



SternVitamin widens its portfolio to include liquid premixes and a new compounding plant for highly sensitive products

STERNVITAMIN
Fortification for a Healthy Life

SternVitamin is steadily widening its competitive edge as a vitamin premix designer. As a micronutrient specialist capable of meeting the most sophisticated requirements the company now offers the option of compounding micronutrients on a container blending line built to pharmaceutical specifications and optimally suited for processing and filling vitamins, minerals and trace elements. Moreover, the wide range of premixes has been enlarged still further to include liquid vitamin-oil mixtures.

Business Development Manager Jan Heuer describes the extended service chain ...





SternVitamin is an innovative service company specializing in the procurement and production of individual micronutrient premixes. Its latest flagship is a blending plant designed to pharmaceutical specifications for highly sensitive products.

How did this development come about?

Jan Heuer: "This latest project is an ideal addition to our existing facilities. The new plant enables us to meet even the most demanding requirements, such as ingredients for food supplements, over-the-counter medicines or fortified food for babies and toddlers – all of them sophisticated market segments with growth potential. That's why it was decided to invest four million euros in a new building and plant specially for this promising sector."

What's so special about the plant, then?

What makes it different from standard equipment?

Jan Heuer: "The new blending and filling plant puts us on one of the highest quality levels in process and plant technology. It enables us to blend and fill products with the greatest possible care, ensuring maximum purity, adherence to formulations, safety and reliability. The design and technical equipment of the completely independent plant, which is divided into three hygiene zones, meet the most stringent purity requirements. Each batch can be traced back separately, and the process can be validated from beginning to end. Moreover, this plant totally excludes the risk of cross-contamination – a major requirement for the production of allergen-free compounds, for example."

Can you give us some concrete examples of applications in the food industry?

Jan Heuer: "The fruit-juice industry often fortifies its products with vitamins and minerals. If these premixes contained even the slightest traces of starch they would turn clear-soluble drinks cloudy. Our new plant makes it possible to exclude risks of this kind. The same applies to the manufacture of products free from gluten or lactose; there is more and more demand for these from people with food allergies."

Do you see potential outside the food industry too?

Jan Heuer: "There is great potential in compounding single active and basic substances for over-the-counter medicines. And in the whole food supplement sector, of course. The plant is optimally designed for these demanding products, and the gentle blending process achieves excellent results; it ensures that the premixes remain stable and homogeneous."



Liquid premixes have to be used in some industries and applications. Can SternVitamin supply the market for oily blends?

Jan Heuer: "Of course we have responded to enquiries about these, and we can now offer our customers a suitable range. As part of our recent investments we commissioned a new blending plant for liquids, which means we can now supply the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K and also beta-carotene as a premix in the form of oil. These oily blends are mainly used in margarine and edible oils, but they find their way into dairy products too."





SternVitamin seems to be very well set up from the technical point of view. But one of your company's biggest assets is its fund of know-how – after all, SternVitamin is the youngest member of a vigorously growing group of companies operating solely in Food and Feed Ingredients ...

Jan Heuer: "That's true: we have the great advantage of being part of a vast network of competence within the Stern-Wywiol Gruppe. For example, our group of companies has a modern Technology Centre with an area of 2,000 m², where it pushes ahead with new products containing functional ingredients for dairy products, processed meats, delicatessen specialities and baked goods. We let our customers share all the benefits of this "Know-How Connection."

What form does this transfer of information take in practice? Do you have concrete examples?

Jan Heuer: "The best ideas for new products always come about through an interdisciplinary exchange of information. And since our group can draw on years of experience in stabilizers, enzymes, lipids and emulsifiers we are able to develop premixes that fit our customers' applications like a glove. For example, we have just developed an overall concept for a breakfast drink together with our sister firm Hydrosol. The drink is a ready mix of various constituents like vitamins, minerals, prebiotic oligofructose and a stabilizing system based on milk protein. An interesting option, especially for dairies and manufacturers of soft drinks."

SternVitamin stands out from other trading companies because of the comprehensive services it offers. Just how complex is your service chain?

Jan Heuer: "Depending on customers' requirements, SternVitamin's full-service offer ranges from procurement of raw materials through individual development and production to quality control and dispatch. All the steps in the process are accompanied by a comprehensive quality management system that includes certification according to

ISO 9001:2000, an audited HACCP system and Higher Level / Version 5 of the International Food Standard."

Where do you see the biggest growth potential for supplemented products? The traditional distribution channels are in the USA, Japan and Western Europe. How is demand developing outside these established markets?

Jan Heuer: "Functional food has long become a global trend. Generally speaking, we meet with great interest wherever prosperity is increasing – especially in the emerging markets like China and India. So we operate worldwide and maintain an international distribution network. Only recently we concluded agreements with new agents in the UK (Thew Arnott & Co. Ltd.), Thailand (FIT - Food Ingredient Technology Company Ltd.), Russia (Stern Ingredients Russia) and Cameroon (Contacts sans Frontières)."

One word about the company's background. Although SternVitamin was not established until 2006 it is already well known in the industry as a manufacturer of vitamin and mineral premixes. How was SternVitamin able to set itself up so quickly?

Jan Heuer: "In principle we developed out of our sister company Mühlenchemie, that has been a global player in the field of flour fortification with vitamins and minerals for decades. Since more and more of our customers were asking whether we could supply these additives for other foods like dairy products and sweets, and also drinks, we established SternVitamin two years ago. So in fact we are a young company with years of experience in micronutrients. With this background we had excellent chances of getting off to a good start."

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SternVitamin at a Glance

Company headquarters	SternVitamin GmbH & Co. KG Kurt-Fischer-Straße 55, 22926 Ahrensburg, Germany
Year of establishment	2006, by Volkmar Wywiol
Group of companies	Stern-Wywiol Gruppe Holding GmbH & Co. KG, Hamburg Turnover: 250 mill. EUR, employees: 450
Management	Volkmar Wywiol, Lennart H. Kutschinski
Key competence	Applications consultancy; research into, development and production of tailor-made vitamin and mineral premixes for foods, beverages and food supplements.
Range and applications	Vitamin and mineral premixes to fortify baby food, cereals, beverages, dairy products, sugar confectionery, edible fats, pasta, bakery products etc., also dietetic products, OTC articles and food supplements
Trademarks	SternVit, SternMin
Production facility	Wittenburg (Mecklenburg-West Pomerania)
Percentage of exports	40 %
Quality management	Certification according to ISO 9001:2000; IFS Higher Level; EU health mark for dairy products; approval under the Dietetic Products Ordinance; audited HACCP system; production conditions conforming to GMP; allergen management

And what can we do for you?

A lot of factors have to be taken into account when fortifying foods and beverages or manufacturing food supplements. The requirements are highly specific, so standard products are not a viable solution. That makes it all the more important to seek the advice we give at the start of all development work. On this basis we create solutions to meet your needs, drawing on the skills of the whole group.

Visit our applications technology department in Ahrensburg and our factory in Wittenburg. We are looking forward to an e-mail or phone call from you.

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