, and local and national politics. We will do this by seeking and deepening dialogue with all of them."

The Westfleisch 10-point Programme for the future

1. Work contracts: Westfleisch itself hires all employees

Over the next six months, we will employ all of our employees ourselves and bring them into our cooperative. In this way, Westfleisch will in future assume responsibility for its employees and will forego the corresponding service contract providers.

2. Nationwide introduction of digital time recording

We already use electronic time recording with our own employees. We will gradually expand the use to include the contract workers until they are taken over by the group.

3. Group-wide participation

For years, Westfleisch has had collective agreements negotiated with the food and beverage trade union (NGG), strong employee participation and functioning works councils. We want to continue to fill the open dialogue with the NGG with life.

4. Ensure adequate living situations

With the further expansion of the company's own service company, WE-Service, Westfleisch is pushing ahead to procure housing for its employees. In this way, we want to ensure that the standards of the accommodations will in future be reliably higher than the legal requirements everywhere.

5. Integration officers for each location

The Westfleisch integration officer is available to every employee as a contact person for all social issues (accommodation, everyday help, especially regarding daycare, schools and authorities, etc.); this offer will now be expanded further.

6. Revised hygiene concept increases occupational safety

As a consequence of the events in May, Westfleisch has further developed the existing hygiene concept for pandemic times: The focus is on the weekly testing of all production-related employees, the equalization of production processes, and on even stronger training and control of compliance with the hygiene rules.

7. Strengthening regional agriculture, improving animal welfare

We know: Our regional farmers would like to meet society's desires for more environmental protection and animal welfare, but these must also be rewarded and paid for by trade and consumers. Together with our retail partners we want to continue advancing programs to ensure that farmers can look forward to a secure future.

8. Greater integration into the local community

Westfleisch has been deeply rooted in northwestern Germany for over 90 years. In recent years, however, we have not yet been good enough at maintaining our local connections: we want to improve, involve the interests of local groups more closely, and also involve ourselves much more intensively than before in local social life.

9. Secure supply with strong trading partners

Westfleisch attaches great importance to trusting and strong relationships with its trading partners. We want to continue intensifying these relationships. Because together we can ensure the supply of the population with regional and high quality products. Our absolute focus will continue to be on the domestic market.

10. Clear sustainability strategy

Westfleisch invests continuously and substantially in the quality and safety of its products along the entire production chain. Sustainability is a core value of our company and we want to live according to this value in every respect in future.