

PACKAGING WORLD®

Banding together

The other improvements at Peak Foods are upgrades to the tamper-evident shrink-banding operations. Peak's single four-headed bander was replaced by two three-head tamper-band applicators from **Axon Corp.** Peak's production flow is split equally to each three-head bander. One 7'-long heat tunnel was retained from the prior setup, and a new tunnel has been added.

Peak general manager Steve Vogel says that each unit can handle half of the production flow with as few as two heads, so the extra head on each provides production "headroom," so to speak. The units automatically switch flow to the third head if one of the two



heads acts up, according to Vogel. "This means that we don't disrupt our production flow," he says. "It's worked beautifully."

Vogel is especially appreciative of Axon's new design. Previously, the bowls were transported on a tabletop conveyor between flights and a siderail. The band was dispensed over the bowl and rested atop the rail and the moving flights. The bands were "tacked" to the bowl with spot heaters before moving from the flighted section to the shrink tunnel. Vogel explains that it wasn't uncommon for the band to become lopsided as the bowl conveyed inside the heat tunnel.

Secured flight

The new machine design eliminates improper positioning of the shrink bands since the bowls are transported in circular stainless-steel flights. A front half-circle



There are a trio of shrink banders (left) on each of Peak Foods' two lines; above photo shows flights that encircle the bowls to ensure positive control and a centered shrink band.

flight and a rear-half-circle flight come together to encircle each bowl. Cut from a folded tube in web form, the 1¼"-wide tamper-evident band is dispensed around the bowl and rests atop this flight.

"The band is supported 360 degrees atop the flight from the point it is applied and stays that way through the shrink tunnel," says Vogel. "There's no place for the band to go when the hot air heat hits it except straight in toward the center of the bowl. It does a better banding job than before with very nice alignment. Not only are the aesthetics better, there are much fewer rejects than before."

Production manager Debbie Friend says that reject rates of improperly banded bowls had been running from 5% to 7%. The redesigned bowl transport system has lowered rejects to just under 0.5%. Which is why Peak personnel have been bowled over by the banding improvements.

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