

EFFICIENT, TIME-SAVING AND COST-EFFECTIVE GAS ANALYZER

Expensive mountain of paper disappears with Dansensor® CheckMate 3

Pfanni

The food company Pfanni, a subsidiary of Unilever, is famous for its dried potato products. At the company's plant in Stavenhagen, in north-eastern Germany, around 130,000 tonnes of potatoes are processed each year. This is turned into 36,000 tonnes of product such as puree, rosti and dumplings.

Increasing shelf-life with MAP

Many of the products are packaged in an inert atmosphere of nitrogen to increase the shelf-life. The plant runs several Modified Atmosphere Packaging lines. "We need to ensure that there is very little residual oxygen in the packages – close to zero – as dried potato is sensitive to oxygen and

if the levels are too high there can be a quality problem," explains Assistant Operation Manager Christian Heinrich.

Time consuming quality system

To ensure that the oxygen levels do not exceed the threshold values, the plant operates a strict quality management system. One aspect of this involves checking packages for residual oxygen. Until recently, the system required the operator to take a measurement of the oxygen level, print out the readings and file the paper copy of the data together with the hand-written weight of each package.

The problem we had with this system was that we generated a large amount of paperwork and this was inefficient," says Mr Heinrich.

"We needed to store all the data in a filing system. If inspectors came to the plant and asked to see data from a particular date two years ago, for example, we would have to search through a lot of paper to find the relevant information. This is very time-consuming and not an efficient use of our workers. Paper means money."



"QC with the Dansensor CheckMate 3 is going to save us a lot of money because it makes our work a lot easier to do." – Christian Heinrich, Assistant Operation Manager Pfanni/Unilever.

Dansensor CheckMate 3 was the solution

The solution to this problem was provided by MOCON Europe's Dansensor CheckMate 3 headspace gas analyzer together with its associated software. The device takes an accurate measure of residual oxygen in an individual package. Crucially, the software automatically keeps an electronic record of who has used the device, the time of the test, which product was tested and what the reading was.

"With this system, each operator has his or her own log-in pad," says Mr Heinrich. "We therefore have a record of all the shifts over a day, a week, a month, which tells us who was operating the system and making the checks. This gives us a clear picture of the complete production cycle, which is extremely useful."

Mr Heinrich is also impressed with the ease of the operation of Dansensor CheckMate 3. "It is very simple. The person who is doing the check simply logs in then places the probe in the package.

He or she needs to take only this one step and obtain the measurement and there is no more to do. It is very simple. "The system can be linked in with other software so that, for example, the weight of the package can be automatically combined with the residual oxygen readings. All the relevant data is automatically logged and downloaded onto a memory stick.

Saving money

The days of having to store a mountain of paperwork are coming to an end. "This is going to save us a lot of money because it makes our work a lot easier to do," says Mr Heinrich. "It is much more efficient, much more time-saving and therefore more cost-effective. For us this was the best system we could buy and we are very happy with it."



Dansensor CheckMate 3 - MOCON Europe's most advanced headspace analyzer. Accurate testing is combined with strong data logging capabilities - however, still very simple to operate.



Pfanni factory, Stavenhagen, Germany

Pfanni case study, October 2011