



Manufacturing FOR Manufacturers

York County manufacturers make production of snack foods and baked goods more efficient

By Barbara Phillips Long

Everyone loves a good brownie, cookie or piece of candy, and luckily some of the food manufacturers that make those treats possible are conveniently located in York County. But it takes a lot of equipment to commercially produce cookies, candy, pretzels and bread, and manufacturers of that machinery can be found in York County, too.

Readco Kurimoto LLC in Manchester Township makes machines that mix dough or chocolate continuously — there's no batch processing. When dough has to rise, Weldon Solutions in West Manchester Township makes equipment that can stack the troughs of dough and retrieve them when they need to be baked; similar equipment can heft a ton of baking pans at a time. Equipment to shape dough, load and unload ovens, take buns and bread out of pans and more can be obtained from Eastern Bakery Systems LLC in Newberry Township. To



Eastern Bakery Systems is having one of the best years for sales in its history. PHOTO/SUBMITTED

top off candy or cookies, Woody Associates Inc. in Spring Garden Township manufactures stringers to drizzle narrow lines of chocolate or icing in pretty patterns. Other York County manufacturers include Capway Systems Inc., which makes conveyors and other baking equipment, and various companies involved in food packaging.

Much of this equipment is partly or fully customized. It's expensive, lasts for years and is invisible to the average grocery shopper. The amount of dough and the number of pans that this commercial machinery can handle dwarf in-store bakeries at grocery stores, let alone home kitchens.

"To do it at this scale is sometimes mind-boggling for someone who's not used to seeing it," said James Snyder, director of engineering at Eastern Bakery Systems.

Eastern Bakery Systems

Customers of Eastern Bakery System's products are large industrial bakeries that make bread and rolls for the higher-end, hearth-baked market — mostly restaurants and delis rather than grocery stores. Predicting sales is difficult, as the market is cyclical, said Snyder, but orders are flowing in and the company is set to have the busiest year in its history.

Eastern Bakery is a wholly owned subsidiary of Gemini Bakery Equipment Co., which is located in eastern Pennsylvania and offers a wide range of commercial baking equipment. The site in York has about a dozen staff members and relies on local sheet metal and machine shops in Adams, Lancaster and York counties for some parts.

Oven loaders and unloaders may be fairly standard, but each item has to be customized for the specific oven. In addition, Eastern Bakery makes other equipment, including conveyors, bread pans and peel loaders, depanners and dough-forming equipment.

While there haven't been big breakthroughs in the technology for about 20 years, some electronic components and robotics have changed in the last six years, Snyder said. Part of the key to selling new equipment, however, is to increase throughput without increasing labor and energy costs — taking a bakery line from 60 loaves per minute to 100 loaves per minute, for instance, through incremental efficiencies.

"We're constantly working on the designs and modifications," Snyder said.

Readco Kurimoto

Readco Kurimoto had its start in the bakery equipment business in the early 1900s. By the 1960s, the company had come up with the continuous processor, a mixer that remains its signature product.

The machinery is versatile. It works with chocolate, peanut butter, pizza cheese, gum and "a lot of confectionary," said Stan Myers, sales manager. It will blend any solid and liquid, and it integrates flavoring ingredients efficiently using minimal heat.

The continuous processor streamlined processing long before lean manufacturing became a manufacturing catchword. And with proper maintenance and servicing, the machine will last more than 20 years.

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Readco Kurimoto makes continuous processors that mix liquids and solids. PHOTO/SUBMITTED



The SCP, by Readco Kurimoto, thickens liquids or changes liquids into powders. PHOTO/SUBMITTED

“Before it was popular to go green, we were making a machine that was very environmentally friendly,” Myers said.

Unlike many on the market, Readco Kurimoto’s mixer isn’t a mass production item. As such, an individual unit may sell for more than \$1 million, so only a few

are made per year. But the company has been expanding its marketing for years, providing mixing equipment not only to food processors but also to the plastics, nutraceutical, pharmaceutical and, more recently, the petrochemical industries.

In addition, the company has developed

the self-cleaning processor, which can take wet ingredients from damp to dry — for example, transforming chili peppers into chili powder. It’s the reverse of a mixer, increasing viscosity and changing a liquid to a powder.

Beyond local businesses, Readco Kurimoto also makes mixers for the North and South American markets.

Weldon Solutions

Weldon Solutions provides the mechanical muscle to handle pans and baking troughs. In other words, the company produces robotic units that move pans or troughs in and out of storage or proofing areas. Various pieces of Weldon’s specialized equipment can turn pans over so they can be stored upside-down, take lids off pans and remove bread or other products from baking pans.

A commercial bakery might have 2,000 to 3,000 pans for each kind of bread it makes, said Charles Gales, manager of automation sales. Equipment is customized and programmed for each customer.

The employee-owned company also has other product lines, including CNC machining equipment and other robotic equipment. The bakery equipment is

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