

Karsemijer shredded cheese automates its end of line packaging

One operator who controls the complete factory with just a touch of a button' seems ideal according to Patrick Pijnacker of Karsemijer geraspte kaas BV. An extreme wish, but in the recent year his ideal has come closer thanks to the purchase of a complete automated end of line packing line of Blueprint Automation.

It is no longer hectic in the factory of Karsemijer BV, where in the past approximately 50 employees were working now 10 men are active. A part has been made redundant by eliminating some side activities. The rest followed after the automation of the cheese processing and packing area, where the number of employees was reduced from 15 to 6. And surprisingly the output has increased 4 times.

To optimise our competitors position we need to minimise our staff, explains Patrick Pijnacker. Beside we created additional capacity to continue our growth as we are introducing more of our own brands in the market. Any new order we can fulfil due to this increased capacity

At the moment the company process sliced, shredded and cubes of cheese, which are packed in various packing styles such as: thermoformed cups and flexible packaging of 100 gram pillow bags for the retail market up to 5 kg for the foodservices.

Two Case packers

BluePrint delivered in 2000 the first 2 case packers to Karsemijer. It where 2 MGC (modular gravity Casepacker) for lay down packing of Pillow bags into RSC boxes (up to 80 bags/min). A few years later a supermarket chain requested for small individual portions in a pillow bag standing upward. To be able to react on the demand quickly Blueprint Automation delivered a semi automatic packing line, which orientated the packages in a standing position so the operator could easily place the bags into a case.

The decision to automate this packing line was accelerated because the work & health inspection felt the workload on the semi automatic system was too high. To be able to meet the demands of the inspection Karsemijer decided to modernise the entire factory also according to the International Food Standard (IFS). For the end of line packing this big modernisation resulted in replacing one of the two MGC case packers with a HVP (Horizontal Vertical Packer) case packer. According to Blueprint Automation the most flexible and multi functional casepacker on the market. The servo controlled Robot can pack flexible packages as well as cartons and thermoformed trays, in a lay flat or upstanding orientation in numerous packing patterns. Beside this the patented SmartTrak accumulation and collation system ensures the robot can reach speeds up to 300 packages per minute.

Market growth

'A request which is asked more and more is the demand for case packers which can pack assorted cases' according to Hans Verhoeff, Sales manager Benelux of BluePrint Automation. 'Especially suppliers to chains like Aldi and Lidl are requesting this. To sell more product types, these suppliers pack 2 flavours into one box, like 2 flavours of crisps'

Also Karsemijer was confronted with this trend and the HVP machine was specially designed for this. Thanks to the double product feed conveyor, a double SmartTrak system and a double intermediate cassette in the HVP machine Karsemijer is capable of packing assorted cases of different thermoformed trays, bags and flow packs. The HVP packs this product in crates, RSC cases or trays, which are delivered by the separate BluePrint Automation crate de-nester or carton erector. These "Single Function Cells" are part of the flexibility of the new case packer adds Hans Verhoeff. 'Because of the use of stand alone case erectors and crate de-nesters, a separate case packer and individual closing units the complete system is easy to change over to a different packing style. This in contrary to old style case packers where the packer and case erector are integrated into 1 machine. Because of this Karsemijer could not handle crates and had to manually fill them. The use of Single Function Cells also adds a buffer to the line, so if something goes wrong the line does not immediately stop the entire production line.'

Regular Suppliers

Karsemijer usually buys her equipment from regular suppliers. Weber delivers the slicing lines, the shredders are from Groba, the thermoform machine is delivered by Multivac, the VFFS machines are from CFS and the case packers Karsemijer buys from BluePrint Automation, Huigsloot Robotics supplied the Fanuc palletising robot. Beside this the company has metal detectors from Loma and inkjet coders from Thorus.

'Quality and service are more important than price' explains Pijnacker over the purchase policy of Karsemijer. 'Continuation and Efficiency are our main issues'

To be able to meet the expected growth Karsemijer wants to run an optimised production. 'We want to automate as much as possible, so we can produce with a minimum of personnel' Pijnacker emphasises again. 'Especially as the labour costs are high'

High labour costs and decreasing profit margins are according to Verhoeff factors, which give a positive impulse to the machine sales of BluePrint Automation. 'Companies want to produce as efficient as possible because of the changing market. This means often automation to reduce costs and this is where we can be of service.'

Harry van Deursen

Flexibility²

We think in flexibility. 'Actually flexibility in square root' says Paul van der Meulen, managing director of BluePrint Automation. 'Not only because we are specialist in packing of flexible packaging, but also in delivering flexible solutions.'

Especially the logistic point of view is interesting Van der Meulen adds: 'how can you come up with a solution, which offers added value to the end packaging. This is what it is all about. For an English producer of chocolate Easter eggs we gained 18% space on the pallet by packing more efficient. Beside savings on the usual logistic cost we saved 50 pound per pallet on the extra cost for storing the pallets in a cold house.

BluePrint Automation B.V. is from origin a specialist in packing flexible packages into carton boxes. In the recent years the case packing specialist is requested more and more to handle rigid products sometimes with an odd shape, such as bag in box packages, biscuit rolls or round plastic pancake trays.

'Nowadays companies want to pack on one machine flexible and rigid packages' says Paul van der Meulen. 'We can do it. We can supply equipment, which handles flexible and rigid product in a box, laying flat or standing upward in a display. Companies are looking for more flexibility. And our machines are prepared for this. Recently we had a customer who needed to change from a square packaging to a round packaging. 'For only 20% of the value of a new casepacker we modified the machine to the desired system. Also with our new costumers we keep on thinking in terms of flexibility. For one of the biggest producer of flexible juice pouches we developed an expandable case packer. First they wanted a 5-pack packer but very soon the request was if we could also fill a 10-pack. In the meantime the machine is handling 15-Packs. Our machines are prepared for this and can handle it without a doubt.'