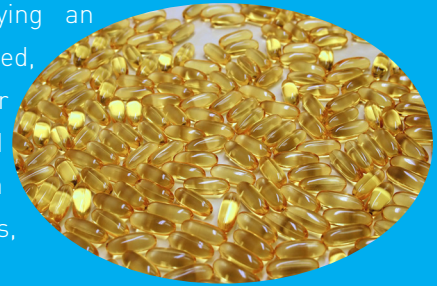


EuroCaps Limited

A weighing and traceability system supplied by Marco is playing an important role at EuroCaps's South Wales facility. EuroCaps Limited, a part of DCC Nutraceuticals, is a leading contract manufacturer of soft gelatine capsules, servicing the vitamins, mineral and dietary supplement (VMS) market worldwide. DCC Nutraceuticals, a division of DCC plc, has the flexibility to produce soft gelatine capsules, tablets or hard shell capsules, in bulk or packed form.



The Marco solution is based around two custom designed stainless steel DataMaster workstations running the Lot-Manager module of Marco's innovative Trac-IT E4 software suite.



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The DataMaster modules are powerful self-contained weighing and control stations with operator friendly, PC based, touch screen displays. These are used for weighing out the active ingredients and the gel materials for the capsule shells. The active fills may range from single oils such as evening primrose through to multi-vitamin supplements with over 30 individual ingredients.

The Trac- IT system brings traceability and control to the whole process from goods-in to finished product. As product is used, the Trac-IT system automatically updates stock levels and keeps control over quarantined products at goods-in.

Complete Control

EuroCaps' QA Technical Manager Michael Bolt is very positive about the benefits of the Marco Solution: "Marco took the time to listen to what we wanted and then came up with positive and practical solutions. Their system not only carries out accurate ingredient weighing, but also provides us with important data relating to our process from goods-in to packaged product. All products are manufactured to order and the minimum order size depends on the size of the capsule: the bigger the capsule, the smaller the minimum order. Typically we produce capsule quantities ranging from 100,000 to 10 million at a time. Controlled stocks of key raw materials allow us, in many cases, to respond to customer demands within two to four weeks.

We now have over 650 live formulations and this is expanding continuously as new products are developed and introduced. These products range from the encapsulation of customer supplied fills from simple oils to highly complex, multi-ingredient suspensions. Keeping track on all the variations is a daunting task.



The nature and variety of the ingredients require that they are weighed out manually. In the past this placed the onus on the operators to ensure the correct amounts of each ingredient were weighed out correctly. The Marco system brings complete control to the process. It keeps constant checks on what is being weighed and highlights any variances so that simple remedial action can be taken".

The System

The system serves a dual function by both controlling and verifying the manual process of weighing out the ingredients. Once a particular works order has been activated, the screen prompts the operator to select the correct ingredient and weight out the right quantity, verifying at each stage that this had been carried out.

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If the operator inadvertently selects product from a batch which has not been QA passed, the screen flags up the problem and does not allow the weighing to take place. Ingredients range from fine powders through to oils and the screen can also highlight health and safety information relating to the properties of specific products.

Multi-ingredient suspension products are prepared by weighing out each individual ingredient and placing them in intermediate containers. The excipients, materials used for the suspension process, are weighed and delivered to the homogenising unit where heat is applied to melt the fats and waxes. Once in a molten form the actives are then added in the order dictated by the batch documentation. The unit is closed and a vacuum applied to ensure no air gets into the fill material, and then a homogeniser is used to ensure a homogenous mix is achieved. After the mixing has taken place the fill is then milled and de-aerated to ensure a smooth and fibre free mix before being decanted into mobile medicine tanks. After the batch has been processed, the final product is re-weighed to determine the actual yield. If the discrepancies are outside accepted tolerances, necessary action can then be taken.

Product safety and quality are of paramount importance to EuroCaps. The company has invested significant amounts of time and money to establish a leading facility so that they comply with existing and future European and National legislation in the formulation and production of their products.

As Michael Bolt concludes: "We are licensed by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) and BRC (British Retail Consortium) accredited, allowing us to supply to leading supermarkets and retail outlets. Control and traceability are essential within the process to ensure our customers receive the highest quality products. Thorough analysis is performed on all ingredients at stages through the production process and final QC analysis confirms the product meets specifications before it is shipped. The Marco system plays a major part in the process and there is no doubt that it has had a positive affect on our bottom line profitability."

To learn more about Eurocaps click here



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