

Automation speeds up breaded products line for Italian company

The installation of a 20 head Ishida multihead weigher at leading Italian food manufacturer Martini Alimentare has delivered an immediate 2% improvement in product giveaway and enabled the company to increase production capacity by 25%.

The Ishida CCW-R-220 is handling a range of fresh and frozen breaded products such as chicken nuggets for discharge into trays at target weights of between 200g and 3kg.

Improved flexibility

The weigher is divided into two 10-head sections, each side capable of weighing up to 60 packs per minute to give a combined throughput of around 120 packs, but Martini Alimentare aims to gradually increase speed to around 160 packs per minute. The flexibility of the split weigher enables Martini to simultaneously handle different products or the same product at different weights.

In order to facilitate packing of the product into the shallow trays, Ishida's Italian agent Itech AG has devised a bespoke distribution system. The weighed product is transferred into a special discharge



hopper. This holds the product and then moves along the line with the tray to gradually deposit the product into the moving tray for a more even distribution of the nuggets.

As well as improved accuracy, Martini has reduced manpower on the line by half compared to the hand weighing operation that it previously employed.

The company says that in addition to its excellent accuracy and efficiency, the CCW-R-220 is easy to operate and maintain, with fast changeovers and easy cleaning. Full

training was given to all relevant factory personnel as part of the installation process.

The Ishida weigher is part of Martini Alimentare's on-going investment to further automate its production processes.

"Naturally we looked at other options, but with my knowledge of Ishida, I felt confident that the company would be able to find the right solution for this project," Martini Alimentare's Production General Manager Claudio Cabassi, told International Meat Topics.

"The new weigher has made an immediate difference in terms of production and efficiency improvement. Nevertheless, we are only at the start of the process and we know that, as we become more familiar with the line, we can achieve an even better performance in terms of speed, accuracy and reduced manpower requirements and that is what we will be working on to deliver in the coming months."

Even so, Martini Alimentare estimates that payback on the weigher will be achieved within one year. ■

