3 Enercon Cap Sealers increase production efficiency for Texas based Renfro Foods

Renfro Foods is a family-operated business experiencing tremendous growth. Since being named Vendor of the Year by Wingstop Restaurants, Inc., the Fort Worth, Texas company has pushed the capabilities of its packaging equipment to satisfy growing demand for their zesty sauces, salsas and relishes.

The company first invested in induction cap sealing in 1995, when it purchased a Compak Jr.™ portable tabletop machine from Enercon to seal salsa containers it copacks in slant-handled jugs with 63mm caps.

Renfro Foods evaluated several equipment brands at the time and identified Enercon as a market leader, says company president Doug Renfro. With help from Enercon’s local equipment distributor representative R.P. Anderson Co., which offered a great deal of local expertise, Renfro Foods was able to conduct sealing demonstrations with the Compak Jr., which “sealed the deal.” The self-contained sealer proved to be a powerhouse. Soon, it was pulled into service, sealing entire truckloads of product.

The Super Seal™ cap sealer has increased production line speeds at Renfro Foods.

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New induction sealers to debut at Pack Expo

Be the first to see the newest induction cap sealer on the market today. Enercon will introduce two new sealing systems for traditional cap sealing and unique capless applications.

The high performance and compact system designs are a direct result of forward-thinking electronic architecture which features a proprietary switching device technique. The new induction sealers offer unparalleled flexibility and versatility.

The new systems will be in operation along with the Super Seal™ Deluxe cap sealer which features microprocessor control, a sophisticated operator interface and an advanced sealing head design to maximize performance.

Simple operation is guided by the microprocessor which is specifically designed to control, monitor and display all critical performance, inspection and operational data.

Visit booth S-766 to see the latest cap sealing technology in operation.
Renfro Foods started induction sealing its containers for a couple of reasons, Doug Renfro says. "Many of our foodservice customers began to refuse accepting glass containers and the freight/shipping costs are lower on plastic because it’s lighter. Our finished product in a plastic container averages about thirty-eight pounds gross per case, versus forty-eight pounds in glass."

At first, the company put the Compak Jr. induction sealer into service as a stand-alone machine for short production runs to provide tamper evidence and to seal in product freshness. Over the next several years, foodservice product demand grew and the production runs became longer and longer.

Says Doug Renfro, "We used the machine for all of our volume on foodservice, which had reached regular, truckload-sized orders. We laughed when we saw Enercon’s description of the Compak Jr. It was designed for laboratory use and short production runs. But we can attest, it’s a production workhorse. We started sealing truckloads of containers with it."

Induction sealing became such an integral part of the foodservice packaging business that the company invested in a second Compak Jr. in 2004, as a backup to the primary machine.

While the Compak Jr. machines kept up with the faster pace, at the time, Wingstop, one of Renfro Foods’ primary foodservice customers, was expanding its product distribution into 25 states.

Renfro Foods saw that a fully automated induction sealer was needed on that bottling line to minimize some of the labor-intensive tasks.

They added the fully automatic Super Seal—its third induction cap sealer—within the past year. The unit was integrated into the line to run both foodservice and retail products.

An air-cooled system, the Super Seal operates via a dedicated microprocessor and a controller. With an all-in-one, quick-change sealing head that pivots to allow for sealing bottles and jars with different closure diameters, it features a waterless design and an adjustable “Loss of Seal” indicator that allows users to preset the power level and trigger an indicator such as a stack light, if the sealer output power dips below the preset level.

"With the Compak Jr., we could seal five units or gallons per minute," adds Doug Renfro. "The Super Seal can seal nine containers per minute. That really improved our line speeds and combined with the labor savings we see from automated sealing—it’s great." Doug Renfro says the company is quite pleased with both the Super Seal machine and the fact that it’s fully automatic. The Compak Jr. machines are currently used as backups. "Today we use them to seal bottles of our barbecue sauce, a dozen different salsas and several relishes," he tells PD.

When asked if the company has experienced a return on its induction-sealing equipment investment, Doug Renfro replies, "Here we’re pretty informal. We don’t calculate ROIs. The Super Seal saved us a significant amount in labor costs, so we’re happy. Should the foodservice business expand much further, perhaps we will add another shift. The sealers can take it."

The company can now concentrate on watching the condiment/sauce trends in upscale restaurants, knowing that within a short time, the trendy flavors there will make their way into consumer households across the country. Next on its product-development menu? Mango Habanera Salsa.
Bill Zito will be attending his 18th Pack Expo show this year and since the early 1980s a lot has changed in the packaging industry and with induction sealing.

We took the opportunity to pose him a few questions on where the technology and industry are headed.

Q: What has been the biggest development in induction sealing?
A: It’s easier today to add induction into your packaging line than ever before. Ultra-compact power supplies and air-cooled sealing heads are relatively maintenance free and extremely reliable. These technological advances are also making it possible to use induction for new applications.

Q: What are the new applications?
A: We’re pioneering the use of induction heating for non-traditional sealing applications around the globe. We have pressure-belt systems which allow containers with non-torqueable caps to be sealed. Sealing containers without caps or prior to capping is also allowing packagers to take advantage of the benefits of induction sealing. We present packagers with a safer and more economical alternative to conduction sealing.

Q: Over the years what has changed with the industry?
A: It seems more manufacturers are trying to do more with less. Many have cut back and are relying on telemarketers or counting on their website to be a substitute for a knowledgeable applications team. Not a week goes by that we don’t receive a phone call from someone that bought a sealer from someone else. They explain that they are having application problems and can’t get any help from their supplier. As a courtesy, we help these people out, or refer them to someone in the industry who can assist them.

Q: How is Enercon different?
A: Actually, our website is the most in-depth resource you can find on induction sealing. But we back it up with the largest force of direct, factory trained salespeople in the industry. In fact, Enercon has more direct sales personnel than all of our domestic competitors combined! As the market leader we pride ourselves in visiting face to face with our customers before and after the sale.

Q: Isn’t it expensive to maintain such a network and to visit customers?
A: It is expensive, but we feel it’s important to maintain personal contact with our customers, before, during and after the sale. In fact, we estimate that last year our sales people made over 1,000 sales visits to customers in North America, Mexico, South America, The Pacific Rim and Europe. We also have the largest network of manufacturer reps, which means that when one of our direct salespeople can’t arrange a visit, our local rep is only a phone call away.

New applications

Induction seals provide hermetic seal for decorative tins

At Pack Expo Enercon will have induction-sealed samples of new containers that may inspire your packaging team.

From TinScape comes a variety of creative decorative tinware. The Aurora, IL based company produces tins for many industries including: food, confection, snack, fund raising, coffee & tea, gift & stationery, health & beauty, media, spice and cookies.

The addition of an induction seal provides tamper evidence, prevents leaks and preserves product freshness. Implementing a sealing solution for these attention-getting packages is made easy with Enercon’s partnerships with leading machinery builders. Solutions include manual, automated, indexing and rotary systems. Contact us today to learn how to take advantage of our unique capless sealing capability.

Add value to these decorative tins with induction seals.
Enercon “Success Guarantee” based on a world of experience

When you request a proposal from Enercon you’re tapping into decades of application expertise. But how can we guarantee your success?

Our engineers carefully analyze your application configuration including; caps, liners, bottles and line speed requirements. Each of these variables plays a critical role in configuring the best power supply and sealing head for your application.

Your requirements are compared to our database of laboratory test data and real world applications. As the market leader, we maintain the most extensive induction sealing database in the industry.

On occasion, the data leads our engineers to request samples for added testing. When a new speciality solution is required, our research and development team takes action to create a custom solution specifically designed for your application.

So the next time you request an induction sealing proposal, do it with confidence and allow the expertise of Enercon to guarantee your success.

Optimizing the electro-magnetic field for your application is the specialty of the Enercon technical team.