

A natural philosophy

JAYN STERLAND, MD OF WELEDA UK,
TALKS ABOUT NATURAL HEALTH
AND SUSTAINABILITY



Q TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND

I'm the product of a farmer and a doctor and I grew up on a Derbyshire farm, so I'm very much in touch with nature and the land. Interestingly though, I chose to follow a very different path studying design and spent 15 years in the not very sustainable world of fashion. After having my two children I discovered Weleda products, and this led to me working for the brand. I think I would find it difficult to work anywhere else now.

Q WHEN DID YOU FIRST BECOME INTERESTED IN NATURAL PRODUCTS?

I have always had a strong interest in everything natural. As a child, my gran taught me how to make hedgerow remedies to ward off coughs and colds, along with syrups, cordials and other family remedies. I became vegetarian at the age of 15, and I have always cooked from scratch using home-grown produce. You could say it's in my blood.

Q HOW IMPORTANT IS ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY TO YOU?

Enormously important. I recently attended a global forum for sustainability alongside many experts who advise governments around the world. We are facing a crisis on a scale we simply do not understand and seem oblivious to the damage our actions are taking on the planet. Sustainability should underpin every action of each and every one of us.

Q WHAT'S YOUR VIEW ON GREENWASHING?

Our industry isn't very good at policing itself and many brands will use words to give a false impression of how 'green' they really are, hence the term 'greenwashing'. You would think 'being green' is an either/or issue, when in actual fact it comes in many shades. Simply saying a brand is carbon neutral doesn't make it a green brand. I advocate going beyond the label to challenge and question the ingredients and their sourcing. We urgently need legislation as strong as the food industry's for organic claims.

Q HOW CAN CUSTOMERS ENSURE THEY ARE BUYING AN AUTHENTICALLY NATURAL PRODUCT?

The only way you can be sure is to look for a logo you can trust on the pack – for our range it's the NATRUE seal. The NATRUE standard is definitely one you can trust, wherever you are in the world. Consumers can see at a glance whether a product is truly natural, and know that the product will be top quality and free from mineral oils, silicones, genetically modified ingredients, and artificial colours, fragrances or preservatives such as parabens.

Q WHAT IS THE MOST REWARDING ASPECT OF YOUR WORK?

In 2013, we established the Weleda Advisor programme, through which we train holistic therapists and other healthcare professionals to learn about the benefits of using Weleda products. By the end of this year, our network will

have grown to 500 advisors, who sell our products and train others. Each and every advisor is hand-picked, and they are the most incredible people. I simply love working with them and I learn from them daily.

Q TELL US A BIT ABOUT JAYN...

I've become a professional juggler, being a working mum and wife of an entrepreneur. We have two boys – not so small these days (10 and 13) – a gorgeously curly-swirly cockapoo and two acres of garden, which when added together is exhausting but fun. Through Weleda I have become an advocate of biodynamic gardening. Of course, I cannot live without great coffee, and cooking brunch while listening to Desert Island Discs would be my perfect Sunday morning.

Q DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE QUOTE OR SAYING?

My dad used to say that everything matters but nothing matters greatly; I try to keep this always in my mind – particularly if, at times during the day, it's difficult to keep things in balance. I often turn to my favourite lines from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: 'We are such stuff as dreams are made on, and our little life is rounded with a sleep.' This always grounds me. **ti**

Jayn Sterland is MD of Weleda UK, the global natural health and wellbeing brand. Jayn was last year voted number one in the Who's Who in Natural Beauty hotlist by the natural and organic beauty industry. She famously rediscovered the now best-selling Weleda Skin Food, created in 1926.