



# Neumarkter Lammsbräu

DAS FEINE ÖKOLOGISCHE BIER

„Once you caught the organic bug, you won't get rid of it anymore.“ – Dr. Franz Ehrnsperger, owner of Neumarkter Lammsbräu caught the „ecovirus“ long before today's save-the-planet-hype and the health trends have become mainstream. As early as 1980 the businessman with a doctor's degree and studied master brewer decided to manufacture organic beer and to run his brewery in an ecologically sound manner. At first ridiculed by brewer colleagues and business partners alike, the nearly 400-year old brewery that has been owned by the Ehrnsperger family since 1800, has become the largest organic brewery in Europe.

„No to genetically engineered smut on this beautiful earth!“ – the two-meter tall man looks very fierce with his red tie and the giant banner in his hand as he demonstrates at a “No to GMO” get-together against the genetic contamination of beer ingredients. When it comes to beer, Franz Ehrnsperger can't take a joke. The manifesto for the permanent protection of the Bavarian Beer Purity Law that was signed on September 27, 2006, reflects his thinking. Moreover, true to the slogan “We won't put into our beer what a beer doesn't need”, the studied brewmaster and manager publishes already in 1989 his guidelines for organic beer brewing with the title: the Beer Purity Law starts on the field - a proclamation where the passionate organic brewer describes what is near to his heart. At the age of 24, the young university graduate starts to work at his parents' company. At first, he takes over the sales department, takes care of technical affairs and writes his dissertation on the side. 1971 he is appointed associate partner. His parents, Lisa and Michael Ehrnsperger, still manage the brewery and know that their headstrong offspring is planning to do a lot of things differently than the five generations before him. Especially his mother Lisa who is the brewery's head accountant worries herself to death when she realizes how doggedly the junior works on the implementation of his ecological business concept. “The boy will ruin the brewery”, she states worriedly and also the long-established farmers are very doubtful towards the sublime phantasies of the young, biodynamic entrepreneur. Franz Ehrnsperger, however, manages to convince the local farmers to found an organic growers association, to convert their farms to organic agriculture and to cultivate natural, pure hops and organic barley for his brewery. Today, more than 100 local organic farmers cultivate approximately 4.000 hectares for the organic brewing materials of Neumarkter Lammsbräu.

The first trials with organic beer took place already in 1984 in Nuremberg at the „Brauerei im Altstadthof“ – a subsidiary of Neumarkter Lammsbräu

. Three years later, Ehrnsperger & Co. market their first two organic beer brands: „Schankbier“ and „Dunkel“. “I knew that I could only survive if I do things better than my competitors”. Better, however, doesn’t really describe it: Ehrnsperger’s integrated, ecological business concept not only proves successful, but is downright visionary from today’s perspective. “In the 1980s nobody was talking about the organic food boom. There were only a few natural food stores, that was it”. Franz Ehrnsperger and his wife Hemma belong by no means to the typical muesli-eating, sandals-wearing fraction. On the contrary: vital, merry, full of love for animals and plants, the two are mainly connected by one thing: the deep respect for humankind, nature and life itself: “It is our heartfelt conviction that a sustainable economy can only be realized in unison with nature and creation. The most important commandment is to act sustainably and to always have your sights set on future generations.” The two have been a couple for 40 years. They have been married for 36 years. Three children and six grand-children are the living evidence that the two found their respective “soul partner”: “God made us so tall that it will be easier for us to find each other”, says Hemma Ehrnsperger who looks like a model with her slender 1.84 meter height.

Once the children were out of the house („I am an absolute family person“), the CTA completed a training as nutritionist at the University of Giessen and further educated herself in the direction of therapy, life and health consulting. “I wanted more for myself than being just the wife of a successful business man“. Today Hemma Ehrnsperger works in her own practice near the brewery where she helps people deal with situations of crisis.

Since she also takes care of the wellbeing of the brewery employees she also supports the brewery’s official employee healthday. On that day, all of the 80 brewery employees – from the brewmaster to the accountant – can inform themselves about healthy eating, a healthy lifestyle and sensible physical exercise. „We want to offer our employees more than just a job and a salary. In principle, we want to give our employees a second home, an environment where they are comfortable“. People who sign on at Lammsbräu should have team spirit, should take responsibility for their work and should have a very pronounced ecological awareness. By signing the work contract, every employee commits to doing his or her ecological best. In the meantime, all is ecologically well at Neumarkter Lammsbräu: the brewery’s trucks are fueled at the brewery’s own gas station with cold-pressed canola oil, the bottle filling plant is equipped with noise absorbers and the labels of the bottle contain no heavy metals. The entire company uses recycling paper. Since the end of 1995, the brewery has switched over to manufacturing 100 percent organic beer. Next to „Schankbier“ and “Dunkel”, the first two organic beers that were marketed in 1987, there are twelve additional kinds: from Pilsner and the typical Bavarian wheat beer (the only organic wheat beer that received a “very good” assessment from the respected German consumer magazine ÖKO-TEST) to an organic shandy. Organic soft drinks and various mineral water products complete the range. Franz Ehrnsperger doggedly refuses

to enter the large, conventional market with his organically correct products: “You can buy our beer only in selected stores”. The yearly output totals approximately 60,000 hectoliters; most of the products are distributed within Bavaria.

For sure the consequent environmental orientation doesn't always increase the turnover, but the compassionate organic brewer would never deviate from his philosophy for monetary reasons. His convinced stance is recognized: the list of awards and prizes that he and his company are receiving year after year is rather lengthy: among others he was voted „Eco Manager of the Year“ by the Capital magazine and the WWF Germany in 1990; in 1999 Neumarkter Lammsbräu received the “Company of the Year” award that is sponsored by the Executive Academy. In 2001, Neumarkter Lammsbräu was the first brewery to be decorated with the German Environmental Award, the yearly award of the German Federal Foundation for the Environment (DBU), in recognition of its exemplary, integrated ecological business concept; in 2006 the brewery boss receives the Golden Town Medal in appreciation for his special merits for his hometown Neumarkt and the Neumarkt region. The awareness for organic products grows, the importance of a long-term, healthy lifestyle is recognized more and more – Ehrnsperger's concept has become trendy. All the same, the assiduous brewer is far from resting on his laurels: “We question everything that we are doing in the brewery and re-assess ourselves continuously. Besides, we permanently invest in technical equipment, innovative products and control systems for improving our quality. Invest or die!” Some of his money and his time, Dr. Ehrnsperger invested into a large-scale study that he commissioned about two years ago. In order to confirm the beneficial health effects of his beers, the brewer had his two non-alcoholic beers examined. The extensive studies were performed at the Chair for Phytopathology at the Technical University of Munich. The laboratory tests showed that “Lammsbräu Non-Alcoholic” and “Lammsbräu Non-Alcoholic Wheat Beer” have strong antioxidative effects and that they support the body's own immune defense. The observed effects are by far greater than those of probiotic yoghurts for example. You could almost say now: it's your own fault if you don't drink (organic) beer. Inspired by such positive results, the lab findings are currently being confirmed in a study with healthy volunteers: a high requirement that is specified by the EU Health Claims Ordinance for foods with health-related statements. If the Lammsbräu beers also master this hurdle they could get an official claim: “Then we would be the very first brewery that could market its beer with health claims”. Although it won't be easy – with his own gentle tenacity, Franz Ehrnsperger will also reach this goal: “For me, resistance translates into challenge”.

His wife Hemma rephrases: “My husband loves to push the envelope”. Ecologically valuable envelopes, of course.