MFI GmbH: hygienic desgin is playing an increasingly important role

Hygienic design is a key factor when it comes to purchasing baking technology. How do your customers approach this? What requirements do you have to meet?

Jan Schumacher: Industrial food manufacturers take a very sensitive approach to this topic. Furthermore, we can see that hygienic design is playing an increasingly important role in bakeries. Above all, our customers are demanding that equipment and machine surfaces are easy to clean and that all surfaces are readily accessible for cleaning. Our particularly cleaning-oriented design makes this possible – after all, we always keep cleaning processes in mind during development. MFI started developing its expertise in this area early on. We design our systems and machines so that they don't get dirty that quickly and can be cleaned fast. We achieve this by eliminating superfluous joints and edges, and by avoiding unnecessary drill holes and dead spaces. In addition, we use large, uniform elements as covers for machines. These are designed to have high ground clearance, which facilitates cleaning. We use pneumatic or electromechanical drives in all of our systems and only food-grade oils and greases. All our products for the baking industry are made of high-quality stainless steel.

What cost factor does hygienic design play in the planning and production of a system? How much more expensive does this make systems?

Schumacher: In the food industry, hygiene is the top priority. Hygienic design has been a standard with us right from the start. Therefore, there are no additional costs because the systems have been created as hygienic designs right from the start too. Our customers benefit from our decades of experience in the meat industry, as well as in other food sectors. The principle of hygienic design is incorporated into the planning of complete bakery systems, as well as our product innovations for the bakery industry.

To what extent does hygienic design help the user to cut down on costs and save time?

Schumacher: Several inspections in German bakeries have revealed a severe lack of hygiene. If you don't want to risk jeopardising your image or even your livelihood, you won't ever compromise when it comes to complying with hygiene standards. Another issue is the rising cost of wages, energy and quality assurance. These make the daily cleaning of equipment and machinery in the food industry a considerable cost factor. Hygienic design reduces these resource costs. The less dirt builds up on machinery and equipment, the shorter the cleaning and downtimes are – and thus the lower the total overhead costs. With equipment that can be cleaned easily, quickly and effectively, the consumption of both power and cleaning agents can be reduced, while at the same time protecting the environment.

Photo: MFI 2021

Jan Schumacher, Bakery Sales Manager.

What are the current developments in hygienic design? What should be paid particular attention to at the moment?

Schumacher: Intralogistics systems are getting bigger and legislation is imposing more stringent hygienic requirements. At the same time, cleaning procedures are changing and many customers are introducing new hygienic guidelines. We are facing more and more requirements for hygienic design, which must also be reflected in the processes and machines. Not everything that's shiny is easy to clean. Special attention needs to be paid to the quality of the materials and stainless steel. The workmanship of the equipment and machines is also a crucial factor here. The fewer inwardly curved surfaces, dead angles and exposed screw head threads there are, the less this causes dirt build-up and bacterial growth. Another factor not to be underestimated is cleaning rota instructions for system parts and machines. All of this must be documented and explained to customers.

Do you offer hygienic design solutions that are exclusive to you?

Schumacher: Our product portfolio from conveyor technology, storage technology to control cabinets is specifically adapted to hygienic design. We've also developed many innovative and customised solutions and machines for our customers. Designed specifically for use in the food industry, the flexible TARO storage system is made entirely of stainless steel. MFI's patented innovations include OCTA, which handles the automated and gentle process of packing bread into suitable baskets. The next innovative product created by MFI in hygienic design is HERO – the perfect solu-

tion for flexible and automated stacking and unstacking of different containers. We've developed the mobile paper magazine TEMO for the baking sector. This new product also meets the industry's hygiene standards. TEMO is suitable for automated insertion of papers or fleece into trays or baskets.

Where do you see the future of hygienic design?

Schumacher: Hygiene regulations for the bakery industry are becoming ever stricter and there is growing interest in hygienic design. Large bakeries in particular are increasingly focusing on this topic. More and more customers are looking for solutions that not only increase process efficiency, but also meet hygiene standards, simplify cleaning procedures and reduce downtimes. In addition to extensive knowledge in stainless steel processing and hygienic design, our customers benefit from MFI's many years of experience in the meat and pharmaceutical industries, where hygiene standards are extremely high.

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5 *The conveyor rollers at MFI are mounted in a way that makes cleaning quick and easy.* ***6*** *With stainless steel surfaces and components, MFI ensures hygiene in the systems it sells.*