



NEWS FEATURE

Loma's highly accurate checkweighers offer benefits to processors, retailers and consumers

Food prices are increasing at their highest rate for more than a decade. The increases are being driven by rising dairy and meat prices, coupled with the growing cost in oil and global shortages of key crops, caused both by adverse weather and the demand created by China's rampant economic growth.

After a decade of falling food prices, staples such as grain and milk are becoming more expensive around the world. This comes as consumers in developing economies become richer and demand for food increases. These surging costs are having a knock-on effect to UK consumers, who are experiencing the highest food bills for years, and who could end up spending almost £1,000 extra on their annual food bill. Basic essential items such as flour, eggs, cheese and margarine have soared to record prices - for example, the price of cheddar cheese has risen by 19 percent since last year.

Consumers must now carefully choose products as price becomes a dominant consideration in the weekly shopping trolley. Consumers are calling for easier to understand price structures and simpler pricing. The EU legislation that protects consumers against short measures puts even greater pressure on food producers to accurately measure their products and ensure that prices and weights are correct and that under-weights and over-weights are kept to a minimum. The regulations recognise that there are inherent fluctuations in the automatic packing process so there are tolerances for small differences, but these need to be strictly enforced.

Loma Systems, leading global suppliers of checkweighing, metal detection, and X-ray inspection equipment, recently launched their CW³ Checkweigher, which is designed to help producers meet these increasingly strict weight regulations.

Pre-packed cheese is a good example of the changing attitude to prices and weights. Traditionally, cheese was cut to a particular size rather than packed to a particular weight. This meant that consumers had to check each wedge of cheese before purchase, as every individual wedge had a different price dependant on its weight.

In a modern retailing situation, it is not efficient to price each slice individually, and as a consequence many food producers use automatic checkweighing to simplify this process and ensure product labelling is accurate.

The Loma CW³ is extremely accurate, and can easily be integrated into high-speed processing lines with belt speeds up to 120m/min, making this unit ideal for today's high volume production lines. Fast and accurate, the CW³ is ideal for cheese producers as it can cope with a wide range of flexible and rigid packs weighing up to 1.5kg.

The needs of producers and retailers were a key consideration in the development of the CW³ Checkweigher, as Managing Director of Loma Systems Simon Spencer explains, "New trends in pricing mean there has never been a greater need for weight accuracy in industrial food production. Loma works closely with its customers to provide the best solutions to real, everyday needs, and the feedback we got was that accurate weighing in a fast-paced food preparation environment is essential."

Constructed of stainless steel, right down to the bearings and rollers, the CW³ Checkweigher will happily endure real-world production line conditions and the inevitably intensive cleaning processes required to maintain hygiene standards. The design is easy to clean, having paid keen attention to minimising bug-traps, and the bead-blast surface of the machine is water-repellent to stop cleaning solutions settling. This dramatically cuts drying times – a significant consideration in any cleaning regime. Quick-release mechanisms for conveyors and other attachments also make cleaning easier and further reduce the potential for dirt to build-up.

User-friendly touch screen controls offer simple, multi-lingual operation for a wide variety of operators. With this increased flexibility, the unit can easily adapt to weighing new or changing products and pack sizes, and can even be switched to other production lines or manufacturing plants, should the need arise.

The checkweigher has a simple USB connection and a PC interface making it easy to produce reports and statistics and to download these either to a memory stick or to a factory network. This is ideal for reporting on and monitoring operations to ensure production meets stringent weight regulations.

Added to this, Loma have made sure the CW³ Checkweigher is fully compatible with their IQ³ metal detector so both systems can be used simultaneously, controlled via the same panel. This system will store the product weight details and contaminant detection requirements of dozens of products, so that safely changing products on the line and maintaining accuracy is quick and easy. This feature is particularly useful in applications such as cheese packing, where it brings about both a significant reduction in downtime and a major improvement in food product safety.

Loma constantly listen to their customers to ensure they build machines that the food industry requires. In the context of a growing demand for increased weighing accuracy in food production, the new CW³ Checkweigher is right on target.

For more information please visit www.loma.com or contact +44 (0) 1252 893300.

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Note to editors:

Loma Systems is a leading global supplier of metal detection, checkweighing, X-ray inspection, and management information systems that help food manufacturers keep their products safe. Loma 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 has a reputation for its robust and reliable machines that are *designed to survive* even the harshest of production environments.
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