

Permanent Air Hygiene

Previously thorough examination of the processing environment is recommended.

For about one year now, the consulting and planning company Just in Air is active in the food industry. The company analyses the climatic environment in the plants with focus on hygiene and provides optimization solutions. Furthermore, it assists in the implementation of concepts and measures.

In the past, LT reported several times about Just in Air GmbH, Bremen, founded in 2000, and their product range. This company is flourishing which is last but not least due to their energetic general manager Ralf Ohlmann. „We are still growing in the two-digit range annually,“ he says proudly.

Ohlmann has recognized that a basic examination prior to the technical implementation of his technology is necessary and thus founded the engineering company Just in Air. This company offers separate consultation services focusing on air climate for the food industry. From the incoming raw materials to production, packaging and storage of finished goods, all constructional and engineering requirements are being analyzed and evaluated in order to determine realistic improvement measures for long-term safety. The team consists of food technologist and process engineers who are able of assessing the environment and who are familiar with the particular products and their production processes. For example, an ageing room for raw sausages has other requirements than an

area where breads will be sliced. Ohlmann explains, „We point out problems; we elucidate them, put them into figures and work out a catalogue of measures for improvement of the situation. Our goal is to support the companies in their effort to secure their hygienic status in the long term.“ By the way the costs for that are calculated based on moderate daily rates. First of all, a status analysis has to be conducted in the plant. This includes the determination of air flow, humidity and temperature curves. In critical areas, airborne microorganisms as well as germs on surfaces of machines and equipment are enumerated. Subsequently, optimization solutions are worked out and discussed with the client. „Economic efficiency is most important to us,“ emphasizes Ohlmann. „It is often possible to improve the air pattern by simple changes such as a slight modification of the air conditioning system or attentive behavior of employees in terms of closing windows and doors in a disciplined manner.“

Just in Air always strives for implementation of integrated solutions in the plants to ensure permanent air hygiene which meets official requirements getting constantly tighter and safeguards product stability. „Our company is active mainly in



What's the problem?
Ralf Ohlmann:
„Simple changes will often result already in an improved air status.“

fields where fresh or refrigerated foods with prolonged shelf-life are being produced such as meat and sausage products, dairy products, delicatessen or ready meals. But there are also possible applications in bakeries, in pasta production, even in the beverage industry. Our solutions can be quite different depending on the problems at site, for example a special air conditioning technology or a dust exhaust," Ohlmann continues. „Of course, often the air and surface degermination provided will play a role here, but not necessarily. The decisive factors are the analysis results and the client's specifications. In any case, we are available to accompany the implementation of the concept.

For a medium-sized food company, two engineers will need two days to collect all necessary information and two to three more days to evaluate the data and to work out proper solution concepts. We also compile a report. Thus within one week the plant manager will receive sound facts for his decision making. Larger companies often ask us to investigate individual areas only.“

Optimization potential determined

One company which has already relied on Just in Air's services is the Bremer Erfrischungsgetränke GmbH. The Coca-Cola filling company, located in Bremen, Germany, produces according to the strict hygiene regulations demanded by its American franchiser. New regulations on air-borne germs as well as the recording of actual processing environment data were the reasons for technical manager Uwe

Nordhausen to contact the specialist company and to ask for an evaluation of optimization potential of air hygiene and environment. He expresses his satisfaction about the services provided by the specialists, because after only three days of intense investigations at site the facts were already on the table.



The beverage company will include several technical modification measures in their 2005

budget to improve the air situation in the plant. For example the ventilation equipment shall be modified for optimized air flow. Furthermore several improvement steps have already been initiated and successfully implemented. Installation of the air and surface degermination technology is also scheduled. „We feel that these measures

make sense," says Nordhausen, „because of increasing market requirements and because of the fact that our products, in particular our Fanta products, are becoming more susceptible.“ Bremer Erfrischungsgetränke GmbH is one of nine Coca-Cola franchisees in Germany. They produce Coke, Fanta and Sprite. Another product from their range is Lift Apfelschorle, a mixture of apple juice and mineral water. The annual output of the company which has five locations in northern Germany is about 2.5m hL. They fill only into returnable containers.

Economical solution

Buss in Ottersberg, Germany, a manufacturer of ready meals, took advantage of the consulting services offered by the air hygiene specialists from Bremen as well. Plant manager Manfred Petersen was also pleased as the following interview shows.

LT: Mr. Petersen, what was the scope of analysis in your plant?

Petersen: All factors influencing the production such as products, ambient air, machines, personnel, building and adjoining areas were included and properly evaluated. This included



„Besides the improved hygienic safety, there were also simplifications of the entire production process.“

Manfred Petersen

comprehensive information on air flows, temperatures, humidity curves and microbial load for a certain period of time. It is interesting how the existing parameters affect each other and the products; this could be specified and optimized only after a compilation of all environmental data. ▶