

Insulating doors for “udder”ly awesome milk

Tradition, quality, and pioneering technology are top priority for the Berchtesgadener Land dairy plant.

Combine dairy cows, smart controls, the finest mountain vegetation, efficient machine protection doors, committed farmers, fast operating speeds, 1,700 farms, one cooperative and 300 million kilogrammes of milk per year: the recipe for the success of the Berchtesgadener Land dairy.

Founded by 54 farmers in 1927, the dairy cooperative has added more and more ingredients to this strategy. Starting off as a small concern, it has developed into the premium dairy of today which processes and purifies the milk from the area between the Watzmann and Zugspitze incorporating the highest standards of hygiene. State-of-the art systems, including EFAFLEX high-speed doors, guarantee that fresh products and long-life milk arrive at the right place and at the right time.

“The most important thing for me is the reliability of the EFAFLEX doors,” says Johann Hager, their Senior Technical Manager, when giving a reason for using 93 of the world leading manufacturer’s industrial high-speed doors.

All of the dairy’s loaded pallets of produce pass through the EFA-SRT® MS Machine Protection doors which open and close every minute, as part of their journey from production onto the electronically controlled rail conveyors. “We can’t afford any downtime of the doors. This would cripple the entire logistics process. In half an hour, 90 pallets leave the production area. They would stop on their respective conveyor line instead of being transported into the chilled high bay warehouse.”

EFAFLEX’s space saving, self-contained design of the EFA-SRT®MS machine protection doors make them ideally suited as movable separating guards, as they are performance level “d” and can be adapted perfectly to the required safety devices. They are exclusively used to lock openings in or around machines in accordance with the Machinery Directive 2006/42/EC. They outperform others due to their extraordinary resilience and stability, capable of up to 250,000 operating cycles per year. The EFA-SRT® MS

door leaf is fully transparent and equipped with warning strips, with coloured, highly tear-resistant, and transversely stable curtains are also available as standard. All curtain versions are free from substances that could interfere with the lacquering process.

The interplay between a high-performance frequency inverter controller and a functionally adapted drive makes the high cycle rate of up to seven cycles per minute possible in production processes. Because of the lack of a weight counterbalance mechanism, the side frames are extremely slim, meaning that any maintenance work or spare parts required are reduced significantly.

A transparent cover provides a clear view of the integrated safety end-limit switch of cat. 4 / PI »e« according to DIN EN ISO 13849- 1. Thanks to the optional floor supports, the safety devices can also be installed as a stand-alone system, with any uneven ground compensated using levelling screws.

“Green” and sustainable

All products which are deposited within the 20,000 pallet bays in the three high-bay warehouses are channelled via the EFAFLEX doors.

All three warehouses are completely automated. Two of the buildings are cold storage buildings which are maintained at 4 degrees Celsius. “We are a sustainable operation throughout,” explains Andreas Koch, Deputy Technical Manager. “This includes and ranges from reducing the fuel consumption for our milk vans thanks to more modern vehicles and route optimisation, right up to completely foregoing PET bottles and using cardboard packaging made from renewable raw materials. It is clear that we are also trying to keep the energy costs of operating our high-bay warehouses as low as possible for climate protection.” The exceptionally insulated EFA-SST®-L Premium spiral doors support these efforts of the dairy cooperative in every respect. They reduce exposure and the loss of cold air due to their rapid opening and closing speeds, with a keep-open time of a mere ten seconds!

EFAFLEX doors: Customer oriented and industry specific

“The EFAFLEX portfolio offers doors for almost all areas of use, and the advice given by their field service technicians is specifically tailored to the installation issue,” Johann Hager describes the excellent cooperation with the door manufacturer. “We need doors that are suitable for the conveyor lines, and also use their stainless-steel effect cleanroom doors for the hygiene locks between the first production building and the bottling plant.” The maintenance costs for the doors are very low according to Johann Hager. “The customer service is excellent, and they arrive on site quickly when we need it.

We are also planning a further 23 new doors for the fourth production building in the dairy. If the budget allows it, we will also work with EFAFLEX again here,” says Johann Hager, smiling.

Fair prices for high quality

Being cost effective is a top priority in the Berchtesgadener Land dairies, especially when it comes to fair milk prices for members of the cooperative. Even in years of crisis, the farmers always received remuneration which was higher than the average across the whole of Germany and Austria. This is how the dairies reward the considerable extra effort made by the small, mostly traditional family run businesses, with an average of 27 dairy cows, to produce the best quality milk. These days, more than one third of all farmers in the dairy cooperative are certified organic. “Berchtesgadener Land” is Bavaria’s oldest organic dairy, with its heritage dating back to 1973. 100 Demeter and 460 Naturland farms deliver their milk to the dairy every day.

The conventional products are sold in Germany, but the organic products are also exported to Austria, Italy, the Benelux countries, Spain, Greece, and France.

With fair milk prices, the dairy contributes to maintaining the small farm structures and conserving the natural and cultural landscape of the Alps region. The ban on universal herbicides such as glyphosate, the rejection of genetic engineering and only purchasing their feed in Europe, combined with the fair principles in working with suppliers, customers and employees were further reasons behind the dairy being given the German Sustainability Award in 2019.

You could say it is “Udder”ly awesome!