

## ready meals, condiments &amp; sauces

# Consumers lead the charge for the right combination

There may be happy news ahead in these times of consumer austerity, according to recent research from the IGD (Institute of Grocery Distribution) shoppers may be looking to packaging to save the pound in their pockets.

Interestingly instead of being the bad guy packaging was highlighted by consumers as a means to help them out of financial difficulties, while also having a positive effect on sustainability through the prevention of household food waste. For example, smaller portion sizes (36 per cent); resealable packaging, which increased 8 per cent since 2007 to 37 per cent; and better food planning, which also increased from 43 per cent to 49 per cent, were all seen as major pluses offered by packaging.

Consumer choice has an obvious impact on the packaging and processing machinery sector, and although it is to be expected that innovative new consumer products may sit on the back burner for a while yet, the market is not starved of developments that fit snugly with the consumer's wish list; particularly in the ready meals sector.

Line efficiency has a huge bearing on profitability and down time is expensive whether caused by the need for product changeover or a machine fault. And single-source supply is also a growing trend to ensure optimum interfacing of the different packing functions to help maximise efficiency.

There is, of course, a continuous requirement to increase manufacturing efficiency in order to remain competitive, but in the current economic climate manufacturers have to face the further dilemma of cuts in capital expenditure.

Cutting costs is the top priority for food and drink manufacturers in 2009, according to a Deloitte report that outlines strategies companies can adopt to stay ahead in challenging economic times. A survey of 90 leading manufacturers, retailers, and food service companies around the world found that 31 per cent of respondents had made cost reduction their number one priority, with 73 per cent of businesses reporting substantial input cost rises in the last 12 months.

Food retailers, says Deloitte, are struggling to hold the line on food price increases, which means they either absorb a reduction in margins

or, more likely, pressure their suppliers into absorbing a reduction in margins.

Just recently and unsurprisingly Sir Terry Leahy, Tesco's chief executive, called on suppliers to keep prices down to help the cash strapped consumer. How's that for magnanimity!

If retailers or suppliers do choose to raise prices with impunity, several criteria need to be met, including clear product differentiation, strong brand equity, innovative products or services, and, in the case of retailers, a superior customer experience, the report continues.

Good news can, however, be found as pressure on the pound in one's pocket is likely to drive consumers away from eating out into the arms of the food and ready meals market.

This does not dull the need for flexibility, minimised costs, and an efficient supply chain.

Packaged foods of all types are particularly challenging markets for the supply chain calling for mass efficiencies and special demands for hygiene, process and packaging safety. Just how the packaging and processing machinery sector is shaping up to these demands can be seen by the latest developments on pages 24 – 35.



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ready meals, condiments & sauces

Chilled foods put it right

The Chilled Food Association (CFA) has welcomed the Waste Resources & Action Programme (WRAP) decision to change its definition of food waste to separate 'store bought' ready meals from takeaway waste.

The CFA, believes the change in terminology will lead to more accurate information and improvements in minimising food waste.

CFA had criticised WRAP for linking food waste associated with ready meals manufacturers with takeaway restaurants as misleading and damaging to the perception of ready meals.

The disputed figures appeared in WRAP's *The Food We Waste* report on domestic food waste in which it was claimed that 440,000 ready-made meals were thrown away by consumers. A figure that did not marry up to market data, said the CFA.

Revised estimates state that of the total 215,000 tonnes, around 81,000 tonnes represents waste from store-bought ready meals and 88,000 tonnes from takeaways; the rest could not be determined.

● Waste minimisation initiatives being undertaken by the CFA include a shelf life research programme to better understand and explore the shelf life of chilled foods through reduced energy heating processes that enhance quality without compromising safety.

It is also funding research at Sheffield Hallam University that is comparing energy usage and waste arising from domestic and industrial production of lasagne, and another at Cranfield/IGD that is looking at the impact of trade relationships on waste.

[www.chilledfood.org](http://www.chilledfood.org)

# Efficiency and the recipes for success

The right automation and technology are essential ingredients for the ready meals market particularly when everyone involved is looking for economies of scale.

Multipond, for example, has noted that ready meals lines are becoming ever-more complicated with the inclusion of a multitude of different components. For instance these days a meal is likely to consist of not one or two main components, but also several more expensive ingredients. Currently these 'extras' are often hand placed as the requirement could be for a single piece or a small number of pieces.

This is where the filling and weighing sector comes into its own. For instance there has been an increased demand for reliable but ever more accurate in-line product weight inspection systems. However, the trick according to OCS Checkweighers, is not only to be able to provide this but importantly to do so with a significant reduction in the total cost of ownership.

"For us it is clear that the Ready Meals market will invest in the right automation to reduce giveaway and to get proven data for both their and their customers' protection," explained Ingolf Latz, of Wipotec, of which OCS Checkweighers is an operating division.

Food preservation technology is instrumental in satisfying consumer desires for less waste and healthier eating and Modified Atmosphere Packaging (MAP)

meets these demands by extending product shelf-life and the ability to use fewer preservatives. Integrapak for example says: "In comparison with more conventional techniques, i.e. air or vacuum-packing, MAP constitutes the best way to preserve food, without sacrificing the attractiveness of traditional packaging."

Synchropack, part of the Integrapak range, produces several fully electronic flow-wrapping machines designed specifically for MAP applications, where robust, reliable hermetic seals with laminated and co-extruded barrier films and high-speed throughput are required.

But Chris Holland, managing director of Holmach, believes that there was a steady trend away from MAP during 2008 to the use of retorts. "MAP does not give any real advantages on combination meals as there is no single gas that will retard microbial growth when meat, sauce and vegetables are mixed.

"However, short/sharp thermal processing can extend life to in excess of 30 days without affecting quality."

He claims that there are now 50 Lagarde Retorts for REPFEDS – refrigerated processed foods of extended durability – in daily operation producing extended shelf life ready meals.

Their use at a time when Sterling is weak has assisted UK manufacturers to export ethnic foods to feed growing demand from European retailers, Holland added.

The continuous requirement to increase manufacturing efficiency in order to remain competitive has not escaped Headland Food, one of the UK's largest producers of frozen ready meals, which has been investing steadily over recent years.

It produces more than two million meals/week at its Flint and Grimsby sites, and has invested £15m at Grimsby.

Projects included a £5.1m investment in processing machinery part of which was for a line producing 110 lasagne meals/minute, which is claimed to be the first fully automated pasta line in the UK.

The investment also included a sophisticated £1.5m, start-to-finish tray line handling all stages



Synchropack's Pack 600, part of the Integrapak range, designed for MAP applications

## ready meals, condiments & sauces



Holmach believes retorts are the future

from cooking to packing. The filling line project managed by **Raque Food Systems** is running at 100 packs/minute filling frozen ready meals.

The single lane line features a continuous motion system comprising a tray denester, rice/spaghetti filler, multihead weight controlled filler for proteins, and piston fillers for sauce. This is followed by the latest design of heat seal machine with 'trim film', which significantly reduces the amount of film used.

The finished packs are checkweighed before being evenly distributed on a freezer belt for optimal utilisation.

Headland Food's CEO Mike Russell praised the successful installation and said, "The equipment supplied for the project has proven to be extremely reliable and is achieving the planned efficiencies. The detailed planning allowed a faultless installation in just three weeks."

Installations include **Multi-Fill's** MPF depositor, featuring a PLC-controlled pneumatically operated volumetric filling head, to fill cooked chilled rice and spaghetti at speeds of up to 100 packs/minute.

Notoriously difficult to fill, the system is capable of depositing this type of product in precise portions into trays, cartons or pouches.

The depositor has been upgraded with an adjustment to the filling head, making it much easier to adjust for line height variation. Another technical advance is a dual-drive belt system that allows positive traction of the conveyor belt. All these new features can be retrofitted to older machines.

Represented in the UK and Ireland by F. Jahn, Multi-Fill can

also offer clients a customised product distribution system that allows its MPFSC120-01 automatic depositor to work with multi-lane machines, such as thermoformers or tray filling/sealing lines.

One MPF filling head can now deal with up to eight containers in various combinations or patterns.

Alternatively, the distribution system can be used as a stand-alone unit working, for example, directly under a multi-head weigher.

The right checkweigher will survive the most rigid hygienic cleaning requirements and HACCP compliance.

For example, **OCS**, has supplied Headland Food with its HC-WD checkweigher to meet these requirements. The OCS HC-WD met Headland's specific requirements for precise weight control.

It also provides HACCP compliant design and IP 69K rating, and ensures cleaning to a strict and repeatable high standard in 'High Care' areas.

The HC-WD is manufactured from 100 per cent stainless steel, has no flat surfaces (with the exception of the conveyors), zero cavities and runs at speeds of up to 300 packs/minute.

Also available is the HC-WD-MDi, which has a metal detector included on the same base frame.

The checkweigher's robust hygienic construction and IP69K rating, mean that customers can enforce strict cleaning and hygiene practices (using jet washers and foaming agents) without the fear of costly down time. And its Electromagnetic Force Restoration Weigh Cells helps to prevent product giveaway.



Multi-Fill's MPFSC-120-01 automatic depositor

### FURTHER INFORMATION

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## The big freeze!

The global market for retail frozen foods was up 5.8 per cent to £4.8bn to November 2008, according to figures produced for the British Frozen Food Federation (BFFF) by the TNS Worldpanel. The market has now enjoyed 10 consecutive quarters of accelerating growth.

The frozen ready meals market has shown something of a renaissance with a value increase of 3.4 per cent, following a decline of 3.8 per cent the previous year. The pizza sector has made significant growth at 6.3 per cent, while savoury foods have shown continued growth and are now growing annually at 8.6 per cent by value. The vegetables sector is now growing faster in value at 9.7 per cent year on year, more than any other sector

BFFF's Director-General, said: "Consumers are turning to frozen in vast numbers attracted by the locked in nutrients, minimal waste and terrific value." He expects 2009 to show even more growth and the market to surge over £5bn.

● The BFFF Health & Safety Working Group has launched a Health & Safety Pledge to demonstrate members' commitment to employees.

The Pledge emphasises the importance of complying with health and safety legislation and of striving to improve standards through continuous improvement.

More than 30 members have already signed the Pledge including Ardo UK, Associated Packaging Technologies, John Bean Technologies, Birchall Catering Supplies, Freshpack, Headland Food, and many more.

Visit [www.bfff.co.uk](http://www.bfff.co.uk)

## ready meals - weighing systems

# Shuttle improves dosing speed and accuracy

A dosing system that allows the speed and accuracy advantages of multihead weighers to be applied on multi-lane thermoformers and tray sealing lines used for ready meals has been developed by Italian manufacturer PFM Packaging Machinery.

The PFM Shuttle, with an integral multihead weigher installed above the line, is mounted on castors to allow the unit to be moved from line to line. It is particularly suitable for applications where high value ingredients are being added to ready meals trays.

"Multiple lanes present speed and feeding difficulties for linear weighers, which traditionally use one on each lane," said PFM sales and operations director Chris Bolton.

"However, multihead weighers are faster, provide much higher and consistent accuracy and with the Shuttle, up to six lanes can be handled while bringing product giveaway under much finer control."

In place of the conventional single discharge of a multihead weigher, the Shuttle

employs a series of additional product buckets set at right angles to the direction of the host packaging machine. These are dosed individually by the weigher, one after the other to allow high accuracy, and then discharged into the trays below in a single operation.

The PFM Shuttle is also able to index in the direction of the machine to allow two or more rows of trays to be dosed sequentially within the overall cycle of the thermoformer or tray lidding line, typically at speeds of 80-100 trays/minute.

For high accuracy, the Shuttle system is fed by one of the new C series PFM multihead weighers with up to 24 heads depending on the speed required. The C series incorporates software that cuts the time needed to replenish each weigh hopper with product, allowing the contents of more hoppers to be combined for a more accurate dose at higher speeds.

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## Bite size solution for meal time

Multipond has launched a fully-automatic multihead weighing solution for single piece weigh counting – the S5R option (individual head reject system). The weigher is designed to handle a small number of pieces or alternatively small target weights.

It is claimed to be a perfect solution for today's complex ready meals industry for which a meal might consist of one or two main products and several more expensive ingredients. Currently these are usually hand placed. The S5R is a fully-automatic weighing solution for these applications.

Based on a standard twin memory hopper weigher, the S5R option is available on a number of Multipond multihead weighers from 16 – 36 heads. The outer memory hopper is replaced by a second pivoting funnel which can either deposit product into a 'good combination' or divert it to a reject position. Multipond claim that there is no loss in weighing efficiency as rejects are evacuated on an individual head basis while



the rest of the weigher can continue weighing resulting in no missed cycles.

The rejected product can be manually or automatically fed back into the system.

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## ready meals - round-up

# Mash is in from the cold

Frozen mashed potato is growing in popularity among consumers but up to now has been an energy intensive process involving water as the heat transfer medium to pre-cook and initiate starch gelatinization, a cooling step to retrograde the starch and a final cook followed by mashing.

However, a newly adapted adiabatic process from ABCO Food Processing Machinery, represented in the UK by Walsall Engineering, is an energy efficient process which can replace this energy intensive three step process used for fresh and frozen mashed potatoes.

The process applies a minimal amount of steam to the surface of the product and cooking continues as the product is held. Using its knowledge of

existing Heat/Hold blanching technology, ABCO adapted this process for mashed potatoes. The process is controlled by altering the Heat/Hold ratios, the number of Heat/Hold cycles and the total cook time.

Studies have shown that the steam processed mashed potatoes were significantly more uniform, brighter and lighter in colour than the water processed samples and the heat transfer medium had no significant effect on the final product's adhesiveness or cohesiveness. The steam processed product was also perceived to offer a stronger potato flavour.

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# Sandwiches up to the mark

Buckingham Foods has recently installed six Domino V200 high quality thermal transfer printers (TTO) to provide the necessary coding flexibility to accommodate changes in packaging requirements in the competitive sandwich manufacturing market.



that costly recalls are eliminated by monitoring that the correct sandwich is placed into the correct pack and that the barcodes on the packs are readable, explains Domino.

The V200 also features Domino's patented Ribbon Economy feature, which allows ribbon savings of up to 60 per cent without

Replacing existing thermal transfer printers, the V200s are being used to code flow wrap packs of sandwiches following a move away from thermoformed wedges.

The installations at Buckingham Foods' sites in Milton Keynes and Tamworth are complemented by Domino data integrity packages to help ensure

compromising print quality, states Domino.

Powerful printer control and on-board label creation are provided by the V-Series controller, which can be networked for remote operation.

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# It's the 'Good life' for automation

Goodlife Foods has installed automated end-of-line equipment from Astec Conveyors to help cope with demand for its branded and own label meat-free products and quick frozen ready meals.

The handling solution feeds food products through a new flow wrapping machine, X-ray machine and an automated cartoner. Due to space restrictions Astec designed and installed a loop conveying system incorporating slat band conveyors and a 180° belt bend.

The 7.5" Flextop stainless steel food quality slat

conveyors, incorporating 90° and 180° bends, transport product through the various end-of-line machines. Just prior to the auto cartoner, the slat band conveyor is fitted with a simple pre-diverter which enables product to be manually stacked.

At the end of the slat conveyor, product is transferred onto a 180° belt bend which is controlled by the automatic cartoner, to provide regulated feed into the machine.

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## Chill out for Premier Foods

Chilled ready meals manufacturer RF Brookes, part of Premier Foods, has installed four tray-sealing machines and tooling from Proseal.

Proseal supplied its latest automatic tray sealer, the GT1, which was specifically developed for demanding food production environments. The sealer maintains high throughput speeds thanks to its servo-driven infeed conveyor and high accuracy tray positioning system, explained Proseal.

Intelligent film feed provides enhanced control of the sealing operation for improved seal quality with easy film threading and dynamic control of the film throughout the film feed cycle.

Proseal's Auto-Tool, which allows tool changes to be carried out in about two minutes, and the GT1's innovative Touch Screen Control user interface, designed to optimise fast, intuitive retrieval of all recipe settings are also being utilised.  
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## Salad days

The importance of efficient line development is demonstrated by an Ishida Europe installation at the Dutch salad processor Tuinderij Vers. The custom-built line includes a Tray denester, RS series multihead weigher with 3 litre hoppers, the rapid tool change QX-775 traysealer, IX-GA 4075 x-ray inspection system and a DACS-W checkweigher. Trays are produced at 40-50 packs/minute and giveaway is massively reduced, says Tuinderij.

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ready meals - round-up

# Food hygiene gets the CSL treatment

Conveyor Systems Limited (CSL) has installed a tailor-made product handling system for film-wrapped individual and/or stacked pizza bases at a leading producer and distributor of fresh chilled foods.

The system transfers the pizzas between high and low care food quality areas, operating across three classifications of food hygiene and transport of goods from the first floor level down to the ground floor.

In the high risk area located on the first floor, conveyors interface with two film wrappers and transport a range of pizza bases in diameters from 8 – 14 inches via an overhead conveyor in a high care area into a low care ground floor Packing Hall.

CSL designed a special modular plastic matt declining conveyor, fitted with FDA approved high friction gripper inserts to prevent the film wrapped pizza bases slipping during their descent down from the first floor.

The conveyor was constructed in food quality stainless steel. A single frame carrying two individual lanes of modular matt conveyor provide maximum flexibility and enable each flow wrapping line to operate independently.



In the high care area, the modular plastic matt conveyor has a long overhead run, designed with high-level strengthened supports to ensure an open operating environment with minimum obstructions to workflow and access. Once wrapped the pizza bases are conveyed through a wall down to the 'low care' packaging hall. At floor level, the single frame conveyor splits to feed two, two tier packing stations.

Downstream of the packing stations, powered roller conveyors include integrated metal detectors, case weighers and case sealers.

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## Spreading the message

Calder Foods has installed a Riggs Model 1000 depositor, two lid pressing units and two metering pumps, which are to be integrated into existing production lines at the company's premises in Cumbria.

The machines are being used for a wide range of mayonnaise-based sandwich fillings and salads and the upgrade of the equipment has helped Calder Foods to meet growing demands, increase productivity and improve efficiencies.

The Riggs Autopack machines give Calder Foods the capability to fast fill large particulates without damage, while effectively



handling the products to maintain high quality standards and minimises wastage, states Riggs Autopack.

The Model 1000 features fast changeover times, and by multi-cycling can easily deposit into different size tubs during the same batch run from 70g – 10kg buckets, states the company.

Replacing a manual process, the accurate metering pump transfers

mayonnaise from pallecon containers directly into product mixes.

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ready meals - pouches & stickpacks

# Saucy alternatives advance with style

Pouches and stickpacks are seen as some of the most user friendly and sustainable packaging styles of today. This is being re-enforced by the ever expanding range of products for which they can be used thanks, in part, to advances in aseptic and materials technologies.

Since stickpacks were introduced to western markets from Japan, more than 20 years ago, they have become synonymous with powder and granulated products such as sugar, milk and coffee. Indeed you rarely see these products for single portion consumption in anything else today. Increasingly, however, there are more and more liquid foods being packed in sticks and this, says one of the pioneers of this format, is the future of 'stickpacking'.

The advantages of sticks are well established. They are easier to open than sachets, look more attractive, use up to 40 per cent less material, are easier to pack in cartons and take less space on pallets, in storage and on the shelf. But problems with technology has restricted its use for liquid forms until now.

Today aseptic machines are appearing (Hassia, Volpak and Unifill have them) and the breakthrough seems to be in the area of milk and other dairy products. Hassia is packing yoghurt drinks in sticks for a French manufacturer, while Unifill has packed soft cheese snacks. The first aseptic stick for milk was made in the UK 10 years ago and



produced a shelf life of four months. But it was probably ahead of its time and was not very successful but the dairy industry now seems ready to adopt the format.

Elsewhere the easy open, single dose design of a stick is now being applied to pharmaceutical products such as antacid preparations and headache powders. But with the availability of liquid machines, single doses of cough medicines and other remedies are being explored.

Pouches have come into their own with retortable qualities widening their use for soups, sauces and desserts. Initially pouches took the juices market by storm but with the Doypack's stand up design and stability, and the advances in filling technology markets are widening.

For instance, the petfood market is now dominated by the pouch. And with the advent of recloseable pouches and in-built pouring devices the pouch is ideal for soups and sauces, even those products with solids in suspension.

The lightweight pouch is also seen as 'greener' in some quarters than the equivalent can or 'bric' style carton. However some issues over recyclability of the materials remain but in terms of use of material and transportability it wins hands down.

Between them stickpacks and pouches seem set to conquer new markets, replacing more traditional packs where portioning and easy opening are key factors.



## ready meals - pouches & stickpacks

# Tasty pouch a hit at Asda

The new range of ready meals from Asda, launched in September under the 'Fresh Tastes' banner, is packed in clear, microwaveable, stand-up pouches produced by Schur Flexibles Europe. This range of 20 meals caters to the trend away from frozen or long-shelf-life ready meals towards short-shelf-life products. All the meat and vegetarian recipes are produced by Bakkavor's Hitchen Foods in Wigan and 10 seafood varieties produced by a seafood specialist.

Both production companies are using Schur®Star 2040-C equipment and pouches from Schur Flexibles Europe. This was the optimum system for automatic filling of sauce combined with manual filling of a wide variety of ingredients on the same machine, says the company. The flexibility and rapid changeover of the system facilitates production of multiple varieties on a daily basis. The machine also presents the pouches to operators fully opened, and keeps them open, for ease of filling.

The packaging is new for this type of product. The stand-up Doypack style pouch gives much more shelf impact than conventional ready meal trays, while the clear packs also give all-round visibility, claims Schur. Convenience is a main feature – the 'easy-tear' top allows consumers to tear open 2cm for venting, without the need for scissors. After microwaving and cooling, the top rips off, again without scissors, ready for dispensing.

This pack will make a significant contribution to Asda's declared aim to reduce overall packaging weight. The pouch is 60 per cent lighter than a typical combination of tray + lid + carton sleeve.

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ready meals - pouches & stickpacks

# Pouch filler cleans up...



## House full

One of the UK's biggest suppliers of soups, sauces and recipe dishes to the food service and manufacturing industries Bar and Restaurant Foods, has purchased a volumetric depositor from Riggs Autopack which sits above a Rovema bag-making machine. The combination fills sauce sachets in a wide range of weights.

This latest installation gives Bar Foods a virtual full house of Riggs' depositors, says Bill Beaumont, operations manager at the company.

Last year Riggs supplied the company with two eight-head depositors for use with a Multivac thermoformer.

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Thimonnier of Lyon, France, which specialises in the manufacture of filling and sealing equipment for the Doypack pouch has launched an updated and completely redesigned version of its TD range of filler/sealers for pre-made pouches. The company is represented in the UK and Ireland by F Jahn & Co.

The new THD800 is an automatic rotary indexing system, taking empty pouches from a magazine to different stations around the turret for opening, inflating, filling and sealing. The operating rate of the THD800 is up to 65 cycles/minute, with the output in terms of pouches/minute dependent on product and pouch size.

The machine combines simplicity of operation with a robust, compact design and ease of access to all areas for cleaning and maintenance, according to the manufacturer. The THD800 is constructed entirely in stainless steel for use in

the food industry to meet the sector's stringent hygiene practices.

Changeover times for different pouch sizes are quick, with the adjustment for pouch width being made by a handwheel, without the use of tools.



# ...and pouch handler stacks up

A recent installation by LAN Handling Systems for a major food manufacturer in Scandinavia, which makes prepared meals in thermo-formed pouches, takes the packs from the thermo-former conveyor and automatically loads them into special retort trays by means of a pick and place unit.

These trays are then stacked and transferred into the retorts for a pasteurisation process. The trays are then taken from the retorts, de-stacked

and the pouches automatically unloaded and conveyed to a packing area, where they are placed manually into plastic crates for storage prior to final packing in cartons. The system includes an automated stacking system for the plastic crates.

LAN equipment is represented in the UK and Ireland by F. Jahn & Co.

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## ready meals - pouches &amp; stickpacks

# Triple stick solutions

Several companies represented by Springvale Equipment offer stickpack solutions.

A multi-lane stickpack machine, (4 to 6 lanes), is available from Boato Pack which allows sticks of different widths/lengths to be accommodated using minimal parts changes. Stick widths range from 17mm – 100mm.

The company now makes machines for a wide range of liquid products such as ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise and dressings.

Langenpac has developed an innovative style collation for stickpacks, providing the ability to



pack any number into a carton, and is not dependent on the count being a multiple of the number of lanes of the stickpack machine. Running successfully at a leading coffee producer, it can be applied to work with any multi-lane stick or sachet machine.

Unifill is now able to deliver single serve portions in the

Qwikpak soft flexible bottle. Available in soft or rigid format, with or without a spout or cap, the lightweight pack is aimed at 'on the go' markets.

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## Pouches and Doypacks get a head

Chesapeake Packaging Systems, part of the Chesapeake Corporation, has developed and installed a new automated machine system for applying a board header card to any style of pouch pack or Doypack, using adhesive technology. The header card enhances the pack's shelf presence and provides valuable space for product information, whilst allowing excellent product visibility, says the company.

The header card format is a flexible and cost effective alternative to direct printed packs with advantages such as short runs and promotions;

no printed pouch stock to manage; fast product change on line using a generic pouch material; highest quality graphics, including embossing and foiling; while the header card style, shape and material can be customised

Chesapeake was able to provide a solution by first sourcing and testing a hot-melt adhesive capable of performing at the required temperature levels. A gluing and mechanical handling solution was successfully developed.

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## Nifty nozzles a cinch for liquids

New developments in nozzle design are enabling 'membrane' pouches, in which a 'two in one' pouch design can hold two products separately. It is suitable for liquids or a combination of liquid and dry products, according to Volpak.

The company has developed specific nozzles for a variety of applications, including sauces, soups and dressings. The pouch filling process maintains product integrity using a non-drip system which avoids splashes. Other nozzles can be used for particulates in suspension.

For foaming liquids the nozzle features the latest Volpak submerged filling technology which incorporated a suction system to prevent product dripping at the tip.

The company has also developed an aseptic filler to complement its standard range of hot and cold filling machines

The fillers can achieve speeds up to 15,000 pouches/hour, depending on the application.

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