



Case Study

PARADISE FOODS PROFITS WITH LOMA

In the quest to live healthier lifestyles and feel more virtuous, today's consumers just can't get enough fruit - and the more conveniently it comes, the better. Pre-packed and prepared exotic fruits now enjoy a prominent place on the shelves of our supermarkets. The average Brit is getting more adventurous and is prepared to pay a premium for that taste of paradise in a clean, convenient consumer pack.

With this in mind, Tyneside-based Paradise Foods first turned to Loma Systems in September 2000 to help guarantee consistency and quality in its range of prepared and packed exotic fruits, which includes fruit salads, mangoes, kiwis and pineapples. Loma's AS series combined metal detector and checkweigher model not only ensures that packs reach the shelves contaminant-free and at the correct weight, but most importantly, prevents product from being literally 'given away'. And with a customer base comprising of the major multiples in the UK and Eire, the importance of maintaining margins has never been greater!

Having built up its reputation as a key supplier to the retailers, Paradise Foods is keen to keep tight controls on production processes. Manufacturing Director, Steve Neale comments: "Loma supplied the AS series with its LomaNet hardware, which we are using as a management tool to translate batch information directly onto our computer system. This way, we can guarantee compliance with the Weights and Measures Act, get a good indication of where we are in the production plan and also monitor product overfill".



LomaNet makes the information accessible and convenient. It can be used to network multiple devices and give an overall picture of line performance. Now that these have been linked with LomaNet, Paradise operatives have a comprehensive data capture system and no longer need to waste time 'number-crunching' data from different machines.

The company is currently reaping the benefits of buoyant market conditions. Demand for pre-packed fruit has soared over the past few years for a number of reasons: Fruit is increasingly seen as a meal replacement by the office lunch set; the population is becoming more health-conscious, and consumers are turning to fruit due to concerns about food safety in other sectors, such as meat. The pace of life means that people favour convenient solutions and handy portion-sized packs. As a result of these trends, Paradise Foods has increased its turnover by 60% in a single year and doubled its workforce since Christmas.

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The growth in staff and turnover goes hand in hand with the introduction of more automated manufacturing processes. The purchase of the first Loma AS series was part of this development programme and the company plans to add a further production line in the near future. There is

already a second AS series on order and Steve Neale is looking to replace the 3 older checkweighers, which are becoming harder to service.

Steve Neale continues, "The Loma AS series have been supplied to a specification which will allow us to operate at twice the current speed as our volumes increase. We run 16 hours per day, 7 days a week to service the retailers, who order at 7am and require dispatch the same evening. At the moment, there are 5 filling lines packing around 200,000 units per week, but this is growing all the time."

"We opted for the AS series because it is compact enough to fit on the production line where space is limited due to the over-wrapping machine. Our operatives also received comprehensive training during the commissioning phase and can call in the support of Loma engineers if necessary."

Loma's Product Manager for checkweighers, Alan Johnson comments, "Paradise Foods selected Loma, because its technology is tried and tested and the equipment is robust and reliable. As checkweighers are part of our core offering, they valued our long-term commitment to the development of the product range and knew that obsolescence would not be an issue in the future."
