



World Water Day on 22 March: Water – a precious raw material at Werner & Mertz

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The 23rd United Nations World Water Day is being observed on 22 March 2016. Organized by UN Water, the entity responsible for work on water and sanitation, World Water Day is intended to remind people around the world of how important and precious water is. Ensuring that drinking water from the tap remains a high-quality product requires sustainable and responsible handling of this resource. At Werner & Mertz, the Mainz-based manufacturer of detergent, care and cleaning products, sustainable management of water has been part of corporate philosophy from the start.

Instead of using valuable drinking water for production, Werner & Mertz uses its own well water from its Water Center. Since 2011 when the new Water Center was constructed on corporate grounds, the company has processed water without the use of chemical additives such as lyes and acids. That's a great plus for environmental protection.

"We obtain water from deep wells and treat it in a reverse osmosis facilities. Reverse osmosis is a process by which water is purified of solutes by being forced – at about 12,000 liters per hour – through a semi-permeable membrane which allows the solvent, but not the solutes, to pass. The demineralized water is the raw material used in our products and in cleaning and rinsing processes in Production. The well water is first used to cool our administration building before it is demineralized and put to other uses," explained Dr. Detlef Matz, Head of Sustainability Management at Werner & Mertz.

Wastewater from Production is also handled very carefully. In special treatment facilities, the wastewater is forced through a filter, leaving behind sludge that can be used as a supplemental material in brick manufacturing for the construction industry. The pre-treated wastewater is then cleaned in the municipal treatment plan and directed into the Rhine. "That is a genuine closed loop in keeping with the Cradle to Cradle principle," said Matz.

The Water Center has been expanded repeatedly since it was built in 2011. At the beginning of October 2015, a second holding tank with a capacity of 200 cubic meters was put into operation. The installation of a fourth reverse osmosis facility this year will guarantee sufficient supplies of demineralized water for increased demands in Production.

Frosch protects frogs: Joint strength for watery habitats

Water protection at Werner & Mertz extends way beyond corporate premises. For more than 140 years, Werner & Mertz has featured a frog in its logo and has worked to promote its mascot and protect its habitat. Since 1999 the cooperative effort "Frosch protects frogs" with NABU (German Society for the Preservation of Nature) in Rhineland-Palatinate has focused on preserving the tree frog's natural habitat and that of other species in and near the water. NABU and Werner & Mertz are collaborating on the return of the tree frog to the Rheinaue wetlands between Bingen and Mainz. With the renaturation of the wetlands, a suitable habitat for the tree frog is created once again. With support from Werner & Mertz, NABU has been able to secure important surfaces for the amphibians' spawning grounds and summer and winter habitats and to ease the frog's return to the Rheinaue wetlands. Besides reforesting the wetlands, NABU members also help a frog or two across the street.



Other joint projects by Werner & Mertz and NABU support the population of rare and endangered species of plants and animals. They include the reforestation of the species-rich Rheinaue wetlands near Ingelheim and bog renaturation at the Murmes in the Eifel region. Werner & Mertz sees the cooperation as a contribution to preserving the natural balance and biological diversity of riverscapes and other wetlands like the raised bogs. Finally, this engagement, like the development of the Frosch brand, is devoted to doing more for water protection.

Follow this link to read more about water protection at Werner & Mertz:
<http://ganzheitliche-nachhaltig.de/Gewaesser-schuetzen>

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