

Staying productive and competitive in the food industry

Remaining proudly independent in a widely consolidated industry, the Mt. Olive Pickle Company maximizes uptime and minimizes labor using a new self-cleaning filter system that eliminates production stoppage due to filter cleaning and blocking.

As the largest privately held U.S. pickle company in an industry that has undergone widespread consolidation, the Mt. Olive Pickle Company understands it must operate more efficiently than ever while delivering product of the highest quality to consumers. Packing over 90 million jars of pickles, relishes and peppers annually for distribution in over 45 states, Mt. Olive must ensure its processing meets the most stringent standards. One important process is nozzle spraying fresh product with brine solution at a salt bath.

To prevent the spray nozzles from clogging with product debris washed off in the process, the brine wash solution must be filtered before each reuse. However, Mt. Olive found that the traditional filter bags they were using for this purpose had distinct drawbacks.

"Depending on the product running, filter bags on each production line had to be changed about once an hour, during which time production had to stop for about five minutes," says Steve Whitman, Production Manager for Mt. Olive.

Furthermore, filtering efficiency could vary depending on how full the bags were, leading to potential spray nozzle blockage and line shutdown. To determine when to change filter bags, workers had to spend time and attention monitoring pressure gauges. "As the outlet pressure gauge dropped and the inlet pressure gauge increased, workers knew they needed to get in there and change their bag out," says Whitman. Cleaning the strainers and changing out the filter bags by hand was a wet, messy job, while purchasing, storing, handling, and disposing of the bags added to production costs.

Based on the recommendation of its salt bath supplier and its own research, Mt. Olive turned to the state-of-the-art self-cleaning Eco Filter system from Russell Finex (www.russellfinexusa.com) of Pineville, North Carolina.



The Russell Finex Self-Cleaning Eco Filter in use at Mt. Olive

- Increased productivity and reduced labor costs with simple self-cleaning design
- Enabled easy material sampling without production stoppage
- Maximum efficiency and minimal operator involvement with the Russell Filter Management System

Manufactured at the Russell Finex plant, the Eco Filter is a self-cleaning system that integrates directly into the pipeline and completely eliminates the need to change filter bags or clean filtration baskets. By means of a unique spiral wiper design, the filter element is kept continuously clean, ensuring optimum filtration efficiency. Because of its self-cleaning design, cleaning the filter between batch runs is quick and easy with minimal disruption during production changeovers.

"We do no longer have to shut down production or babysit filter bags," says Whitman. "Because we are removing all the particulate pieces of product from the brine solution, we are not blocking up our nozzles and are getting good brine flow into the system."

Mt. Olive now uses a number of Russell Eco Filters in production. These have a unique Q-Tap valve that allows the sampling of freshly filtered material so quality can easily be monitored on the fly without interrupting production. The filters also feature the Russell Filter Management System™, a technology that automatically opens the oversize discharge valve at a specified differential pressure or time interval. The system enables the filter to be operated efficiently without operator involvement.

"Production is streamlined because the system automatically flushes and cleans itself when needed, and there is no need to monitor, change, or dispose of bags," says Whitman.

Because it is totally enclosed, it also prevents outside pollutants from contaminating product and protects operators from any fumes or spillage. Users see substantial improvement in product purity as well as throughput and waste elimination.

"With more production uptime and lower labor costs, the Eco Filters are helping us stay productive, competitive and grow into new markets," concludes Whitman. "They are part of our winning team."

For over 70 years Russell Finex has manufactured and supplied filters, screeners, and separators to improve product quality, enhance productivity, safeguard worker health, and ensure powders and liquids are contamination-free. Throughout the world, Russell Finex serves a variety of industries with applications including food, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, adhesives, plastisols, paint, coatings, metal powders and ceramics.



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