

# CERTIFIED ETHICAL OILS

FRAGOL AG is a specialist supplier of heat transfer fluids, high quality compressor and vacuum pump oils, and lubricants for the food industry celebrating its 60-year anniversary in 2022. Iris Zeffass, CEO, outlined her business principles to Jordan Yallop and Phil Nicholls.

**FRAGOL**  
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German oils and lubricants company FRAGOL blends a strong sense of ethics into its business model. Owned and run by a family with a long-term interest in the firm, paired with personal morality and a published code of conduct have created a friendly and principled company.

The 60-year history of FRAGOL began in 1962 with the establishment of the company Brenntag Kraft und Schmierstoff, a joint venture between Brenntag and Total. Dr Heiner Mueske was appointed Managing Director in 1985 and conducted a management buyout in 2004, by which time the company name had changed to FRAGOL Schmierstoff. Further changes followed, culminating in adopting the name FRAGOL AG in 2017.

In 2020, Dr Mueske retired from the board of FRAGOL, but remains closely associated with the company as a strategic advisor. Iris Zeffass, who joined the FRAGOL management team in 2014, took the role of CEO in the family company. FRAGOL is based in Mülheim an der Ruhr in western Germany with 30 employees.

Growth is steady at FRAGOL, with sales figures increasing consistently over the past few years. Driving this growth are the broad range of fluids and lubricants at FRAGOL. Ms Zeffass was clear about FRAGOL's best-selling line: "It's the H1 lubricants, which are used in the foodstuff production." All FRAGOL H1 lubricants are manufactured according to DIN ISO 21469, meaning that these oils are safe for incidental contact with food products.

Alongside the stringent manufacturing requirements necessary to achieve the safety certification, FRAGOL sought religious approval of its products.

"Our H1 lubricants are kosher and halal certified," Ms Zeffass explained. "This is very important, especially for Asia and North

Africa, so these lubricants can be used for both kosher and halal food production. We actually have a rabbi and an imam coming into the factory and auditing our production before issuing a certificate."

## FRAGOL rocks oil

The FRAGOL portfolio consists of a broad range of products. Its synthetic lubricants are suited to specialised applications including hydraulics, gears, compressors and vacuum pumps. The lubricants are applied to those areas of the machine under increased stress due to the demanding operating conditions.

The portfolio of heat transfer fluids at FRAGOL is the largest in Europe. The company has a specialised team of engineers and chemists presiding over a range of 60 different fluids. As well as its own FRAGOLTHERM® brand products, FRAGOL also has other high-quality fluids from renowned manufacturers.

Heat transfer with thermal oils is part of many industrial processes, or simply for heat recovery. FRAGOL products cope with temperatures ranging from -115°C to 430°C. Raw materials used include aromatic compounds, HT oils, mineral oils, silicone oils and polyglycols. FRAGOL offers an analysis service to clients for heat transfer fluids, helping the customer understand the condition of the fluid and making recommendations for future action.

In its industrial lubricants business unit FRAGOL offer customers more bespoke options beyond the standard portfolio. The 'Tailor-Made Products' service is available for special applications not covered by the standard range of products. Here, FRAGOL partners with the customer to develop bespoke solutions for a specific problem.

Another special option is the Private Label Service, where FRAGOL offers to supply items from its full range of high-quality products but





Iris Zeffass, Fragol CEO

labelled and marketed under the private label of the customer. These fluids are blended to the usual FRAGOL standard, with next-generation base oils and additives from its constantly expanding portfolio.

### Friendly and agile

Despite the vast range of products available from FRAGOL, the company remains small and agile in the market. Ms Zeffass sees this as a clear advantage.

"If the customer is not happy with one product, but another one works for them, then we can sell that. I don't have to worry about filling my production quotas because we work with small blenders. We have no issue with making less of product A to create more of product B. We're really flexible."

The small working atmosphere at FRAGOL is another distinctive feature.

"We're a very friendly company because FRAGOL is family owned," explained Ms Zeffass. The friendliness within the company is supported by the official Code of Conduct. The code supports FRAGOL's corporate values and supports the team in their daily work.

FRAGOL's friendly team are excited to return to trade fairs this year, particularly ACHEMA which had previously been cancelled due to the pandemic. ACHEMA is the world's leading trade fair for



the process industries, held in Frankfurt am Main in August. FRAGOL plans to take a booth at the fair but faces a new set of decisions as business adjusts to a post-Covid world.

"We are discussing whether we wear masks in the booth or not," Ms Zeffass said. "Because if we do, then people can't see our faces. However, if we don't wear masks, then people might not feel safe to come into our booth. It's all these little things that we never had to think about before."

### FRAGOLTHERM innovation

Innovation is a key aspect of FRAGOL's business model. A seven-member team of engineers focuses on heat transfer fluids, pushing forward R&D within the company and advising clients on the latest developments in the field. By deploying this expertise, FRAGOL ensures that customers use the best solution available for their applications.

One recent solution was the FRAGOL-lead replacement of cooling fluids with environmentally friendly alternatives. A technical consultation with the customer led to the replacement of a system using approximately 20 cbm of diethylbenzene-based cooling fluid with the more environment-friendly FRAGOLTHERM F-12. The FRAGOLTHERM F-12 is a synthetic heat transfer fluid that can be used in a temperature range between -85°C and 230°C.

The drive towards sustainability is a strategic focus at FRAGOL. Expert advice from FRAGOL ensures clients use products perfectly suited to the application, resulting in a longer working life for the fluids, thereby reducing consumption.

"We try as a business to make our office climate neutral," Ms Zeffass explained, "But more importantly, we try to build an eco-friendly and non-toxic product line. We invest heavily in R&D for products with sustainable applications."

The growing awareness of sustainable issues within the industry can be seen in the shift in customer enquiries at FRAGOL. "For example, heat recovery is always quite interesting, because when the cost of energy is low, nobody's interested in heat recovery," Ms Zeffass said. "Now, of course, everybody's very interested again in heat recovery applications."

FRAGOL has a close relationship with key blending and warehousing partners who are instrumental to ongoing production. Ms Zeffass emphasised that FRAGOL's reliability as a supplier during difficult times within the supply chain was a keystone of building a long-term relationship with business partners.

"We were always able to supply," she said, "And that is something I tell my people and my customers; that this is unique: we were always able to supply what is a very specific product. We believe it's important that both parties have a win, and it's only if both parties are healthy businesses, that we can work together long-term."

Recent issues with the global supply chain have been a challenge for FRAGOL. The company works hard to overcome problems with sourcing raw materials. Yet, FRAGOL has weathered these issues.

"We have a very stable business," concluded Ms Zeffass. "We have sustainable growth; it's important for a business to be sustainable, not only environmentally, but by building slowly, carefully and reasonably."

"Our strategy is to focus on what we are best at, which is developing the best product and delivering the best solutions for our customers' applications."

