

we in europe

For esco – european salt company staff

esco locations: esco Headquarters (HQ) in Hanover



From left to right: Reinhard Dust (S-T), Matthias Stamm (SD), Holger Bekemeier (S/BD), Dr. Roland Rüniger (SF), Joachim Hüttenrauch (SH), Adriane Schaefer (S/TQM), Klaus Lütke-Bohmert (SG), Stephan Gatz (SL), Dr. Denis Vidovic (SP-T), Manfred Koopmann (SE) and Erich Krug (S-M). Also Head of Department at esco HQ, but unfortunately absent when the photo was taken: Dr. Klaus Peter Breidung (SP).

esco – european salt company was founded on 1st January 2002. Its headquarters have been in the city centre of Hanover since April 2002 – just under ten minutes from the central railway station and only about half an hour from the airport.

“We may be a comparatively small team in terms of numbers at esco HQ, but we certainly get things moving”, states Erich Krug, Managing Director Marketing & Sales. “This is where the threads from the entire esco network come together.”

In Hanover, all of the production and sales locations at home and abroad work hand in hand to coordinate the production and sales plans on a regular basis, new products and marketing concepts are developed and esco's quality management system as well as its cer-

tificates are kept up to date. Approximately 80 members of staff working in a total of nine departments also ensure the smooth running of the manufacturing and logistics processes across the Group, that the right employees are assigned to the right position, and that the financial affairs of esco are in order.

The Hanoverians also play an active role in sales activities, they schedule customers' orders, organise shipping, make out delivery notes and invoices, observe the market and the competition and look after the needs of both public and industrial clients all over Europe. In doing so, they work closely together with the esco distribution companies abroad. “We phone or mail our international colleagues almost every day”, reports Manfred Koopmann, Head of Marketing Specialities & Sales Europe, “for example, in order to discuss order

details, to solve problems or to prepare long-term contracts with customers. Since not everything can be sorted out by taking a look in the SAP system. Such technology does indeed help, but it cannot replace communication among colleagues.”

Communication between the esco HQ, the holding company K+S Aktiengesellschaft and the affiliated salt company SPL in Chile is also lively. “The reporting system has grown significantly over the past few years”, states Reinhard Dust, Managing Director Production, Finance and Administration. “The stronger the growth of the Business Unit Salt of the K+S Group, the greater the need for coordination between the sub-divisions and the holding.”

Mr Dust sees particular challenges and opportunities in the acquisition of the US company Morton Salt by K+S. “Although esco primarily supplies salt in Europe and the focus of SPL is on South America, parts of the East Coast of North America and Asia, while Morton Salt mainly serves the North American market, there are still some points of contact. The three salt affiliates can benefit from the experience and methods of each other.” The aim is to further develop this potential in the months to come in order to jointly enable K+S to achieve and sustain its position as market leader in the global salt business.

(to be continued on page 2)

Positions and departments at esco HQ in Hanover:

- ◆ the Managing Director of Production, Finance and Administration (S-T)
- ◆ the Managing Director of Marketing, Sales and Logistics (S-M)
- ◆ the Department of Strategic Business Development & Corporate Communications (S/BD)
- ◆ the Finance & Controlling Department (SF)
- ◆ the Marketing & Sales Department for De-icing Salt (SD)
- ◆ the Department Marketing Specialities & Sales Europe (SE)
- ◆ the Department Sales Germany (SG)
- ◆ the Human Resources Department (SH)
- ◆ Supply Chain Management (SL)
- ◆ the Production & Engineering Department (SP)
- ◆ the Total Quality Management Department (S/TQM)
- ◆ and the esco subsidiary Deutscher Straßen-Dienst GmbH, which distributes de-icing salt to authorities and other representatives in the public sector in Germany.

Bianca Schanklies

News: E-billing at esco reduces workloads and cuts costs

esco sent invoices electronically for the first time last year and was thus able to reduce costs and facilitate processes together with its customers in the case of five percent of all billings. In the current year the number of participants in this procedure has further increased. Now, the aim is for this system to reach all clients by means of a wide-ranging information campaign.



Moritz Ottenbreit is convinced of the benefits of e-billing.

“With our powers of persuasion, we have been able to make good progress in convincing many of our customers of the benefits of e-billing in our joint project with the sales departments”, sums up Moritz Ottenbreit, head of the project and a member of staff at esco in the department Supply Chain Coordination which focuses on billing/export services. Ottenbreit now hopes that the brochures printed in five languages and the information on the

esco website will have the effect of convincing those customers who have so far been hesitant to receive their invoices as a so called PDF file by e-mail.

The goal is to win over all customers with less than 2,000 bills per year for this kind of e-billing. “For clients who receive more than 2,000 bills from us a year, the technically more complex EDI technology* has already proven its worth”, explains Ottenbreit, “we are already working on this successfully.”

E-billing also affects legal issues. It must be ensured that the bill received by the customer electronically is recognised as such. Moreover, the fiscal authorities involved must agree to the procedure. Since electronic communication has found its way into everyday office life, companies, associations and state agencies have been striving to find solutions. The key word is “digital signature”, whereby the main concern is the verification of the authenticity of documents.

However, Olaf Oczkos, responsible for Supply Chain Optimisation at esco, still regards the approaches in the area of digital signature available on the market as being too expensive: “For the encryption of an invoice we would pay roughly the same as we would save on

postage and other costs. Furthermore, no standard for digital signature has been able to assert itself so far. “

Instead, Moritz Ottenbreit and his colleagues prefer to work with a more favourable compromise that has been verified not only by colleagues from the K+S Holding units Taxes, Legal Matters, Insurance and Compliance, but also by experts from public fiscal administrations: They send the client all bills in paper form at the end of the year again. “That reduces the costs per bill by approximately 75 percent, and the client can still pass any conceivable financial audits in this way. In addition, should the client require printed invoices before the end of the year, we will, of course, send them to the client at any time and without delay if so requested.”

E-billing is considered as a subject relevant for the future at esco. Ottenbreit hopes for “A positive response from the current information campaign” and is convinced: “The benefits are obvious.”

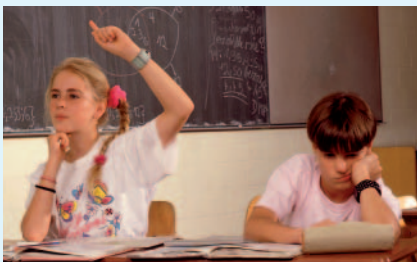
Manfred Koopmann

*EDI: Electronic Data Interchange, usually SAP-based

Salt and Health: Combating iodine deficiency with salt

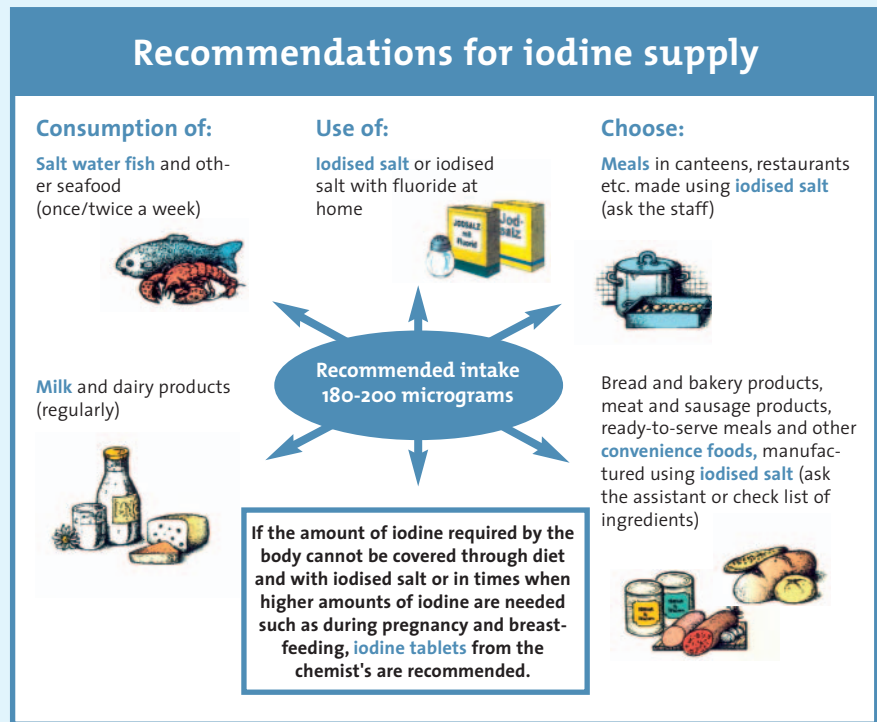
Iodine is a vital trace element for the human organism, the intake of which must be through food diet on a regular basis, since the body is unable to make it itself. Table salt is particularly suitable as a vehicle for iodine, thereby helping to prevent deficiency symptoms and health problems.

The body needs iodine to make thyroid hormones which are involved in numerous vital processes regarding metabolism and circulation regulation. Pregnant women and nursing mothers require even higher amounts of iodine. The Arbeitskreis Jodmangel (German study group iodine deficiency), in which esco and its predecessors have been members for many years, has been applying itself to this issue for more than 25 years now. According to Professor Dr. Roland Gärtner, spokesman of the Arbeitskreis Jodmangel, “in addition to difficulties in learning and remembering things, iodine deficiency in children and adolescents can also result in the impaired development of intelligence”.



The right diet for easier learning – smart heads use iodised salt. Concentration, thinking, learning – the mental demands made on school children are great.

Although the main sources of iodine are salt water fish and seafood, other important sources are milk and dairy products as well as certain types of vegetables (including lamb's lettuce, spinach and broccoli). However, due to the fact that the consumption of sea fish is continually decreasing and most European countries are regarded as being iodine deficient areas, the use of iodised table salt is recommended for all age groups.



All pictures: Arbeitskreis Jodmangel, for further information please visit www.jodmangel.de

The United Nations World Summit for Children in 1990 had the decisive signal effect to combat worldwide iodine deficiency. At this time, 192 countries – including Germany – committed themselves to setting up national health programmes with the aim of eliminating iodine deficiency by the year 2000. Germany has failed to completely meet this target to date.

In a summary of the findings of current studies presented at the press conference of the Arbeitskreis Jodmangel in Munich, Prof. Dr. Thomas Remer of the research institute for paediatric nutrition in Dortmund states that “overall, the supply of iodine in Germany may be described as virtually sufficient”. However, the nutritionist points out that there is still a clear need for action despite the success over the past few decades, as around seven percent of children still have severe iodine deficiency levels. Due to various legal requirements in countries of the European Union, the food industry producing for the international market, in

particular, is increasingly dispensing with the use of iodised salt in the manufacture of foodstuffs. Owing to this decline, which has been emerging since 2005, one may expect a deterioration in the supply of iodine again in future, including that among children.

Therefore, the declared aim of the Arbeitskreis Jodmangel (AKJ) thus continues to be: to further improve the supply of iodine in Germany, thereby preventing subsequent health problems. Since the use of iodised table salt is voluntary, intensive and consistent awareness training activities are still of particular importance. The AKJ and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Ernährung (German nutrition society) therefore recommend eating fish at least once a week and using iodised salt at home. When buying convenience products (including bread, sausage and meat products and cheese), consumers should also check the label to see if the product has been manufactured using iodised salt.

Jürgen Bunk



Market News: Participation in the trade show “Food Ingredients 2009”

From 17th to 19th November, esco and K+S Kali GmbH showcased their products as exhibitors at the international trade fair “Food Ingredients” in Frankfurt. “Food Ingredients’ is the ideal platform to find out about international product innovations in the area of natural ingredients”,

explains Dr. Isabell Goldberg, product manager for consumer products at esco. “We noted a high degree of interest in our two product lines Balance® Salz and Natural Crystal Rock Salt”.

Manfred Koopmann



Recipe: Roasted duck breast with coarse salt and black cherry confit

Serves 4
Preparation: 30 mins.
Cooking time: 30 mins.

Ingredients:

For the roasted duck breast:

- ◆ 2 duck breasts
- ◆ 10 cl chicken bouillon
- ◆ Coarse kitchen salt, e.g. Gros Sel de Bayonne Cérébos
- ◆ Chilli, e.g. Piment d'Espelette (aromatic and spicy chilli from the region of Bayonne)
- ◆ Olive oil

for the cherry confit:

- ◆ 400 g black cherries, stoned
- ◆ 200 g chopped onions
- ◆ 2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- ◆ 10 cl wine vinegar
- ◆ 1 tsp honey
- ◆ Fine grain table salt, e.g. Sel Fin de Bayonne Cérébos
- ◆ Pepper

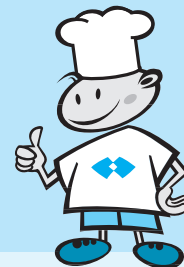
Preparation:

Preheat oven to 210 °C and firstly make the cherry confit: lightly brown the onions in olive oil, season with fine grain salt and pepper; add balsamic and wine vinegar together with the honey and cherries; allow sauce to reduce slightly for 30 minutes.

Now brush the duck breasts with a blend of olive oil, coarse salt and chilli; with the skin side facing outwards, roll up and wrap around string, but not too tightly; place on an oiled baking sheet and roast in the oven for 20 minutes (> pink); leave to rest for 5 minutes, keeping it warm; deglaze the duck stock with the bouillon.

Slice the roasted meat, allow 2 slices per portion, sprinkle with coarse salt and serve with a spoonful of confit and a little sauce.

Tip for those in a hurry: In order to save time, you can also use a jar of cherry preserve (100 % fruit without sugar), to which you add a dash of balsamic vinegar and a pinch of fine grain salt.



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