

Quality, the best value.



Chocolate manufacturer Ritter Sport stacks sustainably and efficiently

“Quality and sustainability are important parts of our corporate philosophy, as these have also proved themselves to be economical. A high quality returnable load carrier such as the CR1 pallet fits into our business plan.”

- Uwe Peters, Head of Logistics Ritter Sport



The German company Alfred Ritter GmbH & Co. KG, based in Waldenbuch (Swabia), is surely best-known for its square-shaped chocolate bars of which it manufactures around 2.5 million per day for chocolate fans around the world. As Ritter Sport is a ‘freshly made product,’ perfectly coordinated logistics have to ensure that the sweet cargo is in shops and ready for consumption no later than 14 days after production. Due to the manufacturer’s high quality and service requirements, all logistics processes between the manufacturer’s factory in Waldenbuch and the central warehouse in Reichenbach (near Stuttgart), are continually reviewed and improved. All logistics services, such as the daily shuttle service to the logistics center, warehouse management as well as picking and packing, are centrally organised and handled by the forwarding agent Kraftverkehr Nagel. This includes the entire pallet management.

In 2009, the manufacturer and freight carrier decided to introduce a new load carrier, both as part of a modernisation measure aiming at optimising warehouse processes and to implement the newly developed ‘wood-free production’ directive that Ritter Sport had recently created. After extensive testing of various pallets, the Craemer CR1 plastic pallet convinced with its high quality and stability.

Smooth transition from wood to plastic pallet

According to Uwe Peters, Head of Logistics at Ritter Sport, two aspects were particularly important in the decision-making process: the new plastic load

carrier had to fulfil highest hygienic aspects while also ensuring that both the production center logistics as well as central warehouse handling run smooth. “Unlike the wooden pallet, the plastic pallet only has to be moved once - either directly into the high bay warehouse or into the short term storage area”, as Uwe Peters explains. “The high quality and stability of the CR1 have the advantage that there is no wastage and no further steps are needed in order to check the pallet.” Peters explains that before, the time-consuming process of checking each wooden pallet’s functionality - before being able to use it - was a step they were keen to eliminate. Thanks to the CR1 pallet’s high level of shape retention, this time-consuming process is now no longer required and higher process reliability has been achieved. Peters states: “This does not only allow flawless use in the high bay, but also enables using the pallets on all conveyor systems without any problems.”

Investment in greater quality pays for itself

For Ritter Sport, investing in 5.000 new Craemer CR1 pallets brings a variety of advantages, such as high load capacity, due to additional steel inserts, and durability. CR1 plastic pallets can be used for 15 years and longer, which means a reliable Return on Investment. The anti-slip top deck provides an additional level of safety during transport, while the plastic pallet design makes it ideal for safe and easy handling with forklift trucks, pallet trucks or jack lifts. In terms of food hygiene and cleanliness, the new load carrier scores extra points. Unlike the wooden pallets, there is no dust or abrasion and the pallets are easily washable.



Before making the switch to plastic, Ritter Sport examined and fully tested various load carriers. Different types were selected, such as pallets made from new material, pallets made from recycled material, and pallets with and without strengthening steel inserts. During the test phase, all products had to run along the entire conveyor line several times. Overall, the CR1 convinced with the lowest deflection values of all tested plastic pallets. For Uwe Peters, it was clear from the beginning that quality would be a main criterion: "Quality and sustainability are important parts of our corporate philosophy, as these have also proved themselves to be economical. A high quality returnable load carrier such as the CR1 pallet fits into our business plan."



Cooperation with Kraftverkehr Nagel logistics

The forwarding agent Kraftverkehr Nagel, a leading European provider of food logistics, is responsible for the entire pallet management at Ritter Sport. In 1995, Nagel built a logistics facility in Reichenbach near Stuttgart. After Nagel won Ritter Sport's tender invitation for a warehouse in 1998, the logistics provider took over the construction of the central warehouse as well as the national distribution. In 2000, a high rack warehouse and picking center with a capacity of 11.000 pallet spaces was built. Every day, up to 1.000 pallets can be loaded and up to 7.000 pallets can be stored. Between 4.800 and 5.600 square chocolate bars can be stored per pallet.

In addition to the storage of finished products, the high rack warehouse is also used to store palletised raw materials and packaging materials in a pre-buffer storage area. These materials can be retrieved at any time and are used to meet short term production needs. Apart from storage and pallet management, Nagel has also taken over packaging as well as transport handling for Ritter Sport. Starting from Reichenbach a daily route supplies for example the Benelux countries and Austria. Up to 600 pallets are delivered daily. Since 2005, the central warehouse in Reichenbach has been continuously upgraded in order to meet increasing turnover. Jens Waldenmeier, Head of Logistics at Kraftverkehr Nagel, states: "The use of wooden pallets proved to be susceptible to faults and this risk became more and more critical with increasing automation of inventory and handling processes. In order to make these processes run more efficiently, the switch to plastic pallets was the missing link in our logistics chain".

Ritter Sport is currently using more than 5.000 CR1 pallets for all aspects of supply, packaging and storage within the high rack warehouse. At the same time, finished products are palletised at the factory and internally transported on the CR1 pallet to the central warehouse in Reichenbach as PPG goods (primarily packaged goods). There, they are stored in the high rack warehouse until dispatch. According to Craemer, the manufacturer of the CR1, the general willingness to invest in high-quality reusable load carriers is increasing, as error-free logistics as a consequence of sustained pallet logistics have positive effects on costs, as this example at Ritter Sport shows.

About Ritter Sport

The Alfred Ritter GmbH & Co. KG was founded in 1912. Today, the Waldenbuch (Swabia) based company employs around 800 people. Every day they produce 2.5 million bars of chocolate. Ritter Sport sells them in over 90 countries around the world. In 2009, the company had an annual turnover of 274 million Euros.

Find out more about Craemer solutions:

Germany (Headquarters Export Department)

Craemer GmbH
Brockler Strasse 1
33442 Herzebrock-Clarholz
Germany

Tel.: +49 5245 43-0
Fax: +49 5245 43-201
E-Mail: info@craemer.com

United Kingdom

Craemer UK Ltd
Craemer House
Hortonwood 1
Telford
Shropshire
TF1 7GN

Free-phone: 0800 032 4291
E-Mail: enquiries.uk@craemer.com

www.craemer.com

