



An interview with Carsten Blum

**Head of Marketing, Stern-Wywiol
Gruppe and founder of World
Flour Day**

World Flour Day is celebrated around the world every year, on 20 March. This date is firmly established on the commemorative day calendar and is observed with many activities. Although flour is one of humanity's oldest staple foods, World Flour Day is still young. It was created on the initiative of one Carsten Blum.

Carsten Blum graduated from California State University of Long Beach, USA and University of Oldenburg, Germany with a degree in International Business.

In 2015, he joined the Stern-Wywiol Gruppe and took over the role as Head of Marketing for the Food Ingredients Division. In this position, he develops new digital solutions and breaks new ground in customer communication.

This interview focuses on what it was that motivated him to launch this World Flour Day, and what it is that maintains his enthusiasm for this event to this day.

It was you who had the idea to start World Flour Day. How did that come about?

I enjoy holidays. They are occasions for getting together with family and friends, and celebrating and appreciating special things. Since I love flour, I asked myself whether there is a day when the world's most important staple food is celebrated. There turned out not to be one.

I researched further and found an organisation in the US that officially registers such commemorative days. Since the organisation gets 20,000+ proposals a year and only implements 8 to 10 of them, a few conversations were necessary.

Ultimately, I managed to convince the committee to add the 20th of March to their calendar as the official World Flour Day and record our unique flour museum as the initiator.

Flour is one of the oldest and most important staple foods in the world. Why wasn't there a day to celebrate it much earlier?

I was surprised too. Flour really does have a special significance for mankind. Not just culturally, but also in view of the rapidly increasing global population. The millers and the flour processing industry have a great responsibility to feed humanity now and going forward.

I am all the happier that we now have an official holiday on which we can show our appreciation for flour, and for the people who work daily to take grain from field to final product.

How has the industry responded to World Flour Day; do you feel sufficiently supported in your efforts?

The acceptance of the holiday has been overwhelming! Right from the first year, many well-known companies in the industry supported our commitment and celebrated the day with employees and customers.

Now, as we reach the third World Flour Day, and I can say that the holiday has become established. We now have a special day on which we can all join together in celebrating the flour we love. Employees will gather in many mills and bakeries. They'll bake and eat together and invite others to join them. All of this will also be represented in many wonderful ways in digital and classic media, which will further spread the idea.

What was your highlight of this year's World Flour Day?

A special highlight of this year's World Flour Day was the large amount of flour donations we received from

our customers for a charitable project in Uganda. On the initiative of my colleague Maximiliane Schneider, Sales Manager East Africa at Mühlenchemie, the FlourWorld Museum and Mühlenchemie collected several hundred kilograms of flour for the 'Girls' Club' charity project by the Buritu Friends Circle organisation in Uganda.

The initiative started in 2021 and invites girls from Butiru and surrounding villages to a Girls' Club three afternoons a week. The goal of the initiative is financial independence, the strengthening of the community and the autonomy of women. The girls also learn to determine their profit and handle money.

The project has been so popular that Girls' Clubs are now offered in other locations and more girls have the opportunity to take the first step towards financial independence.

The donations help the organisation to run baking and cooking courses so that the girls and women can set up their own small bakery stall. We're very glad to be able to help in this way, because to us flour also means helping the community.

Do you have more ideas for the future up your sleeve? Do you have any other activities planned for future years that we should be looking forward to?

In addition to the Roger Gilbert's great 'Milling Hall of Fame' initiative, which recognises people in the industry for special achievements, which we now do together; and which has found a home in our museum, our focus right now is on further extending the museum.

It will soon feature a spectacular new installation which will illuminate another aspect of flour history. It's something to look forward to!