

Portioning the cheese 'to go'

Alpma has developed equipment to deliver quick and efficient mini-cheese portions to meet trends



Alpma has supplied high-speed lines to the US to deliver up to 600 portions a minute to packing

To meet the growing demand for 'to go' cheese, or mini portions, Alpma has developed solutions that produce portions of widely varying sizes, shapes and weights on a single machine. The Snack Line is described as flexible, hygienic and can be changed to suit different cheese sizes without tools.

Depending on the type of snack, the Snack Line delivers up to 600 portions per minute, and with accurate weights. In order to achieve this speed, the line travels in two lanes and can therefore handle up to 300 portions per lane each minute. The Snack Line then transfers the mini-portions in synchronised operation to the downstream flow wrapping machine.

ANY CUSTOM WEIGHT IS AVAILABLE

The range of cutting machines will cut a block of cheese into individual mini portions of 8 g sticks, or 12 g and any other desired custom weight up to 1000 g.

Most common snack portions are in the range of 25 g; 30 g; 40 g and 50 g, as well as twin sticks.

In operation, the process is a series of

stages to size reduce the incoming block of cheese into the required individual portion size. This is achieved with a series of wires and blades to precisely and accurately cut the block into smaller and smaller sizes and then to separate each portion and feed them into a packaging line either manually or fully automatically.

The range of equipment starts from 40-60 portions per minute with a semi-automatic line at an investment starting from £50,000 up to fully automatic cutting lines running at 600 portions per minute at a higher investment. Alpma has machines ranging from the entry-level HTII portion cutter to the full CUT32 and CC100 range of machines that are designed to deliver accuracy and efficiency with the minimum of waste. Indeed, for 12 g portions the company has a give-away of less than 1%. This is the level of accuracy of within 1 g for a natural product being cut and separated and delivered to a packaging machine for UK cheddar cheese at over 200 portions per minute.

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