



Pocino Foods finds new IQF “wave” freezer from Linde ends flighted freezer headaches

Business benefits

When Pocinos replaced their existing flighted freezer with the Cryoline® CW they:

- Increased their production capacity across different product lines
- Reduced their production downtime for cleaning thanks to the hygienic design
- Improved their cryogen efficiency thanks to the innovative Cryowave technology
- Improved their operational efficiencies

The demands of the food industry mean that food manufacturers are constantly looking to enhance production efficiencies, maximize production line capacity and improve quality control. As part of a plant expansion project, Pocino Foods installs the new Cryoline® CW IQF freezer to update their IQF product line and increase their current capacities.

The issue

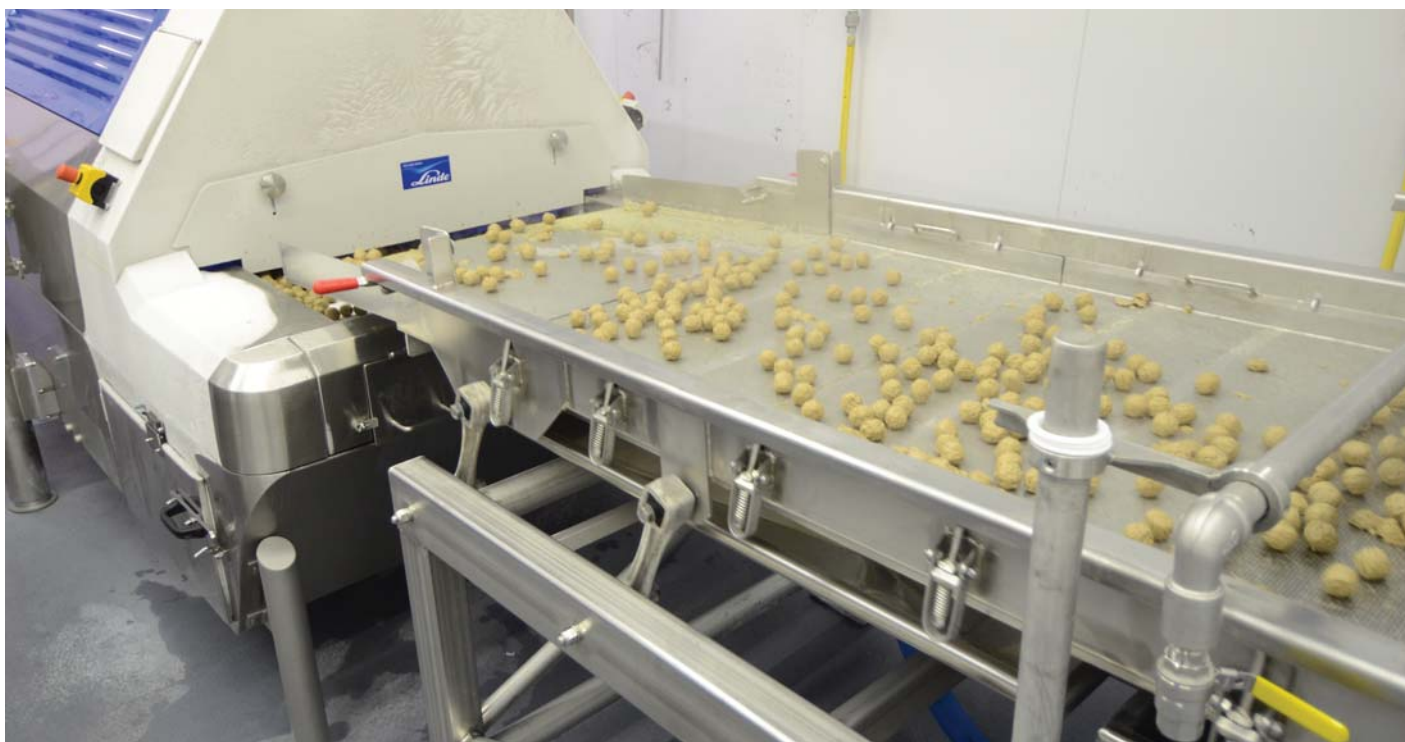
Now in its 80th year, Pocino Foods based in California, USA has produced premium quality deli meats and innovative meat products since 1933. Time-honoured family recipes have been passed down through the generations, which have established Pocino's products as high quality items.

Today this includes traditional Italian, Hispanic, Asian and uniquely American meat products from individually quick frozen (IQF) items to deli meats and dry sausage – sold to retail and food service customers, and to

further processors and institutional markets for pizzas, frozen meals and other prepared foods. Close attention to freezing operations and plant hygiene help ensure quality.

As part of an \$8M plant expansion last year, the company added an additional quality control laboratory, completely isolated raw and finished goods processing and reviewed other areas of improvement. One of those was updating its IQF line for cooked sausage and meat mince, meatballs and sliced and diced beef products.





"It was time to replace the flighted freezer. It didn't have high enough capacity. CO₂ snow carryover was an issue and we wanted a freezer that was easier to clean and more sanitary," said Jerry Pocino, Vice President and son of President Frank Pocino, whose father founded the company.

The solution

Linde evaluated the operation and installed the new Cryoline® CW IQF freezer. The patented Cryoline® CW is the first cryogenic tunnel freezer with rolling-wave action to keep IQF items separate as they freeze. The rolling-wave is fully adjustable and gently tumbles Pocino's cooked products as they are quick frozen to lock in moisture and ensure each piece is individually frozen. After quick-freezing, products are sent to a pack-off area for weighing and sealing into bags, ranging from 225g to 4.5kg.

At Pocino, some meats are pre-cooked and diced before going through the Cryoline® CW tunnel freezer. Others, like meat mince, are extruded and continuous-cooked before spreading onto a conveyor on their way to the quick freezer.

The business benefits

With the old flighted freezer, CO₂ snow carryover would require clean out several times a day, contributing to product losses and cutting into operational efficiencies. The hygienically designed Cryoline® CW freezer uses smooth internal surfaces to help eliminate areas that can trap food particles and help reduce the chance of contamination. The top of the IQF tunnel freezer rises vertically to provide complete access for cleaning, and internal areas are sloped to a centre drain for easy washout. Pocino says the new Cryoline® CW freezer requires cleaning just once daily.

Pocino Foods runs two 9-hour shifts, 5 days a week, and the IQF line produces different cooked products every day – meatballs, pizza toppings and sliced and diced meats. The Linde food team provided training and worked with Pocino to program the new IQF freezer for each product using an easy to use touchpad.

The Cryoline® CW freezer can be equipped to use liquid nitrogen, but carbon dioxide (CO₂) was preferred in this case. The installation included ductwork for venting, and Linde's telemetry based gas monitoring system.

Jerry Pocino, Vice President

"We were looking for a freezer that would increase throughput, efficiency of CO₂, be more sanitary and easier to clean. We chose Linde, because we felt it met all those needs, and it has"

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