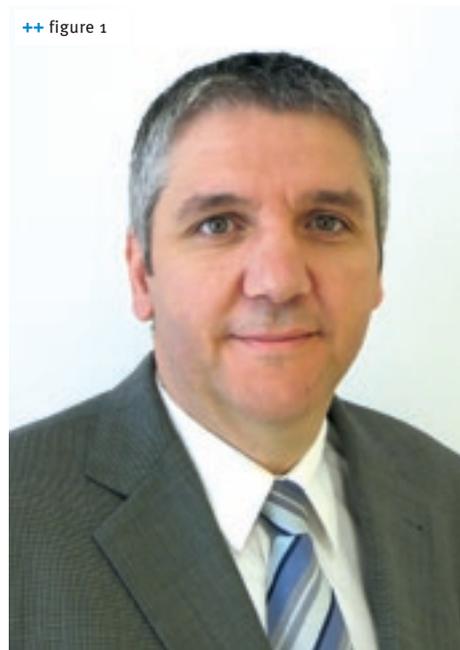
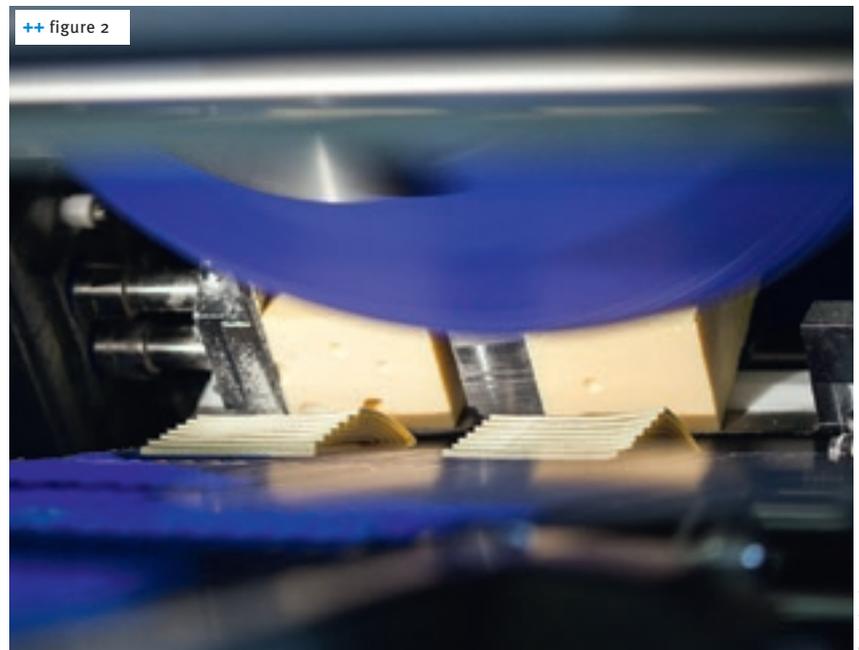


Sounds cheesy!?

FRISCHPACK IS AN EXPERT FOR CHEESE FOR FURTHER PROCESSING IN THE SNACK BUSINESS, AND IS THUS A MARKET PLAYER IN THE PART OF THE BAKING SECTOR THAT IS NOT NECESSARILY THE FOCUS OF ATTENTION – DESPITE ITS GREAT IMPORTANCE



++ figure 1
Michael Frank, Distribution Manager for Germany/
Austria/Switzerland, Marketing Manager



++ figure 2
A selection of cheeses are cut and packed with most modern machinery in the form requested by the customer

+ Snacks have become an important source of revenue for bakers – for example the Schanzen Bakery, a store chain in Hamburg, makes 30% of its turnover from its snack business, with a rising trend. One important component of the sandwiches, grilled pizza slices and other savory to-go products is ingredient cheese, which is the name given to cheese used for further processing in the food industry. When buying cheese, large bakeries resort increasingly to customized products that are easy to integrate into their own processes. This means they themselves no longer need to cut or grate types of cheese or mixtures tailored to their respective intended application from blocks of cheese. Investments in costly cheese cutting machines become unnecessary, as do the additional production steps to process the cheese within the factory.

Frischpack GmbH is an example of a company that has specialized in the manufacture of ingredient cheese and in its further processing and packing. It has its origins in the foothills of the Alps in Upper Bavaria, Germany, where more than 300 employees process over 35.000 t of cheese every year to produce slices, pieces, grated cheese, cheese cubes and sticks, and snacks. As a subsidiary of the ALPMA, a specialist machine builder for cheese dairy, cutting and packing technology, and the Alpenhain Käsespezialitäten-Werk GmbH & Co. KG, a successful producer of cheese specialties, its core competence also comes specifically from this line of business. Together

with the meat-processing industry, the baking sector is Frischpack's most important customer in the industrial client area. The packing specialist supplies to major companies and large bakeries, who can order cheese products from the standard range directly from Frischpack at a minimum order volume of more than 100 kg. Small bakeries in turn are able to obtain the products in carton quantities via wholesalers and the cash-and-carry markets. The products are distributed both as their own brand and also under private label and other manufacturers' brands.

Frischpack offers more than 50 different varieties of hard and sliced cheese in different packaging types and sizes. The demand in the baking sector is mainly for the cheese varieties Gouda, Edam and Emmental. At the same time a distinction is made between the demand for the shop counter in the branch, and for further processing. In addition to the three standard types mentioned above, cheese products for sandwich toppings with pepper, paprika, ham, salami or nettle are popular for the shop counter. Baguette and triangular slices are much in demand here, as well as the classical slice formats. In turn, optimum baking and melting properties are the decisive quality factors for the further processing of cheese in the baking process. This means the cheese must be able to withstand high temperatures without losing its typical flavor and appetizing appearance. Another requirement is for the cheese to show the desired browning and texture after



++ figure 3
Cheese in demanded forms, formats and packaging sizes for the baking sector



++ figure 4
Frischpack covers a wide range of more than 50 cheeses

the products have been baked. Michael Frank, Frischpack's Distribution Manager for Germany, Austria and Switzerland and also Marketing Manager, gives the following explanation: "Our special tasks also include for example the procurement of types of cheese with specific properties that withstand the baked goods manufacturing process." The company markets slices and cubes in a wide variety of sizes. The product ranges offered to the manufacturers of pizzas and baked goods also include grated cheeses in grating thicknesses from very fine to shaved for cheese sandwiches, pretzels and sticks as well as a variety of cheese blends. Bakeries often require the latter as analogue cheese in combination with conventional cheese. Frank says "These articles are appropriately declared in accordance with German Food Labelling Ordinance and must also be declared correspondingly by the operator." However, Frischpack understands further processing to mean not only the preparation in the baking line but also the final baking-off by the end customer. The company uses various development tests and even small batches for product tests at the baker's premises to ensure that the cheese will behave as required in the consumer's oven. Frank adds that: "This requires a high level of consultation and service intensity, which is why we have continuously strengthened our marketing system in recent years. For example we advise our customers in the choice of the correct cheese for their specific application, including with regard to flavor, color and melting properties, or if necessary we even procure cheese types with specific characteristics that withstand the process of manufacturing baked goods."

Suitable formats, easy removal

A cheese packaging specialist must also respond flexibly to the bakers' format requirements, for example through precisely matched dimensions for bread rolls, sandwiches and baguettes.

Modern cutting and packing machines enable Frischpack to manufacture a large number of different formats. Cubes, rods, pieces, bars and customized formats can be manufactured and processed as easily as a large selection of slice formats and weights. In addition to standard formats such as 10 x 10 cm, these also include baguette strips in 5 x 15 cm format, circular disks and triangles for various sandwich applications, topped bread rolls and individually customized snacks. The product range includes weight designated and equalized pieces from 30 to 1,000 g. Another requirement imposed by large bakeries is the easy, accurate handling of the packed cheese products. For example the slices in large convenience packs are in a fanned-out arrangement and thus easier to remove. At the same time the customer can individually specify the exact number of slices per pack or even the exact slice weight. This allows product range changes and new types of baked goods to be put into practice much more flexibly. Hygiene has very high priority, as in any industry sector dealing with sensitive raw materials or foodstuffs. According to Frank: "Our customers know they can rely on the fact that we satisfy the highest hygiene and quality standards. We continuously invest in the most modern cutting and packing machines, and we use only selected high-quality raw materials as the basis for best quality, consistent product properties and maximum efficiency. Our production processes are audited regularly by customers and independent institutions. The safety and quality of our processes is also confirmed by the IFS (International Featured Standards) and BRC (British Retail Consortium)." Under these conditions, Frischpack is also able to concentrate on the further export of its products, which currently account for a proportion of 40%. Austria, Italy and Scandinavia are the most important export markets in this respect. Frischpack also has a presence in almost all the European markets. +++