



In 2001, Farmer's Tobacco of Cynthiana, Inc. (Cynthiana, Kentucky), launched the Kentucky's Best brand of whole-leaf tobacco cigarettes. Recently, the company saw an opportunity to expand this established brand with a product line extension. As a result of higher tax rates on carton cigarettes, there has been increasing demand for "roll your own" (RYO) tobacco delivered in a bag format. This represented a significant opportunity to expand the Kentucky's Best brand into the RYO market.

Having concentrated exclusively on pre-made cigarettes in cartons, Farmer's Tobacco required an entirely new packaging solution to offer its tobacco in the RYO format. A key requirement was a resealable bag that would keep the tobacco fresh during storage and use. An additional need was a flexible solution that would allow different bag sizes and future packaging line upgrades.

Packaging requirements

Farmer's Tobacco had already decided on two sizes (6 oz. and 16 oz.) of polyethylene bags. The clear packaging film was critical for success in the RYO market as research indicated that consumers like to view the product to inspect its quality. A resealable closure was also important as it ensures freshness during use and storage.

Packaging machinery solution

A critical component of the operation was the band sealer from Dobo, a Bosch Packaging Technology brand. The **B-500** Continuous Band Sealer offered industrial performance in a compact size, which was an ideal solution for a company attempting to upgrade its operations and enter a niche market in a cost-effective manner.

After product sorting and check weighing, the filled tobacco bag is presented to the Bosch **B-500** sealer, which applies the final seal, after which the finished product is placed in secondary packaging for distribution. The weighing and sealing process is conducted by one operator, an important requirement from Farmer's Tobacco to keep labor costs down and simplify operations. A key benefit the machine offers is the precise placement of seals. Placing the



A Brand New Bag: New packaging solution for the “Roll Your Own” market

Farmer’s Tobacco breaks into the “roll your own” market with packaging solution

seal too high up on the bag may cause the seal to be ruined on initial opening and inhibit resealable functionality, whereas placing it too low may cause product bunching and affect quality. A consistent, reproducible seal is an important packaging feature, especially for a newly launched product, as consumers must be able to open and re-close the package and access the product in a convenient way. The **B-500** accomplishes this seal with bag top control, with full

length urethane time belts gripping the bag to ensure consistent speed and bag control. Heating and cooling bars provide consistent pressure throughout the sealing process.

With manual feeding into the sealer, the **B-500** currently runs 12–14 inches per minute (6–8 bags per minute). However, the machine is also designed for higher speed applications and can process linear speeds up to 750 inches per

minute. This ensures that, if demand rises, Farmer’s Tobacco could add two weighing and filling stations, or even augment line capacity with an automated infeed, and still continue sealing with the **B-500**.

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- 1 Sealing bars produce 6 mm wide seals
- 2 Dobby **B-500** Band Sealer

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