



**SKF**

AT THE THIRD EDITION OF

**BEARING WORLD 2020**

**Ruediger Sontheimer,**

*Director Sales Industrial Seals & Strategic Account Management at SKF*

FVA – The German Research Association for drive technology is organizing the third International Bearing Conference in Hannover on 31 March – 01 April 2020.

The FVA always focuses on areas where something is driven, controlled and moved. Research projects concentrate on mechanical and electrical or mechatronic drive technology in stationary industrial plants, in motor vehicles and mobile machines, through to aircraft. All links in the value added chain are put to the test, from materials, production technologies and quality assurance, components and systems and their calculation, lubricants, through to environmental compatibility, quality, costs and innovation management. Currently approx. 180 ongoing projects are coordinated each year by 25 active working groups.

SKF is one of the main sponsors and supporters of the International Bearing World conference and supports the platform to exchange latest research results on Global level. It is for SKF the place to be to learn about capabilities and future opportunities of bearings. We tried to reveal more details about SKF's participation during an interview with Mr. Ruediger Sontheimer, Director Sales Industrial Seals & Strategic Account Management at SKF.

**1. Over 250 participants from industry and research meet at the international BEARING WORLD Conference. So how important is the exchange between research at universities and industry at conferences like this for the whole industry?**

Germany is home of world class industrial drives technology, in terms of international leading companies as well as research and development performed by international recognized universities. Since more than 50 years FVA has built up an industrial drives community and connected industry

expertise and university science in order to strengthen this community and to develop future solutions. The international BEARING WORLD Conference taking place for the 3rd time in 2020 is a fantastic opportunity to share the expertise on a global level. It is THE place to go to learn about capabilities and future opportunities of bearings, a key component of industrial drives.

**2. Smart bearings are still an interesting topic in the rolling bearing industry. What do you mean by smart bearings and how far is your company in implementing them?**

Smart bearings are a symbiosis of standard bearings and sensors, electronics, analysis and evaluation software, etc. to offer condition monitoring as well as process control capabilities. SKF is offering a wide range of respective solutions contributing to increased safety and predictability of machine operations as well as implementation of Industry 4.0 principles.

**3. It is always a matter of identifying the major trend themes of the coming year in order to be appropriately prepared for them. Which trend topics are currently occupying the bearing industry?**

*“The main purpose of rolling bearings has always been to reduce friction and though to increase the efficiency of machines and aggregates.”*

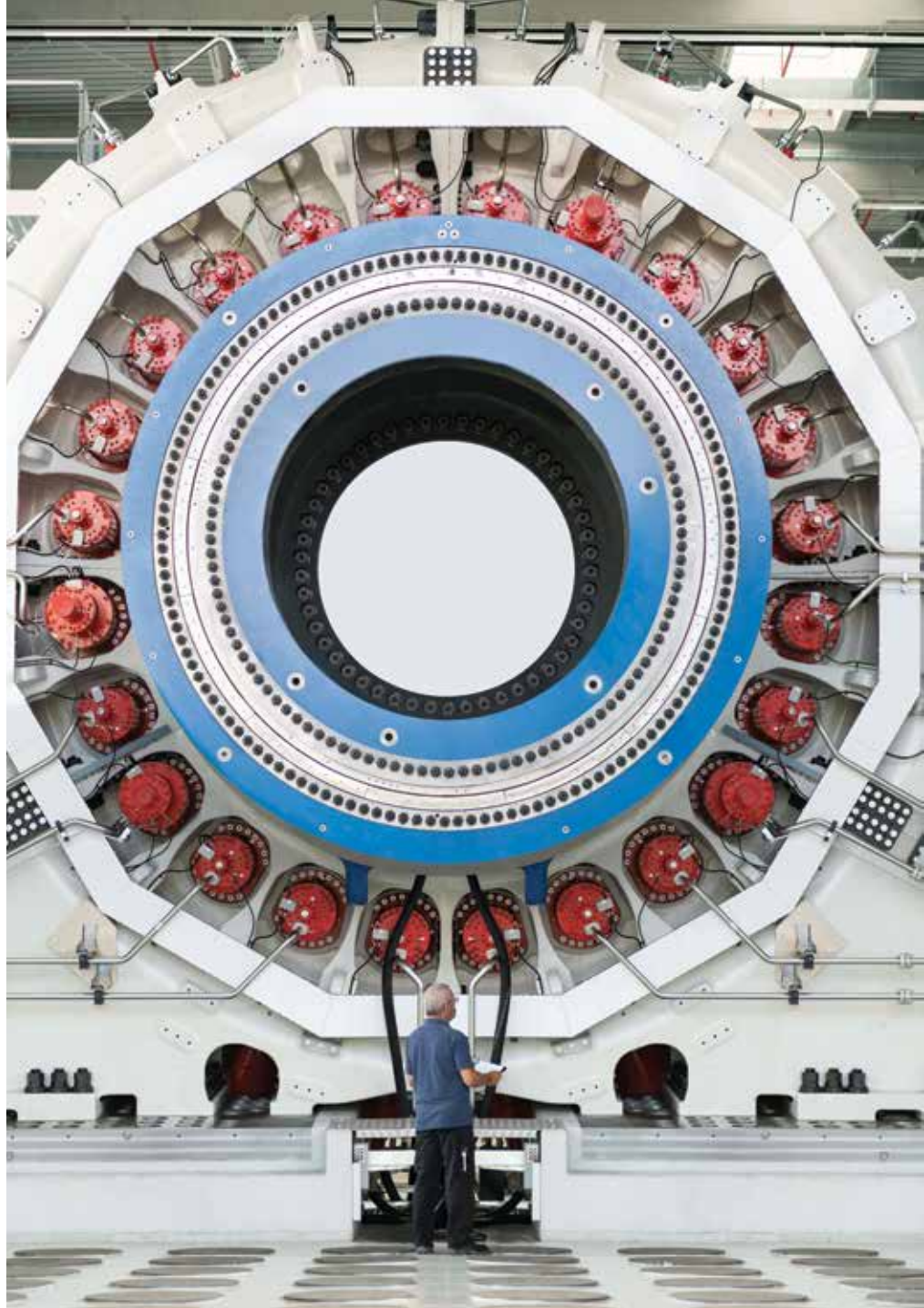


Technologies like AI and IoT are major trend themes defining the current research and development topics. New materials and manufacturing technologies like 3D printing are in the focus as well. Furthermore, all aspects of environment protection are in the consideration.

**4. An increasingly important topic is sustainability and what everyone can do for a climate-neutral future. Therefore, the question arises what your company can add to reduce the Co2 content?**

The main purpose of rolling bearings has always been to reduce friction and though to increase the efficiency of machines and aggregates. This is why it is in the genes of the bearing industry to contribute to sustainable solutions reducing energy consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emission. New materials and coatings, higher carrying capacity offering opportunities for downsizing, improved lubricants with optimized/ reduced consumption, reconditioning of oils, etc. do contribute heavily to support the development into a climate-neutral future.

The SKF approach to environmental, health and safety management is based on a Group-wide certification to the requirements of ISO 14001 (environment), OHSAS 18001 (health and safety) and ISO 50001 (energy management). SKF is continuously increasing the recycling rate of all consumables in the SKF factories (as of now > 90%) and investing in energy efficient manufacturing processes resulting



— Large Size Bearing Test Center: Validation and Testing of Large Size Bearings with an outer diameter up to 6 meter

*“We foresee that most likely the ramp up will happen in the 2nd half of 2020 “*

in a continuous reduction of the total energy consumption in spite of an ongoing capacity increase. Last not least it is more than 10 years ago that SKF has decided to only invest in new buildings with a minimum standard according to LEEDS Gold.

SKF's first environment report was published in 1994, and with time, this turned into a sustainability report. Since 2002 the Sustainability Report has been integrated into the Annual Report, to emphasize that sustainability issues are embedded in SKF's operations.

**5. Also, of interest are the future challenges of the bearing industry. What challenges do you think will the bearing industry have to face in the future?**

There will be 2 major trends, i.e.  
a) cost down for standard components through design principles as well as more efficient production processes connected according to Industry 4.0 principles  
b) smart bearings including condition monitoring, load sensing, speed



—Hybride angular contact ball bearing - with ceramic balls



—Rotor positioning Sensor-Bearing unit

rotation”, the mission is to be “The undisputed leader in the bearing business”. The strategic priorities are

1. Create and capture customer value
  2. Application- driven innovation
  3. World-class manufacturing
  4. Cost competitiveness
  5. Maximize cash flow over time
- SKF Care – Sustainable business and operations

This is reflected in:

**Strong customer offering: right product, right cost, right time**

The product proposition meets performance requirements of specific

detection, communication and data exchange capabilities

**6. In the same context how does SKF address the increasing demands for durability and reliability in the face of rising cost pressures?**

This is requiring new business models and approaches such as performance-based contracts for high end solutions. SKF is offering so called REP (rotating equipment performance) contracts especially to users of high value machines in the process, paper and metals industry. We are confident that this trend will further develop and will be established also in other industries.

**7. 2020 is likely to be a difficult year for the German economy. What consequences do you think will the upcoming economic situation have on the bearing industry?**

Following a recession of the automotive industry the mechanical engineering has shown a slow down beginning in the 2nd half of 2019. At the same time the OEM’s have started to reduce their stocks and though further reduced their purchase volumes. Once the economy is turning the opposite effect will be noticed. In addition to the increased needs additional volumes will be required to build up stocks again to avoid shortages. This



— SKF sensor- bearing-steering-encoder-unit

is reinforcing the slow down as well as the speed up effect for the concerned component suppliers which we call the bull whip effect. We can already foresee that most likely the ramp up will happen in the 2nd half of 2020 and we are doing our very best to be prepared for this.

**8. In the following can you share with us SKF’s future strategy focus areas?**

The vision of SKF is “A World of reliable

parameters such as speed, load, noise or physical environment.

**Total cost of ownership**

The Rotating Equipment Performance proposition meets the needs of customers operating critical machinery by maximizing performance.