

STAUFEN.

A PLANT MOVES





COMPANY PROFILE

LEMKEN specializes in the development, production, and sales of agricultural technology. Its special culture is characterized by the values of a traditional family-owned company and the innovative processes of a leading international industry heavyweight. While Anthony van der Ley bears the operative responsibility as CEO, Nicola Lemken is the Managing Director and member of the Executive Board who is the seventh generation to continue the family tradition.

The company was founded in 1780 by Wilhelmus Lemken, a blacksmith, and it has become a leader in the soil tilling, sowing, and plant protection sectors. The company's main location is in Alpen on the Lower Rhine, about 50 km north of Düsseldorf. Today, LEMKEN is represented in more than 50 countries; in 30 of these with its own sales locations. In 2021, its 1,700 employees generated annual sales of EUR 450 million.

LEMKEN at a glance

- ✓ Since 1780
- ✓ Annual sales EUR 450 million (2021)
- ✓ 1,700 employees around the world
- ✓ 1,200 employees at the main plant in Alpen
- ✓ 30 locations around the world

INITIAL SITUATION

In recent years, the company has grown a great deal. One consequence of this was that the utilization of the plant halls was no longer subdivided optimally between the different production locations. **That's why the management decided to shift production of drilling machines from the main plant in Alpen to Haren, 150 kilometers away** – a location that was only incorporated into the LEMKEN corporate network in 2005 and had up to that point been used as a field sprayer plant. So there was growth potential here. The structure in Alpen did not permit any separation of value creation and logistics activities. Furthermore, the supply of large parts was primarily on call, which caused productivity losses in assembly.

The many years' experience of long-time employees in Alpen, by contrast, was a clear strength of the location. Since the essential assembly expertise of the employees in Alpen could not be transferred to Haren, however, the fixed station assembly used there had to be changed. **"In addition to the move, there was a conversion from fixed station assembly to cyclic assembly at the same time,"** explains Ingo Meyer, plant manager of the LEMKEN location in Haren. "Due to the planned growth, even the only existing cyclical assembly line in Alpen had to be redimensioned from scratch and cycled out just like all the other lines to be moved."



Main plant in Alpen



Haren location

PROCEDURE

The schedule was tight: The time between the decision to move and plant start-up was just six months. To coordinate the factory move, an internal project team consisting of colleagues from both plants was formed; after an initial fact-finding phase, it was assisted by Staufen. **There were only three weeks between "end of production Alpen" and "start of production Haren" -- but in this time, customer orders also could not be neglected.** "In the moving phase, across a period of three weeks, six to eight fully loaded trucks drove from Alpen to Haren each day," remembers plant manager Meyer. In addition to production materials, all tools and fixtures were transported step by step from the Lower Rhine to the Emsland.

And there was an additional challenge when moving the factory: the contact restrictions during the Corona pandemic. "We had to form two teams, which could not meet in person to discuss problems, tricks, and wrinkles," is how Ingo Meyer describes the situation. There was a half-hour of idle time between "team early shift" and "team late shift." The informal, collegial exchange so crucial for such projects was therefore practically impossible. Even the managers did not meet in person in the first three months – coordination was only possible via video conference. According to plant manager Meyer, there was an important reason why the usual high product quality could nevertheless be maintained in the Haren location from the very start: **"The training before the plant start-up by our colleagues who were still in Alpen was simply outstanding."**



Assembly incl. logistics areas, top right of the figure

RESULTS

The start-up curve and utilization of the plant initially presented the greatest challenge, but it was tackled very well. This was thanks to the clear structures in the new plant layout, which reveal each and every deviation from the standard right away. Value creation and logistics are now also clearly separated from one another. The systems and machines used in Haren are still the same ones, but the processes are completely different. Thus, for example, all logistics flows were established anew and now work according to the just in sequence, just in time, and Kanban principles. In addition, digitalization was taken to the next level at the same time. The "Excel solutions" used previously were replaced wholesale; now all processes are mapped in the ERP system.

After moving production to the Haren plant, the annual output of rotary harrows and drilling machines produced increased to about 4,000. **"This output would not have been possible with the previous processes,"** is how plant manager Meyer sums things up. "And Staufien is largely responsible for this. **In particular, the combination of lean expertise and practical experience ensured great acceptance among all employees.**" But LEMKEN would not be LEMKEN if there weren't another plan in store. Due to the very positive market development, the capacity in the Haren location is supposed to be increased still more. So the project "a plant grows" is set to follow the project "a plant moves."





ABOUT STAUFEN

Inside every company, there is an even better one.

With this conviction, Staufen AG has been advising and qualifying companies and employees since 1994. Worldwide.

300
Employees

200
Projects per year

17
Languages

> 65
BestPractice partners
worldwide

7,000
Seminar participants
per year

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