The fresh produce market’s use of plastics packs is coming under intense scrutiny and in our special feature, we look at the new alternatives that are now available to the sector.
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MACHINERY UPDATE

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Firstly, let me wish you all a very Happy New Year!
Let’s hope that 2022 is not such a stop-start affair for the general economy as we have sadly, had to become accustomed to in recent times. It has certainly been a tricky road to navigate for every manufacturer, but I feel proud that our PPMA members have pulled out all the stops to help keep our nations fed, watered, and sanitised as well as playing a key role in helping us all to be tested, traced, vaccinated and even boosted!

The special feature in this issue looks at the very latest developments and installations seen in the fresh produce sector across last year. There surely can’t be many more market sectors hit so hard by labour shortages across the board, from picking to packing or from farm to fork... But this, in turn, seems to have forced new technology to the fore. And not even the newest technology, just automation in general in many cases.

As the fresh produce sector starts to adopt this technology, much of which has been available for some time, the true benefits are being felt. Even tricky applications such as trimming sprouts automatically, or handling delicate soft fruits at speed, or picking; washing and packing various vegetables all on one vehicle, have all been accommodated.

Making a connection between the range of enabling technologies on offer is to everyone’s benefit

But the connection with this enabling technology has been made because of labour shortages – this has been the driver for the investment. The same can be said for more sustainable packaging formats that are now being demanded by retailers and consumers. You will find many clever examples that have been developed to answer these needs within the feature.

Just as COVID-19 forced us all into new ways of working, with more remote options demanded in many cases, so acute labour shortages and sustainability issues are driving this market. But I would argue, the increased productivity that will be delivered, would have justified the investment way before now.

And even when money is tight, there is often help with funding to take advantage of. Last year’s budget’s super-tax deduction, for instance, which allows businesses to offset the cost of new equipment against tax, plus an additional 30%.

Finally, let me once again wish you all the very best for the year ahead, when I feel sure you can continue to rely on the vast range of technologies and the service levels provided by our entire PPMA membership across all industry sectors.
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The Grant Jamieson engineering scholarship is launched by PPMA

At the Chairman’s Lunch held in December, the PPMA Group of Associations’ chairman David Barber announced the launch of the Grant Jamieson Engineering Scholarship.

Jamieson, formerly the md of Winkworth Machinery, was most recently the PPMA Group’s marketing and communications director and has stood down after 11 years of service. He became chairman of the PPMA in 2015 which provided a platform for him to speak passionately about the engineering skills shortage. Indeed, he has continually voiced concern that the UK manufacturing industry continues to suffer from an ageing workforce, caused by diminished entrants into the engineering sector over the last 25 years.

“In recognition of Grant’s service to the PPMA, and in support of his passion to aid re-generation of future engineering talent, it gives me great pleasure to formally announce the launch of this scholarship in 2022,” said David Barber. The PPMA is committed to its funding and the trustees of PPMA Best will define and execute the scholarship.

The aim is to support people who have a genuine interest in pursuing a career in engineering, demonstrating practical application outside of their studies.

Manufacturing site expands with larger fabrication facilities

Karmelle is expanding its factory to accommodate a growing fabrication department with the liquid packaging specialist taking on a new 3,200sq ft unit where frames and parts for its filling, capping and labelling equipment will be made.

Since bringing the machinery manufacturing process inhouse, the company has invested heavily in its existing 15,000sq ft facility which now includes a machine shop and two workshops. Today, it manufactures the majority of its equipment onsite in West Yorkshire.

The fabrication team will move into the new unit early this year.

News

Open House event shows the appetite for automation in the UK

A full schedule of speakers and a record number of visitors to its Open House event in November demonstrated the appetite for automation in manufacturing, says Fanuc UK.

With over 1,000 people passing through its HQ doors at Antsy Park, Coventry, Fanuc’s week-long event brought together individuals from across the industry to look at the future of automation. Keynote speakers and panel discussions also took place which looked at the Future of Automation in terms of manufacturing, development, training, apprenticeships and Industry 4.0 along with IIoT.

Karmelle is expanding its premises

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The fabrication team will move into the new unit early this year.

Movember magic at Antalis

Thirty members of the Antalis conversion team took part in Movember 2021, the annual event that sees men grow a moustache – whether this be a regular ‘mo’, a handlebar, or a French moustache to raise funds and awareness for men’s health. So far, the team has raised over £3,000 for the campaign.

You can donate at: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/antalis-ltd

THIRTY PARTICIPANTS RAISED FUNDS FOR CAMPAIGN

Centre redesign is set to fast track the factory of the future

Following a major redesign to incorporate a new demonstration area, Omron says its Automation Centre, which spans well over 800sq m of floor space, is now helping to ease the transition to automation for manufacturers.

The Barcelona-based facility enables visitors from across the EMEA region to collaborate with the company on general and application-specific industrial automation solutions. This can include robotics, vision, quality control, flexible manufacturing and AI, and all designed to further increase project success.

The newly updated and expanded facility allows customers to experience the benefits of a connected intelligent factory before making an investment.

Further expansion at a key company hub

The KEB Automation HQ in Barntrup, Germany is being further expanded with the construction of a brand new high-bay warehouse which is being built over the next 18 months on the former car park, with scheduled completion set for Spring 2023.
Investment increases EMC and RF testing capacity at UK site

TÜV SÜD is investing £1.65 million in a 1,800sq m fully automated EMC and RF testing facility. Based at TÜV SÜD’s Hampshire headquarters, the new facility’s three semi-anechoic EMC chambers will be in addition to five existing ones – significantly increasing test capacity. This will help machinery manufacturers achieve a shorter time to market for products which integrate RF modules, including technologies such as Bluetooth, WiFi and the new 6E frequency bands.

As the new chambers will also offer testing to worldwide compliance specifications, this will support growing demand from manufacturers to access multiple global markets simultaneously.

The three new EMC test chambers will be integrated with TÜV SÜD’s bespoke radiated emissions test software. This will create a fully automated solution that will minimise disturbance of the device under test, so that measurements have a high level of repeatability and accuracy. The 24-hour service will also mean that tests can be completed more quickly, ensuring that manufacturers can fulfil product launch timescales.

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## Automation is the key to productivity gains, says major new report

Speeding up adoption of industrial automation and robotics can lead to dramatic improvements in productivity, according to a new report published by the Manufacturing Technology Centre (MTC) and the Industrial Policy Research Centre (IPRC), Loughborough University.

‘Robotics and Automation: A New Perspective’ says that the slow uptake of robotics among British manufacturers, and a reluctance to invest in automation, has contributed to the country’s poor productivity performance in recent years. But investment in automation along with reshoring manufacturing operations, can lead to new opportunities for UK businesses.

Compiled by MTC and IPRC experts with contributions from major players in the world of automation, including PPMA members, the report says that although the UK is 24th in the world for robot density in manufacturing businesses, and lags behind in productivity as a result, the technology to turn the situation around already exists.

The priority going forward is to improve the rate of adoption and independent advice to new users, particularly in the SME supply chain, which will be the key. The report calls for more support for UK businesses to help them with adoption at every stage, from identifying opportunities, getting workforce buy-in, selecting suppliers, ensuring they have the right skills, and implementing solutions.

It also calls for knowledge-sharing across industry and the automation supply chain to develop, demonstrate, test and deploy affordable automation.

[www.the-mtc.org](http://www.the-mtc.org)

## Local hospice benefits through a three-year fundraising effort

Richard Armstrong marked his retirement as managing director of OEM Automatic at the end of 2021 by looking back at the support he and the staff at OEM have given to LOROS over the last three years.

His support for the Leicester-based charity started in 2018 and since then, the team has raised over £20,000 for the local hospice. Fundraising has involved staff taking part in half marathons, twilight walks, Christmas jumper days and bag packing volunteering to name but a few. New managing director Peter Evans will continue this support going forward.
Regulations

Helping to ensure machinery is safe

Paul Taylor
MANAGER FOR MACHINERY SAFETY AT TÜV SÜD PRODUCT SERVICE

Although very little has changed in terms of regulations since Brexit, it is still the case that machinery must not be placed on the market or put into service unless it is safe; and getting this right is vital.

From a practical perspective, two years on from Brexit very little has changed. The UK standards currently remain the same as European Union (EU) harmonised standards, as they were simply carried across as UK designated standards in order to maintain a single model.

Since 1995 it has been a requirement that all machines supplied within the European Economic Area (EEA) comply with the Machinery Directive. For the UK market, the Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations 2008 now aligns with the EU’s Machinery Directive. The regulations apply to machinery that is placed on the market or put into service on or after 29th December 2009. The 1995 regulations apply to anything before that date.

The following persons or companies are responsible for compliance with the Supply of Machinery (Safety) Regulations:
- Machine builders,
- Assemblers of machine parts or installations,
- Manufacturers of special-purpose tools, skids and rigs,
- Machinery importers located in the UK,
- Machinery distributors or dealers that buy from a UK-based manufacturer or importer have the obligation to verify that the conformity assessment was performed and that the necessary documentation and information is available.

Relevant machinery under the regulations includes assemblies of machinery, components and interchangeable equipment:
1. An assembly fitted with or intended to be fitted with a drive system other than directly applied manual or animal effort, consisting of linked parts or
2. Components, at least one of which moves, and which are joined together for a specific application.
3. Machinery referred to in 1 missing only the components to connect it on site or to sources of energy and motion.

Sufficient responsibility to ensure machinery safety. However, they do not have to be an expert as they are allowed to seek appropriate advice. The responsible person must ensure that all the necessary research and tests are conducted so that machinery can be assembled and put into service safely. The responsible person must also ensure that the applicable essential health and safety requirements (EHSR) are satisfied. These are wide ranging, and take into account potential dangers to operators and other persons who may be at risk. A typical example is the operator himself in putting machinery safely; that a declaration of conformity is drawn up; and that the UKCA (for UK market) or CE (for EEA market) marking is affixed. In the UK, there has been an extension to the acceptance of CE marking in the UK until 1st January 2023, after which the UKCA marking requirements apply.

The appropriate conformity assessment procedure must also be followed, using either:
- Regulation 10 – Machinery not referred to in Annex IV, which details categories of machinery
- Regulation 11 – Annex IV machinery manufactured fully in accordance with published harmonised standards
- Regulation 12 – Annex IV machinery not manufactured fully in accordance with published harmonised standards.

The responsible person must also ensure that appropriate instructions are made available to operate machinery safely; that a declaration of conformity is drawn up; and that the UKCA (for UK market) or CE (for EEA market) marking is affixed. In the UK, there has been an extension to the acceptance of CE marking in the UK until 1st January 2023, after which the UKCA marking requirements apply. Quite simply, machinery must not be placed on the market or put into service unless it is safe. Getting this right is vital as non-compliance with a regulation is a criminal offence, punishable by fines and imprisonment.

For more information contact
www.tuv-sud.co.uk
TÜV SÜD Product Service
is the FPMA’s technical and legislative partner.
SAVE THE DATE!

PPMA TOTAL Show is the UK’s No.1 event for processing and packaging machinery materials, automation and vision

ppmatotalshow.co.uk
Shemesh has launched a new mechanical cam-based rotary piston filling machine for high and low viscous products. This introduction follows five years of R&D and achieves a filling tolerance of +/- 2 ml and speeds of up to 300 containers per minute (higher throughputs are available depending on the number of filling stations).

Called the Asterra, this new option includes 16 filling stations specifically designed to fill a wide range of low and high viscous liquid with particulates (viscosities from 500 to 400,000 CPS). It is suitable for a wide range of products across varied market sectors including food & beverage, nonwovens, cosmetics, chemicals and household products.

The robust Asterra features a proprietary mechanical cam with built-in bottom-up Shemesh nozzles and portioning technology. It also includes a programmable portioning speed graph for anti-foaming and drip prevention.

Shemesh says the Asterra’s technology results in higher accuracy as the filling process itself does not depend on auxiliary air pressure, which may be unstable. Additionally, the portioning process is faster and more consistent with this filling method which results in less waste and spillage. Thanks to its proprietary nozzles and mechanical cam technology, Asterra can also fill highly viscous liquids, including particulates such as sauces with fruit pieces inside, peanut butter and pastes, etc.

Constructed of 304/316L stainless steel and USDA/FDA approved materials and sanitary welds, the Asterra is an hygienic option. Meanwhile, the tri-clamp sanitary nozzle connections are designed for quick clean-up and maintenance, a ‘tool-less’ cam mounting system saves valuable time when changing production and/or product specifications and a complete changeover takes just 30 minutes.

This filling machine comes as a stand-alone filler or either in a rinser-filler-capper monoblock or in a filler-capper monoblock configuration. Asterra can also be easily incorporated as part of the complete Shemesh custom made bottling line featuring unscramblers, rinsing machines, loading systems, cappers, sealers, labellers, case packers, palletisers and depalletisers.

The new filler has a small footprint: 4.9 ft x 5.2 ft only (1500 mm x 1600 mm excluding infeed and outfeed conveyors). That is thanks to the faster portioning process which means fewer filling stations and smaller turrets are required.

W: www.shemeshautomation.com
T: 01252 538082
Ytron-Quadro (UK) is now offering a scalable, benchtop dry granulation compaction unit from The Fitzpatrick Company. This LCS – Lab Compaction System – is a low-volume benchtop model for R&D and trial batch production. With capacities ranging from 10 g to 6 kg an hour, the LCS is ideal for proof-of-concept work or for small volume production.

Manufactured with Fitzpatrick’s high-precision, twin feed screw system, the unit processes powders using the same mechanism as larger production-scale systems. This capability ensures development projects can progress to production with confidence, says Ytron.

The available 20 kN/cm roll pressure is equivalent to production-scale systems and matches the requirement for most pharmaceutical blends.

The LCS offers gains

The unit features ‘touchpad’ control of all independent feed and compaction variables. Meanwhile, the complete disassembly of all contact parts enables thorough cleaning that is quick and easy.

“The Fitzpatrick Company has consistently achieved powder processing excellence for the pharmaceutical, chemical and food sectors,” says Jon Youles, md at Ytron-Quadro (UK).

The LCS offers gains

Gripping, lifting and moving solutions.

Evolving automation since 1951.
Syntegon (formerly Bosch Packaging Technology), has entered a strategic partnership with Bayer for the development of new continuous manufacturing processes for oral solid dosage (OSD) forms.

The cooperation is based on the Xelum platform developed by the Syntegon subsidiary Hüttlin, which the partners intend to advance together and establish as a standard in the pharmaceutical industry. Its main advantage and a novelty in continuous pharmaceutical production, is the previously unattained precise dosing of active ingredients.

At the same time, fluid bed granulation provides granules with outstanding properties. Fluid bed granulation remains the most flexible technology to produce solid oral drug formulations, says Syntegon. It is well established and the ease of transfer from the currently predominant batch process to continuous production is of high value to pharmaceutical companies. Continuous manufacturing makes it possible to further increase quality assurance in production and make new drugs available to patients even faster.

“The partners aim to establish Xelum as a standard for continuous production, the goal to realise a continuous line that covers all steps from powder to coated tablet.”

While other continuous processes rely on screw granulation, Syntegon’s Xelum platform uses fluid bed granulation. The system doses, mixes and granulates defined sub-quantities of the product, so-called X-Keys, which continuously run through the process chain and are removed from the system successively.

Ishida Europe is launching its next generation IX-G2 dual energy x-ray inspection system which offers significantly enhanced sensitivities for the detection of low-density and difficult to spot foreign bodies, including bone.

The machine includes a new line sensor that provides an x-ray image through an enhanced signal to noise ratio which has increased the ability to detect bone fragments by a factor of four compared with previous x-ray models. This further increases the ability of the machine to identify contaminants, particularly when handling thicker and denser products such as chicken fillets, chicken breasts and a wide range of poultry products where they can often be overlapped or presented with uneven surfaces.

This enhanced sensitivity also greatly reduces the risk of false detections, which helps to maximise throughput and avoids the costs associated with unnecessary waste and the repacking of products. The high performance of the IX-G2-F is supported by Ishida’s special self-learning Genetic Algorithm (GA) technology which combines with the new line sensor to deliver maximum detection sensitivity and reliability. The GA technology focuses the x-ray machine to identify difficult to detect contaminants.

Moody Direct offers a one-stop-shop to its customers, with a range of services available through dedicated divisions. Moody Heat Exchangers, one such division, provides a range of thermal transfer solutions which includes sourcing, supplying, installing, commissioning, maintaining, servicing, testing, and refurbishing a wide range of heat exchangers from a variety of original equipment manufacturers (OEMs).

Poultry producers will be interested in the enhanced sensitivity for difficult to detect objects offered by next generation x-ray systems.
Domino understands that integrating innovative, new equipment into the toughest production lines requires reliable, compliant products, simple integration and a consistent global support infrastructure. We have already launched products, including our new Thermal Inkjet Gx-Series printers, which offer in-built future-proofing to keep pace with customers’ increasingly intelligent factories.

Domino are trusted by a wide range of food, beverage, life sciences and industrial manufacturers, as well as global packaging machinery manufacturers who partner with us to offer fully-integrated solutions with customisable options.

Learn more: www.domino-printing.com
Holmach and Perfinox are launching a continuous solution for mayonnaise and other cold or hot swell dips and dressings with a single process that is adaptable for all types of mayonnaise, from low fat to full fat and from traditional to flavoured options.

Called Perfiline, the companies believe that the new system’s adaptability will help to revolutionise mayonnaise production.

As part of Perfinox’s patented Perfiprocess, the Perfiline has been designed for high inline emulsion production at high flow rates from 2 tonnes an hour to 6 tonnes an hour. Designed for mayonnaise and similar cold emulsions, the Perfiline performs inline automatic ingredient dosing tailored to individual recipes and inline emulsification.

With different combinations available, back pressure devices set up the required holding time and shear rates to achieve the proper viscosities, while maintaining a low product temperature to ensure product stability.

Enhanced VFFS unit offers gains

Tna solutions has released the latest iteration of its flagship vertical form fill and seal (VFFS) packaging system, the tna robag 3e. Featuring a new CXE integrated display controller, smart diagnostic tools and intuitive time-saving components, the system can deliver up to 250 bags per minute (bpm) with wastage as low as 0.1%, alongside enhanced serviceability.

The simplicity of the new tna robag 3e VFFS packaging solution makes it easy to operate, service and maintain. Featuring EtherCAT real-time protocol and an integrated display controller system, this latest tna robag reduces cabling infrastructure by 20%, enabling easier servicing and lower total installed costs.

Also, the new system shares common core components with tna rollo distribution conveyors and the tna intelli-flav seasoning system reducing the need for additional spare parts stocking and features integrated LED lighting in the packaging jaw area to make maintenance safer and easier to perform. Equipped with smart diagnostics and remote connectivity, the new tna unit also offers real-time communication and status updates, enabling faster global servicing support.

VMECA product specialist and UK agent for over 15 years. Vacuum challenges? Simmatic has the solutions.

BRINGING PNEUMATICS AND VACUUM TOGETHER

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- Installed with Turtle pumps (optimized for Turtle series)
- Easy and convenient wiring with M8X6PIN connector and wiring cable.
The FlexiBowl automatic bulk parts feeder from RARUK Automation allows families of parts to be fed into the assembly process regardless of their shape, fragility, material composition, weight and surface characteristics. Several new developments have widened the application scope of this system and the first is a specific URCap for FlexiBowl. URCap is a platform upon which shortcuts can be introduced that enable Universal Robots to work with accessories on many different tasks. The new FlexiBowl URCap connects the feeder and the UR controller enabling applications to be set-up via the UR Teach Pendant. It is a simple and reliable way to create a dedicated solution without the need for time-consuming programming, says the company.

**PLUG-AND-PLAY OPTION**
This plug-and-play URCap is designed to control multiple FlexiBowls at the same time and is ideal for manufacturers whose production involves frequent product changeovers and reduced volumes.

RARUK has also introduced a new model to its FlexiBowl range. It’s the FB200, now the smallest in the series, for part sizes from 1-10 mm, weighing 30 g. The largest model is for parts from 60 – 250 mm, weighing 250 g. In operation, entire families of parts can be handled by a single FlexiBowl replacing the need for a full set of dedicated vibratory bowl feeders.

Also new is the FlexiBowl quick empty feature which is an option for just-in-time operation and small batch sizes being handled.

Cama Group is a leading supplier of advanced technology secondary packaging systems, continuously investing in innovative solutions.

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IMMERSE YOURSELF IN GENERATION 4.0
Even low levels of moisture in gases and compressed air can lead to deviations in industrial processes or cause damage to equipment. This is why Witt offers two measuring devices for the determination of humidity or dew point of gases: the mobile hand-held device HYDROBABY and the desktop device MFA H2O.

These instruments determine relevant measured variables such as the dew point in degC and the volume ratio of water vapour to gas in ppmv. In addition, they generate graphical trend curves of the measured values. Witt moisture analysers operate with a ceramic metal oxide sensor which delivers fast measuring speed, exact measurements as well as high reproducibility. A result is usually available after only three minutes, with a dew point accuracy of +/- 0.5 degC.

Fast measuring speed with reproducibility is offered.

Tattoo markers allow for full product traceability

To apply complex product information in a high-resolution and reliable manner, GEA can now integrate corresponding laser marking systems into its thermoforming machines from the PowerPak series in cooperation with various suppliers, on a customer-specific basis.

“Demand for laser marking systems is rising sharply,” says Volker Sassmannshausen, senior product manager thermoforming at GEA in Wallau, Germany. “While packaging must provide growing volumes of product information for end customers, it also has to ensure that products are fully traceable at all times.”

Applying a QR code with a laser is a solution with plenty of advantages,” he says.

The engineers at GEA take an end-to-end approach to designing individual solutions. That includes overseeing everything from selecting the laser supplier and initial film test to optimally positioning the laser in the packaging line.

Depending on production batch sizes, it is possible to either mark the top film feed in advance or once it has passed through the thermoformer’s sealing station, but before the finished packaging units are cut apart.

For instance, recently a food industry customer opted for a laser marking system from Videojet to accompany its GEA thermoforming packaging machine. The chosen CO2 laser solution was integrated at the GEA PowerPak system’s sealing station to print the top film before it is joined to the bottom tray.

Despite the additional processing step, there is no increase in production time because labelling is accommodated within the integrated production process cycle.

Handling of rolls in tight spaces

Packline Materials Handling has designed a bespoke stainless powered roll handling solution with sideways rotation and loading to work in narrow, confined spaces.

This roll handling equipment and vertical spindle attachment with sideways rotation facility was designed in response to a food industry customer to handle rolls in narrow, confined spaces, with height restrictions and narrow aisles. The resulting solution is suitable for clean room high care environments such as the food and drinks industries.

In operation, the rolls are loaded from the lift onto the packaging machinery along narrow aisles of one metre width. To allow transfer of the rolls from the vertical spindle attachment to the load point on the packaging machine, the rolls are transferred by means of the “side feed” facility.

The sideways rotation of the vertical spindle attachment allows the rolls to be loaded to the left- or right-hand side without the need to turn the lifting machine itself. The lifting machine feeds the rolls sideways onto the mandrel at a low load point.

This bespoke design is achieved by changing the orientation of the vertical spindle from the standard “vertical to horizontal” mechanism to a “vertical to sideways” rotation device. In addition, the attachment is designed with a special powered fabricated L-shaped arm and motor allowing the rolls to rotate sideways.
New x-ray options bring user benefits

With its new models, Minebea Intec is offering customers a tailored solution for a wide range of applications. For instance, the Dymond DSV, which includes multi-sided radioscopy of the products – with just a single x-ray source. In operation, the system can look for foreign objects in a food can, for example, at a rate of up to 650 pieces per minute. The natural expansion of the x-ray beams is used by this ‘dual split view’ (DSV) method which means the image is captured both when it enters and exits the radiation cone.

USER GAINS ON OFFER
Minebea says that with the Dymond DSV, users gain double benefits: the precision and accuracy of two x-ray beams but with the maintenance commitment of a simple, single-beam solution.

Meanwhile, new monoblock option for the Dymond D x-ray inspection solution has also been introduced. This eliminates the need for active water cooling and therefore guarantees easier installation and maintenance. The high sensitivity of its powerful image processors, combined with intelligent image processing, means it can detect even those foreign objects that are positioned vertically or lay hidden at the edge or at the bottom of the container.

A large selection of feed systems, separators and other options is available for each model. The two models complement the previous products in the Dymond family – together with the Dymond S, the company’s single-beam version and the original Dymond D with double-beam technology, the new x-ray inspection solutions are designed for reliable inspection.

All systems have been developed for use in highly automated processes and to meet the challenges of Industry 4.0.

“With the two new side shooters, we are better catering to the needs of our customers,” explains Dr Thorsten Vollborn, global product manager at Minebea Intec. Simpler situations often arise where a single-beam system like the Dymond S would be sufficient.

“The two machines Dymond DSV and Dymond D monoblock offer a great alternative with which most applications can be covered.”

www.minebea-intec.com
Packaging Automation introduced its most advanced machine last year – the evolution S – which was developed alongside food producers and manufacturers to reduce production runs and save labour.

Positive customer trials data revealed a 30% reduction in downtime for film snaps and punnet crashes; between 12-20% increases in OEE performance and no rejects.

The company says the only thing limiting this machine’s output is the upstream process which is why its team set about optimising every operation required to seal a tray accurately, reliably, and efficiently. It employed the latest technology to develop a patented design.

Capable of sealing up to 250 packs a minute in a single lane format, the evolution S also puts a stop to intermittent stop-start movement, removing the need to decelerate or stop a process to correctly position packs. This achieves continuous controlled movement that streamlines any operation, explains the company.

In addition, the evolution S is billed as transporting packs three times faster while maintaining optimum accuracy and accommodating all pack formats without the need for a tool changeover. The machine also removes the need for transfer arms, which can be notoriously heavy and awkward to move and set up.

According to Stuart Jackson, vp at Crawford Packaging, with the evolution S, Packaging Automation has raised the bar for accuracy and high sealing speeds while reducing the required footprint for the packaging area in a single lane format. “This machine will help our clients to optimise the high production rates they require,” he says.

Omron has launched the D41 series safety door switch that reduces the risk of interlock devices being deactivated, for a safe and worry-free production site.

Thanks to the built-in function in the D41 to prevent deactivation in the switch itself, companies can reduce the risk of defeating their protection guards. In the “high-coded” safety door switch, the combination of sensor and actuator is fixed by pairing with more than 1,000 variations available to users.

The compact design means the device fits into tight spaces inside machines and does not hinder entry through opening; it matches with machine design while providing versatility of mounting, while pairing of all series-connected switches can be done simultaneously, (which reduces design and commissioning time).

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Mecmesin has launched the VTG digital torque tester which combines a highly responsive, capacitive 5 in colour touchscreen with sophisticated torque measurement features driven by the power of the company’s Vector OS.

The VTG Tornado is accessible via an intuitive touchscreen interface that, says the company, sets it apart from other torque testers. It is easy to navigate, just swipe or press-and-hold to access menus, toolbars, and settings.

Digital torque tester provides easy to use features and quicker field results

Four portable models are available

Vector OS is the technology platform at the heart of the VTG Tornado enabling operators to customise the touchscreen interface, configure the tester to their requirements and analyse test results quickly in the field.

Billed as a major step forward in portable torque testing, the VTG Tornado boasts an array of advanced capabilities. It includes a dual zone display with the upper zone clearly showing the peak readings in N.cm, lbf.in and other common units of measurement.

A configurable first-peak function, coupled with the standard maximum reading, ensures that both the initial slip torque and the secondary break torque are captured.

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Pharma granular/powder products can be detected

CEIA’s new THS/PH21N-G70-FFV integrated metal detecting system is especially designed for the inspection of granular and powder products and the elimination of any contaminating metals, including both ferrous, non-ferrous and stainless steel in the pharmaceutical industry.

Available from MDS in the UK, it is a fully integrated system with a compact design and has an ultra-high sensitivity to metals. The CEIA unit is fitted with a special deflector that ensures a quick and precise ejection of any contaminated product from the base material. This compact detector is designed with a high flow rate in mind and can fit straight into any existing production line as well as into new processes.

Typical throughput is 2500 kg an hour, but this depends on the bulk density of the product. Fully compliant with FDA 21 CFR Part 11 and other equivalent pharmaceutical regulations, it has been produced with the highest hygiene standards in mind, with most of the body made from AISI 316L stainless steel providing both durability and cleanliness for the user.

It features a metal detector probe, a valve actioning unit, a compressed air connection unit, an ejection valve, a power supply control unit, an emergency stop button and a mains connection switch. An ATEX Zone 22 model is available on request for use in explosion zoned areas.

All models include a test sample insertion point that allows for regular checking of both detector sensitivity and ejection operation.

The insertion point includes a blanking plug that must be in place for normal operation and during a sensitivity check. Manual testing is required on first starting the system or after any operational changes such as a change in material or throughput.

With LANCOM Systems, we have found the ideal partner to take our cybersecurity to the next level,” says Dr Eng Benjamin Haefner of the Optima Group.

“The highest hygiene standards are part of the design regulations, it has been produced with the highest hygiene standards in mind, with most of the body made from AISI 316L stainless steel providing both durability and cleanliness for the user.”

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Coca-Cola Europacific Partners (CCEP), the largest independent bottler of Coca-Cola globally, has announced an £11m investment over the next five years in its manufacturing sites in Great Britain, as part of its drive to become a Net Zero business by 2040.

The investment will see its 200-strong fleet of materials handling equipment (MHE), including some gas-powered forklift trucks, which are used to move over 520 million cases of product around the bottler’s sites, replaced with units powered by lithium-ion batteries, producing no carbon emissions in their day-to-day operation.

This change will reduce CCEP GB’s carbon emissions by more than 1,500 tonnes each year and represents a further step towards its target of reducing carbon emissions across its value chain by 30% by 2030 and reaching net zero by 2040.

Work has already begun to replace the MHE fleet, with the transition complete at the Morpeth factory and Milton Keynes Cold Drinks Operations, and last month training began on the 76-strong fleet being introduced at Wakefield, Europe’s largest soft drinks production site by volume. The changeover will be completed at four remaining sites in Great Britain by 2024.

CCEP is working with Linde Material Handling to introduce the new fleet, which will not only be powered solely by renewable electricity but is also more efficient and safer to operate. The new MHE can be charged quickly without having to remove the battery from the machine; a full charge now takes just two hours, rather than the eight hours required by the current fleet. Alternatively, top up charges can be completed during break times. This means not only do they require less electricity to charge, but also deliver a significant increase in efficiency in a fleet that operates for more than half a million hours each year.

The fleet is also much easier and more comfortable to operate, and comes equipped with Linde Safety Guard, a monitoring system that increases safety for truck operators and pedestrians in the vicinity of the truck.

“This is a really significant step in making our GB bottling and distribution operations cleaner, greener and more efficient,” says Frank Denvir who led the project for CCEP (GB). “It’s been great to work with Linde to find a solution that will deliver a significant carbon reduction across our GB sites, while also improving the safety and usability of the machines for our hard-working teams.”

Contact:
Linde Material Handling
Eamonn Parker
Tel: 0845 608 5000
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**Installation News**

Coke bottler invests to reduce carbon emissions across sites

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- Linear style case erector
Two labellers are meeting the needs of a cider maker

Logopak International has completed the installation of another case and pallet labeller for one of the UK’s best known cider producers based in Herefordshire.

Continuing a business relationship that has lasted over 15 years, the most recently installed equipment on the site is from Logopak’s latest generation of print & apply labelling machinery. “Our new ‘Body One’ series of machines are the most robust, reliable and accurate labellers ever produced,” says Howard Jagger, managing director at Logopak. “They feature ‘Digi-Drive’ technology which electronically monitors and controls every aspect of the labellers operation, allowing maximum print speeds of 200 mm per second with unrivalled print quality,” he tells Machinery Update.

Meanwhile, the latest case labeller to be installed is applying a GS1-128 logistics barcode to the front face of multi-packs of cider. As it is vital that these barcodes are applied to every single pack, a Logopak validation scanner reads every barcode after it has been applied to ensure 100% compliance to GS1 standards. The pallet labeller automatically prints and applies two SSCC labels to each pallet, one on the front and one on the side, to allow the pallet to be tracked throughout the supply chain. A validation scanner is again used to confirm a valid label has been applied, ensuring every pallet leaves the warehouse with a label.

Production has been scaled-up

New system meets higher export needs

With overseas demand growing for its range of cleaning and restoration products, Furniture Clinic turned to Karmelle to automate the filling, capping and labelling of several key products.

The new equipment needed to handle two plastics bottles of 15 ml and 50 ml sizes.

Karmelle had already supplied a benchtop filler and a wraparound labeller to the company. “We’ve developed a strong working relationship with the Karmelle team,” says Furniture Clinic’s production manager, Dan Dodds. “When we identified a need for an end-to-end liquid packaging solution, they were the obvious choice of partner.”

After initial consultations, the Karmelle team proposed a mini monoblock system that featured a rotary infeed table, and filling, capping and wraparound labelling stations. The mini monoblock is designed to handle smaller volumes and has a footprint of just 5sq m.

The system was designed, manufactured, assembled and tested at Karmelle’s Huddersfield facility where the Furniture Clinic’s team attended Factory Acceptance Tests prior to installation and commissioning. “The system has allowed us to scale-up production without compromising on quality,” explains Dodds.

A 32-head multihed weigher from Ishida Europe is providing fast and accurate weighing of mixed bags of quality chocolates for Chocolates Valor, one of Spain’s leading chocolatiers.

The Ishida CCW-RV-232B can handle two, three or four products simultaneously for discharge into the same bag, giving chocolate Valor the flexibility to respond to changing customer orders. During the peak four months in the run up to Christmas, the machine is operating 24 hours a day, handling 16 tons of product every hour.

It is packing a variety of bag sizes – 180 g, 250 g, 470 g and 1 kg – for both Chocolates Valor’s own brands and private label.

Logopak has been supplying equipment to the cider maker for over 15 years

Multihead weigher is providing the accuracy required to handle mixed bags of chocolates
Installation News

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Retractable conveyor reject unit is delivering benefits for nut supplier

Most snack producers opt for gravity metal detectors. With 15 Fortress mini Vertex snack inspection systems integrated with multi-head weighers in its Aintree factory, Trigon Snacks is no exception. Yet, for its latest coated honey roast nut production line, the nut specialist selected a bespoke linear Stealth metal detector with a special retractable conveyor reject system from Fortress.

For its new honey roasted nuts line, the company commissioned a highly sensitive horizontal metal detection concept.

Stringent retailer COPs specified that as 'naked nuts', the new honey-coated range must be inspected for metal contaminants prior to own-label packaging. Additionally, Trigon required a supermarket specification metal detector that was sensitive enough to adapt to the fine oil and sugar tolerances.

For logistical reasons, a small-footprint, wide-head Stealth metal detector engineered to inspect the fried, dried and seasoned nuts on a conveyor before entering the chute and falling into the one-ton sacks (over 1,000 kgs), was the most viable and accessible option.

Screening 32 tons of honey roasted nuts daily, space limitations was a key driver to the design, reaffirms Trigon's lead engineer Mark Grieve. “Being located on a mezzanine floor, we commissioned a wide head yet highly sensitive metal detector with a specially adapted linear conveyor system measuring just 40 cm wide,” he explains. Factoring in the conveying and reject system was critical to guarantee reliable operation and avoid false readings. Given the tight footprint, a customised solution was the best way to ensure that metal detector performance was not compromised.

With insufficient space to accommodate a flap style reject, Fortress Technology instead engineered a clever and efficient retracting band conveyor and reject mechanism. Rather than a typical tongue and groove conveyor, the rollers on Trigon’s moveable easy-clean, food-grade belt are rounded. The metal detector which sits at the front of the conveyor calculates precisely how long the contaminated nuts will take to reach the end of the conveyor band, communicating via the metal detector control system.

The belt then smoothly retracts back on a sliding rail rolling the rejected nuts into the dedicated bin located beneath the conveyor, resuming its inspection position in just seconds.

To-date, Trigon reports zero false rejects on the honey roasted nut line, upholding the company’s longstanding sustainable, ethical and traceable principles. Despite admitting he was slightly apprehensive by the compact dimensions of the entire system, Grieve corroborates that it has already proved itself to be a reliable and easy to use inspection machine.

The decision was made to replace the old products with 800 maintenance-free speed controllers from Interroll, which operate without wear-prone braking technology. The Interroll magnetic speed controller MSC 80 was used, a magnetic speed controller that regulates the movement of pallets in the flow channel to a maximum of 0.3 metres per second, irrespective of their weight.

Warehouse modernisation is achieved through contactless, maintenance-free speed controllers on the conveyor system

Interroll says that anyone who believes that the productivity of their pallet warehouse can be increased with costly retrofit projects alone is wrong. Often, only the smart use of key products is necessary to significantly improve existing processes in the beverage warehouse.

For years, the gravity roller conveyors at a large company performed their service reliably – until the maintenance technicians calls began to pile up.

Maintaining the safe flow of pallets through manual intervention became more and more time-consuming. Handling performance and productivity fell, operating costs rose. The cause of the uncontrolled flow of goods turned out to be the speed controllers used, which were only fulfilling their function to a limited extent as a result of continuous operation – primarily due to worn or seized linings.

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Branded clothing provider Essential Embroidery Design has significantly improved its efficiency after purchasing three new pieces of finishing kit from Friedheim International.

The company provides a wide range of clothing decoration services including embroidery, screen print and transfer print and to complement this offering, it needed new machinery to improve the efficiency of its packing department as it went in search of further business growth.

This was focused around a solution that could fold, bag and label clothing products from its production line and so a Beck Serienpacker S2050XI bagging machine, a Texfinity S.OMNI garment folding machine and a Weber Legi-Air 2050 print and apply labeller station was supplied by Friedheim International.

REDUCED LABOUR NEED

“We wanted a solution that could fold, bag, and label as a one-man operation, using these three units together we were able to achieve that,” explains Louis Georgiou, Essential’s operations director. “The investment has really helped us in being more efficient by reducing the labour hours needed in our packing department, which will now allow us to pursue new work and grow our embroidery business as a result.

“This purchasing decision has allowed us to take on jobs on shorter turnaround times and given our staff more time to focus on more important organisational tasks, which allows our operation to run much more smoothly,” he told Machinery Update.

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Harn Engineering Solutions in Bangkok is using its 7-colour Domino N610i inkjet label press to digitally print full colour labels incorporating variable data QR codes which are applied to oxygen concentrators being used in the fight against COVID-19 in Thailand.

These unique QR codes are used for online traceability of the oxygen concentrators. Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn granted The Chaipattana Foundation permission to use funds from the Chaipattana COVID-19 Aid Fund to acquire these high-flow oxygen concentrators, which are being distributed on loan, free of charge, to hospitals, affiliated field hospitals, and first responders in Thailand to help medical personnel treat patients with respiratory issues.

Dr Jain Charnnarong, President of the Recipients of Ananda Mahidol Foundation said: “It is vital that the print quality of the unique variable data QR codes is of high resolution and consistent quality for scanning purposes.

“There is an important and robust disinfection procedure to ensure hygiene and safety standards of the oxygen concentrators which necessitates thorough cleansing with alcohol wipes before they are dispatched to the next patient. This means that the labels must be capable of maintaining print quality and readability of the QR codes, after withstanding repeated wipes. “We needed a fast, reliable and high-quality printing solution to deliver the short print runs of these labels in a short lead time,” Dr Charnnarong continues. “The Domino N610i label press enabled us to meet these demands and digitally print these labels.”

Dr Charnnarong says that during COVID-19, many label makers have been handling more variable data before they are dispatched to the next patient. This means that the labels must be capable of maintaining print quality and readability of the QR codes, after withstanding repeated wipes.

Remote solutions deliver new bottle for drinks company

To expand its carbonated soft drink brands and meet market needs for home consumption with larger formats, Nouvelle Brasserie de Guinee (Braguinee) contacted Sidel for help with the remote tuning of its packaging line to produce one litre bottles. In just three days, Sidel’s global team was mobilised to guide and empower the customer, using Sidel’s latest remote line-adaptation technologies and leveraging effective digital solutions for quick set-up of larger bottle formats.

Meanwhile, another vaccine manufacturer has ordered several 425UHLS in-line mixers for their factories in Belgium, France and the US to be used as back-ups for Silverson mixers already in place. These in-line mixers are being used to produce an adjuvant, used to enhance immune response and improve the effectiveness of a vaccine. This adjuvant will not only be used in the company’s own COVID-19 vaccination but in the industry as a whole; and will also be added to other company’s vaccines going forward.
Fluid management company Watson-Marlow Fluid Technology Group (WMFTG) has released a new article discussing the potential for advances in the field of personalised medicine made possible by progress in biopharmaceutical engineering during the global pandemic.

The article features an exclusive interview from Dr Edward Abrahams, president of the Personalised Medicine Coalition, that is based in Washington, DC, accompanied by expert insights from industry leaders including Oxford Biomedica Gemini Bio, Franz Ziel GmbH, and WMFTG.

COVID-19 has demonstrated how one disease can have wide-ranging outcomes, with some patients experiencing asymptomatic infection, some developing long-term conditions and some, sadly, experiencing severe illness and death.

A PARADIGM SHIFT

“Personalised medicine offers a paradigm shift in the way we treat diseases, but as such demonstrates significant manufacturing challenges,” explains Jim Sanford, life sciences sector strategy manager at WMFTG.

“By working collaboratively with drug developers, we can better understand the requirements of these novel processes and develop and adapt technologies to solve these problems.”

Bioprocessing remains a considerable challenge as much smaller scale facilities are required that allow high flexibility, precision and yield maximisation, while retaining sterility and cross-contamination control.

www.wmftg.com
As with most products sold in supermarkets, the fresh produce sector’s use of plastics packaging is now coming under intense scrutiny with pressures coming from all sides. As *The Grocer* magazine published in December, packaging of fresh fruit and vegetables is now set to be added to the list of “problematic” plastics targeted by the Industry’s UK Plastics Pact.

France, of course, has gone even further in its bid to reduce plastics waste and is banning plastics packaging for nearly all fruit and vegetables from this January.

In this 17-page fresh produce feature, you will find many PPMA member companies responding to the ecological challenges that are now being demanded by the market as well as the very latest equipment that processes, handles packages or marks the range of fruit and veg marketed in the UK.

New products that reduce the use of plastics abound. For instance, Paramount Packaging has helped reduce PVC usage for mushrooms (see page 34); WestRock has just launched the PFS family of equipment that handles fibre-based packaging (see page 36) and Multivac can now handle paperboard and cardboard packs for fresh produce (see page 38).

**ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN**

Proseal agrees that in addition to the need for maximum speed and efficiency on the tray sealing line, fresh produce customers are also now seeking solutions that deliver on sustainability. “Environmental concerns are an increasingly important part of consumers’ food purchasing decisions, but they still want quality and freshness from their products,” says Tony Burgess of Proseal.

And Ed Williams, sales director of Ulma Packaging UK, says that as sustainability becomes an ever-increasing priority, so too does the pressure for fresh produce processors to eliminate waste in their operations. “Yet efficiency and sustainability needn’t be mutually exclusive, especially when considering the problem of excessive air in herb and loose-leaf salad packaging,” he tells *Machinery Update*. Not only is this a hidden cost, increasing pack size and stock volume per pallet or box, but it also leads to practical concerns.

Chief among these is leaves and herbs spreading around the pack and getting trapped in the seal, resulting in contamination concerns and expensive product waste, says Williams. Many processors use oversized bags to tackle this, but while this can be effective, this uses additional materials.

“With this issue in mind, it is incumbent on packaging machinery suppliers to develop practical solutions that can resolve both financial and green practice concerns simultaneously,” he says. “We have developed Venturi technology, which pulls product through while blowing out excess air before sealing through our vertical form, fill and sealing (VFFS) air extraction system, known as Tight Bag.”

As well as tackling the issues facing the fresh produce sector, our feature also details major installations that have taken place in the last year. Enjoy!
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As fresh food packaging has moved steadily closer to the farmer’s field, and in some cases, at the site of harvesting itself, coding solutions can now be found in the farmer’s field.

For instance, one of Markem-Imaje’s customers has millions of acres of agricultural land in East Anglia and beyond, suppling green vegetables, including lettuces and leeks, to all the UK’s major supermarkets. Its fresh produce is picked from the field, moved on to the back of a trailer, just a few metres away, where it is packaged and coded and then sent straight to a distribution centre and onwards to the supermarket.

The trailers where the packaging takes place are satellite tracked and built to a bespoke design by the customer.

“There are many challenges to having applications this close to the agricultural coal face,” explains Martin Bailey, zone director, Northern Europe at Markem-Imaje. “In addition to the usual issues, such as varying substrate materials, we have to think about the harsh environmental conditions and everything that comes from being in a muddy field including dust, dirt and wind.”

In response to these challenges, Markem-Imaje introduced the Xtreme print head range for its coding built for extreme SmartDate thermal transfer overprinters. “We have developed harder-wearing coatings on the Xtreme print heads that improve head life along with allowing us to print high resin ribbons and difficult substrates at a faster speed,” explains Bailey.

“The coatings make the print heads far more resilient to attrition. “What is more, the control boxes can easily be upgraded from IP45 to IP65 too, as water ingress from cleaning down the packaging machines along with harvesting in any weather creating dust etc provide additional challenges,” he tells Machinery Update.

In addition, the company has also optimised the printer mounts and created a bespoke air-blowing system, which removes debris from both sides of flexible film. An uninterruptible power supply completes the package. Operational challenges exist too.

“Fruit-and-vegetable-picking teams can often comprise a work force who may not share a common language,” Bailey adds, “so in addition to making the hardware rugged, the user interface needs to be as simple and as intuitive as possible.”

Looking ahead, the company is also working to help minimise error: “We have found that a combination of our CoLOS software and camera systems integrated together with software from our third-party partners Progressive ID is extremely useful in this space,” adds Bailey.

The combination enables the scanning not just of a barcode but, for example, an entire punnet. This allows for the confirmation of correct coding, coupled with correct products, making it easy to spot errors.

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W www.markem-imaje.co.uk
Last year, Paramount Packaging Systems helped cut 97 tonnes of PVC in the first year of a switch to new kit for a major UK supermarket, with additional lines installed to triple this figure going forward.

Paramount was contacted by a leading UK mushroom grower in 2019 to explore the options to remove all the PVC film used on its existing overwrap machines from one line within its packhouse. Discussions were focused on using a mono layer PE film on mushroom punnets, which would be return-to-store recycle, to comply with the supermarket’s 4R programme — Remove where we can, Reduce where we can’t, Reuse more and Recycle what’s left.

From previous trials within the produce sector, Paramount was confident in the ability of its Fuji equipment to control and seal low gauge PE film with ease. This is because all Fuji wrappers can control film speeds and temperature precisely, with the added benefit of using a special Fuji centre seal section with patented Fuji Box Motion end sealing. “This results in perfect seals, even at high speed,” says sales director at Paramount Aaron Bessell.

Meetings between the two parties took place to look at the most commercially viable option to move the eco-project forward. Belt speed is matched to film speed, so any mushrooms proud of a punnet remain in the punnet during packing

An FVS scanner is built into the film drive roller housing for ease of use for machine operators

Greener option for UK grower

This project has been billed as the biggest innovation the mushroom category has seen in the last 70 years...

As Chris Gibson, Paramount’s area sales manager entered the customer’s packhouse, he saw line after line of PVC overwrap and label applicators running at a steady speed, but a speed that a Fuji flow wrap could far exceed with pre-printed mono film (while also removing the labels).

Paramount then conducted two months of internal trials to prove the new concept that originally had four different variations of film composites and gauges. After the site visit, both parties agreed to a short depot trial, whereby Paramount would supply a new Fuji Alpha 8 box motion flow wrapper. But both the customer and the Paramount teams shared the same vision — that moving to pre-printed mono films would not only have excellent environmental benefits, but also reduce the overall cost per pack. Labels would be removed, line speeds would be higher, less material would be used, and overall pack appearance would be improved. Shelf life was also set to be extended.

During the depot trial, integration was simple; within one day, the line was running with full communication protocols with all the upstream and downstream equipment.

Paramount then tweaked the Fuji Alpha 8 a number of times during this depot trial, to ensure it was performing at its optimum. This was achieved while 70 different film perforations and
composites were running, to achieve the best pack presentation, sustainability, shelf life and overall cost.

After this six-month depot trial, the supermarket was impressed; final film choices were made, and the customer purchased the machine outright before adding additional Fuji Alpha 8s to its packhouse and partners.

REASONS TO INVEST
The case for the investment was, says Paramount, compelling:

• There was improved product quality through the reduction of condensation within packs
• 97 tonnes of PVC per year was removed from the supply chain (from one line)
• The introduction of pre-printed film removed the need for labels.

To date, Paramount now has multiple machines installed and on order across the UK and Ireland for other mushroom growers and supermarkets, leading the way for a more environmental way to wrap mushroom punnets.

Currently, the customer has confirmed it is achieving a line speed which is 45% faster compared to its previous machine. Although, the Fuji Alpha 8 has the capacity to increase its speeds by 87%. “This means the Fuji Alpha 8 hasn’t just matched the speed of incumbent PVC over wrappers, but has exceeded line speed, while improving efficiency,” says Bessell.

“By being the first flow wrapping manufacturer to launch a mushroom punnet flow wrapping system, using the pre-trial and depot trial work conducted, we now have a finished and proven machine, which customers can be confident will deliver the results they want and more,” explains Bessell.
WestRock has developed a new family of machines specifically designed to help produce growers and retailers meet the increasing demand for sustainable and ethical packaging solutions. To address the ever-changing needs of the produce industry, WestRock’s new line of machinery is engineered to form EverGrow tills, trays, punnets and hinged-lid designs that are completely customisable. These new packaging designs are fibre-based and recyclable, helping brands and retailers meet their sustainability goals while helping consumers at retail with eye-catching designs.

And, says Rick Anderson, vice president of Automated Packaging Systems for WestRock, customers have been very positive about the new offer. “Our expert automation specialists worked hand-in-hand with our material scientists and structural designers to create a truly unmatched automation solution for produce packaging,” he says. “WestRock continues to deliver integrated solutions for primary, secondary and tertiary packaging unlike any other.” The new PFS machinery gives growers the optional ability to form packaging on-site, increasing flexibility and creating supply chain efficiencies. Available in several configurations including versions with an integrated stacker, the PFS machines can produce quality trays at high speeds at over 120 a minute. The equipment has a compact footprint and features a high-capacity horizontal magazine that provides up to 60 minutes of running time.

This small footprint enables WestRock to install the equipment at produce packing facilities where space is often at a premium. “Our machines are highly versatile and capable of forming a range of produce packaging structures that are completely customisable,” says Anderson. “this gives our customers a great deal of flexibility allowing them to run different styles, sizes and substrates on the same machine.”

The optional integrated stacker can deliver trays in stacks for transportation to processing lines, or shipping to another facility. This feature supports greater flexibility in packaging operations for growers and a more seamless transition away from plastics alternatives. “We believe our packaging designers, combined with our engineering team, have created market-leading plastics alternatives for fresh produce,” explains Anderson.  

Mini option is high speed and accurate

Newtec’s 2008PCM Mini weigher is designed to meet the needs of the fresh produce sector by offering accurate and high-speed services. “In terms of packaging, we mainly pack into punnets,” explains UK technical sales manager Paul Graham. “These can be plastics or card, and we have various sizes and shapes of chute to suit each style which can be changed very quickly.” Mini weigher efficiency enables companies to maintain production levels while delivering fresh quality fruit, thus supporting sustainability practices for the industry, says Newtec. Customer reliance on product quality is therefore not compromised by the speed of production.

Newtec’s Mini weigher solutions (for example, six Mini weighers connected across two lines, or four Mini weighers connected in one line) are complete automated weighing and packing lines that function at high capacity and are capable of processing, mixing and packing products with ease and at high speed. This means that they can pack any mixed products quickly and efficiently while reducing the need for work by hand.

The Newtec 2008 PCM machine can run a single unit, or it can be networked to run multiple products. Each machine is a combination weigher, giving high accuracy at up to 70 portions per minute from 50g to 500g.

Designing in a ‘green’ benefit

The range of equipment developed by WestRock delivers eco gains for packaging fresh produce...
First x-ray inspection

Yamato Scale has supplied a range of inspection units to Natures Way Food.

Yamato Scale has installed Natures Way Food’s first ever x-ray systems at its Selsey plant. Previously, the manufacturer of fresh convenient food worked with Yamato to expand its facilities which culminated in the creation of the largest bagged salad factory in Europe. Part of this included the installation of 25 checkweigher/metal detection combi systems, and so the inclusion of x-ray adds another layer to the site’s quality control protocols.

The YX20 x-ray machine

After one of its customers requested x-ray inspection on a new product being brought into market, Natures Way Food approached Yamato to provide a solution. Two of Yamato’s YX20 x-ray systems have now been installed into the Selsey-based facility, enabling the detection of a range of contamination across the product range, including metal, ceramics and glass. Yamato also provided training for the Natures Way team, including guiding them through IRR17 rules for working with x-ray, to ensure the system was used safely and accurately.

“Yamato was already a trusted supplier for us, so when we needed to bring x-ray inspection in the facility, they were our first port of call,” says Keith Ellis, engineering manager at Natures Way Food. “We were pleased with its ability to test the product ahead of installing the system into our production line and to meet the lead times we required.”
To meet retailer, wholesaler and consumer demands for more sustainable packaging concepts that can partially or completely replace conventional plastics packaging, Multivac UK can now offer full-wrap labelling solutions for fresh produce.

Single-origin recyclable packs made of paperboard or cardboard are the latest trend for packaging fresh produce and are gradually replacing typical plastics trays which usually have an additional pillow pack or are wrapped in stretch film or netting.

Multivac recently launched two sustainable, full-wrap labelling solutions for plastics-free packaging of fresh produce at its Packaging and Processing Discovery Forum last October.

The new solutions require just one wrap-around label to securely seal a cardboard tray. The packs are not only attractive at the point of sale, but Multivac says that they also guarantee a high level of acceptance with consumers who are increasingly reaching for recyclable packaging, which can also result in higher sales.

**TWO SOLUTIONS OFFERED**

The first of the two solutions is a winged cardboard tray, most suitable for larger fruits such as apples, mangoes, avocados, oranges, lemons, peppers and tomatoes. The other is a flat walled cardboard tray and is more suitable for smaller produce such as grapes, cherry tomatoes, sweet peppers, plums or gooseberries.

The cardboard trays are automatically labelled and sealed with self-adhesive labels made of paper, and the trays are either fed in manually or transferred directly from an upstream module. This provides significant cost savings and higher cycle rates. The cycle output of the L 310 is between 90 - 100 packs per minute.

Multivac says existing packaging concepts with board trays, which meet the current requirements in terms of recyclability, are generally cost-intensive and less efficient. This is because a cardboard sleeve is usually applied manually to the pack, or only low cycle rates can be achieved if the application of the label is automated in an intermittent packaging process. If complex folding cartons are used, these may be closed manually and frequently need to have an additional label.

The compact L 310 full-wrap conveyor belt labeller is very easy to operate and is designed to fit into any existing packaging line. It can also be used as a standalone machine. Meanwhile, coding systems for batch and expiry dates can be integrated into the machine.

For 60 years, Multivac has supported fruit and vegetable producers with its wide range of cost-effective packaging solutions. Today, the company is continuing to develop further as a leading partner for sustainable processing and packaging solutions.

“Our customers see us as a partner who makes a crucial contribution to their success,” says sales director at Multivac Matthew Jackson. “Fruit and vegetable producers count on our solutions to protect their products, maximise the shelf life and reduce the loss of aroma and nutrition.”
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Feature: Fresh produce

Meeting market production aims

PPMA members have been answering the needs of the produce market with installations across food groups...

Installations for products as diverse as pineapple chunks, microwaveable potatoes, fresh tomatoes and salad products have seen a range of technologies deployed last year.

At Zentis GmbH, for instance, a company that specialises in the preparation of fruit and other natural products, metal detection systems from Mettler-Toledo prevent metal contaminants entering the production process at the site.

During incoming goods control, a Profile Advantage metal detector inspects raw pineapple chunks from 2-3 kg cans. After the cans are opened in an automated process, the pineapple chunks are shaken onto a conveyor belt and immediately guided through the metal detector.

If small metal particles have been left in the pineapple from the supplier’s cutting process or the automatic can-opening process, the Profile Advantage detects these foreign bodies and removes the affected product from the production process automatically using a reverse belt reject mechanism.

Meanwhile, Danish company Kildespring has launched new potato products in Schur Star Zip-Pop bags, enabling busy consumers to prepare a meal in only eight minutes. Potatoes and spiced butter are placed in two separate compartments and during preparation, the steam from the potatoes will open the compartments, and the butter in the top will melt down over the potatoes.

When potatoes are prepared traditionally, valuable minerals and vitamins are lost by using the boiling water, but this gentle method of cooking retains the nutrients, says Schur Star Systems.

When the UK’s largest tomato and produce packer APS Produce was looking for a tray denester-placer, it approached Partners in Packaging (Machine Systems). The A Series-four denester installed onto an indexing chain and peg conveyor, is capable of speeds of more than 100 trays a minute, and the four tray magazines offer a tray capacity that...
another conveyor for weight checking and automatic packing into bags. The complete system can also withstand a full pressure wash down. Simon Calder general manager of Blackdown Growers says the system far exceeded his expectations in reducing labour.

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minimises the amount of operator loading required. “The A Series offered us the simplicity and reliability of operation together with the flexibility to change in future to other trays including card trays with a simple and quick size change mask,” said David Pearson APS’ facilities director.

Recently, the UPM team worked with specialist providers of baby leaves and herbs Blackdown Growers to create a bespoke conveyor system that would automate the handling of tote boxes from the chilled area to its packaging lines.

In operation, baby leaf is transferred to a UPM custom engineered receiving bay that allows operators ease of tilting to discharge the leaves onto a belt conveyor. It is then discharged onto

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Over the past year, one of Europe’s leading suppliers and growers of fresh produce Vitacress Salads, with production facilities in the UK and Portugal, ordered ten Verus vertical form, fill and seal (VFFS) machines from BW Flexible Systems (BWFS).

To best determine both Vitacress Salads’ needs and therefore the best solution, BWFS spent time onsite at the company’s production facility, observing its current lines. The company also interviewed key stakeholders to explore their needs and how best to address them as well as conducting efficiency studies to determine benchmarks. During this time, the BWFS engineers spent time beside the existing machines with a clipboard and pen to record flow rates, downtime, and any downtime issues.

Efficiency and simplicity were quickly identified as the primary needs which is why the company supplied its Verus 35s, a high-speed, intermittent VFFS bagger.

**ALL HYGIENIC FEATURES**

“The IM Verus’s hygienic features, low-maintain design, and intuitive operation, made it the correct choice for this application,” explains Thomas Lombardo, regional sales manager for BWFS. “Performance data, as well as operator and engineer feedback captured after the first two machines were installed has justified the decision.”

The IM Verus’ intuitive design delivers fast changeovers and offers simplified set-up, making it easy to use.

Meanwhile, the hygienic design of the IM Verus has provided benefits. The advancements that BWFS has made with the sloped electrical cabinets, jaw area improvements, waterproofing and reduced machine complexity which makes for easier access for cleaning and maintenance were appealing to an industry that requires strong hygienic performance.

“When designing the IM Verus we leveraged our collective knowledge, with a focus on hygiene, simplicity of use, ease of maintenance and high performance to produce a bagger that ticks all the boxes for users,” says Lombardo.

Vitacress Salads also wanted to investigate how it could save on film usage, an area of ongoing interest to BWFS, as well. Its experience in the fresh produce market and various film structures, both new and existing, allowed the company to make recommendations concerning current trends that Vitacress then used to make an informed purchasing decision.

Delivering a ten-fold gain

The IM Verus is simple to operate and has delivered operational gains for the Vitacress Salads’ facility

Here, the IM Verus’s ability to seal all film structures while offering a wide variety of bag formats, made it an easy choice.

“We have been deeply engaged in film structure research for some time now, ensuring that we can provide outstanding seal quality across numerous film types,” says Lombardo. “As a company, we’ve also partnered with film providers to test the latest substrates, so we have a detailed understanding of the nuances of film types: their capabilities, and what they can deliver.”

The ten machines ordered by Vitacress Salads will be installed in its UK facility in the coming year.
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Making salads a fresher thing

Equipment from Ishida offers the efficiencies European salad producers require for success

Reliability, flexibility and ease of use were the main reasons behind the selection of Ishida weighing technology for the fast and accurate packing of bags of mixed salads at Primaflor, one of Spain’s leading fresh produce growers.

At the same time, economic and ergonomic benefits were the main criteria behind the success of an Ishida-designed weighing, filling and tray sealing line at Fresh Servant, Finland’s leading supplier of fresh prepared salads.

As Torsten Giese of Ishida says, salad characteristics such as different shapes and sizes of leaves need to be handled and the lightweight product often arrives wet at a weigher but then dries out during the process.

Smooth and quick movement of leaves is vital, with no sticking points, product transfer is also critical, while weighing such a lightweight product is also a challenge, as is any water ingress in the process. Giese believes that careful selection and suitable investment in an advanced weighing solution is key to delivering the highest outputs and efficiencies.

The latest model at a Primaflor factory is a 14 head 5 litre CCW-RV waterproof salad model from Ishida’s Sector Solutions range; it is the 15th Ishida multihead weigher to be installed by Primaflor, with 12 now in operation at the Las Canalejas factory and another three at its factory in León. The weighers have been specifically designed to handle the challenging characteristics of all salad products, such as baby leaves which are prone to tangle together and be difficult to move efficiently throughout the weighing process.

Meanwhile, the line Ishida installed at Fresh Servant is meeting demand for complete salad ready meals with added ingredients such as chicken, tuna and cheese.
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Preserving freshness with freeze dryers

Freeze dryers manufactured by FrostX use vacuum technology by Busch, and one unit has just been delivered to a three-star Michelin restaurant in Austria. Busch says this example shows that the process of freeze-drying has been more than accepted by restaurants and enables a whole new way of cooking and taste. And all this without any loss of nutrients and flavour.

The FrostX freeze dryers are smaller than a standard fridge and enable vacuum freeze-drying of many kinds of fruits, vegetables, herbs and mushrooms. And all this while maintaining the full nutritional and taste qualities of food. Freeze drying also helps to prevent food waste and makes food storage so much easier, because the durability of freeze-dried food is significantly longer.

The compact dimension can fit in even small kitchens or bakeries and the low noise level and reduced operating costs bring even further advantages.

Freeze dryers from FrostX are equipped with Zebra rotary vane vacuum pumps from Busch Vacuum Solutions. These vacuum pumps are robust and reliable in operation and enable a stable pumping speed even in low pressure range.

The vacuum pump itself has a low noise level and can be easily serviced if necessary, says Busch.

Loaders offer quick returns

Huntapac Produce is laying the groundwork to boost its packing efficiencies with case loaders

Harvesting 4000 acres of root crops a year – the majority carrots – family-run Huntapac Produce has installed a customised Brillopak vegetable case loading system to boost its overall efficiencies.

Indeed, Will Hunter – a robotics advocate since the age of 16 and fourth-generation operations director – is leading a new mission at the company to introduce the best quality control, process and packaging technology to boost productivity, with the fastest ROI.

Having explored robotic pick and place options over the last decade, a mechanical case loading system designed by Brillopak is delivering against Hunter’s exacting criteria. With an estimated ROI of 2.5 years, Huntapac tasked Brillopak to engineer an affordable, compact bespoke tray packing system to accumulate and present carrot packs into neat layer formations in retail-ready crates.

“There’s an accepted truth within the farming community that automation can address labour shortages and improve how packs are presented into retail trays,” explains Hunter. “Despite this, it can be hard for many farmers to justify a seven-year ROI on traditional pick and place robots.” An accumulation system based on Brillopak’s Punneter Paker design with a special retractable overhead push and slide mechanism more than halved the ROI and answered this conundrum.

This specially adapted BR2 vegetable packing machine allows Huntapac to run different sized and weighted carrot packs, from 500g to 1.5 kg, smaller Chantenay carrots, and even parsnips, as well as different packaging materials including new recyclable substrates.

And all without incurring time delays by switching robot end effectors.

Presenting up to 80 carrot packs per minute into retail trays, Huntapac replaced one of its traditional rotary table, manual crate packing lines with the automated system last year. Operating 16 hours a day, five days a week, 1200 tons of carrots are graded, washed, polished, cooled, optically graded by size and quality, packed and checkweighed.
Smart seal checking

Engilico supplies an in-line system that offers 100% seal inspection

The sealing of flexible packages is a critical phase in the packaging process for fresh produce manufacturers which is why Engilico offers an inline, 100% seal inspection of these packs enabling customers to realise better packaging quality and higher productivity even for tricky products such as sliced vegetables, leafy greens or baby leaf salads.

SealScope is an in-line, non-destructive seal inspection and process monitoring device for flexible packages such as pillow bags, pouches and flow-packs. Sensors are installed on the sealing jaws of the packaging machine which measure during the closing of the sealing jaws. Every time a package is sealed, the actual measurement is compared to a reference model of correctly sealed packages.

In case the deviation is higher than a user defined limit – due to any product in the seal, or wrinkles or folds in the seals – SealScope will issue a rejection signal and the package is excluded via an ejecting system so only quality product gets through.

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Digital labelling gives fresh food firm the production agility needed

Family-run food business Raynors is addressing the needs for producers to be increasingly responsive and agile with digital printing technology from Epson. As Adam Newland, managing director of the branded sandwiches, rolls, wraps, panini, salads and bespoke products producer explains: “In the last six months with the pandemic and Brexit we have experienced some difficulties with the supply chain and, for some ingredients, we have been let down.

“We have had to find a quick solution and that has meant last minute changes and being able to quickly adapt labels allows us to be flexible and puts us in a better position to manage customer demands,” he tells Machinery Update.

“With Natasha’s Law you can no longer make generic claims, so the labelling of foods has to be more specific,” he adds. “Any change to the ingredients is now a more complex process but digitally printing the labels allows us to have greater control.”

Raynors has previously placed large label orders for blank labels of up to 50 different versions and then overprinted them with black and white thermal printers. “If you needed to amend a label there was a lead time of four weeks and you had to factor in the cost of the plates which were around £40 per colour,” says Newland. “When there are five or six colours that all adds up, not to mention the minimum order requirement.”

The company began working with two Epson ColorWorks C7500 three years ago after it started to see greater variation in printed label volumes. Its supplier, Wessex Labels, began printing more jobs digitally, especially when run lengths fell below 50,000. The printing operator then suggested Raynors take the smaller run lengths in-house, with Epson technology and Wessex’s own developed Tolarus software to manage the label design and print production process.

“We chose two printers to factor in an element of redundancy and so now we can produce any design on demand, make any tweaks and print very quickly,” says Newland. “It means we don’t have to store so many designs or have money tied up in stock on the shelves.

“We can simplify what we need, order more of a fewer number of designs to benefit from the economies of scale and be clever with the design to use as little ink as possible,” he continues. “A huge benefit is that we can take a product from concept to launch faster, and we can also support seasonal products without too great a commitment, particularly when the demand is unknown.”

Managing director at Raynors Adam Newland is delighted with digital printing

Top and base labeller has replaced a manual operation to meet growing customer demand

Producer of edible drinking straws Wisefood turned to Herma for quick and uncomplicated support when sourcing a labelling machine to cope with a large order. The 652C top & base labeller was ordered, delivered and ready to go within just one week, and thanks to its simple operation, versatility and performance reserves, the machine represents a future-proof investment for the company in the light of soaring demand.

“We set up the labelling machine ourselves, spoke to the Herma support team twice by phone and then got cracking,” explains Wisefood co-founder and ceo Philipp Silbernagel. 01440 763366 www.hurma-labellingmachines.co.uk

Wisefood’s ceo is impressed with Herma’s response

Company earns its Zebra stripes

Clearmark Solutions is now recognised as an official Zebra Technologies Partner. The company has been awarded ‘Registered Reseller and Printer Repair Specialist’ status by the print company and the addition of Zebra’s off-line printers gives food and drink processors of all sizes more coding options.

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A meal/recipe box company is tracking its cartons in real time

Logopak International has completed a third UK site installation with Gousto, the online meal/recipe box company that supplies fresh ingredients of customer choice for home delivery. Accuracy, speed and time are key ingredients for the successful operation of a company like Gousto, where the Logopak labellers are used for applying either one or two license plate tracking barcodes to the cartons in real time. This aids with internal tracking, traceability of customer orders, location of the goods, status of orders and applying the correct despatch label to the correct customer order in real time.

Once the order is fulfilled, a unique carrier despatch label is applied to the carton and scanned to confirm a valid label is applied and that can be read throughout the entire supply chain. Logopak says it can print multcarrier, multiservice and interface to numerous Ecommerce platforms.

“Our machines deliver time and time again for Gousto,” explains Howard Jagger, managing director of Logopak.

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**Vision News**

**Latest streaming cameras offer time-saving options**

Sick has unveiled the first in a new generation of Ruler3000 3D streaming cameras, designed to offer a fast track for integrators to harness the speed and measurement precision of the company’s high-definition 3D imaging technology.

The Ruler3000 is billed as setting a new standard for high-speed 3D image quality in an easy-to-integrate, pre-calibrated device. It combines Sick’s Ranger3 streaming camera with a Class 2 eye-safe laser, pre-selected optics and fixed geometries to enable much simpler configuration and commissioning. With industry-standard compliance giving comprehensive access to machine vision software tools, the Ruler3000 dramatically cuts time and complexity when integrating more demanding inspection, measurement and robot guidance tasks across a wide range of industries.

“With today’s demands for higher throughputs, more accurate quality control and flexible, batch-orientated production, the pressure is mounting to deliver more speed and accuracy from 3D machine vision systems,” says Neil Sandhu, Sick’s UK product manager for imaging, measurement and ranging.

“Any deviation from the metric view is likely to find diverse applications in industries including electronics, automotive components, consumer goods, food and beverage and pharmaceutical production.

**Latest deep learning-based image analysis software can simplify complex problems**

With VisionPro Deep Learning, Cognex is offering a deep learning-based image analysis software that is specifically designed for factory automation applications.

One major benefit of VisionPro Deep Learning is its ability to combine the available tools, says the company. This allows complex problems to be broken down into smaller individual steps to simplify project optimisation and reduce the number of training images required.

Another distinctive feature of the new software environment is that developers can easily select the best tool for the given task by combining it with VisionPro’s rule-based vision libraries. Projects can be created in the VisionPro Deep Learning development environment and then exported to a VisionPro project, allowing users to combine the best of both worlds, says the company.
One of Europe’s leading biscuit manufacturers asked Machine Vision Technology (the machine vision part of Identify Direct) to provide an automated vision solution to ensure their biscuits were of an even size.

In operation, the factory needs to make the ‘sandwich biscuit’ the correct overall height, as any deviation in the stack size, even if each is just a mm out, would result in a failure in the wrapping process. The main objective of the company is to achieve economic production while being smart with the raw materials and packaging. To do this, any issues in the production process need to be identified quickly through data that can be accessed efficiently on demand.

Machine Vision Technology was asked to automate the size and the weight control of the biscuits during the production process. The company approached MultiPix Imaging for advice on camera and image processing software selection and produced a solution consisting of three Basler Scout cameras to grab images of the biscuits from above and HALCON Imaging software to analyse the image to ascertain if the biscuit is the correct size. A fourth camera was used in partial scan mode for higher frame rates, grabbing a laser line profile of the biscuit.

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www.machineryupdate.co.uk JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2022 MACHINERY UPDATE 51
Servo technology keeps transferring swing-tops

New servo technology from Festo is helping Grolsch to put the iconic swing-tops on its bottles of lager. The ‘swing-top transfer unit’ was custom-designed by Festo in conjunction with system integrator MCA Linear Motion Robotics and has been installed at the Grolsch Enschede plant in the Netherlands.

The ‘swing-top transfer unit’ provides about 3,800 swing-top bottles per hour with a porcelain cap and rubber ring. Bottles without clips are fed in on one side, while the swing-tops are fed in from the other side. Before the tops can be positioned, a sensor detects where the hole in the bottle neck is as the bottle rotates.

Based on this measurement, the bottles are rotated into the correct position via a servo motor located underneath. Afterwards, the swing-top transfer unit positions the swing-top while the bottle is rotated again so the swing-top can first be pressed into one and then into the other hole.

WDS Components has released a new range of hand knobs with loss protection that are designed to increase machine protection, speed up maintenance and comply with EU Machinery Directive 2006/42/EC regulations. The hand knobs are secured to machinery by a permanently fixed lanyard attachment and are intended for use with panels and machinery guards for OEM or end user retrofit. The lanyard attachment is bolted to the installation, preventing loss of the adjoining hand knob when the knob is unscrewed by suspending or retaining it within easy reach. This secure lanyard attachment also protects machinery from damage during maintenance by preventing the hand knob from falling into moving or sensitive machine parts.

Elesa UK is offering digital position indicators to ensure downtime is kept to a minimum during product changeovers. “Machine downtime for our customers and their end-users can become a major problem while they re-set each roller spindle manually,” explains Nigel Pritchett, md at Elesa (UK).

“Fortunately, we have a solution readily available in the form of our wireless digital electronic positioning system.

‘These units are a like-for-like replacement for conventional items and the connected system allows up to 36 position indicators to be re-set all together from a PC link,” he continues.

“This saves a great deal of time compared to re-setting each one individually for different packaging configurations.”

Elesa’s RF electronic positioning indicators enable wireless communication with a PLC. This results in faster, more efficient machine set-up and associated changeover processes. The wireless system enables a quicker and more reliable machine set up – achieved by using a linked controller, which displays the initial set-up values on each of the electronic position indicators.

An operator can simply choose the appropriate menu, then quickly re-set each spindle to its correct start position and the machine is ‘good to go’. This saves time and reduces the possibility of human error every time the line is changed or recalibrated.

The simple flexibility enables the Elesa system to be adapted as a mainstream option on all such machines and ensures it may be retrofitted to existing installations when upgrading a facility.

New lanyard-secured hand knobs improve machine security and maintenance safety

One of the most significant changes in the new design is the replacement of the two electric and parallel positioned axes that carry out the horizontal movement (X-movement) by a heavy duty EGC axis. This has a double guide that is actuated by new servo technology in the form of Festo EMMT servo motors.

The EMMT compact servo motor has a single cable for both motor and encoder signals. This means it can generate an extremely low holding torque, enabling it to synchronise several axes, even during lower speeds. In addition, the EMMT has a digital, absolute displacement encoder (single- or multi-turn) and is available in protection classes IP40 and IP67.

The EMMT servo motor has a single cable for motor and encoder signals

Positioning system cuts downtime

Elesa UK is offering digital position indicators to ensure downtime is kept to a minimum during product changeovers. “Machine downtime for our customers and their end-users can become a major problem while they re-set each roller spindle manually,” explains Nigel Pritchett, md at Elesa (UK).

“Fortunately, we have a solution readily available in the form of our wireless digital electronic positioning system.

‘These units are a like-for-like replacement for conventional items and the connected system allows up to 36 position indicators to be re-set all together from a PC link,” he continues.

“This saves a great deal of time compared to re-setting each one individually for different packaging configurations.”

Elesa’s RF electronic positioning indicators enable wireless communication with a PLC. This results in faster, more efficient machine set-up and associated changeover processes. The wireless system enables a quicker and more reliable machine set up – achieved by using a linked controller, which displays the initial set-up values on each of the electronic position indicators.

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No other photoelectronic sensor affected industries as profoundly as the wintec product series by wenglor known for its slanted edge. wintec enables objects to be detected regardless of color, gloss, surface texture and inclination angle.

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New smart light tower is shedding light on production efficiencies

Sick has reimagined the industrial light stack as a versatile and customisable Smart Light Tower that can be easily set up with a wide range of parameters to communicate the real-time operational and maintenance status of machinery.

It exploits the benefits of IO-Link so that both machine builders and end users can easily program real-time displays and audible signals to support wide-ranging operational, maintenance, and management goals. The new unit can be easily installed via a single cable and an IO-Link Master and programmed through an intuitive graphical interface with a standard PC.

In operation, it uses three operating modes: signal light, level meter, or animation to communicate the run status of machines and alert operating personnel to any maintenance tasks or emergency conditions. It can be fitted to a wide variety of fixed machinery, as well as on mobile vehicles such as AGVs (automated guided vehicles) and AMRs (autonomous mobile robots).

Sick’s latest tower is designed for a long, maintenance-free operating life.

Partnership brings new range to UK

ANCA Motion’s new LinX M-series linear motor, an alternative to pneumatic, ballscrew, linear flatbed options, is now available in the UK from Olsen Actuators. This LinX M-series tubular linear motors from the Australian company are designed to improve on and replace inefficient, leaky and bulky pneumatics, ballcrew, linear flatbed options. New partner Olsen says these dynamic tubular linear motors are perfectly suited to industries such as food and beverage and packaging.

The LinX M-series linear motor features an integrated position sensor with 10 um of resolution, eliminating the need for an external encoder, thus simplifying the system design and reducing overall cost. The modular design, reduced footprint, and flexible mounting options enable flexibility in system integration.

The M-series motors are compatible with standard pneumatics making it easier and more straightforward to be retrofitted. Olsen explains that the series is designed to deliver superior performance for high dynamic applications: velocity up to 10m/s and maximum acceleration of higher than 30G.

Compared with a pneumatic system, the LinX motor is billed as reducing operating costs due to reduced energy consumption and maintenance. An estimated payback period versus pneumatic cylinders is only 18 months, which makes a compelling economic case, even though the up-front costs are marginally higher.

Firm combines breadth of technologies and a problem-solving approach for customers

Emerson has celebrated the 75th anniversary of its Branson brand, a name that has become synonymous with ultrasonic technologies for plastics and metal welding, and precision cleaning.

“The use of ultrasonics in so many remarkable ways,” said Vernon Murray, president of Emerson’s assembly technologies business. “Our goal has always been to deliver proven performance, unequalled expertise, and the broadest technology portfolio for material joining and precision cleaning applications.”

Given the company’s depth of technical resources, Emerson application engineers can utilise a process-neutral approach to help manufacturers evaluate, select, implement, and optimise the right joining solution, regardless of the application or complexity.

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Transforming Technology

Celebrating a milestone

Emerson application engineers can utilise a process-neutral approach to help manufacturers evaluate, select, implement, and optimise the right joining solution, regardless of the application or complexity.

www.sick.co.uk

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Pressure sensor is a miniature option

Miniature pressure sensors from the new PL54 range from ifm electronic can be mounted completely flush with the internal surface of the vessel or pipe in which they are installed.

This makes them ideally suited for use with adhesives, media with suspended solids and other viscous media that tend to ‘plug’ the dead space created from a non-flush mounting sensor.

Providing a standard 4 to 20 mA analogue output, the new sensors have a flush-mount diaphragm with G1/4 thread directly welded to the sensor body. This arrangement provides high accuracy in a compact housing that measures just 19 mm across flats. The sensors feature high vibration and shock resistance and are manufactured from corrosion-resistant high-grade stainless steel, making them suitable for use in mobile applications and other demanding environments.

Ifm says that despite their competitive pricing, PL54 pressure sensors offer high measuring accuracy of ± 0.5% or better, and exceptional repeatability of ± 0.05% or better. They are available in five versions, which between them cover measuring ranges from 0 to 60 bar up to 0 to 400 bar. All types can be used with media over the temperature range of -40 to +90deg C, and all feature standard M12 connectors.

Moving coil actuator reaches over two billion cycles record

A user of SMAC moving coil actuators has reached over 2 billion cycles, marking a new record for the devices. These units were built over 20 years ago and, while they recently needed some minor maintenance, they are expected to last several more decades.

One of the key reasons for such high cycle life is the patented ‘Soft-Land’ feature which, among other benefits, makes them less susceptible to wear over time, says SMAC.

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John Garner, the former head of business development at Antalis Packaging, has been appointed to the newly created role of head of innovation and design at the company tasked with helping customers to respond to environmental challenges. The appointment comes in response to sustainability needs of customers.

Sam Colgan has joined the packaging team at the company as its new regional sales manager for the Midlands from its office division, where he was regional sales manager, North.

Peter Adams has joined Antalis Packaging as its new UK service manager. He will be responsible for all UK service and support activities.

Patrick Cole has joined CME’s electrical controls department where he will be responsible for PLC programming and documentation in support of the company’s automation and packaging machinery build projects. He brings expertise in programming a wide range of industry standard PLC types as well as experience gained from working within food and beverage manufacturing sites.

Lindsay Lewis has taken up the new role of HR manager at CME, joining from a similar role at Make UK.

Cayla Payne has joined Hazel 4D as its sustainability lead. She is responsible for developing the company’s environmental, social and governance strategy, ensuring it is setting and achieving its eco goals.

Ekaterina Krakovskaya has joined Baker Perkins as regional sales manager for the confectionery and biscuit sectors across Russia, Eastern Europe and Italy. She brings 14 years of food processing and packaging experience to the regional role.

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Pictured on the left of the back row in this photo is Nick Beal, who has been promoted from software engineer to service & support manager at fast-growing GIC. Next to him are two new recruits Mark Roberts and Ian Redhead, while the third new joiner is Lewis Shaw, who is pictured on the front row. Ian Redhead has taken on the role of service co-ordinator with responsibility for managing the service diary and liaising with the service team to assign service, pre-delivery inspections, training and installations. He joins GIC from Eminox, where over the course of 22 years, he worked his way up to installation and service delivery manager, looking after a team of 13 people.

As service engineers, Mark Roberts and Lewis Shaw will undertake preventative maintenance, installations, training and breakdowns amongst the ever-increasing GIC install base.
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