



ALBERT KNOBLINGER

Strong *in* mechanization

Timber industry supplier of the year 2023

When it comes to building new pellet mills or expanding existing pellet productions, many timber companies with integrated production sites rely on the high-quality pelleting systems and project management of Albert Knoblinger, which is based in Ried im Innkreis. In the wood-based materials industry, too, companies trust in the innovative mechanization solutions and tried-and-tested technology of the bulk material expert. Here is a portrait of the timber industry supplier of the year 2023

✍ Philipp Matzku 📹 Knoblinger (3) Philipp Matzku (2)

In recent years, Knoblinger has delivered around 80% of its systems, conveyor technology and components to companies of the timber industry. "Originally, we built mills for the agricultural sector. When Austria became an EU member state in the mid-1990s, our focus shifted towards industrial plants and, in particular, towards the pellet and wood biomass sector. We were able to use a lot of our know-how in process technology for the agricultural sector in the timber industry," managing partner Alfred Knoblinger tells us.

"Trust is important"

The first complete pelleting system was delivered to Pfeifer Group's production site in Kundl in 1996. Over the past almost 40 years, the Tyrolean timber group gradually expanded its collaboration with Pfeifer which now uses pellet systems and mechanization solutions by Knoblinger at almost all of its production sites in Austria, Germany and the Czech Republic. "We also offer biomass handling solutions for the wood-based materials industry. For example, practically all sites operated by the Egger Group are equipped with Knoblinger conveyor technology, and for Egger's wood-based materials plant in Lexington/US, we also delivered the conveyor system for the wood chips," Jürgen Zuser adds, who has been part of Knoblinger's management team since April and is mainly responsible for the operative business of the bulk material expert. "Around half of our projects involve the delivery of turnkey systems and we're noticing a further upward trend in that respect," Zuser emphasizes. "Our strength lies in the mechanization of systems and their integration into a perfectly coordinated turnkey plant. We built individual plants which are tailored to the needs and requirements of the respective company. The customer is fully involved in the planning process. Later on, when we install the systems, we also try to integrate the employees who are going to work with the systems on a daily basis. In addition, we also

handle the start-up process and the training and follow-up training of the customer," Johannes Waselmayr, Sales Manager at Knoblinger, tell us.

Robust, high-performance pelleting systems

"Pellet mills are often in constant operation, all year round, seven days a week and so is the mechanization, which should deliver maximum performance with as little wear and tear as possible. Without specialized mechanization, you cannot achieve the required performance. At Knoblinger, we take all life cycles of a plant into consideration. We coordinate the solution-finding process together with the customer who provides us with information on the type and quantity of raw material they would like to process. Then, we take a look at the existing machines and at new installations that might be necessary," Zuser explains.

In 2017, Knoblinger presented the PelletsCube at the Ligna fair. This turnkey complete pelleting system is installed inside six 20-foot ISO special containers which have a soundproof and heat-insulated housing. The entire technology, from pellet presses, conveyor technology, hammer mill, intermediate storage container, cooling and filter technology to electronics and system control, is installed inside the containers. The individual containers are then transported from Knoblinger's factory to the construction site where they are reassembled. "The Cube is very compact. Everything is in the right place and easy to maintain. Our customers appreciate the short assembly times in particular. Often, the system goes into operation only three weeks after delivery. Thanks to the integrated system control, few employees are needed to operate the PelletsCube," Waselmayr says. Knoblinger's compact pelleting unit is designed for an output of up to 5 tons per hour, which corresponds to an annual capacity of 30,000 to 40,000 tons. "All the customer needs is a concrete foundation. It isn't



necessary to build a separate building and install the associated technology. Especially when it comes to expanding existing production sites, our solution is the best choice," the sales manager adds.

At its Frankenmarkt site, Stallinger Holding is planning to put a pellet mill with an annual capacity of 120,000 tons into operation this summer. As general contractor, Knoblinger will deliver three PelletsCubes which will be operating independently of one another. "In case one Cube fails, the other two will continue to produce wood pellets," Waselmayr explains.

Another example is the pellet mill at Hasslacher Group's Preding site. In the past five years, seven Cubes have gone into operation, and six more are currently being planned and/or produced. Especially those Austrian timber companies, which were first-time investors in 2022 or will make an investment in pelleting this year, such as Donausäge Rumpfmayer or Stallinger Holzindustrie, rely on Knoblinger's tried and tested technology, customer-oriented project management and a collaboration based on trust, as the company emphasizes.

Tried and tested technology

With the exception of pellet presses, hammer mills and belt dryers, Knoblinger manufactures all the parts and components for a pellet plant itself. In-house production of conveyor technology, in particular, has reached a high level at the headquarters. This technology is used for the connection of GELO Timber's sawmill for small-diameter log wood in Wunsiedel/DE to WUN Bioenergie's pellet mill. Furthermore, the pellet production of Tilly Holzindustrie of Altenhofen with its planned output capacity of 150,000 tons per year is scheduled to go into operation in the first quarter of 2024. As part of this new installation, Knoblinger is responsible for the project, which includes the assembly of the Salmatec presses. This year, the wood chip loading system has been successfully delivered to the Carinthian timber company.

"We work closely with all well-known press, hammer mill, filter system and belt dryer manufacturers. In the animal feed sector, we have a decades-long partnership with American press manufacturer CPM and over the years, we have perfected the interplay of our components with those manufactured by CPM," Alfred Knoblinger tells us. In Switzerland and France, Knoblinger's trusted partner is ZM-Technik of Mühledorf/CH.

Knoblinger delivered a 2,800 tons pellet storage facility, which includes an acceptance area and a 78 m³ storage silo and has a

loading capacity of 80 tons per hour, to pellet trading company Nyfenegger Holz in Emmental/CH. In addition to the entire system technology, Knoblinger also supplied the system control. In total, as many as eight pellet transshipment facilities have already been installed in the Swiss Confederation.

"France, too, is an important market for us. We believe that it has a lot of potential in the future," Zuser adds. The PelletsCube prototype, which had been exhibited at the Ligna fair in 2017, was bought by a customer in France. At the Ried im Innviertel site, another identical system is currently being built for a company in France and several screw conveyors are being manufactured for Egger's French production site in Rambervillers. //

- 1 **The Knoblinger pelleting system** system at Donausäge Rumpfmayer has an output capacity of 75,000 tons a year
- 2 **In 2020 Knoblinger invested €7 million** in a new production hall and another laser cutting machine
- 3 **A winning team:** Johannes Waselmayr, Sales Manager, Jürgen Zuser and Alfred Knoblinger, Management, with Franz Bachinger and Bernhard Doninger, Sales (from left)
- 4 **A turnkey plant:** the PelletsCube Knoblinger installed at a Carinthian customer
- 5 **Everything in the right place:** All system parts including the controls are perfectly positioned inside the PelletsCube



ALBERT KNOBLINGER
Location: Ried im Innkreis
Established in: 1964
Management: Alfred und Erich Knoblinger, Jürgen Zuser
Staff: 125
Sectors: pellets, wood-based materials/ biomass, animal feed, metals, ash, sewage sludge
Products: pelleting systems, PelletsCube,

loading plants, bagging equipment, screening and silo systems, screw and chain conveyors, bucket elevators

Sales: Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France
Reference customers include: Pfeifer Group, Egger Group, Mayr Melnhof Group, WUN Bioenergie, Cycleenergy, Donausäge Rumpfmayer, Stallinger Holding, Tilly Holzindustrie, Nawaro Betrieb Energie, Aprobois, Hasslacher Group, Pellets de Jura