

Vion | Falkenstein

Reconstruction of a plant without a production stop

After a one-year planning phase and two-years of execution, one of the most modern and efficient slaughterhouses for cattle was built for Vion at the Waldkraiburg site. The plant with a slaughtering capacity of 140 cattle per hour respectively 1,000 animals per day, has been awarded the German Animal Welfare Label "Für mehr Tierschutz". For the produced meat, Vion received last year a gold medal at the World Steak Challenge in London.

High slaughtering capacity

The old plant was a cattle and pig slaughterhouse with two lines. To prepare the existing structures for the high level of slaughtering capacity far reaching adjustments were necessary. The general planning services have been provided by the specialised planning office

Falkenstein Projektmanagement GmbH, headquartered in Aulendorf, Baden Württemberg, Germany and were carried out during regular business of the slaughterhouse.

Ongoing operation

In order to carry out the modernisation without any interruption of the ongoing operation of the plant, it was quite a challenge for the planners because reconstruction of an existing plant always means extra work compared to a project on a green field site. Nonetheless, in spite of the complexity of the reconstruction and the reorganization of existing structures, the highest planning requirement in Waldkraiburg was to create a linear, crossing-free process – from the animal delivery to the slaughter line, cooling rooms until the dispatch or until the cutting and deboning.



The modernised cattle slaughterhouse in Waldkraiburg with capacity of 1,000 cattle per day sets new standards. Photo: Vion – Tim Wegner

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This was achieved through a holistic analysis of the project and reorganization of the staff routes. An overall solution was found which makes it possible to produce high-quality, sustainable food with an energy optimised, economic and environmental operation of the plant.

Animal welfare

The cattle delivery ramps and the cattle waiting hall were planned based on the latest recommendations of the world's leading animal welfare scientist, the US-American specialist Temple Gradin. For the realization new materials and construction details were used in line with animal welfare requirements.

A challenge during the project was the handling of available energies as well as the integration and connection of the modern technology into existing structures. Equivalent to the slaughter quantity, efficient cooling was also required to cover the increase of capacity from originally 600 carcasses to 3,400 carcass halves. In order to achieve the new cooling capacity, an extensive cooling concept was prepared in advance, taking into account available resources. As a result, the existing cold rooms were completely reconstructed, expanded and renewed.

Sustainability

The sustainable production at the Waldkraiburg site can be defined by the production of high-quality by-products which partially can be re-entered into the food cycle. For example, the feet remain assigned to each carcass in the slaughter hall until the veterinary inspection of the carcass, so that the feet can be used as food. Blood gets collected as food blood and citrated blood and is stored for further production in cooled storage tanks. The skins get assigned to each carcass and are individually weighed before they are dropped in a storage container. For this an expansion of the basement floor was necessary. Now, for example it is possible to market the skins of Simmentaler breed different than the skins of black-and-white cattle breed.

The fact that the beef steaks from Waldkraiburg are one of the best worldwide confirms that competitive advantages can be achieved, above all, in the area of corporate culture in the future. Responsible actions towards the environment, sustainable production, transparency towards the consumer and compliance with animal welfare are the attributes that have been exemplary in the plant.

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