Recipes for a delicious future: "Ährenwort" and regional organic quality

09.01.2020

Ideas that meet with sustainability and tradition: Saxony-Anhalt's food industry hits the taste buds

The food industry in Saxony-Anhalt certainly has many recipes that are fit for the future. The sector includes several businesses in the federal state which make food or beverages and use the right ingredients to achieve success; the advantages of their location, guaranteed quality attributes and organic products. Companies such as "Kathi Rainer Thiele GmbH" in Halle (Saale) and "Wikana Keks und Nahrungsmittel GmbH" in Lutherstadt Wittenberg are examples of how the sector is hitting the taste buds. "Kathi" focuses on regional quality, and uses grain which is certified by the quality programme "Ährenwort" (word of honour) in all of its baking mixes and flours. "Wikana" whets the appetite for more – with excellent organic biscuits.

"Kathi" is as much a part of the city of Halle as the river Saale. The company story reads like a book. In 1951, Kaethe and Kurt Thiele began their production in a garage complex with modest means. Their company, carrying their names, develops an innovative “all-round baking mixture”: cake flour. Over the years the product range has grown in size, just like the company itself. "Kathi" has been an integral part of the market ever since its foundation. The successful combination of tradition and innovation, combined with the highest standards of quality, has proven to be a key ingredient for success. The owner-managed family business in Saxony-Anhalt has received repeated awards for its considerable level of regional and social commitment, including the Ethics Prize of the federal state of Saxony-Anhalt and the "n-tv Hidden Champion" in the category of "Responsibility".

Transparency from the farmer’s field to the shop counter

"Kathi" takes responsibility from several perspectives. This includes the fact that all of the "Kathi" baking mixes and flours include a "word of honour": "We promise our customers that high-quality, and above all else, regional raw materials are used in all of our products, baking mixes as well as flours," explains press spokeswoman Susen Thiele. "And that's not just an empty phrase, it's a sophisticated concept." Behind these words is a fixed component which is integrated within all the production processes. The "word of honour" quality programme stands for regionally-produced grain, and covers regional areas of farming in Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringia and Brandenburg. "We also give our 'word of honour' that we use varieties of grain with high baking quality which have been tested over several years, that the fertilisation is carried out as required and the plant protection is completed after intensive monitoring, and that regular internal and external laboratory checks take place," explains Susen Thiele. And there's another thing: all consumers can rely on the monitoring and documentation of the processes. "That means", explains the press spokeswoman, "we guarantee the complete traceability of our products, from the shop counter back to the field." "Kathi" also demonstrates its close links to Saxony-Anhalt as a location through the fact that more than 80 percent of the raw materials it uses, especially the primary raw materials such as flour, refined flour and wheat starch, originate from the federal state itself or from Saxony, Thuringia and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. Susen Thiele: "Only those raw materials which aren't available here have to be purchased from other regions." Susen Thiele gives a quick answer to the question of why regional origin is so important to the company: "Our roots are here, and the location, with its excellent soil, farmers who aren’t afraid to break new ground, and several businesses from the food industry with whom we are happy to cooperate, have created the ideal environment for us."

A recipe for success: the combination of tradition and innovation

The company "Wikana Keks und Nahrungsmittel GmbH" is also one of the “old hands” in the food industry. Since 1906, everything in the business has revolved around the sweeter side of life: "from the chocolate of the founding years, through to the many varieties of biscuits from Lutherstadt Wittenberg today. Among the classics are the "Lutherbrodt", the "Othello" biscuit, the "Hansa" biscuit and the butter cookie with the Luther rose, which aren’t just popular in Saxony-Anhalt. "Wikana" exports biscuits and pastries to sixteen different countries, including Denmark, France, Italy, Japan, Croatia, Austria, Switzerland, Spain and the Czech Republic. Nicole Witt, Head of Marketing, describes the recipe for success of "Wikana" as follows: "We combine tradition and innovation, we only use selected raw materials, and we bake biscuits and pastries of the highest quality with them."

Organic segment set for expansion

For lovers of biscuits and pastries, this philosophy seems to go straight to the stomach. That includes people who want to eat consciously and are happy to give such a claim some leeway. "Wikana" has been dedicated to organic farming since 2001, and has developed considerable know-how in the production of organic biscuits. Fair trade products have been available from Wittenberg since 2008. "This success confirms that we will continue to combine quality and organic in the future and to continuously expand our organic segment," explains Nicole Witt. The fact that the company has embarked on a promising and successful path is, among others, demonstrated by the "Organic Regional Prize" with which "Wikana" was presented last year for two organic products at the "International Green Week" by Saxony-Anhalt’s Environment Minister, Claudia Dalbert. The "Organic Coconut Biscuit" and the "Organic Quinoa Cocoa Biscuit" – both with chocolate chips – won the jury over in the criteria of organic suitability, regional origin and flavour. Things are all set to continue with these "tasty appetizers." "We are firmly established here at our location, but we always like to think outside the box. For us, that means staying at the cutting edge. We still have some ideas, and we are confident that a lot of people will like them," says Nicole Witt.

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