



REPORT



Customer Service 2001

News from PFM Packaging Machinery, the packaging specialist.

Leak-proof poultry packs gain retailer approval

A flow-wrapping system that provides completely sealed leak-proof packs of trayed poultry has been developed by PFM Packaging Machinery and Secomak, the shrink tunnel specialist. Initial orders include seven lines for one of the UK's major UK poultry producers.

The system is based on a PFM Mistral flow-wrapper, which has been specifically developed to run SES film. It can use both printed and unprinted films and also shrinkable barrier materials such as BDF for gas-flush applications.

"The system is now approved by major multiple retailers and produces leak-proof packs for the entire range of poultry tray sizes from D14 and D18 to J4," explains Chris Bolton, UK sales manager at PFM. Speed is typically 60 packs a minute on D14 size trays.

The seven lines have been bought by Banham Poultry of Attleborough, Norfolk, to equip its state-of-the-art Station Road site. Banham enjoys a long history of innovation and, indeed, was the first to stretchwrap whole chicken in trays for retailing.

"This marks a significant change for all our wrapped products," says Jonathan Hall, Banham Poultry marketing manager.

"Leak-proof packaging offers advantages for both customers and retailers, with no mess on the shelves, no mess for the customer and will highlight any damage or tampering with the pack."

The Secomak heat tunnel used with the Mistral wrappers was specifically developed for running printed SES film and, says PFM, has



Above: Leak-proof packs improve hygiene for retailers and consumers
Left: One of the seven new PFM Mistral lines at Banham Poultry



been a resounding success. There is little or no distortion of the finished pack and very low heat dissipation into the packing hall.

Zipper bags add appeal for grated cheese

The first PFM Zenith bagging machine to be supplied in the UK with a cross-web zipper attachment has recently been installed to produce 200g reclosable bags of organic grated cheese at specialist processor, Alvis Brothers.

"The market for organic cheese is expanding," points out dairy operations director Peter Alvis, "and as one of the leading organic processors in the country, we see an opportunity to offer our range in grated form: something that is

not currently available.

"Alvis Brothers have used PFM horizontal wrappers for portion wrapping blocks and wedges for several years. We have been pleased with their performance and back up so it was only natural that we approached PFM when looking to move into vertical bagging."

The Zenith incorporates a separate side-mounted reel holder for the narrow format zipper profile, which is cut and fed at 90deg across the wrapping film, just prior to the forming shoulders, and heat sealed in place on one side.

Side drive belts transport the material down the forming tube in the usual way while the longitudinal seal is made. The cross-seal jaw



Zipper packs: PFM Zenith bagger

assembly incorporates a second smaller set located just below the main jaws, to make the final seal of the zipper to the other face of the finished bag. A gas flush facility is included.

The Zenith is also able to make 1 and 2kg pillow packs for the catering market and, says PFM, can be changed over in under 15 minutes.

PFM claims that because the zipper is enclosed within the bag, there is no risk of leaks, unlike attachment of wider zipper material, which needs to be crushed twice as part of the sealing operation.

Flow-wrap sausages offer longer shelf life

Two top-of-range PFM Scirocco flow-wrappers have been installed by one of the UK's largest producers of fresh sausages to produce hermetically sealed, gas flushed packs for extended shelf life compared with the previous bunch wrap style.

Speed is a constant 80 packs a minute when producing the traditional 450g pack of eight sausages.

The wrappers are bottom reel machines, with the print-registered film unwinding onto the machine bed to carry the sausages through the wrapping process without mechanical contact. Feeding is via a special Intralox infeed belt, onto which folded sausages are placed and transferred to the film.

Longitudinal seals are made above the product by rollers while the cross seals are created by PFM's patented long dwell design, which incorporates a mechanical D-cam action to ensure high seal integrity.

There is also a gussetting device to produce a neat, compact appearance in the finished pack.