

# Contract packing at 24° below? Relax, it's an Ishida

Contract packing is a demanding occupation. So is packing at temperatures as low as -24°C. Sivafrost N.V. of Dendermonde Belgium has become successful by specialising in both these challenging fields at the same time.

Sivafrost began life providing refrigerated warehousing and other services back in 1986. In 1996, the company's founders, Jos Siongers and Simone Van Asten, realised that contract packing would be a useful addition to their portfolio, and had a packing line with a multihead weigher installed. By 2005, this equipment was no longer sufficient for the volume of products to be packed, and they decided to add a faster, more modern line.

## Seeking expert help

"Via our customers in the frozen foods industry, we had heard positive things about BRN and about Ishida", says Stijn Siongers of Sivafrost.

Situated in Aalst, close to the centre of Belgium and only 15 km from the Sivafrost site, BRN Packaging Engineering NV is known as a highly capable designer and installer of packing lines. Since multihead weighing would be at the core of the new line, it was also important that BRN were the agent in Belgium for Ishida, whose weighers are known for their speed and reliability.

The line installed by BRN includes a lift/tipper for octabins, serving a 3m<sup>3</sup> feeding hopper, a vibratory feeder to take product from the hopper to the top of the multihead weigher, the weigher itself (a 14-head Ishida model) and the supporting steelwork.

## Coping with 800 different products

The new system is coping well with the demands of contract packing. "We are very satisfied with the BRN-production line and integrated Ishida. We are achieving very high speeds which is most important for us", comments Stijn Siongers.

Sivafrost has a wide range of customers and can be called upon at short notice to handle any of about 800 different products in any of 20-30 formats. "The facility which the Ishida offers, for storing so many programmes and product data as presets, so we can easily switch products, is a big advantage."

These IQF products range from herbs to potato waffles, with target weights from 50g to 3000g. To cope with all these, the weigher has a standard configuration, with ring gate, semi-flat radial feeder troughs, anti-spillage pool and weigh hoppers and a beak-type double timing hopper at the outlet. Hopper size is 5 litres.

## Low temperature challenges

According to Stijn Siongers, one of the trickiest things about low-temperature work is the tendency of product residues to stick to the weigher contact surfaces and then freeze on.

"This is not a problem with vegetables or bread, for example. Fries are more difficult, because they eventually leave significant residues. The most difficult of all are coated products such as creamed leeks, spinach or mushrooms. The residue means we often

have to stop production to clean the equipment. One advantage of the Ishida is that you can simply lift off the contact parts and bring them outside the cold area for cleaning with water. We use special products for cleaning the non-contact parts at low temperatures.”

### **Rapidly growing production**

The new line operates on a daily basis, in a 2-shift system. This means that for rush jobs (which are a frequent occurrence in the world of contract packing) an extra shift, or even two, can always be added.

“Production of course has grown rapidly after installation of the BRN line in 2005. In fact, last year (2007) our client database doubled”, says Stijn Siongers.

“Where speed is an important factor, we use our Ishida line. Because of the efficiency of the system, our clients also profit, as we can offer lower prices.”



With the help of BRN and Ishida, Sivafrost is continuing to grow its business