

Dr. Eckel: 25 years of pioneering animal nutrition



For a profitable, sustainable future

In the beginning was a vision. At a time when antibiotic growth promoters were still the industry standard in animal production, Antje Eckel was firmly convinced that there had to be a better way. Therefore, the agricultural engineer and visionary established her own company—a small office with a garage that served as a warehouse—25 years ago, with the intent to change animal nutrition and provide new solutions for a better future. And Dr. Eckel delivered, providing the first prebiotic feed additive shortly after, at a time when most people had never heard the word ‘prebiotic’ and prebiotic yoghurts had yet to hit the market. It was hard to envisage using something like this on animals. But Antje Eckel was proved right. Her husband Bernhard took over sales, becoming the first employee of the young company, which has continued to grow steadily ever since.

The start-up has now evolved into an international hidden champion with around 90 employees from 20 countries and covering a broad variety of disciplines. Much has changed since. And, according to Antje Eckel, this is a good thing, because, “... the only constant is change.” Dr. Eckel has been operating in Asia since 2011, most recently from its branch office in Bangkok, making its Sales Team Asia directly accessible to customers in the region. Yet, Dr. Eckel stays true to its roots: all proprietary products are ‘Made in Germany’. In addition to the production facility, the company headquarters in Niederzissen also houses an innovative aquaculture testing facility where Francesca Blasco and her creative team can test new product ideas on the spot.

A German SME and model for global success

The company benefits from its heterogeneous team of highly qualified experts, including animal nutritionists, chemists, pharmacists, veterinarians and microbiologists. More than 10 per cent of revenue is invested in innovation projects every year. Numerous prizes for innovation, national and European development projects, and lively dialogue and cooperation with international research institutes are ample testimony to the reputation that Dr. Eckel has earned through its constant leadership position. Antje Eckel herself has received several awards for her entrepreneurial work and has been a member of

the advisory board for SMEs of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy since 2018.

Thus, the German SME Dr. Eckel can confidently operate in the same league as the major global industry players. Ultimately, German SMEs are rightly considered the engine of the German economy. Here, the emphasis is on entrepreneurship and a sustainable, forward thinking and stable economic policy as opposed to a short-term shareholder value policy, attributes that are also sought after in international markets.

Squaring up to the future

One of the most pressing challenges for humanity in the face of the constantly growing global population and scarce resources is the supply of high quality, safe and healthy food. Dr. Eckel squares up to the challenge by contributing to the solution of this burning issue. Human health and animal welfare are still the focus of Dr. Eckel’s commercial activities, as they were 25 years ago. Consequently, Dr. Eckel specifically develops feed additives that improve animal welfare sustainably and reduce the use of medication in animal production. This makes Dr. Eckel one of the first companies to consistently address this major issue through in-feed applications.

Animal welfare pays off

Animal welfare and human health are directly related: only healthy animals produce healthy, quality food. Therefore, animal welfare goes hand in hand with efficiency, and any investment in animal welfare, from feeding to husbandry, pays off. The right feed additives create the conditions for increased vitality, resilience and performance in animals, improving yield and saving resources.

“Improving animal welfare is one of the industry’s major future challenges,” Antje Eckel reiterates. “In order to meet this challenge, our animal welfare initiative focuses on visionary concepts that are always a step ahead of the mainstream. For this purpose, we draw on centuries of knowledge in medical science and combine it with the latest research results in a broad variety of disciplines and state-of-the-art process technology. One thing is certain: although animal welfare depends on many factors, it starts with feed. Our goal is to promote and disseminate this major insight.”

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It starts with the feed


In order to further the progress of this paradigm shift, Dr. Eckel has opted for a holistic approach that takes the entire production chain into consideration. To this end, the

company is in constant dialogue with retail chains, milk and food processing companies, in a concerted effort to make animal production more sustainable, economical and viable, for both the animals and the environment—and ultimately for us all.

25
YEARS

DR. ECKEL
PIONEERING
ANIMAL NUTRITION

**Focus
Animal
Welfare!**

 **DR. ECKEL**
creative solutions