

## Wemhöner experiences strong growth in order intake

More orders from Turkey, South America and Eastern Europe again

Wemhöner Surface Technologies GmbH & Co. KG, based in Herford, Germany, has enjoyed a substantial recovery in its order intake for short-cycle presses since last summer after the economy led to a downturn in 2019 and the Covid-19 pandemic left its mark in the first few months of 2020. Lead times had lengthened to up to two years at times in 2017 and 2018 before returning to normal relatively quickly in 2019 as the order cushion declined. They are now back over 18 months again. This revival was fuelled particularly by several orders placed in rapid succession by customers in Eastern Europe, Turkey and South America. Wemhöner has also won a few orders for sites in Central, Western and Southern Europe. Business with North America is a little more subdued after the completion of major investments carried out mainly by European companies in the past two years.

Wemhöner is generally rather reluctant to provide information about new, ongoing or recently completed projects. Nonetheless, information about a few projects has been disclosed by sources in the wood-based panel industry. Wemhöner has recently provided the Kronospan Group with short-cycle presses for new mills under construction in Kaluga, Russia and Rivne, Ukraine. An MDF/HDF line is being installed in Kaluga in the first step. Commissioning is just around the corner. At the same time, the site is to install two Wemhöner presses. The Rivne project includes the reassembly of a particleboard line transferred from the mill in Bischweiler in the first stage. The first piece of MDF is to be made by the end of the year. Two new short-cycle presses are being

installed for laminating purposes. Unconfirmed reports suggest that Wemhöner has also won the contract to provide two short-cycle presses for a new laminating plant at Kronospan's site in Steinheim-Sandebeck, Germany. Wemhöner delivered three new short-cycle presses to the Egger Group last year. A particleboard mill in Biskupiec that has been up and running since the middle of 2019 has commissioned a third press. The new particleboard mill in Lexington, North Carolina started operations last autumn with two new Wemhöner presses. In December, Gruppo Mauro Saviola s.r.l., based in Viadana, Italy, laminated the first piece of board using a short-cycle press that Wemhöner delivered to the Mortara particleboard mill in August. The firm is currently exploring whether to raise laminating capacity at its Viadana headquarters. During the course of 2021, Wemhöner should also supply Rheinspan GmbH & Co. KG, based in Germersheim, Germany, with a short-cycle press. Gruppo Saviola has held a 50% stake in the latter company since June 2020. An option arranged in the first half of 2020 still has to be converted into a definitive order. Unilin bvba, based in Wielsbeke, Belgium, ordered two more short-cycle presses from Wemhöner in December 2019. This technology is to be installed at the Spano particleboard mill in Oostrozebeke, Belgium and a US laminate flooring mill in Thomasville, North Carolina. The press in Oostrozebeke is already being installed, and the order for the US has just been shipped. Both presses are set up to handle both small batch sizes and high output, which requires a very flexible design. □

Wemhöner sold several short-cycle presses to Turkey via GIM Export GmbH & Co. KG, based in Göttingen, Germany, during the second half of 2020 and in the first quarter of 2021. Kastamonu Entegre Agac San. ve Tic. A.S., headquartered in Istanbul, had also ordered two presses to ramp up laminating capacity as part of a replacement project that is now nearing completion at its Samsun site. At the same time, this customer placed an order for its Gebze mill. Two more short-cycle presses for the Balikesir particleboard mill and Adana MDF/HDF mill have apparently now been added. Starwood Orman Ürünleri Sanayi A.S., based in Inegöl, has ordered six short-cycle presses from Wemhöner (Changzhou) Machinery Manufacturing Co. Ltd., headquartered in Changzhou, Jiangsu Province, in several contracts awarded since the middle of 2020.

In South America, Wemhöner installed and commissioned short-cycle presses at Novopan del Ecuador S.A. (Quito) and the Grupo Sanford (Bogotá) subsidiary PrimaDera S.A. (Gachancipá) last year. Handover has now reportedly taken place, too. The group is in the process of installing a press delivered back in April 2020 to a plant in Curitiba run by Berneck S.A. Painéis e Serrados, based in Araucária, Paraná. Wemhöner also received new orders from Duratex S.A., headquartered in São Paulo, and Floraplac Industrial MDF Ltda., based in Paragominas, Pará. Orders from the two Brazilian plywood and MDF manufacturers Indústria de Compensados Guararapes Ltda. and Indústria de Compensados Sudati Ltda., both headquartered in Palmas, Paraná, and from the Ecuadorian particleboard producer Aglomerados Cotopaxi S.A. (Acosa), based in Quito, are also on the verge of being awarded. However, ongoing financing negotiations still have to be wrapped up in all three cases. □

## Wemhöner commissions production facility in China

Wemhöner Surface Technologies GmbH & Co. KG, based in Herford, Germany, completed work to build a second factory in Changzhou in China's Jiangsu Province via Wemhöner Changzhou Technologies Co. Ltd. in August 2020. Manufacturing commenced in September. At first, the new factory will make lacquering systems for the Chinese market. It will also produce components to make short-cycle and membrane presses at an existing factory run by Wemhöner (Changzhou) Machinery Manufacturing Co. Ltd that is around 2.5 km away. In the past few months, Wemhöner has delivered and commissioned the first lacquering technology to Chinese customers from this location. The start-up of production at the new factory will further expand these operations.

The first factory in Changzhou had been offline for around four weeks in the first quarter of 2020.

Following a scheduled one-week stoppage for Chinese New Year, the restart process was delayed for another three weeks because of restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic. The situation on the Chinese market then returned to normal fairly quickly again starting in April. As a result, Wemhöner's Chinese entity largely made up for the losses in revenues booked in the first quarter later on in the year. At the firm's Herford headquarters, the Covid-19 pandemic also culminated in a significant slump in order intake and sometimes also in a shift to projects already under way in the second quarter. These projects were reactivated more quickly than expected starting in July. At the same time, order intake for short-cycle and membrane presses delivered from Herford picked up sharply; the full year thus ended up being stronger than in 2019. □

Wemhöner landed several orders for short-cycle press technology from Eastern Europe, Turkey and South America. Its membrane presses were mainly sold to customers in Poland, Romania and Turkey. A few orders also came from the UK and North America. Much stronger business again in the second half of the year meant that Wemhöner booked revenues of just over €100m from its Herford site for the third time in a row. However, group revenues dipped slightly because of somewhat weaker business with China over the past two years. Revenues had first passed the €140m mark in 2018 before softening to around €135m in 2019 and more than €130m in 2020 based on preliminary figures. □

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