



SONNENTOR: Innovation and the cycle of nature

SONNENTOR has been a pioneer in the organic sector for more than 30 years. Above all, their innovative and colourful herb and tea range have made the Waldviertel-based company known internationally. Twenty new products are coming up in 2019 and fans also appreciate the company's ecological commitment. SONNENTOR founder Johannes Gutmann plays a major role in this. Once referred to as "crazy", he is a forerunner with his ideas such as packaging without plastic, palm oil free products, CO2 neutral economies and direct trade with organic farmers. Today, many companies follow his pioneering philosophies.

"I don't want to wait until we can plant potatoes or even herbs on Mars because things are no longer growing on earth," says Gutmann, adding: "I want to inspire people to live with the cycle of nature. It is the only way we can jointly get ecological ideas out into the world and shape a future fit for our grandchildren." In order to achieve this goal, Gutmann has put measures in place in his own company and he is committed to environmental initiatives such as "Field Poisons? No, thank you!". An Alliance of organic companies and opinion leaders, that is committed to sustainable agriculture without pesticides. He also started the project "Frei-Hof" close by the headquarters - an organic permaculture farm that invites visitors to be hands on and to learn. A new addition to the herb garden are two land lofts, tiny houses ideal for a simple break in harmony with nature.

Natural resources from around the world

In the past three decades, numerous growing partners have joined the original three organic farmers. Around 300 organic farmers belong to the SONNENTOR family in Austria and Germany and there are many more around the world. Through the cooperation with SONNENTOR, around 1,000 families earn a livelihood worldwide. Whether in Nicaragua, Albania or Tanzania, SONNENTOR focuses on long-term and fair partnerships. A new CSR manager has recently joined the team. Stephan Strasser-Altrogge's goal is securing social and ecological standards in the Waldviertel region as well as in overseas cultivation projects, and developing these standards further.

Working with nature

At SONNENTOR, the concept of nature's natural cycles is implemented in a resource-saving manner. Herb remnants are processed into pellets for heating, old cartons are shredded and reused as packaging material, and compostable film made of wood fiber is used instead of plastic. All the CO2 produced on site is compensated by humus build-up projects. What about electricity? Of course, it is also generated ecologically. From the autumn 2019, two-thirds will be generated by the company's own photovoltaic system.

The Common Good is the goal

Johannes Gutmann insists that the profit stays in the economically deprived Waldviertel region: "We reinvest the profit in the place where it is generated. We pay local taxes. The



money flows back into the infrastructure at the company location. This is a sustainable cycle. We are totally political in our actions. Healthy growth has already created around 330 jobs. Services such as company in house childcare, free organic lunches and a wide-ranging health program are available to employees. Our corporate purpose is to maximize the common good." For this reason, SONNENTOR has been part of the common good economy since 2011. The associated end result makes it possible to measure what is happening in the area of sustainability and can be compared with other companies. Many companies still shy away from this transparency.

Book Tip: "The crazy one wins!" (only available in German)

"The crazy ones wins!" written by Johannes Gutmann, has been newly published by Styria-Verlag. In the book, the bio-pioneer gives remarkable and personal insights into his life and proves that most crises are actually opportunities. The book holds stories of joy and shows that courage and gut instinct inspire new things and make you believe in your own ideas.

SONNENTOR at a glance

About 330 people work at SONNENTOR in Sprögnitz in the Austrian Waldviertel. The employment helps this traditionally economically deprived region. 150 further employees work in the sister company in the Czech Republic. In addition, there are company branches in Romania and Albania, as well as international cultivation projects, e.g. in Nicaragua and Tanzania.

The focus is on the highest possible share of value added in production for the farmers themselves in each individual region. In Austria and Germany alone, around 300 organic farmers belong to the SONNENTOR family. Around 66 percent of the products are exported and with that, the company's sustainability philosophy is exported to over 50 countries. In Germany, SONNENTOR is available in organic stores and in four of our own stores. The SONNENTOR online shop is also very popular, especially with German fans. More information at www.sonnentor.com

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