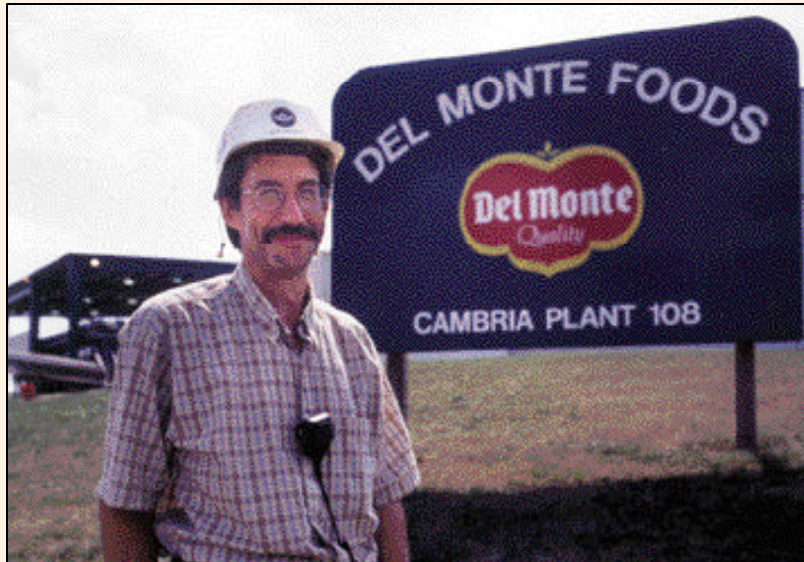


Key Technology Helps Del Monte Foods Raise the Bar for Product Quality



After one season, Production Superintendent Al Bodden is pleased with the product quality upgrade and the performance of Key's equipment. "We're removing more small pieces so we've improved our product quality, along with improving our operations overall."

Since the Del Monte brand was first introduced in 1892, the Del Monte Foods Company has remained fiercely committed to the highest standards of quality, innovation and performance – for its consumers and trade customers. These standards were the motivation behind process upgrades in the green bean processing line at Del Monte's Cambria, Wisconsin plant.

The goal was to improve product quality by removing a higher percentage of knuckles and other EVM. At that time, the beans were cleaned on a vibratory conveyor after they had been cut. It was difficult to distinguish knuckles from good product and product recovery levels were hurt.

So Al Bodden, production superintendent, and his staff turned to [Key Technology](#) for a better solution. Key recommended removing knuckles and other EVM with a [Farmco Rotary Size Grader](#) before the beans were cut.

The Rotary Size Grader is a unique rotary-style machine that removes targeted material using a series of plastic pockets that gently handle the product. Operators can adjust "on the fly" to fine tune the size for separation or removal. Defective product falls through the rollers and exits beneath the machine, while good material moves on to downstream equipment over the tops of the rollers.

"We started to consider the Rotary Size Grader after we sent samples to Key Technology," recalls Bodden. "We just thought it would be a good addition to the (grading) process. They videotaped the test and after we saw it, we decided to test a unit in our plant."

After a successful trial last season, Del Monte purchased three Farmco RSG units. Two are installed on the receiving dock where they remove and separate knuckles and other EVM from the whole beans before they are conveyed into the plant. The third unit is used inside the plant to size grade whole beans.

The results? Improved product quality. The overall operation is enhanced since the Farmco RSG units are self-cleaning. Thorough cleanings which are scheduled at the end of each shift require only a hose wash-down. There are no slats to remove, no screens to change and no parts to remove.

Bodden reports that the operators find the Farmco unit easy to use and maintain. An easy-to-remove side cover and plastic liner offer easy access to bearings, sprockets and the adjusting system.

The RSG's components are manufactured to withstand the short but rigorous green bean processing season. Bodden doesn't anticipate the need for any costly rebuilds, a significant investment for many green bean processors.

In a second step to improve product quality, Del Monte installed one Key [Optyx™](#) Optical Sorters at the same time they added the Farmco RSG units. The company was not new to

Key's optical sorting technology. The Cambria plant has had four [Tegra®](#) Optical sorters since 1999 – two inspecting whole beans and two inspecting cut beans.

The Optyx was added to the recirculation line to accomplish a multi-step inspection process. Whole beans go through one Tegra before they are cut. After the whole beans go through an unsnipped bean remover, they're run through an Optyx unit which sorts out unsnipped beans and other defects.

The second Tegra is dedicated to removing blemished cut beans.

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