

Snowbird steams ahead with new line

The addition of a new cooking line has allowed Snowbird Foods to increase its production efficiency while giving the products an artisanal look. This has led to new product development ideas and more importantly, new contracts.



The new production line at Snowbird Foods.

A new production line was installed by Snowbird Foods at its North London factory at a cost of GBP1.9mn (USD3.4mn) to provide an immediate increase in production capacity of 30%.

The installation follows recent expenditure of GBP3.5mn (USD6.3mn) on a major factory refurbishment of the 18,000ft² (1672m²) building which saw the introduction of a new production line and the purchase of high-technology fillers, owl cutters, mixers, mincers and in-line automated cooking and freezing facilities.

The new line provides oven baking, steaming and roasting capabilities in the factory, which processes fully cooked sausage and other meat products for ready-meal manufacturers and the food service industry.

Combination oven

The latest line comprises a combination oven that can

dry heat, steam, bottom heat from a Teflon belt and/or fry. It is fed from a new product former that makes both meat and stuffing balls. This was developed from a high-speed burger machine to form and roll the balls, which are then steamed, roasted and grilled. This 'dry cooking' method has enabled Snowbird to more easily achieve low fat levels as any frying element in cooking has been avoided.

"There is also a very significant increase in production efficiency which has enabled us to increase the throughput of balls by 80%," says Snowbird Foods chairman, John Drage. Production of meat and stuffing balls, the company's leading products on this line, is now running at 1.5 million 10 g balls per day.

The new system of cooking has given both meat and stuffing balls a handmade and

therefore more artisanal appearance. "They really do look like the ones mothers used to make and most mothers wouldn't have specified the quality of ingredients we use, so our quality is better," adds Drage. He has now challenged the company's recipe development team to produce ideas for steamed products that can be made on the new line. **MI**

High speed NPD wins huge order

A new product development operation has won a meat manufacturing company a contract that saw orders rise to 26 pallets in just three weeks. The challenge, by a ready meals manufacturer, was issued to Enfield-based Snowbird Foods. The requirement was for a very different fully cooked and frozen Exotic Stuffing Ball.

A recipe was developed based on pork, which makes up 24% of each ball. "That was the easy bit," says new product development manager, Jason Drage. "The other ingredients include prunes, apple, egg, cheddar cheese, onions and parsley. Getting the balance and texture right were the big concerns." In all there were 18 different ingredients, all of which had to be sourced and quality controlled.

Initial samples were delivered within 48 hours and the recipe was adjusted, approved and signed off in less than two weeks. Snowbird's Exotic Stuffing Balls were the first product to roll off the company's new high-speed line. It steams and then roasts the balls on a Teflon belt to give them a home-made appearance that was welcomed by the manufacturers.