

Organic pretzel pioneer

HUOBER-BREZEL SPECIALISES IN PRODUCING ORGANIC QUALITY SALTED PRETZELS AND PRETZEL STICKS, AND SUPPLIES THE RETAIL AND CATERERS IN GERMANY AND ABROAD. THE PRODUCTION OPERATION IS BEING MODERNISED CONTINUOUSLY WITHIN DEFINED BOUNDS, THE FOCUS BEING ON PRODUCTION QUALITY AND THE EMPLOYEES



++ figure 1
The cut-out pretzels on their way to lye glazing

+ CEO Karl Huober regards the company community as an employment initiative with shared tasks and themes, e.g. the conscious design of the world of work. The company places great value in its training on personal development and the targeted development of social competence. In addition to social commitment and social educational projects at home and abroad, Karl Huober is also an active board member of the Association of Ecological Food Manufacturers e. V., Bad Brückenau, and with his company ErdmannHAUSER Cereal Products GmbH, Erdmannhausen, the business has been dedicated for many years to breeding organic seeds.

Organic pretzel production

The specialisation at Huober-Brezel has been on the manufacture of organic quality salted pretzels and pretzel sticks and Demeter long-life baked goods. The company purchases cereals as far as possible from Baden-Württemberg or from farmers and mills in the region.

Wheat and spelt flour from six outdoor silos moves to the dough preparation unit via automatic weighing equipment. Mixing and kneading is performed by two mixers from the Diosna Dierks & Söhne GmbH Company, Osnabrück, Germany. A total of three lines are responsible for pretzel manufacture in the production unit. They are able to produce baked goods with weights ranging from 1.2 to 21 g.

In principle there is no difference between the plants. After mixing, the dough is rolled out through two roller stations to the necessary dough sheet thickness. However, the line



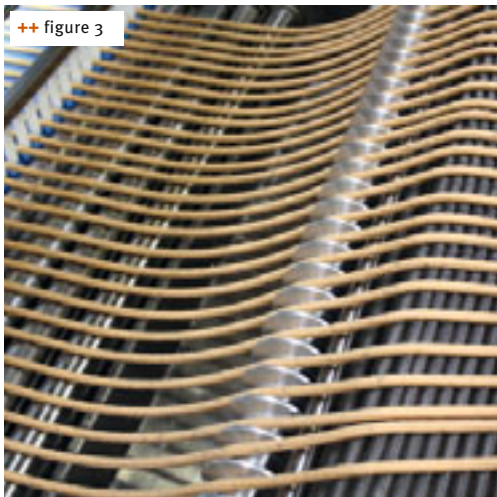
++ figure 2
Huober-Brezel is a specialist manufacturer of ecological quality salted pretzels

for small pretzels has a special feature because the pretzels are punched out by a roller. This is a patented technology of the Werner & Pfleiderer Industrielle Backtechnik GmbH Company in Tamm, Germany.

A reciprocating punch creates the pretzel shape in the other two plants. The remaining dough, which still amounts to around 2/3 of the total amount of dough, is recycled into the fresh dough. The high quality of the baked goods is important to the company, which is why low-pressure extrusion is avoided at Huober. The dough needs time to develop and produce flavour. The purpose of a large volume of baked goods in this process is to increase the quality of the baked

Huober-Brezel

Emil Huober founded the First Württemberg Pretzel Factory, now the Huober-Brezel GmbH & Co. KG Company, in 1950. His son Karl, a social scientist and philosopher, took over the company in 1980 and steadily expanded the enterprise. Three years later, Karl Huober started converting the business to organic production. All the baked goods leaving the production site in Erdmannhausen over the past 15 years have been of organic quality. The business employs a workforce of 150 and is thus one of the biggest employers in the town. Production takes place in two shifts on five days of the week. Night shifts are only worked at peak times. +++



++ figure 3
The company offers sticks and pretzel sticks in various lengths and weight ranges



++ figure 4
Processing sticks such as grissini, beer sticks and salty pretzel sticks on modern plants; 12-15 t of baked goods leave the entire production unit every day

products. This is why the dough pieces, after being shaped, pass into a proofing channel installed directly above the three-deck stone slab continuous ovens.

Proofing is followed by lye glazing. The dough pieces pass through the lye bath on a positive guidance system using a wire mesh belt, after which they are sprinkled with salt or seeds depending on the baked product. Next the large pretzels enter the oven at around 290 °C. After being baked, the baked products must only have a very small residual moisture content, which is one of the most important quality criteria to ensure that the products have a long shelf life.

A total of around 160 pretzels/min, each weighing between 20.5–21 g, leaves the third line.

Salty pretzel sticks and beer sticks

As well as manufacturing pretzels, the company also specialises in the production of sticks such as grissini, beer sticks and salty pretzel sticks. This plant is also supplied with dough by two Diosna mixers. The dough travels over a plastic conveyor belt, through a feed hopper and into the plant, where intake rollers ensure that the dough is shaped into a dough sheet. A total of five roller stations finally bring the dough to the required thickness. A transverse roll then cuts the dough sheet into strips which are spread and/or separated, followed by cutting with a guillotine. The dough sticks remain on aluminium baking trays in a paternoster proofing cabinet for 45 minutes. Before being baked in a wire mesh belt oven, the sticks are sprayed with water or seeded with salt, caraway, spices, cheese or wild garlic.

12–15 t of baked goods leave the entire production unit every day and further growth is planned in the “Sticks” area, for which the bakery is investing in a new plant to clean the baking trays. The final choice was for a Belt 800 food, developed and marketed by the Plasser GmbH Company, Sipbachzell, Austria, and the Anneliese Mertes GmbH Company, Eschweiler, Germany. One challenge when implementing this was the integration of the tray cleaning plant into the existing line. This was made possible by the simple integration of the new plant into the existing control system.

The Belt 800 uses counter-rotating brushes to clean the trays. These Nylon brushes with three different strengths (soft brushes for flour, harder brushes for salt) gently remove flour, sesame, poppy or dough residues from the baking trays. The brushes are adjustable to the contamination level and type of tray. Anneliese’s Sales Manager Frank Hofmann explains that the brushes are easy to change. The brushes should be changed after around 2,000 hours of operation.

The residues produced by the dry cleaning drop into the plant’s collection container, which staff empty at regular intervals. The plant is also mobile, which makes it simple to remove from the line to allow easy cleaning of the machine.

In addition to the Belt 800, a buffer tray store for 30 trays and a tray oiling module were also installed at Huober-Brezel. The release agent is applied over the whole area without causing any mist. Finely adjustable sensors here ensure the required duration of spraying and economical consumption of release agents. All the usual release oils and release waxes can be used via drum and canister systems. All that still needs improvement are the trays; these give way sporadically and thus cleaning is not entirely satisfactory.

The organic pretzel pioneer also intends to modernise production further in 2012. For example, investments including the purchase of a new continuous oven are planned. +++

ADVERTISEMENT



Quality-brand and freshness with long tradition

KOENIG The Nut specialists

...einfach kernig!

Almond- Hazelnut- and Peanut-Products, roasted, sliced, diced and slivered. Hazelnutfilling and Multi-Crunch.

Please ask for products meeting your specifications.

KOENIG BACKMITTEL GMBH & CO. KG • Postfach 1453 • D-59444 Werl
Tel. 02922/9753-0 • Fax 02922/9753-99
E-Mail: info@koenig-backmittel.de • Internet: www.koenig-backmittel.de