

MEBAK® – 40 Years of Brewing Research

On November 19th 1971, the first assembly of the Mitteleuropäische Brautechnische Analysenkommission e. V. or MEBAK® took place in the “Old Library” at the VLB Berlin. This association for brewing analysis, which began its existence as the Deutsche Brautechnische Analysenkommission (DBAK), is now celebrating its 40th anniversary.

In the beginning, participating institutions included the VLB Berlin as well as the Wissenschaftliche Station für Brauerei in Munich, the Versuchsanstalt für Bierbrauerei der Bayerischen Landesgewerbeanstalt in Nuremberg, the Staatliche Brautechnische Prüf- und Versuchsanstalt in Freising-Weihenstephan, the Landesanstalt für landwirtschaftliches Gewerbe at the University of Hohenheim, the Versuchs- und Untersuchungsstation für die Gärungsindustrie in Mühlheim, the Lehrstuhl for Chemical-Technical Analysis in Freising-Weihenstephan, the Versuchsstation Schweizerischer Brauereien in Zurich, and the Versuchsstation für das Gärungsgewerbe in Vienna, along with the central laboratory of the Schultheiss brewery in Berlin and Stuttgarter Hofbräu as representatives from the German brewing industry.

The year that MEBAK® was founded, Prof. Dr. F. Drawert, who had previously led DBAK, was elected the first Chairman of MEBAK®. Dr. H.-J. Wellhoener became his vice chairman. Under their leadership, MEBAK® became a registered association in 1981 with its headquarters in Freising, Germany. Their successors, Dr. H. Pfenninger of the institution now called Labor Veritas in Zurich and Prof. Dr. E. Geiger of Weihenstephan, took over in 1990.

In 2000, leadership passed to Prof. Dr. H. Miedaner of the Weihenstephan Research Center for Brewing and Food Quality (TUM) and Dr. H.-M. Anger of the VLB Berlin. At the 63rd assembly in April 2004, Dr. H.-M. Anger and Dr. A. Gresser of the Forst Brewery in Meran, were elected to fill these positions. In April 2010, Prof. Dr. F. Jacob of the Weihenstephan Research Center for Brewing and Food Quality (TUM) and Dr. G. Bender of the Karlsberg Brewery in Homburg followed in their footsteps.

The name MEBAK® was chosen to include members of Central European countries who share the same or similar analytical and technological concerns. Since its inception, the work MEBAK® undertakes has continued to include analytical methods suitable for small and medium-sized breweries. This has not diminished despite the spread of globalization.

Promoting Research

One of the most important objectives pursued by MEBAK® today, which is reflected in its guiding principles, is to promote research in the areas of analysis and technology for raw materials and beverages, in order to make both established and new analysis methods more accessible. This involves determining fundamental principles and processes, which serve to standardize the analysis of raw materials as well as intermediate, secondary and finished products, additives, processing aids, product containers and packaging materials. In outlining and describing analysis methods pertinent for brewing and beverage production, MEBAK® provides laboratory technologists and other specialists with helpful tools applicable in daily practice. The goal is to reliably and analytically track raw materials through the intermediate and final stages of production, all the way through to the packaged product. This serves to fulfill the quality standards required in the market.

MEBAK® also carries out performance tests on new laboratory equipment, supports university and industry research projects and promotes cooperation between other institutes, state and private laboratories as well as between European and American technical and scientific organizations involved in beer brewing and beverage production.

Technical Literature for the Brewing and Beverage Industry

One of the objectives most important to MEBAK® continues to be the collection and the publication of a collection of methods for students to employ as a guide and a reference in their educational and vocational training. These methods are all documented in a multiple volume collection called Brautechnische Analysenmethoden (Brewing Analysis Methods). This collection comprises multiple volumes that are frequently revised and updated:

- ! MEBAK® Volume Water (drinking water and mineral water, brewing liquor, boiler [feed] water, wastewater) – also available in German under the title Wasser
- ! MEBAK® Volume Raw Materials (barley, adjuncts, malt, hops and hop products) – also available in German under the title Rohstoffe
- ! MEBAK® Volume Wort, Beer and Beer-based Beverages (monitoring brewhouse operations, wort, beer, beer-based beverages and non-alcoholic beverages) – also available in German under the title Würze, Bier und Biermischgetränke
- ! MEBAK® Volume Gebinde und Produktausstattungsmitel (product containers and packaging materials) – only available in German
- ! MEBAK® Volume III (gas and thin layer chromatography, atomic absorption spectrophotometry, HPLC, special analysis for water, enzymatic analyses, microbiological vitamin determination, immunochemical methods, gushing, microbiological analysis) – only available in German
- ! MEBAK® Volume IV (technical processing aids, agents for cleaning and disinfection, conveyor lubrication and the prevention of scale deposits, additives, coolants (brine), beer and beverage hoses, industrial gases/carbon dioxide and dispensing systems for beverages containing CO₂) – only available in German
- ! MEBAK® Volume Sensory Analysis – also available in German under the title Sensorik
- ! MEBAK® Volume Mikrobiologie (German, first edition on brewing microbiology in progress)

Additionally, MEBAK® has created the following guidelines (all in German):

- ! CIP-Anlagen (CIP systems)
- ! Sudwerkskontrolle (guidelines for monitoring brewhouse operations)
- ! Getränkeschankanlagen (guidelines for beverage dispensing systems)
- ! Filtrationsanlagen (guidelines for filtration systems, in progress)

The members of MEBAK® now include national and private brewing institutes in Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic and Switzerland, as well as representatives from the respective national brewing and malting industries. Currently, there are approximately 25 individuals who actively work with MEBAK®.

Bilduntertitel:

Dr. Fritz Jacob, Chairman of MEBAK®