

## Meat Processing Edition

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### Gusto Satisfies Their Appetite For Inventory Control

Processing one million pounds of pork products each week and tracking lot numbers by hand is no easy task. At Gusto Packing, all incoming pork needs to be weighed, cooked, processed, packed, weighed again, and labeled for sale. Inventory tracking must be

in real-time and accurate for the plant to remain profitable.

Gusto Packing is a family owned business that operates out of Montgomery, Illinois. They have been in the pork packing business for the past 30 years. Bulk, raw pork arrives at Gusto in cardboard totes and is cured, cooked and packaged into finished product. Gusto's quality bacon and ham is distributed nationwide either under their brand name, or is privately labeled for other companies.

#### ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRACKING IS VITAL TO PRODUCT QUALITY

Trends in the meat packing and food industry in general is transitioning to improved traceability systems. This includes bar code tracking of products to create a link from a raw material's origin and processing, to distribution and location after delivery. Gusto Packing spent many years tracking incoming inventory and outgoing lot numbers manually. As a growing business, they knew that they needed a way to streamline their product tracking process to improve efficiency and inventory control.



Rafael Caballero Jr.,  
Vice President of Gusto.

In order to implement a more sophisticated system, Rafael Caballero Jr., vice president of Gusto, turned to Koehler Scale in Waukegan, Illinois. With a growing product line, Gusto needed components for a complete inventory solution.

This would include a series of bar code printers and intelligent weight indicators for their existing floor scales.

Koehler Scale recommended a series of SURVIVOR® SST2 direct thermal printers and two 920i digital indicators from Rice Lake Weighing Systems. These instruments would provide the sophistication required while withstanding the wash-down environment of Gusto's busy meat packing plant.

#### PRODUCT SPECIFICS AND SUPPORT

John Zegar, of Koehler Scale, has been using Rice Lake Weighing Systems equipment for many years.



The SST2 is a new product in Rice Lake's printer line with an armor-like exterior that seals out humidity and water. It prints at a high

density 203 dpi which gives Gusto shelf-ready labels, while the 12" per second print speed keeps Gusto ahead of their aggressive production goals. By combining the SST2 with the 920i, Zegar knew that Gusto would have a solution to enhance their inventory process for many years. Along with product durability, Gusto would receive prompt product support that's critical to their fast paced production. Caballero commented, "With our previous equipment we would some-



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times wait for days and even weeks for product support." With Rice Lake, they provide support on demand. Caballero noted, "I'd swear by the service that Rice Lake provides."

## A SMOOTH TRANSITION

With their new system, the pork products are weighed upon arrival on a floor scale that is connected to a 920i indicator and SST2 printer. Both the bacon processing room and ham processing room have this same configuration. Meat, seafood, vegetables and even cheese processing plants could also benefit from this type of set-up. It

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*Rafael Caballero Jr.*

allows employees to weigh the large cardboard totes, key a product type ID code into the 920i, and label the box. The label contains product description, weight, product code, lot number and a bar code. With the 920i's operator prompts, managing this part of the

process is very efficient. Two other SST2 printers are used in the final staging area for the bacon products. With their previous setup, a traditional pack off system was used, but the integration of bar code versus plain product labels provides Gusto greater

inventory tracking capabilities. In this last stage of packaging, a separate PC is used for sending the appropriate label information to the SST2. The case-ready label is applied to the products and then scanned into inventory. Caballero noted that it was a very easy transition incorporating the new equipment with no downtime.

## THE VALUE OF THE BAR CODE

The new equipment has provided Gusto a successful inventory solution. Bar coding gives the plant added tracking capabilities of lot numbers and provides accurate, real-time product yields. They also use the bar codes for billing purposes. Once a product is scanned as it leaves the building, the quantities are tallied and an e-mail is automatically sent to the office to process the billing.

The simplicity and flexibility of the 920i will allow Gusto to make continuous enhancements including additional memory for new product information, various communication protocols for networking, and multiple scales. The SST2 will maintain optimal performance for years of use and washdown. This combination successfully meets the demands of a busy meat packing company. Caballero is pleased with their new system noting, "It's worked out really well and we like it."

## LOVING THE ATTENTION

Gusto Packing Company is a leader in quality and operational excellence in the pork production business. They also get extra attention for their creative slogan. When asked where it came from Caballero said, "My dad came up with it years ago."

When asked if there was anymore to the story, he replied,

"Nope, but it sure gets us a lot of attention."

