

TruNarc helps Police bust one of Europe's biggest "meth labs"

If you came upon a clandestine 'meth lab', an illegal operation producing hundreds of pounds of deadly synthetic drugs, would you know it?

From afar, it might look like nothing more than a quaint old farm in the rolling bucolic German countryside. That's what kind of anonymity a major drug 'cook' from the Netherlands was hoping before he was caught by German police and was locked up in prison for 10 years and heavily fined for running one of the largest methamphetamine labs ever found in Germany. A known producer of synthetic drugs in the Netherlands set up a clandestine meth production facility on a farm in Germany, just across the border.

According to German police, the "cook" set up the operation and oversaw the drug synthesis. The Thermo Scientific™ TruNarc™ Handheld Narcotics Analyzer was utilized to identify chemicals found in his lab. The TruNarc Analyzer quickly identifies a wide range of illegal drugs including narcotics, synthetic drugs including methamphetamine, cutting agents, and precursor materials. Analysis is performed in a single test, portable, hand-held, on the spot, in 30 seconds or less per sample. TruNarc is used worldwide by narcotics detectives, customs agents, and law enforcement personnel for faster analysis of suspected illicit drugs. TruNarc provides non-destructive, non-contact sampling (laser driven) to preserve evidence and is capable of identifying up to 293 prohibited substances. TruNarc is able to scan for more than 450 suspected controlled substances in a single, definitive test. This capability delivers a critical advantage especially in today's dangerous world of synthetic drugs of widely varying strength and toxicity.

TruNarc helped put the 'Cook' behind bars when a large police force, following a lengthy investigation, raided the operation in a comprehensive 'sting.'



Methamphetamine abuse is increasing globally. The demand for methamphetamine or "meth" can cause someone to crave it so deeply that they manufacture it in meth labs in their homes, 'cooking' meth not only for their own supply, but often so that they can sell it and make money to support their habit as well.

According to German police, many hundreds of liters of synthetic amphetamine oil were produced at the German farm. With further processing, the drug known as 'Speed' can be produced, as well as MDMA, commonly known as Ecstasy, a psychoactive recreational drug. The 'drug chef' passed his knowledge on to the Germans, and as a result, five suspects from Poland and Germany were also arrested and sentenced to prison terms of several years.

Speed is a potent and addictive central nervous system stimulant, chemically related to amphetamine, but with greater central nervous system side effects. Methamphetamine is classified as a Schedule II stimulant by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), which means it has a high potential for abuse and is available legally only by prescription. Methamphetamine, when abused, is commonly referred to as “speed”, “meth”, or “chalk” and has been in use since the early 1960s. When abused, methamphetamine is usually smoked, snorted, injected, or taken orally. Acute intoxication causes serious cardiovascular disturbances as well as behavioral problems that include agitation, confusion, paranoia, impulsivity and violence. Chronic use of amphetamine causes neurochemical and neuroanatomical changes. Some of the symptoms resemble paranoid schizophrenia.

When the bust went down, according to authorities, there were enough raw materials to produce 1 million Euros (\$1.12M USD) worth of ‘Speed’ and ‘Ecstasy’.



Meth lab ‘chefs’ typically choose to establish their operations in out-of-the-way places like a country farm because the drug manufacturing operation produces strong chemical odors and waste disposal issues; 5 to 7 pounds of toxic liquid waste are dumped for each pound of meth made, and these including corrosive liquids, acid vapors, heavy metals, solvents, and other harmful materials. If there is a meth lab inside a building, there may be some indications that can be observed from outside, but probably not from any distance.



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