

Out with the old, in with the new

With efficiency the battle cry of all processing plants, older equipment calls out for a makeover. This was the case with the positive displacement pump-style filler that had been in place on a salad dressing line since 1992 in Johnny's Fine Foods' Tacoma, WA-based plant. "The machine was okay when we installed it, but after years in use, the speed was not up to par and it was becoming increasingly inaccurate," says Henry Gumm, plant manager with Johnny's. "The filler was just worn out. It was old, tired and outdated for what we were using it for, and it was costing us thousands a month in lost product and productivity."

When it came time to replace the filler, officials at Johnny's decided they wanted a piston-style filler to help increase accuracy. Gumm attended an industry tradeshow to check out the newest available models. "The equipment I saw there wasn't operator friendly when it came to sanitation," he says. "But

based on previous experiences with other Hinds-Bock fillers we had purchased, I knew the equipment was operator friendly with regards to our HACCP program."

So, Gumm asked Hinds-Bock to custom build a 4P-64 piston-style filler. The machine is designed to fill products ranging from thin salad dressings to viscous products such as peanut butter or creams. The machine offers very large product path openings for handling large particulates such as soups or fruit fillings.

Diving, positive cut-off spouts for bottom-up filling and a PLC operator interface with recipe/menu storage are among the unit's benefits. Neck centering for locating narrow-neck containers, simple bottle indexing system controls for several sizes of containers and stroke slow-down for two-stage filling into tapered bottles are also available.

"They designed a machine that was customized to meet my specifications, including a diving bridge that would do exactly what I wanted it to do," Gumm says.

A salad dressing manufacturer increases efficiency by 30% with a new piston-style filler.



Johnny's Fine Foods replaced an old filler with a custom-designed 4P-64 from Hinds-Bock and increased efficiency by 30% on the line. Source: Hinds-Bock.

The 4P-64 also meets the needs of Johnny's ever-changing lines. "We run containers with anywhere from 28-mm finish openings all the way up to 3-mm openings. Their engineers fulfilled all our different filling needs with a variety of nozzles and bridge attachments," says Gumm.

"This customization makes changeover in our plant a flash. My machine engineer doesn't have to be on the floor for changeovers because the employees on the line can handle it," he

says. "The machine is quickly disassembled and sanitized, properly set up and running a different size in a very short period of time."

In addition, the bottles on Johnny's line all have different heights, so the diving assembly is programmed for each of the bottles and their fill speed. "The engineers at Hinds-Bock helped us program the information when the machine was installed, so now when employees are setting up, they simply punch the product and package they are running into the PLC board. It automatically sets the height, dive speed, lift speed and the cut off," says Gumm.

Since installing the machine, Gumm says labor costs have been reduced and production and efficiency rates are way up. "Regarding efficiency, I have gained about 30% on that one line," he says. "The machine is really fantastic." ♦

For more information:

Rod Gregg, Hinds-Bock Corp.; 425-885-1183;
rodg@hinds-bock.com