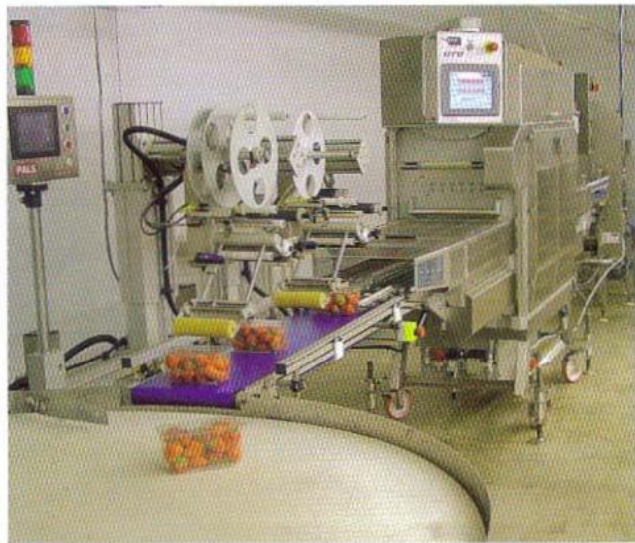


Achieving the largest output with the smallest footprint



The simplicity of the machines is their strength

One of the UK's foremost soft-fruit marketing companies is working with Proseal as its supplier of choice for heat-sealing equipment for top-sealing its fruit punnets. To date, the BerryWorld grower base has installed 12 Proseal GT1 and GT2 machines across the UK

BerryWorld was established in 1994 and specialises in soft fruit, accounting for a large proportion of supplies to UK multiple retailers. The company represents growers covering more than 2,500 acres of soft-fruit production in the UK and throughout the world, ensuring year-round supply and enabling it to offer the widest selection of berries and currants.

Heat-sealing fruit punnets, as opposed to clip-on lids, are helping growers to reduce packaging weight by 30 per cent. With the large volumes BerryWorld handles, it is imperative that neither packing speed nor product quality is compromised in the change of pack format, and for these reasons the company investigated the choice of equipment on the market thoroughly.

"We trialled all the major manufacturers to determine the best equipment for our specific needs and Proseal came out on top," explains BerryWorld's supply chain manager Wickus Olivier. "The simplicity of the machines is their greatest strength.

They are robust and reliable, easy to operate and deliver the high speeds that we require – averaging 70 punnets per minute, while the GT2 is capable of achieving up to 95 or 100 punnets when necessary.

"Equally important, both the GT1 and GT2 have the smallest footprint of all the models we tested and this is a critical benefit for many of our growers, whose packhouses were not designed for large pieces of equipment. With Proseal, we are able to achieve the largest output from the smallest footprint."

The GF1 and GT2 feature an infeed conveyor and tray-positioning system that enables them to achieve and maintain high throughput speeds. A film-feed system provides enhanced control of the sealing operation for improved seal quality, with easy film threading and dynamic control of the movement of the film throughout the feed cycle in order to maintain constant tension and avoid film snapping.

Proseal's advanced Auto-Tool allows tool changes to be carried out in around two minutes and an intuitive touch-screen control optimises fast set up and ensures ease of operation. The touch screen can also be viewed and controlled remotely and provides detailed production data and

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monitoring, as well as full diagnostics.

Olivier says the high performance of the Proseal infeed system in particular is critical to maintaining a consistent throughput to match the speed of the sealer. "There is little point in having a machine capable of 90 packs per minute if the infeed is only capable of 70," he points out. "The infeed needs to ensure a minimum, but also a consistent

volume from the individual weighing stations at all times. The Proseal tray sealers are extremely competent in this area and seem to have the edge over their competitors.

"We have been impressed with the high level of service provided by Proseal," continues Olivier. "The company is dedicated to making things work for its customers. While the equipment is very reliable, where there have been problems, Proseal devoted an engineer to us to ensure the situation was resolved as quickly as possible."

BerryWorld has enjoyed consistently strong growth since the company was founded, reaching an annual turnover of £150 million last year. The soft-fruit market as a whole remains one of the fastest-growing sectors within fresh produce.

"With this level of growth, any investment in equipment has got to be on the basis that the machines can not only meet our current requirements but continue to make a contribution in the years ahead," concludes Olivier. "With Proseal, we are confident we have a partner who will be with us every step of the way."

To that end, Proseal has recognised that any developments in lid materials need to be conducive with existing sealing technology. The company is therefore working with all the major lid material companies in the development of resealable films that operate in the same way as current materials. Such an approach will provide future proofing for Proseal's sealing systems. In addition, all Proseal equipment is already modified atmosphere packing (MAP) capable, which will ensure a smooth technology transfer as and when MAP processes or films are introduced.

The excellent performance of the BerryWorld lines has also led the company to recommend Proseal to its Spanish suppliers and Proseal equipment has now been installed in several Spanish soft-fruit packing operations.