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Berk's Packing

Meat Processing • Application Report

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REPRINT

Solving the problem of short-lived load cells

Berk's Packing replaced electronic load cells with a more durable hydrostatic version that delivers accurate, reliable readings.

Most smaller meat companies these days are engaged in a virtually constant struggle to stay in business. One firm that has seemingly solved that dilemma is Berk's Packing, a family-owned business that has been in operation since the 1930s. Of course, nobody stays in business that long without adapting the nature of the firm's products and services.

"In our heyday, we were a slaughter plant that handled both cattle and

hogs," says Peter Boylan, president of the Berkshire, Mass.-based company. "Now we are strictly processors with a full line of cooked products, such as sausage, franks and roast beef."

Berk's has built its territory in recent years and now distributes products along the East Coast and into Florida and parts of the Southeast as well.

As the company has grown, one constant that has never changed is its emphasis on customer satisfaction -- no matter what it takes.

Boylan says that attitude extends to the company's suppliers, as well.

"Unfortunately, too many suppliers these days turn tail after they make a sale," he says. "We look for (supplier) companies who will back their products, and be there in case you have a problem."

For Berk's, one problem that recurred too often in the past was the failure of the electronic load cells used on the tanks and blenders that are a vital part of their various processing operations. Although the cells performed satisfactorily, the harsh washdown environ-

Rough and ready: Emery Winslow's durable load cells (left) use hydrostatic technology to avoid the problems of electronic load cells that cannot withstand washdown.

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ment necessitated by food-safety considerations destroyed the sensitive electronics, requiring regular and costly replacements.

"Five years ago, we decided to replace the load cells in our ham pumping area," Boylan says. "That's a very corrosive environment, and the (cells) just didn't last."

Berk's decided to replace their electronic load cells with a super-durable type of hydrostatic load cell from Emery Winslow Scale Co., a Seymour, Conn.-based manufacturer of weighing systems and equipment. The all-stainless steel, heavy-duty LIFEMOUNT series of load cells handles washdown, corrosive chemicals and the relentless punishment of meat processing operations without missing a beat.

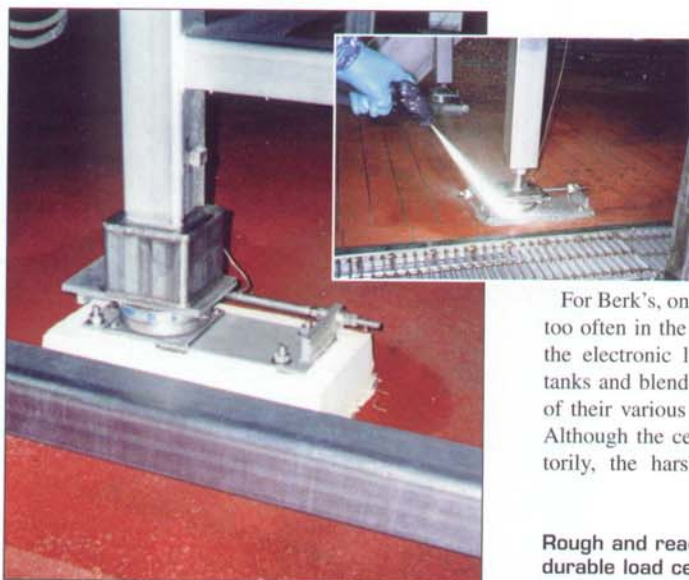
"The Emery Winslow load cells have held up very well," Boylan says. "Maintenance is minimal and they have proven to be extremely accurate. The name of this game is yield, and we need to be extremely accurate in everything we measure."

The Emery Winslow cells are manufactured for ultra durability and are immune to water and electrical damage because the electronics are located outside the processing area. Only the heavy-gauge stainless cells themselves are located in the processing rooms.

"Initially these load cells were more expensive than the electronic ones we had been using," Boylan admits. "But they've performed quite well, and (Emery Winslow) is there to support us with anything we need."

Overall, Berk's prides itself on delivering top-quality products and service. "That's the way we do business," Boylan says. "And that's the relationship we've had with Emery Winslow."

For more info on Emery Winslow load cells call 203/881-9333.



Emery Winslow Scale Co.

73 Cogwheel Lane • Seymour, CT 06483
(203) 881-9333 • Fax (203) 881-9477 • www.emerywinslow.com