

Drew's LLC Earns SQF 2000 Code of Food Safety

By Eriez

Today's consumers are demanding safer, healthier foods. That demand moves down the chain with retailers and foodservice providers asking manufacturers to provide verifiable proof those food safety systems have been effectively implemented.



Drew's LLC, which began operations in 1995, has taken this nationwide initiative to a high level with operational procedures and technologically innovative equipment specifically installed to meet rigid food safety guidelines.

To remain competitive in the demanding and highly scrutinized food industry, Drew's achieved certification in early 2011 from the Safe Quality Food (SQF) Institute in meeting the SQF 2000 Code of Food Safety. This accomplishment was the culmination of employee training and facility improvements that took place during the second half of 2010 at the company's Chester, Vermont processing and distribution center.

According to Chief Operating Officer John Cummings, certification was earned in part because the company installed an Eriez® E-Z Tec® DSP Liquid Line Metal Detector in November 2010 to detect metal contamination in their all-natural dressings and salsas prior to being bottled. Drew's previously installed an aperture style E-Z Tec DSP Metal Detector at the end of its production line to inspect the capped bottles prior to being packaged in cartons and shipped to hundreds of stores. With the two metal detectors in place, Drew's has double protection against any sort of metal particulate reaching customers.

"The SQF certification is important to independently verify our food safety procedures," Cummings says. "We intend to maintain a leadership position in quality management systems and this achievement gives us a competitive advantage in the industry. We are confident in our ability to guarantee our products are of the highest quality."

"There's no question that the Eriez metal detectors helped us achieve the SQF certification," he adds. "The products are some of our Critical Control Points and they make our inspection process much more robust and credible. The certification was a nice win for us and the Eriez metal detectors were a part of that."

According to the SQF Institute, the Level 2 certification doesn't stop at just assessing risk. SQF 2000 is about limiting food safety incidents and recalls. It's also unique among certification programs in that it focuses on safety and quality, giving retailers and foodservice providers around the world even more reason to seek out manufacturers, processors and distributors that have earned SQF 2000 certification.

Chef Drew's Inspiration

Drew's LLC began in 1995 with a line of all natural salad dressings and marinades first offered at the prestigious Deerfield Inn in historic Deerfield, MA.



Customers asked for bottles of the dressing to take home and the fledgling business began to grow. Within a year, regional natural food distributors picked up the line, making it available in hundreds of stores in the northeastern United States. In 1999, after outgrowing the initial production facility, the company opened a 40,000 square foot, state-of-the-art facility in Chester, VT, increasing production by 800 percent.

In 2001, Drew's achieved organic cer-

tification for its production facility and that same year, the company introduced its line of all-natural salsas, including hot, medium and mild. In 2003, the original salsa varieties became USDA Certified Organic, while Drew's introduced a fourth variety: double roasted salsa. Then in 2004, Drew's was awarded registration by NSF International, the not-for-profit health and safety conformity assessment company, for complying with its stringent Food Manufacturing Practices.

Metal Detectors Bring another Level of Product Purity

Attention to foreign material prevention is a mainstay at Drew's LLC. All natural and organic dressings and organic salsas flow through an Eriez E-Z Tec DSP Liquid Line Metal Detector to ensure the fresh product is free of metal contamination. When metal is detected in the product flow, a reject signal is channeled to one of the available output relays and is used to activate a reject ball valve.

Once the bottles are filled and capped before shipment, they are conveyed through an aperture style E-Z Tec DSP Metal Detector for further inspection. All bottles with plastic lids are sent through the metal detector, while some salsa bottles and jars with metal lids do



not go through the E-Z Tec, according to Cummings.

The Eriez E-Z Tec DSP Metal Detector is particularly useful in harsh environments because of its stainless steel design. The oscillator and receiving coils are wound on a rigid frame and encapsulated in a stainless steel shell. The control is housed in a water-tight, dust-tight and corrosion-resistant stainless steel enclosure (NEMA-4X).

One benefit of the DSP is the ease of operation and set-up with the touch screen (1/4 VGA) interface. The 4" x 5" wide angled control with backlit screen allows the user to quickly make changes to the metal detector without having to scroll through different menus. Numeric data and value entries are made through the on-screen keypad.

The DSP model also offers calibra-

tion verification; reject confirmation and quick recovery after detection of tramp metal. The compact cabinet design allows for installation where space is at a premium.

According to Cummings, metal contamination can enter the processing stage at various touch points, starting with supplier ingredients. "We use only the best suppliers, but sometimes contamination can occur with open bags and during the filling stage. That's why the Eriez metal detectors give us an additional peace of mind and make sure we are meeting those Critical Control Points."

Eriez is recognized as an authority in advanced technology for magnetic, vibratory and inspection applications. The company's magnetic separation, metal detection, X-ray, materials feeding, screening, conveying and controlling equipment have application in the process, plastics, metalworking, packaging, recycling, mining, aggregate and textile industries. Eriez manufactures and markets these products through 12 international facilities located on six continents. For more information, call toll-free 888.300.ERIEZ (3743) within the U.S. and Canada. For online users, visit www.eriez.com or send e-mail to eriez@eriez.com.