

Bio-Strath, the family-owned company needs no strengthening

Due to a great success in South Africa, the Zurich producer of food supplements has succeeded in increasing its turnover in double digits

By Romeo Regenass

Bio-Strath with its modest offices in the adjoining area of Zurich, in the Seefeld, and its ordinary production facilities above the villas of Herrliberg, can do without straining after effect. The conservative company prefers to rely on ancient values like loyalty, solidarity and stability.

Since 20 years, David Pestalozzi, the head of the company, has managed the enterprise which his father, Fred, founded in a kitchen of a medical practice in the "Langstrasse" in 1961. When he was a young man, the offspring of the Zurich iron and steel dynasty suffered from severe impaired balance with a strong buzzing in his ears. He was looking after a natural health tonic consisting of herbal yeast developed by the German chemist and philosopher, Walter Strathmeyer, in 1948. This was alleviating. Shortly afterwards, when F. Pestalozzi visited W. Strathmeyer, he was donated the formula, and the product has been named Bio-Strath. Bio in Greek language stands for "life", but in this context for lively yeast cells.

Fred Pestalozzi, now at 86 years of age, is still in the office every day. Bio-Strath employs 15 people and is delivering its product in more than 50 countries – however under two different brand names. The prefix „Bio“ had to be dropped in the EU and in Switzerland in 2001, because it is reserved for biologically cultivated agricultural products; in the rest of the world it is still being sold as Bio-Strath.

Export rate increased to 76 per cent

Last year represented a milestone: For the first time, South Africa with 470,000 packages has exceeded Switzerland's volume of trade which is with 360 000 packages the most important market. This increased the export rate to a record high of 76 percent in terms of quantity. The turnover stated at 7 million Swiss Francs until now has risen to 8 million. And as for this jump in turnover, no additional staff has been hired, the yield has progressed as well. Although, its amount is being kept secret.

In addition to important markets such as Japan and Malaysia, Bio-Strath provides also countries with small orders: For instance every second year 200 packages are sold to Iceland. As D. Pestalozzi explained, "as far as we are able to do so, we are delivering to these clients too". Also the USA is being supplied with a relatively insignificant quantity compared to the size of the country.

«The body takes what it needs»

The undisclosed mixture is being produced in four 12 000-litre tanks of chromium steel. The basis is a herbal stock which is added without heating to a yeast cake which absorbs the herbal raw materials. After two months, a sweet, viscous and slightly bitter mixture is received from 10 per cent malt extract, 5 per cent honey and the same quantum of orange juice. This unaltered product has been in the market for up to 50 years, and even without any conservation agents, can be preserved for five years.

As Strath is a matter of multi-properties mixture, its efficiency is unexplainable. However, it has repeatedly been proven. As 35 scientific studies reveal, a regular intake may improve concentration, strengthen and support the immune system as well as enhance memory in aged persons. «You can do nothing wrong», F. Pestalozzi explained in promoting his product, «every body takes what it needs». There exists a highly interesting study describing a favourable impact for children with alertness deficiencies (ADHD/ADD) (see below).

Bio-Strath has never required any support from banks: In the small family business, there isn't any franc due to banks, even the production facilities are wholly owned by the company. This should remain so in the future. „I have a family and want to be able to sleep peacefully at nights”, D. Pestalozzi said. Although, they think twice before spending a franc. «That is the only way to make work profitable», D. Pestalozzi professed.

This is resulting from Bio-Strath's sponsoring legendary sports celebrities in the past century, like race car drivers Jo Siffert and Clay Regazzoni, Eusebio, the football star or Ferdi Kübler, the legendary biking sport star. They were all advertising “the tonic, with its stimulating benefits”. At present, we can only admit limited liabilities with Karin Thürig, the racing cyclist, Simone Kuhn and Lea Schwer, beach volley ball players or the ski association of Liechtenstein. « Nowadays, proper sponsoring is unfortunately too expensive », said regretfully D. Pestalozzi, director of the company.

Children with ADHD improved concentration

A pilot study has followed 18 patients of a pediatrician practice during 6 weeks who have been administered Strath, the herbal yeast agent to treat Attention Deficit Disorder ADD or ADHD. In addition to the subjective evaluations by physicians, parents and teachers, the results of a recognized computer program have been taken into account determining and comparing the status of the children's performance.

The results have shown that more than 65 per cent of the children concerned have subjectively and objectively benefitted from the intake of Strath; among other things enhanced concentration, less fatigue, improved team capacity and strengthened perseverance were observed. «Unfortunately, the heads of the studies do not dispose of a comparison group who were not administered Strath », indicated the

Head of the technical division of Bio-Strath, Alfred Habegger; this is the weak point of the study. «Nevertheless, mails and letters received from parents worldwide are just confirming this awareness. »

At the beginning of last week, the “Kantonsrat” (Zurich Council of the canton) asked the “Regierungsrat” (Council of the State) for a report on administering Ritalin and similar pharmaceuticals to children and adolescents. This issue is raising also politically a crucial subject. (meo.)