

NOTICE BOARD

Community action

An initiative to create a research and networking platform for the packaging supply chain – thepackagingcommunity.org – was announced at the show. Its founder Charles Reuland said it would be a centralised source of information and data focused on the needs of marketing, development, procurement and legislative decision making.

Partners include the European Brand Design Association and EUROOPEN, the European Organisation for Packaging and the Environment.

One of its first activities was to undertake a survey of 650 key packaging professionals across Europe to discover what will drive decisions in 2009.

Conducted with brand owners, retailers, regulators and NGOs the survey found sustainability is now a major factor in 70 per cent of decisions.

Environmental criteria are top priority in retail packaging, with protection of the product and speed of fill lower down the agenda.

www.thepackagingcommunity.org

Fresh standard

FEFCO, the European Federation of Corrugated Board Manufacturers, announced a new Europe-wide standard for corrugated trays used for fresh produce.

The aim is to make the logistics along the retail supply chain more efficient. The Common Footprint standardises the base size and interlocking tabs to guarantee safe stacking of boxes from different producers and countries.

Base dimensions are designed to fit on a standard Euro pallet with the height being adjustable to suit different products.

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Food companies view latest technologies

If there was any need for confirmation that the 'pouch is king' in the food world these days then it could be found at Anuga FoodTec which took place in Cologne – March 10-13. From soups to spaghetti and tapenade to tapioca the display shelves were full of examples of just how successful this type of packaging has become.

The star of the show was the Ecolean, a new lightweight aseptic pouch system for liquid food products. The other major



talking point was the absence this year of major players such as Tetra Pak, Elopak and SIG.

However, the event still had

plenty to offer both food processors and packagers with almost 1,200 exhibitors from 39 countries and a host of new ideas, some of which *MU* showcases here.

In these cautious times it was good to see so many innovations and with an audience of around 34,000 turning out it proves that food companies that want to remain competitive in the teeth of a recession must continue to invest in the latest technology. *More about pouches pp32-35.*

Ecolean lightens the environmental load

The distinctive pack-style of the Ecolean pouch and a new 'Air' aseptic packaging system was unveiled. The easy to grasp pouch comes with a strong environmental message with savings of 40 – 50 per cent less material than standard liquid food cartons or bottles being claimed.

The new Ecolean Air Aseptic system provides ambient distribution of low acid liquid food, particularly long shelf-life products. Made from Calymer™ – a flexible multi-layered polymer film – the lightweight pouches are pre-sterilised and hermetically sealed prior to arriving at the customer, where the Ecolean EL3 filler can accommodate 500ml, 750ml and 1,000ml packs.

Maximum filling temperature is +30°C and distribution temperature is up to +45°C.

New to the industry is the

company's choice of a dry, chemical free alternative for the pack sterilisation process. The system ensures the food contact surfaces are never exposed to any chemicals during manufacturing or filling; and the sterilisation process is completely separate from the filling machine.

The electron beam treatment is performed with a system of electron accelerators. A heated tungsten filament generates free electrons, which are drawn away from the filament by means of high voltage and accelerated through a passage in a high vacuum.

The resulting beam is rapidly moved sideways by a magnetic field to form a curtain of electrons that finally exit the accelerator through a thin titanium foil.

According to managing director Peter Nilsson the



resulting pack produces 50 per cent less waste than an aseptic carton and less than 25 per cent of an aseptic HDPE bottle, while energy used in manufacture is also correspondingly less.

"Ecolean's ambition is to offer a modern aseptic packaging system that is easy to operate and that satisfies the demands of consumers," said Nilsson. www.ecolean.com

SHOW BRIEFS

Mettler-Toledo Garvens was presented with a silver European FoodTec Award during the exhibition for its X-ray CombiWeigher XS3 AdvanChek.

Judges said the main advantage of the system is its dynamic control scale, employing EMFR weighing cell technology. This allows dynamic and accurate weighing and meets all national calibration requirements. The system is combined with an X-ray foreign body detector.

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Gerhard Schubert says its TLM thermoform/fill/seal machines are the first to use ultrasound for sealing and punching. The company is devoting 2009 to developing its ultrasonic technology which, it says, delivers shorter sealing times; a cold tool for energy saving; simultaneous sealing and punching; validation of seal quality even with soiled edges; no sharp punch contours; and quick tool changes. The TLM also features continually running film transport for continuous filling and longer gassing times.

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Heuft pakCheck is a new leak detector for cartons containing sensitive contents such as fruit juice or milk. It analyses the fill height and the tightness of the containers, examines the closures and checks the 'best before date' all in a single step, says the company.

The fill level is detected by means of a radiometric inspection which compares the results with the container measurements. Closure, colour inspection and barcode verification can be added to the modular, non-contact leak detector.

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Next generation tray sealer set to clean up

The first of a new generation of machines from Multivac – the T700 tray sealer – combines high performance with a new sanitary design which simplifies cleaning, claims the company.

The sealer outputs at up to 60 packs/minute using a 4-up die and standard trays.

The sanitary design is based on strict hygiene requirements defined in ISO 14159 and also meets similar US standards.

These require cleaning down to a microbiological level, easy access for inspection, and avoidance of 'dead' spaces, as well as design measures to prevent the accumulation of



liquids. Multivac paid close attention to the inside of the machine where attachments and components have clearance between them and hoses and cables have been reduced to a minimum and routed through frames and separated by spacers.

Traversing movements can be adapted exactly to the tray

and product and stored in the recipe. This, according to Multivac, makes the T700 suitable for a wide variety of applications including very delicate contents such as liquids or lightweight products.

The company also showcased the B310 which, it says, is the first conveyor belt chamber machine with a tilting lid. The patent-pending lid arrangement has advantages for both ergonomics and hygiene while setting the sealing height and cleaning the interior are also quicker and easier.

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Carrots get Radix treatment

The latest Autosort MC-C72 from Radix Systems uses a laned vibratory conveyor and chute to singulate and align carrots for presentation to the inspection cameras. The system inspects the product in the



round, something which the human eye cannot accommodate, to ensure that any defects are detected quickly and easily.

The four fast scanners inspect for colour and shape in combination with a rapid sequence of light to obtain 'more than colour' information.

Even very similar colours can usually be differentiated and the infra-red capability improves detection of soft rot and foreign

bodies. Cameras above and below the product means the MC-C can efficiently sort for defects showing only from one aspect.

Crown defects are identified separately and size and shape parameters can be pre-set by the operator. The sorter is capable of handling up to 15,000kg/hour based on 100g per carrot average.

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Tub filling for dairy products

The new FLEXLINER XL one lane tub filling unit has been designed with the dairy industry in mind, says Herbert Grunwald. The flexible machine can fill tubs between 1 - 20kg and seal them using reel-fed film before applying a snap-on lid.

Changes between tub formats

can be achieved in less than 10 minutes. The line is also equipped with a laminar flow cabin and CIP filling station which incorporates a self-checking weighing unit, enabling highly accurate product weights.

Tubs are sealed at one of two sealing/cutting stations which

means there is no need to wait for one sealing head to cool down or warm up before installing a different size or tub format. Leaking or underweight tubs are automatically rejected at the outfeed conveyor.

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New nozzle from Niro

GEA Niro launched a new nozzle system for spray driers. The nozzle position can be easily adjusted so that the operator can decide the direction of the atomised cloud and can move the position during operation. This

allows the operator to design the powder particle structure inside the dryer.

The nozzles are placed on short, lightweight lances fitted into the side of the air disperser, at the top of the drying chamber. This makes

them easier to reach than top mounted nozzles and to be positioned more accurately. Previously the dryer had to be shut down to make these adjustments, leading to loss of production. www.niro.com

Debut for case packer

Focke introduced its HFP flexible case packer for fragile products, such as potato chips, pretzels and pasta, in bags or boxes. Product can be packed into a variety of case styles, including RSC, HSC, wraparound and trays in any orientation, says the company.

The patented HFP system guides the case to the product using robot arms. It is then lifted turned and lowered. The flat-lying product is then loaded into the top of the case which is turned sideways on.

No pressure is placed on the bags which can be packed by the introduction of gas or inflation. Up to 15 cases/minute can be filled.

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Check it out

Marel Food Systems' exhibited its new M-Check RF8 checkweigher which has an open, hygienic and sturdy construction, making it particularly suitable for the wet food industry.

Integrating the M-Check RF8 with Marel's Innova software system ensures real-time monitoring and control of performance indicators such as traceability, says Marel. It can be used for pre-packed products, as well as open units such as trays and cans.

www.marel.com

SHOW BRIEFS

ACMA has combined its filling and capping technology with the extrusion blow-moulding expertise of Techne to produce the Unika® combination machine which produces and fills bottles, both mono and multi-layer, from 80ml – 1litre.

It is, say the companies, the first 'combi' in the HDPE market suitable for both food and applications such as personal care products.

The machine uses 35 per cent less energy than a traditional hydraulic packaging line and has a smaller footprint. T: +44 (0) 1420 593680 E: integrapak@integrapak.co.uk

FrymaKoruma, part of the Romaco Group, showcased its MK 95 corundum stone mill for the manufacture of liquid, viscous and highly viscous products.

The mill's rotor-stator system generates high energy density during milling to give high product throughput, says the company.

The company also displayed its MaxxD vacuum process machine for the production of emulsions and suspensions in a wide range of viscosities. www.frymakoruma.com

Wolke Inks & Printers showed its latest m600 printer system – the basic – which was specially developed for the food and beverage sectors.

The very small unit has a keypad which is oriented towards the keypad function of a mobile phone. A maximum of two print heads can be connected.

For Track & Trace functions the m600 advanced is now capable of receiving complete database contents and processing them in real-time mode.

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Slice, weigh and get near the edge

Bizerba demonstrated its latest slicing machine the A510 in combination with a fully automatic GLM-E weigh price labeller, allowing slicing, fanning, stacking and weighing of meat, sausage or cheese in one process, it says.

"The A510 responds to the increasing need for smaller footprint areas in customers' factories," according to Andreas Gmelin, head of food processing markets at Bizerba.

"The machine slices more rapidly than our previous model and is robust enough to cut

large quantities over long periods so is ideal for catering companies, airlines and other volume producers."

The GLM-E is available fully integrated or can be retrofitted. Two models are available, the GLM-E 40 with an internal operating terminal for throughputs up to 50 packs/minute and the GLM-E 50, which features an external operating terminal, for 50-70 packs/minute.

Bizerba also showed its new Near-Edge printing unit which, says the company, provides a cost saving thermal transfer

printing solution. The forward displacement of the print head reduces the distance to the edge to 4mm compared with 10mm for classic printing units.

The head always lifts up when no printing is required, giving potential savings of 50 per cent in both materials and wear parts. Up to now the thermal strip and counter-pressure roll were always in contact. Up to 70 packs/minute can be achieved with a print speed of 250mm/second.

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Robotgrader weighs in for meat

The Aetna Group showed off the Robotgrader the latest product in its Robopac range. The Robotgrader weighs, sorts and packs food, such as defined weights of chicken fillets into retail packs.

Capacity ranges from 100 to 250 packs/minute depending on whether one, two or three robot heads are used. Between 15 and 22 trays are available and

the three head machine can pack more than 60 trays/minute, says Aetna. Currently the machine is aimed at the poultry sector but can be applied to more general meat products or other foods packed by weight.

Dimac presented a continuous orientation system for cylindrical packs, including pots and cans. The system ensures cans, including those with easy open

ends, are oriented for bar code or label identification. Because the system works on continuous motion it can match high levels of production speeds.

The orientation movement is mechanical and does not require registration/contrast marks as the detection system recognises label colours.

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Direct but gentle

German processing equipment company, Stephan Machinery, launched the Combitherm CT 800, which uses direct steam injection technology, for the efficient and economic processing of dressings, purées, baby food, spreads and paté. According to the company it can handle batch sizes of 800, 1,200 and 1,600 litres at the rate of two to three batches/hour.

The company says that the gentle process uses applied vacuum technology and direct steam heating to ensure that aroma and colour are preserved, the structure of the food optimised and damages such as burn-on are avoided, while the quality of the food is increased by the fast heating process.

www.stephan-machinery.com

