

What's On

Marel Food Systems UK and Ireland



Cranwick Country Foods – A Cut Above the Rest

Part of Cranwick Plc, the Country Foods division supplies fresh and processed food to the UK food retail, manufacturing and service sectors. The success of the business stems from its focus on providing high quality produce, a fact borne out by the many industry awards it continues to receive.

Providing first class service to its customers is a cornerstone of the business, consequently it is always looking to improve its production performance. This drive for continuous improvement recently led to a major investment in new meat processing equipment from Marel Food Systems.

Staying Ahead of the Game

Cranwick's Retail Manager, Jonathan Healy, who is responsible for the cutting lines of fresh pork takes up the story, "Our customers quite rightly measure us on the quality of our product and service, which means we have to stay ahead of the game to provide the best ranges of produce.

"Chris Aldersley, our Operations Director for fresh pork, first saw the Marel OptiCut machine at the IFFA exhibition in Germany. He was sufficiently impressed to set up an onsite test at our Hull facility. The consistent results in terms of improved product appearance, higher yield, lower 'giveaways' and reduced 'leakage' were impressive to say the least and made the decision to commit to the two new machines an easy one," continued Healy.

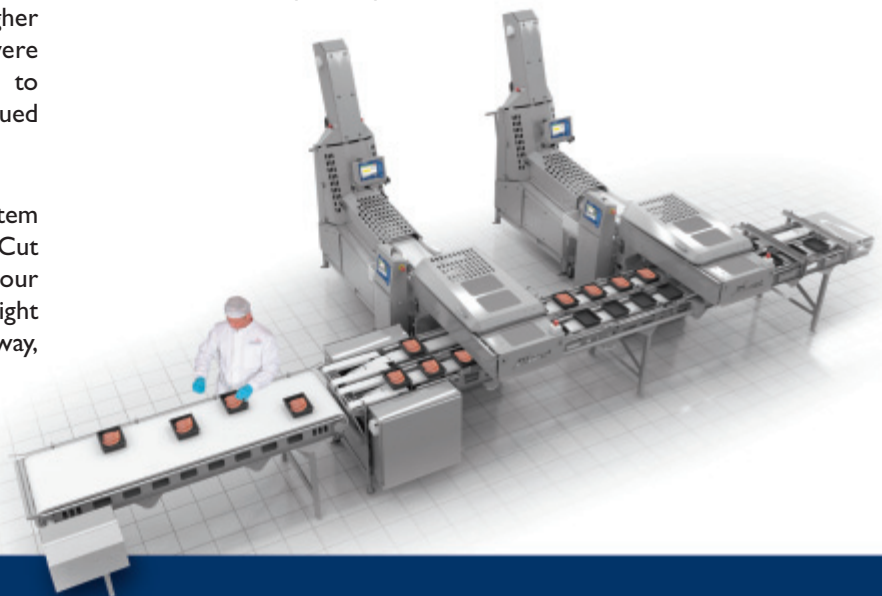
Cranwick have invested in the 'Portion and Pack' system from Marel, which consists of the well proven OptiCut volumetric portioning machine combined with the labour saving Quickloader. This system delivers the fixed weight pork steak portions, in a consistent and accurate way, directly into trays ready for sealing and packing.

Efficiency with Consistency

The improvements in production have been remarkable. The high precision Marel OptiCut ensures excellent cutting accuracy, optimising the portioning process and delivering outstanding yield, with a significant increase in Cranwick's case.

It's the same with 'giveaways' which were running at a higher level at Cranwick prior to the installation of the OptiCut. These have been reduced with no loss in quality of the finished steak; in fact the presentation of the cut steaks has improved too.

The other big benefit has come in the area of 'leakage' which was caused by fat build up on the operatives' gloves impeding the pack sealing process. Healy takes up the story again, "With the old horizontal slicer the meat was cut onto a conveyor and then gloved operatives picked the steaks up and packed



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them into trays ready for sealing. The problem was that, although the operatives had new gloves everyday, during the handling process the proteins and fats would build up on their gloves and eventually contaminate the sealing part of the tray.

“Now the OptiCut packs the steaks into trays without the need for human handling, so our leakage has virtually disappeared. In addition, we have been able to reduce the staff required on the line from six or eight people to two. They can focus on quality control and appearance, thus improving our performance further.”



Looking Good

“The new equipment has made the presentation of the cut face very consistent throughout the loin. It enables ‘brother - sister’ packing all the way through the loin giving the customer a high quality look and feel.”

To maximise the efficiency of the cutter the machine has a built-in feedback system that constantly adjusts the cutting to ensure the best results. Each steak passes through a checkweigher which feeds back the weight information and makes automatic adjustments to the cutter within the specified parameters.

Despite the technically advanced nature of the equipment, it is very easy to operate, requiring little operator interference and delivering virtually no machine downtime.

Reliable and Friendly

New machinery often brings benefits, but sometimes at a cost when it comes to installation and commissioning. Not so with Marel. Healy concludes, “Marel are probably the best team we deal with in the industry; we have an excellent relationship with them. When we committed to the OptiCut machines I went over to Iceland to meet the design and manufacturing team. They really made me feel welcome and went out of their way to make sure all my questions were answered.”

“We have a true partnership with them; they are keen to provide solutions to our problems and nothing is too much trouble. Having installed the first machine, they had to modify the second one to fit into a smaller floor space in our factory. It all went without a hitch, they were brilliant.”

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