

MAP QUALITY ASSURANCE

Top-quality meat producer opts for on-line gas analyzers

Skare

Skare is one of the leading producers of fresh beef products in Europe. The company, whose headquarters are in the small town of Vejen in southern Denmark, supplies high-quality cuts of beef to the retail and catering trade throughout Europe and the rest of the world.

Each year the company debones some 450,000 pieces of beef quarter, producing nearly 50,000 tonnes of meat at its main factory in Vejen, where 425 people work.

Stringent demands

"35 per cent of our sales are to the Danish home market, and 65 per cent to the export market. We have an annual turnover of around 230 million euros," says Skare Director Jens Damgaard Hansen.

"Retail is a growing part of our markets and retailers are making increasingly stringent demands on quality and consistency as well as safety and hygiene," adds Hansen. "While some countries in Europe have historically had very stringent criteria, this is now being seen throughout the rest of Europe."

Modified Atmosphere Packaging

Many of the products are packaged in sealed containers under a modified atmosphere of carbon dioxide and oxygen. "Modified Atmosphere Packaging (MAP) extends the shelf-life of the meat for around seven to nine days," says Hansen.



CASE STUDY SKARE

CASE STUDY

"If you did not use MAP the shelf-life would be around 24 hours only." In addition, MAP improves the freshness, appearance and texture of the meat products.

The company produces some 40-50,000 packages each day on four MAP lines. It is crucial that the correct gas mixture is present in the sealed packages and this must be monitored in a reliable and efficient way.

On-line gas monitors

This is why Skare has just installed new on-line gas monitors on each of its four MAP packaging lines. The machines are Dansensor® CMV-2 analyzers provided by the specialist Danish company MOCON Europe. The analyzer works by continuously measuring the gas content of the packaging chamber before the packages are sealed.

"Previously we carried out manual testing of the packages," explains Hansen. "This involves stopping the packaging line, removing a package for testing, then starting the line again once the test has confirmed that the gas mixture is correct." If the mixture is not correct, the packages that have come through the system since the previous test need to be repacked.



"The main problem is that this results in significant lost production time, given that we were taking around 100 samples daily," Hansen says. "Also if a problem is detected the repackaging also results in lost production time and waste."

The new machines get around this problem by constantly monitoring the gas mixture. If a problem is detected the line is stopped automatically.

"By having 100 per cent continuous measurement we no longer have to stop the line for testing," says Hansen. "This will not only improve our quality assurance systems, importantly it will save us money. Because we can run the lines continuously this makes the production more efficient with fewer stoppages and less waste and I estimate that our investment in this new technology will have been repaid within eight to nine months."

In 2013 CMV-2 has been discontinued from our product range and replaced by Dansensor MAP Check 3 Vacuum.



"Our investment will be recovered within eight or nine months" – Jens Damgaard Hansen, Skare Director.



Skare case study, April 2010