

Hilton Food Group

Red Meat Processing Improvements



The Right Sort of Potatoes
Ishida multi-head weighers deliver the accuracy and speed needed



WORD FROM THE TOP

Our theme this issue is innovation, efficiency, and reduction of giveaway, all geared toward higher quality, more reliability and cost effective operating procedures.

To begin with I am proud to disclose that a new packing robot is in the final stages of development at SF Opal in the UK. Directed by Jon Christie, Technical Operations Director at SF Opal, this advanced R&D project promises to change the way robots can be used in the packing hall.

Two of our valued customers are covered in this issue, Hilton Food Group and the Meade Potato Company. SF has partnered with both companies for a long time, providing everything from stand alone equipment to full system solutions. Hilton Food Group gives us an exclusive insight into the process of designing and installing an entire production facility, while the Meade Potato Company tells us how to sort and pack millions of potatoes with efficiency.

We also take a closer look at the range of exclusive conveyor saws from SF Opal.

Finally I am happy to announce that Grace Scanlon has been appointed SF Engineering's Service Coordinator to make sure that our after sales service is up to par with the quality equipment we deliver.

Seamus Farrell
Managing Director

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In this issue we have some exciting news to tell you about the business, our people, our products and our customers....

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- **SF Profile :** New Service Coordinator
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This Month's Special Offer

Back To The Future

New packing robot to see the light of day



SF Opal will soon release a unique new packing robot developed in partnership with **Omron, Yamaha and Applied Dynamics of Oxford**. This new robot system addresses the need for a flexible, dynamic packing robot that can be moved easily around the plant according to production need.

One robot – different packing lines

The design team approached the concept with innovation and efficiency in mind, creating a dynamic, flexible packing robot that can be placed on any production line within the plant - a feature unknown in other similar applications currently on the market.

Small footprint - fast payback

Designed to pack up to 80 packs a minute into trays, the system has a much smaller footprint than other similar systems on the market. What's more, the new system is set to be considerably less expensive than current solutions.

You tell us...

Let us know what are we doing well, where can we improve, what we can add to our product portfolio or the type of challenges you face in the production environment.

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SPOTLIGHT

The Right Sort of Potatoes

Ishida multi-head weighers deliver the accuracy and speed needed for high throughput potato weighing and sorting at the Meade Potato Company



Opposite are some of the Meade Potato Company team.

From left to right: Paul Monaghan, Engineering Manager, Rodney Kingston, Purchasing Manager fruit, Philip Meade Jr., Purchasing Manager potatoes, Patrick Meade, Purchasing Manager salads, vegetables, organics, with Robert Devlin, General Manager, and Roy White, Purchasing Manager vegetables.

Located outside Navan, Lobinstown, Co. Meath, Ireland, the Meade Potato Company is one of the country's leading growers, packers and distributors of fresh Irish produce and potatoes to the major multiples north and south of Ireland. Offering a high quality range of potatoes, vegetables and salads, fruits and organics, MPC grow and pack their produce to the highest quality standards.

"We also pride ourselves on helping the environment by choosing the most environmentally friendly packaging and packing equipment to keep Ireland a more cleaner, greener environment," explains Robert Devlin, General Manager of MPC.

Choosing the right equipment

For a company that handles approximately 25,000 tons of potatoes per year, it is imperative that their processing equipment is fast, efficient and accurate. "For the past six years we have partnered with SF Engineering to help us choose the most efficient and productive packing and weighing equipment that fits our needs," says Devlin. "We have installed top of the range continuous multi-head weighers which ensure productivity levels are at their maximum to fulfil the mass volumes of our orders."

Leaders in multi-head weighing

Ishida multi-head weighers provide the speed, accuracy and efficiency required by MPC on their fresh produce lines. Ishida is a leader in multi-head weighing technology. The company's

weighers maximize packaging performance with solid mechanical designs and top-of the line weighing technology, delivering unsurpassed accuracy and productivity.

Robust and reliable

Champions of high speed weighing, Ishida's multi-head weighers are robust and reliable in all conditions. Suitable for different environments, from weighing and sorting on the farm to high-throughput packing facilities like the ones at MPC, the multi-head weighers increase productivity while reducing giveaway. The most advanced weighing technology meets a solid, durable build quality in these versatile, flexible weighing and sorting applications.



Partnership with SF Engineering

"SF Engineering are a very innovative team which offers a high quality product, service and support. We also have a dedicated team of fitters in-house. They have had a huge input with the SF team in choosing and designing our production line layout," says Devlin. "We hope to keep our long term partnership with SF into the future to keep Meade Potato Company a leading fresh produce supplier to the ever increasing demands of our customer base."

Red Meat Processing Improvements



Building on a continuous partnership, the Hilton Food Group has worked closely with SF Engineering to improve their red meat packing process. The results: better throughput, increased productivity and less production cost.

The Hilton Food Group emphasises quality, freshness and exceptional service to their customers around Europe. Opening in spring 2004, the company's beef, lamb and pork packing facility in Drogheda, Ireland, boasts of one of the most sophisticated packing processes in the country.

SF Engineering had a hand in designing and installing the systems that make the plant what it is today. Like the other Hilton Food Group meat packing facilities, the Drogheda plant is maintained at the advanced technological level required for efficient operations that support high volumetric utilisation of different types of fresh and cured meats.

Overall processing improvements

Hilton wanted to partner with a company that could help them improve their production process. Over the years SF Engineering has proven to be that partner, working closely with Hilton to improve their overall packing layout, reduce their giveaway and improve

overall efficiency while reducing downtime during production changeovers. SF has also supplied solutions that have improved pack presentation and fixed weight accuracy.

A successful partnership

It all began with a simple consultation on improving packing processes. From that first successful consultation came the installation of efficient, automated pace packing lines that have become the basis for Hilton's packing operation. Since then SF has gone one to supply Hilton with tray denesting, fixed weight checkweighers and advanced Ishida fresh meat packing system that integrates high-tech Ishida checkweighers with CEIA metal detectors. All are tied together with SF's tried and tested conveyor systems.

Radical changes with Pace Packing Line

"SF designed a Pace Packing Line for Hilton that took into account the speed, accuracy and efficiency required by them," explains Padraig Regan, Senior Project Manager, SF Engineering. "We replaced Hilton's manual packing lines with Pace Packing Lines, which meant that the equipment dictated the speed of the line, resulting in reduced labour costs, consistent production speed and more efficiency."



"Hilton Food Group plc is a leading specialist meat-packing business supplying major international food retailers from state of the art facilities located in five European countries. One of these sites is Hilton Foods Ireland located in Drogheda, Co. Louth."



Remaining cost competitive
"We are very happy with the ongoing improvements to our processing system,"

says John McLoughlin, Hilton Food Group's Operations Manager at Drogheda.

"This is an extended team effort to create a streamlined, advanced processing system capable of evolving with our customer requirements.

The process of replacing manual operations with advanced automated lines has allowed us to remain cost competitive in an extremely challenging business."

The partnership continues

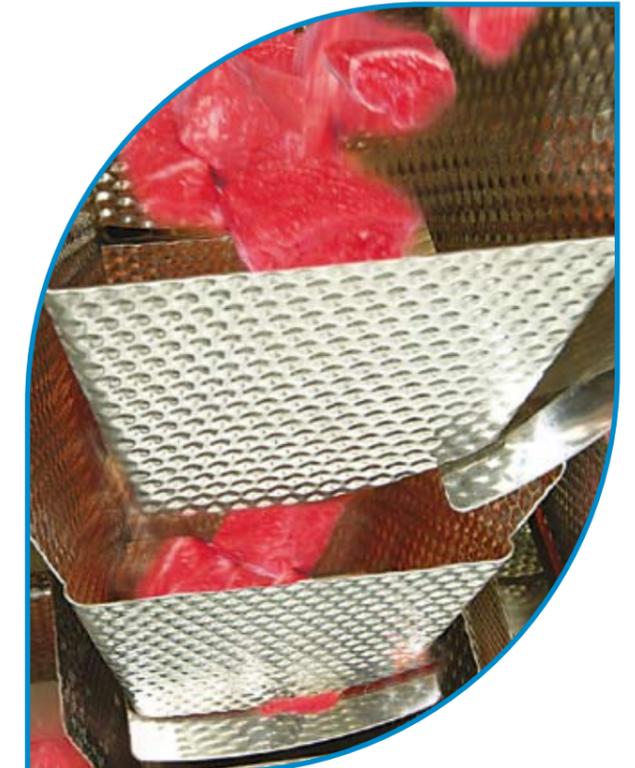
Just recently SF assisted Hilton Food Group in mapping out a new sausage production facility, advising on layout and production flow as well as equipment sourcing. SF supply their tried and tested conveyor solutions to the new sausage line as well as metal detection applications. "We have focused on delivering significant benefits in terms of throughput, quality and speed," concludes Regan. "I am proud to say that we seem to have achieved those goals."

Quick and easy changeovers

The SF Pace Packing Line is equipped with touch screen line control panels that have made product changeovers incredibly easy. Each product is pre-programmed into the system, requiring only a simple push of a button to change product lines. Bottlenecks on the packing line have been eliminated with the streamlined pace and easy changeovers provided by the system. "To further improve efficiency and line speed, Hilton also installed tray denesters from SF on some of their packing lines," explains Regan. "The tray denesters are easy to install, simple to operate and require no tools or technicians for changeovers."

Efficient fresh meat packing

With the partnership between the two companies going strong, Hilton has continued to work with SF in finding the most efficient processing solutions for the Drogheda operation. Looking to automate the weighing of fresh diced meat and chops, Hilton opted for the Ishida Fresh Food Weigher for their line, custom fitted with SF conveyors. The fresh food weigher dramatically improves efficiency with better flow of sticky products and efficient and accurate weighing at the right speed. "We also installed an Ishida Checkweigher on this line which ensures packs remain within specification every time," says Padraig.



Lower Cost of Conveyor Ownership

Energy Efficiency

The right fit, energy efficient drive systems that are adjusted to your particular processes are imperative in keeping conveyor running costs low. Whether looking at a single conveyor or integrated conveyor systems covering the entire production process, the type of motors, gears and drives you choose can significantly impact your running costs.

Save Energy With The Right Drive Technology

"We recommend motors based on long term quality performance, efficiency and flexibility in the product range," explains Declan McTiernan, Senior Design Engineer at SF. "When choosing and installing new conveyors processors are faced with a choice between low initial costs and higher running costs or vice versa. That is why conveyor life cycle analysis is important when choosing the right drive system."



Short Payback Time

The best way to save energy, lower energy costs and maintain long term energy efficiency is to install drive systems that have been specifically designed for energy efficiency. "It's always a matter of choice and initial budgeting will affect that choice" says McTiernan. "Conventional drives might be less expensive in the beginning but their operational costs are far higher than that of energy efficient drives. The payback time on the higher priced energy efficient drive systems is usually very fast."

The Right Fit For Each Operating Process

Another aspect of energy savings is a thorough investigation into the operational suitability of the drive system. "While the increased efficiency of the electric motor is important, you can also save energy by making sure that your conveyor drives are thoroughly adapted to the specific operating process," says McTiernan. "By working closely with our customers we aim to adapt the conveyor systems to the process while at the same time making sure that they are getting the best overall fit for their needs. This is what we do here at SF on a daily basis. We are here to design and deliver the optimal results for the customer to boost their bottom line."



Exclusive SF Opal Product

Integrated Conveyor Saws

SF's unique inline conveyor saws increase yield, minimize giveaway and help extend shelf life.

SF Opal offers a variety of cutting applications and knives. In addition to a range of traditional band saws and circular saws, the company offers a unique line of conveyor saws that can revolutionise primal and rib cutting. As the only major manufacturer in the UK for inline conveyor saws, SF Opal has proven they deliver innovative, market driven solutions that are as efficient as they are cost effective.

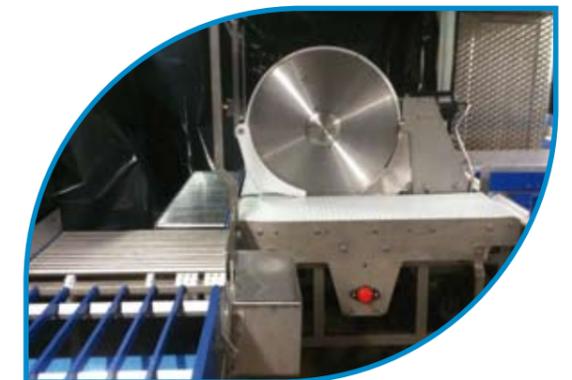


Tried and tested improvements

Installed at production facilities around the country, the SF Opal inline conveyor saws have distinctive advantages over conventional saws. Apart from eliminating bone dust, the saws produce a cleaner cut, which improves product appearance, and better hygiene that results in extended shelf life. Longer blade life also radically lowers replacement and maintenance costs."

Automated rib cutting

Rib cutting is a labour intensive procedure that is easily automated with SF Opal's Rib Cutting Conveyor Saw. The solution incorporates two horizontal band saws into a conveyor that delivers a clean efficient cut and safely speeds up production. With its short payback time and clean, fast and efficient rib cutting, this unique application is ideal for anyone looking to increase yield in their rib production.



Eliminate product loss

Another equally special saw application is the Primal Conveyor Saw that cuts primals in a continuous inline process. This circular saw is integrated into a conveyor that effectively cuts primals without producing bone dust, thus increasing product yield significantly. Eliminating bone dust delivers considerable savings and a healthier bottom line. As an example, a traditional table saw will produce around 35kg of bone dust for every 2000 carcasses. Simply eliminating that bone dust will result in over £20k savings per annum.



SF PROFILE

New Service Coordinator

Grace Scanlon ensures fast and efficient resolution of every service need, from next day spare parts delivery to full operator training sessions.

Grace Scanlon has been appointed customer service coordinator. With a background in electronic engineering, Scanlon has more than five years service with SF. She knows the operation inside out, having been exposed to all areas of the business. Her new role as a single point of contact for plant maintenance is a natural step in SF's continuing dedication to help our customer's facilities run smoothly.

In-depth understanding of production challenges

Grace Scanlon strengthens SF's service department with her in-depth understanding of the challenges facing food processors and her resourcefulness in solving with them. With the purpose of adding to her already comprehensive knowledge of electrical, mechanical and programming automation of production lines, Scanlon is currently studying mechatronics with the support and backing of SF.

Maximizing uptime

A single point of contact ensures fast and efficient response to service needs. "Good after sales support is a critical to our customers,"



Grace Scanlon, SF Service Coordinator with Ger Tobin and Michael Gaciarz from Oak Park Foods and Simon Foster, SF Engineering.

Scanlon explains, "I am here to prevent downtime and ensure that customer plants are running smoothly. Maximum uptime saves time and money and helps our customers maintain a healthy bottom line. I also make sure that all spare parts are readily available and dispatched immediately when ordered."

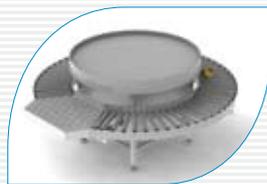
Customized Training Sessions

"Good employee training is the cheapest, most effective way for our customers to increase productivity," says Scanlon. "Our training seminars are comprehensive and tailor made for each client." A typical specialised training session is much like the recent seminar created for Oak Park Foods. The company has just taken delivery of a new Ishida weigh price labeller as a part of a larger solution. Operators Ger Tobin and Michael Gaciarz from Oak Park Foods received in-depth training at SF Headquarters, overseen by Grace Scanlon.

Special Offer on Packing Solutions

SPECIAL OFFER

- Robust & Hygienic Design
- Stainless Steel Construction
- Designed to Suit Product & Application
- Inverter Speed Controller
- Adjustable Legs to Suit Operating Height
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Keep Calling

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Give us call!



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