

P r e s s r e l e a s e

Worldwide innovation at interpack 2011:

Line for fully automatic vacuum packing of heavy and bulky hard cheese blocks / Made possible by development partnership

Waltenhofen / Thiene, 22. March 2011 – *allfo Vakuumverpackungen GmbH is using interpack 2011 in Düsseldorf (12.-18. May), together with its Italian development partner Saccardo Arturo Figli S.r.l., Thiene, in order to present a world innovation to the trade visitors. The film specialist for first-class food packaging from the Allgäu region of Germany and the Italian producer of sophisticated filling and packaging machines present on stand J30 in Hall 5 a line that enables, for the first time, fully automatically vacuum packing of “Euroblock” slicing cheese (15 kg). The original prototype of the highly efficient equipment, with which even 75-80 kg blocks can be easily processed, has been running successfully already since Autumn last year at Allgäuland-Käsereien GmbH in Bad Wörishofen. This hard cheese specialist has been involved since the start of the concept*

phase and gave input of its specific requirements in development of the machine specification.

“Start-up of the new line means an enormous gain in rationalisation”, states Harald Steinhöfer, Plant Manager at Allgäuland in Bad Wörishofen. While much three-shift manual work was required before acquisition of the line, in order to pack the 75-80 kg heavy hard cheese blocks in special ripening film and to vacuum the packs, due to the innovative line, only one man per shift is needed now to supervise the line and to feed tubular film when it is needed. Everything else is performed by the machine on its own, in 1a quality. The cheese blocks then go from here directly into the store for the final ripening process. Meanwhile, approx. two blocks per minute and daily up to 60 tonnes of Emmental cheese are processed. As the equipment was designed for higher output performance already at the concept phase, the cheese plant is also very well equipped to fulfil bigger requirements in the near future.

allfo Vakuumverpackungen (www.allfo.de) is the European market leader for confectioned vacuum bags. This Allgäu region company has furthermore acquired a very good reputation in the past few years as a supplier of ripening bags for the cheese industry. This plastic processing company uses modern extrusion lines to produce multilayer tubular film, which is used to obtain a precise degree of ripening of hard and slicing cheeses. The consistent structure of the film ensures here defined specific gas permeability at each point of the bag. This ensures that optimum ripening is reached, simultaneously with CO₂ extraction. A multilayer composite film was specially developed for the jointly developed worldwide first innovation, to enable optimum processing on the new machinery. The suitable packaging for the vacuum process has therefore been specifically tailored for this type of vacuum packaging line. The allfo development staff ensured, among others, that high mechanical strength as well as good weldability is provided. “That was simply imperative for the fast production rate of the new line”, explains Karl Berktold, who is responsible for development and quality management. allfo has also acquired from Saccardo the right for exclusive sale of the lines in Western Europe.

Around one year passed from the beginning of the project to start-up of the pilot line. In its realisation, Saccardo (www.saccardo.com) applied simple machine design principles, both in terms of cheese handling and the vacuum packaging process. This was the only way to ensure that the line can perform its daily 24-hour operation with an extremely low amount of maintenance, the Italian company says. In addition, much emphasis has been placed on high-grade components and their processing. This ranges from the steel (V4A) through the individual modules such as the weighing station (Bizerba) or the transport robots, up to the control system (Siemens).

Construction of the patent-pending highly functional prototype of the line for fully automatic vacuum packing of the bulky and heavy cheese blocks material has been earned through technological leadership in the joint development project. Also and above all because the new line ensures an enormous jump in rationalisation in packaging of 15 kg heavy "Euroblocks". The partner companies were not the first to feature in this endeavour, but Saccardo, allfo and Allgäuland are the first who have made it into a complete success.

Karl Berktold,

Manager Development and Quality Management,

is pleased to be available at any time

to handle your enquires.

Tel. +49 - (0)831 - 5405630

Fax +49 – (0)831 - 54056350

E-Mail: Karl.Berktold@allfo.de