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ON FURTHER INSPECTION, HAVE YOU KEPT UP?

Legislation and regulation dictate that all food processors and manufacturers must have adequate inspection processes in place to prevent and inspect for dangerous contaminants. Not only this, but retailers now impose strict standards on manufacturers regarding the inspection measures they require in order for them to sell a product from a particular manufacturer.

Inspection technology specialists can help food processors meet both the Food Standards Agency's, HACCP and retailers' requirements and help ensure that costly product recalls are avoided.

To inspect for contaminants, manufacturers have two main choices: metal detection or X-ray inspection. Metal detection has been available for a number of years, but the latest advances in metal detection technology mean that systems are now even more sensitive to metal contaminants, as well as being more user friendly and designed with features to meet the increasing demands of food manufacturers.

Previously, metal detectors had to be configured for each product being inspected. The latest developments in metal detection technology mean that detectors can operate at any frequency between 40kHz and 900kHz and have the ability to select the 'correct' operating frequency in seconds, eliminating the past restrictions caused by single and 'limited' frequency detectors.

This feature makes it ideal for the food and packaging industries as major changes in product and packaging no longer require the expense and inconvenience of engineer set up and production downtime is minimised.

Loma, the inspection technology specialists, have been pioneers in developing this technology and have brought to market their multi frequency IQ³ and IQ³⁺ detectors.

Loma's new IQ³⁺ has further enhanced their IQ³ multi-frequency metal detector for improved ease of use. Their new IQ³⁺ incorporates an icon driven, intuitive full colour graphical touch screen, making it even simpler for operators to use and achieve maximum functionality from the machine.

But metal detection is not the only option for contaminant detection. X-ray inspection is becoming increasingly popular as the inspection method of choice amongst food processors.

The most advanced X-ray systems can now perform multi functions, adding value for manufacturers. In addition, more and more processors can see the benefit of X-ray's advanced inspection abilities. The latest X-ray systems maximise sensitivity to both metal and non-metallic contaminants such as glass, stone, calcified bone, high-density plastics and rubber and can detect other product defects such as component count, zone mass measurement and shape conformity.

The EU now requires all food businesses to implement a documented food safety management system based on the principles of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP), and leading European supermarkets are driving through X-ray inspection as a 'Code of Practice' for foil or metallised product packaging, meaning reliable and more sensitive X-ray technology is increasingly in demand.

Loma has continued to develop its inspection technology and have produced a new, advanced X-weigh system that combines the best of their top quality,

robust X-ray and checkweighing technology. The 'X-weigh' enables the X-ray system to weigh the product whilst simultaneously inspecting for foreign body contaminants in one compact and easy to use format. The combination of the two technologies ensures that food manufacturers' produce is safe and products are consistent in weight, size and shape.

Lastly, with any piece of inspection equipment, manufacturers must consider the robustness and hygienic design of the machine, as without the ability to withstand the harsh washdown procedures (IP69K standards for example) required by some manufacturers, processors can be in breach of the Food Standards Agency's stipulations. All Loma metal detectors, for example, meet IP69K standards and their entire range is designed to survive even the harshest of manufacturing environments.

By utilising the latest advances in inspection equipment, food processors can stay ahead of regulation and streamline production. Most importantly, by employing the most up-to-date and effective contaminant detection techniques, processors can protect their brand and reputation.

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Note to editors:

Part of ITW (www.itw.com), Spectrum Inspection Systems Ltd is the holding company for Loma Systems and Cintex brands, leading global suppliers of metal detection, checkweighing, X-ray inspection, temperature measurement and management information systems that help manufacturers in keeping food safe. Spectrum is an international operation with direct manufacturing, sales and service bases in the UK, USA, Canada, South America, China, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Czech Republic and Poland. Loma and Cintex have a reputation for their robust and reliable machines that are designed to survive even the harshest of environments.

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