Fish Company Ensures Metal-Free Product

Channel Fish Company (Boston, MA), producers of frozen and salted seafood, takes tremendous care at every step of their process to produce the highest quality product. To improve the effectiveness of their metal detection operation — both in terms of maximizing detection sensitivity and production uptime — they recently turned to Mettler-Toledo Safeline and selected the PowerPhasePRO.

“We look to get every piece of metal out that we can. We have zero tolerance,” said Jeff Bedrick, IT Manager at Channel Fish Company. “We are protecting our equipment, protecting our brand and, most importantly, protecting our customers’ brands. We won’t ship product that hasn’t gone through the metal detector. If the metal detector goes down, we’ll stop the line.”

Channel Fish challenges most metal detectors with product that is wet and salty, and an environment that fluctuates from cold and humid during operation to hot and humid during sanitation. This demanding situation caused significant problems for their old metal detector.

Downtime averaged five hours a week and even when the six-year old system was operating, they were disappointed with its detection sensitivity. They had to rely on magnets at the end of the line to assure their product was metal-free. Then in May of 2008, they installed a new PowerPhasePRO metal detector from Mettler-Toledo Safeline.

“We judge how well the metal detector is working by what’s on the magnets. We used to find much more on the magnets. Now, with the Safeline metal detector, we barely find anything,” noted Bedrick. “We’re pulling out smaller pieces and more than twice as much with the new metal detector than we used to. Pulling it out with the metal detector upstream of the grinder, instead of with the magnets downstream of the grinder, helps protect our equipment.”

Featuring an advanced coil design for superior detection sensitivity, the PowerPhasePRO metal detector zeros in on all types of metal contamination, including ferrous and non-ferrous tramp metal as well as stainless steel fragments. A “Faraday Screen” is located between the detector coil and the product to filter out unwanted frequencies, which further improves detection sensitivity while virtually eliminating false rejects.

“We considered metal detectors from five different suppliers. The most important thing was customer service. And we wanted a guaranteed specification for detection sensitivity,” explained Bedrick.

“Metter-Toledo Safeline was willing to ship us a metal detector free of charge so we could demo it and get real world experience. We thought this was fantastic because

it allowed us to test the system given all our in-plant issues. Our sales rep, Mike McCarthy from Flo-Dynamics, even came out to be sure we got up and running smoothly."

The metal detector is designed to handle extreme temperature fluctuations and high-temperature, high-pressure washdowns, making it ideal for Channel Fish's challenging environment. Featuring an IP36K-rated control panel, the Safeline detectors exceed NEMA 4X specifications.

"We measure the success of the metal detector based on detection sensitivity and reliability," concluded Bedrick. "With the new PowerPhasePRO, we're confident that we're shipping metal-free product. And our maintenance guy hasn't had to touch the Safeline metal detector since we installed it."

For more information about metal detection and x-ray inspection systems, visit www.mt.com/safelineus *[1].*

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