

# Going crackers

When baking giant Pepperidge Farm wanted to increase production of its premier brand of crackers, it sent its machinery from the USA to Switzerland

## A natural loaf

Pepperidge Farm originated in 1937 in Fairfield, Connecticut. Its founder Margaret Rudkin, a mother of three, starting to bake bread from natural ingredients for a son that suffered from food allergies. The bread was so good that Rudkin started selling it through her local grocer and, over the next 72 years, these loaves of bread have developed into a multinational business with a broad portfolio of baked goods and annual sales of over one billion US dollars.

Pepperidge Farm now ranks in the top two per cent of brands worldwide in brand equity and still holds a reputation for first-class ingredients and the highest quality.

Goldfish brand crackers are a leading product line within Pepperidge Farm. The tasty snacks were introduced in America by Margaret Rudkin in 1962, following her discovery of similar products on a trip to Switzerland. The crackers are produced in a range of varieties and packaging styles.

## Improvements for classic product

Pepperidge Farms turned to Switzerland once again, in the form of Sigpack Systems, a Bosch Packaging Technology company, in Beringen, when it wanted to increase the production capacity and format flexibility of the Goldfish crackers through modernization and reconstruction.

The crackers' typical packaging style of stand-up bags, with a gable-top closure, needed to be retained, as it is closely linked with the brand and enhances its

quality image. The bags had previously been shaped and filled (with another product) at a production site in Denver, Pennsylvania, using two machines, which ran independently. In order to increase efficiency and output levels, both machines were combined into a single system for the Goldfish production; together with adjustments and innovations in forming, transport and filling sections for higher format flexibility. All the changes were implemented at the Sigpack Systems' site in Beringen; a facility with decades of experience with mandrel wheel machines and upgrading operations.

## System competence pays off

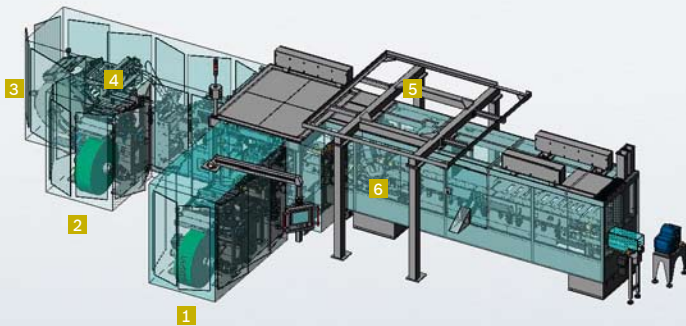
The technological challenge for Sigpack was to combine old and new elements into a functioning and highly efficient system. Aside from a complete



- 1 Material infeed inner bag
- 2 Material infeed outer bag
- 3 Mandrel wheel forming section
- 4 Multihead checkweighing

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- 1 Material infeed inner bag
- 2 Material infeed outer bag
- 3 Infeed stiffener inner bag
- 4 Forming section
- 5 Multihead checkweighing
- 6 Filling section

renovation of the control platform and a comprehensive revision, individual function modules were either converted to the latest technology or replaced. This involved a redesign of all three reel-off units which are now easily and quickly adaptable, thanks to modern servo drives.

New solutions were also applied to the glue application, bag transfer and transportation units. Format changes can now be managed at the push of a button on a control panel, and the Sigpack **PRN** system now achieves output levels of 100 packages per minute.

### To Switzerland and back

Such complex international projects are a formidable challenge for all parties involved, with the keys to success being a detailed project schedule, reliable partners and efficient communication. In order to ensure a swift completion of the project, operations were conducted in tandem; while machines were being disassembled in Denver, the construction of new components was already underway in Beringen. On arrival in Beringen, existing and new components were combined and newly developed modules were integrated. This was an exciting phase, with operations being combined, interfaces and transfers being made to function smoothly and safely and ensuring that the mechanical design and control systems worked in harmony.

### More than a machine supplier

The Goldfish crackers project illustrates the potential of close cooperation between a customer and its technology partner. Bosch Packaging Technology and, in this case, company units such as Sigpack Systems, are committed to advise and support customers over the entire life cycle of a machine or system. Core objectives include provision of services and spare parts, a variety of training instruments, as well as more complex reconstruction and modernization operations. In partnership, we develop new concepts, modify packaging styles and find individual solutions, which enable the customer to adapt to changing market requirements.

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