



Berenberg Corporate Responsibility Award goes to Ritter Sport

Hamburg. For the third time, on Thursday in front of 400 guests Germany's oldest private bank presented the Berenberg Corporate Responsibility Award in Hamburg's Michel church. This year the award went to Ritter Sport in recognition of the "El Cacao" project, in which the chocolate maker set up its own plantation for sustainable cocoa cultivation on former pastureland in Nicaragua.

"Many family companies have a long tradition of corporate responsibility. They work not only for the success and continuity of their business, but also for the common good, that of their employees or their region. This has much to do with the fact that the owners of such companies have a very long-term outlook with a focus on sustainability," said Dr Hans-Walter Peters, Spokesman of the managing partners of Berenberg. As an owner-operated private bank, Berenberg considers itself a service provider and responsible partner to its clients, and initiated the award to recognise projects by companies that combine their business purpose with social commitment in noteworthy ways. "Only companies that respond in a responsible way to the trust placed in them can be successful over the long term," said Peters.

Ritter Sport purchased 2,500 hectares of former pasture in Nicaragua and turned it into 1,500 hectares of cocoa trees and 1,000 hectares of forest and wetland. The land is cultivated using the Agroforst system, which is designed to increase the biodiversity of the former pasture. The project has both ecological and social components – high safety standards, healthcare, extensive further education opportunities and payment above the Nicaraguan minimum ensure fair and secure working conditions for employees. Small settlements with schools, shops and a bus system have grown up around the plantation. The infrastructure has also been substantially improved.

In doing this, the company secures an ecologically sound source of raw materials while giving local employees opportunities and future prospects.

Alfred Ritter, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Alfred Ritter GmbH & Co. KG, said “we see the Berenberg award as confirmation that only a company that conducts business sustainably can have a future. Our responsibility to people and the environment has informed the way we work for many years. We also want to show with our ‘El Cacao’ plantation that economical cocoa cultivation is possible under good social and ecological conditions.”

Founded in 1912, this medium-sized family-owned company today employs some 1,500 people, and in 2017 had revenues of €482 million. Ritter Sport was the first large chocolate bar manufacturer to use only certified sustainably grown cocoa for its entire product range. Every day over three million bars leave the factory in Waldenbuch in the southwest of Germany for export to over 100 countries around the world.

The award jury was made up of Dr Dominik von Au (INTES Academy for Family Companies), Univ.-Prof. Dr Michèle Morner (University of Speyer), Dr Rainer Esser (CEO of ZEIT), Dr Florian Langenscheidt (author and publisher) and Dr Hans-Walter Peters (Berenberg).

Photo: Berenberg head Dr Hans-Walter Peters presents the Berenberg Corporate Responsibility Award to Ritter Sport Supervisory Board members Moritz Ritter and Tim Hoppe (f. l).

Photographer: Phil Dera

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About Berenberg

Founded in 1590, Berenberg is one of Europe's leading privately owned banks today, with roughly 1,600 employees in its Wealth and Asset Management, Investment Banking and Corporate Banking divisions. Headquartered in Hamburg and led by managing partners, Berenberg maintains a strong presence in the financial centres of Frankfurt, London and New York.

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