

Neuhaus Neotec in Germany will formally open a new extension to its premises in Ganderkesee near Bremen in Germany in December. The well-known manufacturer of turnkey coffee plants, roasting machines, grinders and green coffee processing equipment has invested approximately Euros 1.5 million in building and fitting out the new facility

Speaking to *C&I* during an exclusive tour of the new facility and of Kraft's coffee roasting operation in nearby Bremen, Gustav Luehrs, the company's Managing Director said the new facility would provide additional manufacturing space, and space for a number of pilot plants which Neuhaus Neotec plans to use in its ongoing research and development programme and to carry out tests on behalf of its customers.

Optimistic frame of mind

"We have had to expand our facilities more or less every five years as we have continued to grow," Mr Luehrs told *C&I*. "Nowadays we have more than 115 employees, many of whom have worked for the company for many years. Some of our engineers have worked for us since the company started producing equipment for the coffee industry; they continue to pass on their expertise and knowledge of the coffee business that they have built up to the trainees that we regularly take on."

Key role for pilot plant

The new building will provide the company with an additional 1,000m² of space. Apart from a generous new entrance/reception

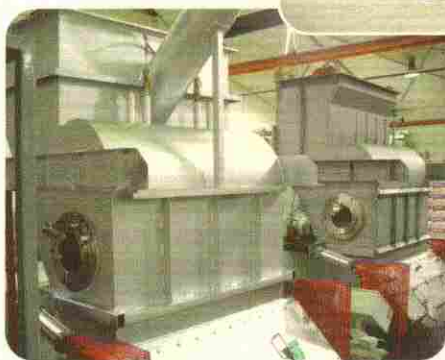
December opening for new facility at Neuhaus Neotec



Gustav Luehrs: "we specialise in innovation"

Neuhaus Neotec's new facility is due to be formally opened in December

The new facility will provide the company with greater manufacturing capacity and a pilot plant for product development



area, the ground floor of the building also accommodates the new pilot plant. Upstairs, above the pilot plant and new cupping room the company has new office space and a conference room.

One of the technologies that Neuhaus Neotec will be focussing on in the new pilot plant is agglomeration, the company having acquired Heinen Drying, which specialises in agglomeration, towards the end of 2009. Prior to acquiring the company, Neuhaus Neotec had a longstanding collaboration with Heinen Drying, which had lengthy expertise in fluid bed technology and in the formulation of powder mixtures of the type that are used in the preparation of 3 in 1 blends for soluble coffee.

"Research and development and testing the new technology that we develop is the most expensive part of the business," Mr Luehrs explained. "We continue to spend nearly 5 per cent of turnover on R&D, but it is a cost that we are happy to bear."

"We have built our name and reputation on developing new technology and responding to customer demand. We have never been the sort of company that just builds generic roasters; we specialise in innovation."

Continuing focus on R&D

As Mr Luehrs also explained, apart from working closely with its clients to respond to their specific requirements, for many years Neuhaus Neotec engaged in a research and development programme with universities such as the Technical University of Hamburg, focussing primarily on process development and particle analysis.

"We continue to focus on energy recovery, reducing emissions from the process of coffee roasting, and on developing bespoke solutions for our customers," said Mr Luehrs. "We are also putting a lot of effort into areas such as micro-fine grinding." The company also specialises in medium size roasters and in roasting machines for the specialty market, and continues to build up a support network for the equipment it supplies.

Among the latest additions to this support network is collaboration with a US firm for support for the control systems on equipment supplied by Neuhaus Neotec and a partnership with a company in Korea. In the longer term, the Kahl group is

planning to build a hub-type facility in the US which will enable Neuhaus Neotec to continue to enhance the level of support it provides to customers.

Kraft praises drum roaster

Among the most recent new deliveries from the company is the first example of Neuhaus Neotec's new drum roasters, a CTR 3000 which has been fully operation at Kraft Food's roasting facility in Bremen since the second quarter of 2009.

Drum roasters are a relatively recent addition to Neuhaus Neotec's portfolio. If a company is involved in producing soluble, Mr Luehrs explained, then the addition of a drum roaster makes particular sense, but the company's newly introduced drum roasting machines are designed to be suitable for handling a range of products, not just soluble.

During a tour of the facility C&C learnt that Kraft Foods is using the CTR 3000 to roast coffee for soluble, but is also using it for a range of products, roast and ground



The CTR3000 drum roaster at Kraft's facility near Bremen

coffee and whole bean coffee. Kraft Foods also has a Neuhaus Neotec RFB roaster at the same facility and uses the new drum roaster to roast batches of 400-600kg. Highlighting the ability of the drum roaster to handle a range of products, a spokesperson for the company said Kraft Foods particularly appreciated the flexibility of the CTR 3000.

The CTR 3000 is one of two drum roasters in the Neuhaus Neotec range, the other being the smaller CTR 1500. Designed for uniform roasting which can be exactly reproduced, the roasters combine efficient heat transfer with roast gas recirculation, which helps reduce Kraft's expenditure on fuel for the roaster.

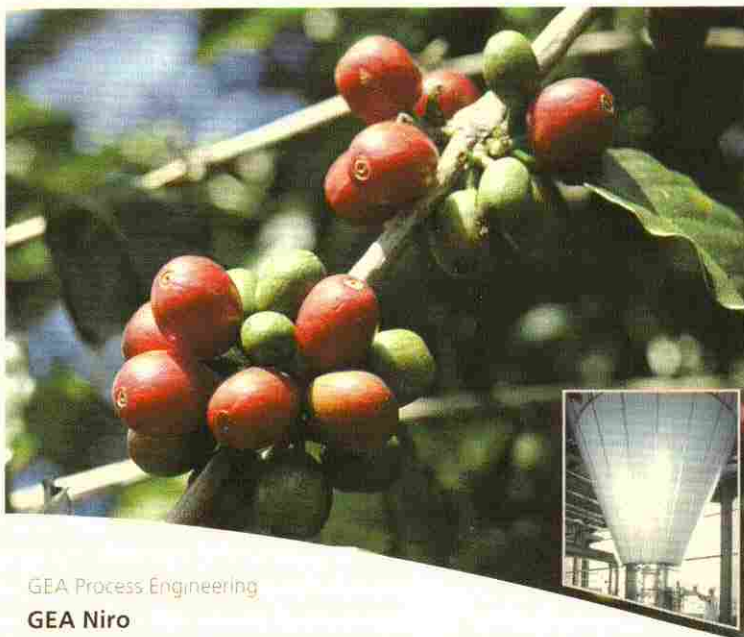
The company said it had also found the CTR 3000 to be easy to operate, with touch a panel with operating keys installed directly on the roaster in addition to the controls in the facility's dedicated control room.

Another advantage is that once the roasting process is complete, cooling is achieved using fresh air, with the air drawn from outside the building to ensure quicker, more efficient cooling. Another feature of the CTR 3000 which Kraft Foods has found particularly useful is an adjustable exhaust gas flap which can be used for dark roasts.

"We are very optimistic about the future," Mr Luehrs concluded. "We have seen some delays in projects because of the uncertainty caused by the recession but we haven't experienced any major cancellations. Overall, we continue to grow, and the new laboratories will enable us to continue to enhance our focus on developing innovative, new technology, and enable us to work closely with clients to respond to their specific needs for coffee roasting and grinding equipment." ■ C&C

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