

Sachsenmilch AG, Leppersdorf, Germany

# Safety for dairy products... with RFID



Creating logistics results:  
As part of a comprehensive plant expansion, Dematic acted as prime contractor to supply the conveyor components, the IT system for warehouse management and material flow control, and also handled the complete integration. In addition to increasing capacity, the goal of the project was to improve delivery punctuality and speed and to double picking and dispatch performance. This was achieved by a number of measures: optimizing the distances traveled in paperless order picking, the use of a highly dynamic buffer shelf for provision of the picked goods for a specific order at the right time, supplying of the goods on 66 gravity feed conveyors as and when needed by the unloading stations, and innovative use of RFID technology. The challenge: Management of the finished goods warehouse for dry substances must be one hundred percent reliable, and must ensure that a product and the batch it came from can be traced

effectively. It must be possible to carry out this function efficiently and reliably in a manually controlled satellite warehouse. Operating errors can only be prevented by means of systematic IT support for prompting the user. RFID provides assistance here through automatic locking of process steps that are not permitted.

Our solution: In the finished goods warehouse for dry substances, the storage and retrieval process is supported with RFID in a manually controlled satellite warehouse with 2,600 positions. This is not only a more efficient solution for material transport but is also more reliable than solutions in the past. Each of the 420 individual channels is equipped with RFID tags, and the RFID reader is mounted on the fork lift truck. The pallets themselves will continue to be marked with a barcode for the time being.

The labeling of the channels with RFID tags is advantageous in this case since

they are less prone to damage or soiling. An additional factor is that with front loading of the channel, the identification of a barcode is significantly more time-consuming because of the distance to the scanner and the time taken for aiming.

Creating Logistics Results



Dematic has solved this problem by upgrading its own Dematic IT warehouse management system with the RFID-assisted processes, and by implementing it on the terminals on the forklift truck and integrating it with the RFID readers. When the pallet is received, the forklift truck reads the barcode to enable it to store the pallet in the warehouse.

The transport order generated by the warehouse administration system is carried out and automatically acknowledged by the RFID tag at the storage position.

In this way the pallet is booked to the destination channel in the warehouse administration system. Thanks to the position management in the warehouse management system, it is possible to see clearly at any time which pallet is in which position of the channel. Retrieval is verified in a two-stage process. Firstly, the slot is acknowledged via the automatic reading of

the transponder. To achieve the one hundred percent security demanded by food producers, the barcode label is then identified additionally with a unique identification on the pallet. This is necessary because manual storage processes cannot be ruled out entirely, especially in channels with free access from the side, e.g. in the case of damage to goods.

This two-stage identification indicates possible incorrect storage early on, corrects it and thus rules out this possibility.

The advantages of fast, trouble-free acquisition of the storage slot coordinates are a key factor in this Sachsenmilch solution.

The solution implemented offers a very high degree of flexibility and reliability within the environment of a manually controlled warehouse.

Benefits for Sachsenmilch:

- Fast, trouble-free acquisition of the storage slot coordinates
- Maximum flexibility in the operation of the manually controlled warehouse
- One hundred percent certain identification and proactive avoidance of incorrect storage

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The customer: Sachsenmilch AG, Leppersdorf, is part of the Theo Müller Group, which is best known for its Müller-Milch brand.

The Leppersdorf location just outside Dresden is one of the most modern milk processing plants in Europe, and is the headquarters of Sachsenmilch AG. Approximately 1.5 billion liters of milk are processed here annually.

The unique arrangement of five dairy operations under one roof allows production of fresh dairy products of the Müller and Sachsenmilch brands, the traditional basic products milk and butter, as well as cheese products such as mozzarella and sliced cheese. Low-cost own-brand products for retail chains and special products, such as various sorts of dried milk powder, are also produced here.

High standards of reliability in production, and product quality that is tested daily, ensure the firm's position as the leading dairy company in the German market.

