

# Non-stop pizza production

PIZZA IS ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL BAKED GOODS WORLDWIDE. IN PARTICULAR, THE FROZEN PIZZA SECTOR IS BOOMING AND SALES ARE CONSTANTLY GROWING. WITH THIS DEVELOPMENT, THE TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS ALSO INCREASE. DOUGH TECHNOLOGIST, **THOMAS SPATH** AT FRITSCH BTT, MEINBERNHEIM, GERMANY, EXPLAINS TO BAKING + BISCUIT INTERNATIONAL WHAT IS IMPORTANT IN THE PRODUCTION OF FROZEN PIZZA



**+ bbi:** The first frozen pizza was launched in Germany, in 1970. How has production advanced since that time?

**+ Thomas Spath:** The major progress has been made by the engineers in terms of gentle handling of dough. In particular, the laminating technology is much more advantageous than the former ball and press process.

**+ bbi:** To what degree is automation applied during the production of frozen pizza today?

**+ Spath:** In general, everything can be automated from the weighing of raw materials to dough preparation, moulding and shaping to freezing and packaging. There is no limit!

**+ bbi:** What are the critical issues in automation?

**+ Spath:** Flexibility is a critical issue. The larger the quantity of different sizes and weights that are produced on one line; the more difficult is it to automate. Most problems arise in the finishing and the packaging. Mono-lines do not pose any problems in terms of automation.

**+ bbi:** After the dough sheet has been formed, the dough is cross-rolled. How do you ensure that the dough keeps its shape and does not contract again?

**+ Spath:** The further development of the spiral rollers allows a gentle cross rolling of the dough. During a subsequent proofing and resting time on the belt, the dough has time to relax again. This ensures that the shape is kept during cutting or punching.

**+ bbi:** Why does Fritsch favor cutting the pizza bottom from a dough sheet? What are the advantages?

**+ Spath:** The main advantage is the gentle treatment of the dough. The dough structure developed during the proofing process on the belt is not destroyed.

**+ bbi:** What do you do with the excess dough?

**+ Spath:** The excess dough is added again to the main dough. This has a positive effect on the dough and on the baked item. Processing of the dough becomes easier and the proofing activity is improved. The dough in the finished baked item has a much more balanced taste.

**+ bbi:** Your company offers several different plants for pizza production. What is the performance range of the plants?

**+ Spath:** The main focus of our work is placed on finding complete solutions for the production of different pizza and flat bread products, fresh products and frozen ones.

**+ bbi:** Is it possible to produce products with different weights and sizes on one line and how long does it take for a product change-over?

**+ Spath:** With the respective tools, different sizes and weights can be handled. The retrofitting time of the line is about 30 minutes.

**+ bbi:** Can your machines produce other types of pizza such as pockets and cones?

**+ Spath:** Fritsch lines can be used for the production of calzons, pizza pockets and even pizza in a heart shape.

**+ bbi:** Is it possible to produce rustic pizza with irregular edges industrially?

**+ Spath:** Of course! Various punching disks and cutting tools are available for a wealth of different shapes.

**+ bbi:** How do you apply the sauce and toppings to the pizza bottom? What possibilities are available today and where do the challenges lie?

**+ Spath:** For sauce application, different systems are available. However, a uniform texture of the sauce is always required for proper dosing.

For the application of ham or salami there are different slicing systems available. They are dependent on the customer's specifications. But here again, the raw materials must meet certain parameters in terms of consistency and size.

Cheese can be sprinkled in a curtain-type applicator or individually. The curtain-type applicator has the advantage that a high throughput can be achieved. Performance is lower when the pizza bottoms are sprinkled individually with cheese, but the weight is more precise.

**+ bbi:** How can the lines be cleaned?

**+ Spath:** Substantial progress has been made in this field in the past few years. Fritsch lines can be offered as wash-down plants. This means that the equipment can be cleaned with hot water and a proper cleaning agent. Our goal is to limit the daily cleaning time to 60 minutes.

**+ bbi:** Mr. Spath, thank you for this interview. +++



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