



Walter **Lang** GmbH

Sustainability





Our company

Walter Lang GmbH is a medium-sized food company located in Bremen, Germany. We have processed honey and alternative sweeteners such as agave syrup since 2008. More than 80% of our products are certified organic.

Walter Lang GmbH purchases raw materials from around the world which we process, refine and then package in various ways. We make products for our own brand as well as for several leading brands. Our customers are mainly from Germany, but also from other European countries such as Austria and France. The products we make in Bremen are even distributed overseas, for example in South Korea.

Our company is a family business owned by two managing partners. Both managing partners have been actively involved in the organic sector and have upheld its values for decades. The eponymous managing director is one of Germany's organic pioneers. He was the driving force behind our organic beekeeping operation. In addition to Walter Lang GmbH's head office, located in the historical warehouse district of Bremen on the banks of the river Weser, we opened a new production site in 2019 in Drebber, a municipality of Lower Saxony, Germany.





Employees

Walter Lang GmbH currently employs 111 staff at its two locations. Around 81 % of our employees work full-time while 19% work part-time (figures for May 2020).

According to the company's personnel policy, temporary employees are only hired in exceptional circumstances, for instance in order to cope with unexpected production peaks or unusually high numbers of employees in certain areas on sick leave. The company's personnel policy is to hire permanent staff in all departments.

Around 58 % of our total workforce is male. This makes it even more gratifying that the share of women in management positions is 50 %.

Around 55 % of all employees at Walter Lang GmbH have an immigrant background. To ensure that all rules concerning workplace hygiene, safety and other matters are fully met, relevant documents and procedural instructions are issued in two languages besides German. Additionally, some training sessions are conducted in Polish.

As a company that is accredited to provide training at both of our locations, we are currently training industrial clerks (m/f/d) and specialists in warehouse logistics (m/f/d). There are now five trainees (in May 2020).



As a matter of principle, all employees are treated equally. Assessments are made according to comparable criteria such as qualifications, performance and experience.

Discrimination of any kind based on a person's geographic or ethnic background or origin, nationality, skin colour, gender, religion, sexual orientation, sexual identity, disability, age, social status, marital status, physical traits or other features is not tolerated.

This equally concerns direct and indirect discrimination, instructions to discriminate, and any form of (sexual) harassment or bullying.

Likewise, bribery and corruption are not tolerated. This applies to our own employees as well as every business partner (see 'Suppliers & other business partners').

In our daily work the company makes sure that all of our employees work under non-hazardous and safe conditions. This prevents accidents and personal injury. Regular training sessions contribute to workplace safety. EcoStep certification of our integrated management system by GUTcert includes audits of our fulfilment of the basic requirements of the occupational health and safety standard ISO 45001:2018.

Ongoing employee training covers general topics like occupational safety and food hygiene, and a range of courses are held within each department on topics specific to their work. For example, there are sensory training and analysis training courses for employees in quality assurance.





Suppliers & other business partners

Walter Lang GmbH cooperates with business partners who share our values. We insist on compliance with national laws as well as unconditional recognition of the international labour and social security standards of the International Labour Organization (ILO). Four of the fundamental conventions of the ILO are: 'Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise', 'Abolition of Forced Labour', 'Minimum Age' and 'Discrimination (Employment and Occupation)'.

Our company prioritises fairness and honesty in our own interactions with suppliers and business partners as well as in our partners' interactions with their employees and other stakeholders. This fosters cooperation, confidentiality and discretion, and equitable remuneration. We do not tolerate bribery and corruption.



Indispensable:
A responsible relationship
with employees and
sustainable stewardship
of resources and the
environment.

Audits of existing and potential suppliers are regularly conducted on these and other matters. Auditing can take place in the following ways, alone or in combination: through performance reviews, self-assessment questionnaires, the provision of extra certificates or other supporting documents, and through on-site audits.

Since Walter Lang GmbH also procures raw materials from risk countries (as per amfori BSCI), we pay particular attention to working conditions in those countries. Virtually all of our suppliers from risk countries are microenterprises, and they are often members of cooperatives. The risk is deemed to be minimal as these operations have hardly any employees and the beekeepers themselves carry out the work. Moreover, the physical demands of the work mean that it can only be performed by adults, and it requires tools such as vehicles that only adults can use.



Our raw material suppliers are certified organic. Many are members of organic associations such as Bioland or Naturland. Naturland offers fair-trade certification in addition to Naturland organic certification. TransFair also provides many of our suppliers with fair-trade certification.

The raw materials are not processed in the countries of origin, so no additional factories or processing sites are involved.

Walter Lang GmbH has maintained long-term relationships with many of its raw material suppliers. Our company has always offered support with regard to the beekeeping operations themselves as well as to their certification. In the past, this has included covering the costs incurred. We make advance agreements on purchase quantities with our regular suppliers to enable both them and our company to optimise planning. We pay market prices plus any additional charges, for instance for products that are certified by organic associations. Our company also pays the price difference between non-organic and organic products to suppliers who are in conversion.

Beekeeping is a viable means of securing a decent income and existence, particularly for families in economically underdeveloped areas with abundant wild flora. Oftentimes, it offers good prospects for the coming generations. Since the conditions for beekeeping have remained the same for hundreds of years and the work requires little technology or investment, beekeeping is a form of agricultural production that can even be performed in the farthest reaches of the rainforest. It's just a question of transportation. And in many cases, that's where cooperatives can help.





The environment

Walter Lang GmbH complies with all existing national environmental laws and regulations and makes sure that our suppliers comply as well.

EcoStep certification of our integrated management system by GUTcert confirms our fulfilment of the basic requirements of the environmental management standard ISO 14001:2015.

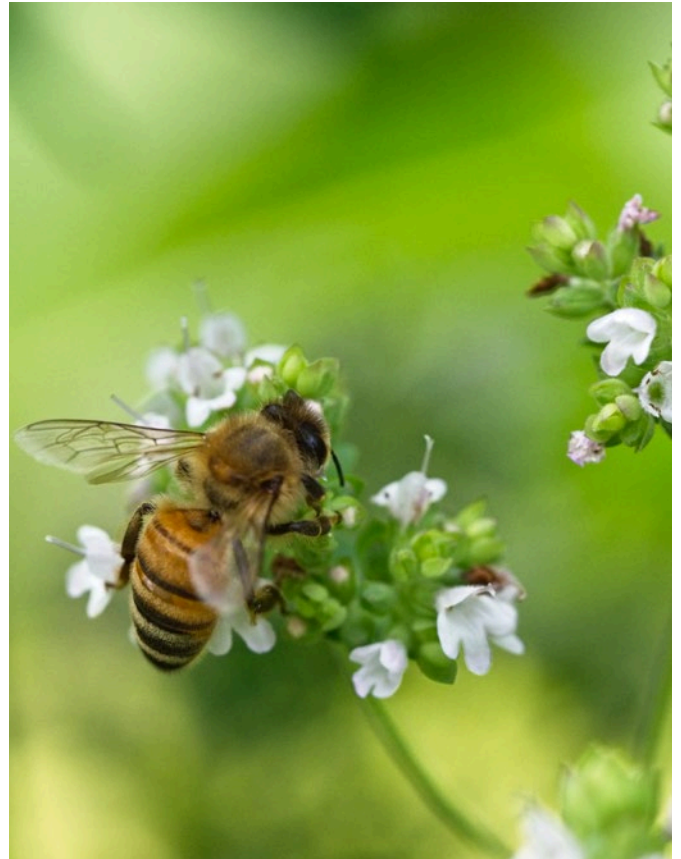
Our company runs entirely on green electricity.

Raw materials from overseas are transported by ship. We have managed to optimise container loads to hold 10% more goods per container, thus reducing the number of containers to be transported. This has lowered our total freight weight.

As the production of honey and alternative sweeteners is naturally a sticky business, the use of water for cleaning is unavoidable. We use rainwater wherever possible, for instance to clean the yard. Wherever closed-loop recycling is feasible, for example to cool machine motors, we install it.

Waste materials are cleanly separated, collected and dispatched to recycling systems whenever possible.

Our company continuously strives to find more sustainable packaging solutions. For example, we reduced the amount of cardboard packaging needed to transport mini jars by developing a new pallet arrangement with intermediate layers.





In October 2019 we switched the dispenser bottles for our private-label honey and agave syrup from PET to recycled PET (RPET). By May 2020, the percentage of RPET used to bottle these products had already reached 75.5%.

We also took a first step toward improving the recyclability of the caps to the dispenser bottles by changing the silicon seal.

Most of the honey jars used by our company already consist of 60% recycled glass.

We also prioritise sustainability in the production of agave syrup. Some of the agave is collected in the wild. This requires permission from the Mexican government and involves specific rules that must be followed. Collection may only take place in certain areas, and for every agave that is harvested, two agave seedlings must be planted in its place. The rest of the agave we use is cultivated. Blue agave plants are grown in fields. Agave plants grow well in semi-arid habitats. Their cultivation never entails

deforestation to create cropland. They are planted during the rainy season. During the months of April and May, enough rainwater falls for the undemanding plants to store moisture in their thick leaves. No irrigation is necessary. Agave syrup is also transported by sea. It is shipped from Mexico directly to the port of Bremerhaven. From there it is just a short distance to our bottling plants in Bremen and Drebber.

Honey is Walter Lang GmbH's core business, and billions of honeybees contribute to the preservation of ecosystems around the world. Bees are the principal players when it comes to pollination, which is necessary for plant reproduction. The beehives that produce our honey are often situated in nature reserves, world heritage sites, or similar landscapes. Bees therefore not only help maintain cultivated areas, but also secure the existence of regions that are under protection. Organic beekeeping in particular constitutes active environmental protection.





Quality



Walter Lang GmbH has installed an integrated management system. EcoStep certification of our integrated management system includes audits of our fulfilment of the basic requirements of the quality management standard ISO 9001:2015.



Our company has additionally achieved Higher Level IFS certification as well as EU organic, Bioland, Naturland and Fairtrade certification.

Wir sind Partner



We conduct our own in-house sensory inspections and testing. All of the raw material shipments we receive are thoroughly inspected. The goods are traceable back to their point of origin at all times.



Prior to delivery, advance samples of goods are carefully inspected for quality so that only goods that meet our quality parameters are accepted. This prevents unnecessary returns.

We discuss and agree upon quality parameters with our raw material suppliers at the very beginning of our business relationship. This includes taking a thorough survey of the landscape and its use in areas where melliferous plants grow, identifying potential risks to quality, and supporting species-appropriate beekeeping according to organic standards. Beekeepers are also given support for continuing their training, which positively impacts product quality.

Since we process and bottle the products ourselves, every step of the work is monitored by our in-house quality assurance system.





Looking ahead

In addition to continuing to develop and optimise sustainability measures in our company, we have taken first steps toward issuing our own sustainability report.

Expect even more systematic evaluations and reporting on our company's sustainability performance in the future.

Sender:

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