

COMPLETE PACKING SOLUTION FOR DRIED FRUIT SNACKS

Case Study **Il Était Un Fruit**

Facts and figures

- » The Ishida designed line comprises a 14 head CCW-RV multihead weigher mounted directly over an Astro 103S vertical bagmaker, which provides a compact and space-efficient combination.
- » The weigher and bagmaker combination is currently running at 30 bags per minute on a 30g pack, well within its top speed of 70 packs per minute.
- » The DACS checkweigher and integrated metal detector provides a final quality and weight check.

A complete packing line solution from Ishida Europe has enabled an entrepreneurial French company to automate and bring in-house the packing of its dehydrated fruit and vegetable snacks, with the ability to increase throughput six-fold. Il Était Un Fruit, based in Montpellier, was founded in 2014 by Laure Vidal, who wanted to ensure her children were able to eat the required five portions of fruit and vegetables each day.

Challenge

She devised a means of drying seasonal fruits from the region, such as apples, pears, strawberries and apricots. In 2016, the company raised €1.2m to support its commercial development, including investment in equipment to industrialise the process. Further investment is planned for 2020. In addition, in 2019 the product offering was diversified with the introduction of dried sliced vegetables, including a special Apéritif range.

Il Était Un Fruit's products are sold in a variety of bag sizes for the retail sector – 10, 15, 30, 50 and 80g – as well as 1 and 2kg bags for specialist retail companies. With the many different fruit and vegetable varieties, this equates to around 40 different product lines, requiring a fast and flexible weighing and bagging solution.

Solution

Initially the company contracted out its packing operation but when the decision was made to take it in-house, Ishida was selected for its ability to provide a complete solution for which it had total responsibility, as well as the company's reputation for accurate weighing and reliable after-sales service.

The Ishida designed line comprises a 14 head CCW-RV multihead weigher mounted directly over an Astro 103S vertical bagmaker, which provides a compact and space-efficient combination, together with a DACS-GN-SE-012 checkweigher with integrated CEIA metal detector.





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The RV-214 weigher incorporates a special C4 coating which prevents product sticking to the contact parts. This ensures a consistent flow of the dried fruit and vegetables throughout the weigher. Thirteen of the weighing heads are dedicated to the main ingredient, such as apple, while a small quantity of a second, high value item, for example fig, is manually fed into the fourteenth head and weighed. Once this individual ingredient has been weighed, the weigher combines it with the main product, delivering accuracy to within 0.02g of the target weight.

The intermittent motion Astro bagmaker features servo motors and software controlled variable seal time, jaw temperature and pressure to ensure a high level of precision. Stripping plates clear the seal area before sealing which ensures good pack quality and servo driven and vacuum assisted pull down belts enable accurate and consistent bag lengths to maximise film use and optimise pack presentation.

Nitrogen gas flushing is used to support the preservation and freshness of products that are naturally susceptible to air (oxygen) degrading the product, giving an ambient shelf life of around six to ten months depending on the product. The weigher and bagmaker combination is currently running at 30 bags per minute on a 30g pack, well within its top speed of 70 packs per minute.

The DACS checkweigher and integrated metal detector provides a final quality and weight check. Rejected packs are directed into two separate

containers, depending on whether they are non-compliant in terms of weight or contain foreign bodies.

The checkweigher features an intuitive and robust display with an easy to learn menu structure that ensures quick and easy set up and is fully compliant with the European directive on measuring instruments. The checkweigher's open frame design ensures easy cleaning and maintenance, including a complete washdown of the line every week.

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“We are pleased with our investment,” comments Nicolas Rey, industrial director at Il Était Un Fruit. “The various machines have all lived up to their expectation, while Ishida's after-sales service is quick to react if there is a problem. We are currently producing one million bags a year but are confident we can continue to grow because the line can cope with up to six million bags a year.”

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