

# Kanes Foods

## Turnkey solution ensures efficient coleslaw production at Kanes Foods

A Marco Trac-IT turnkey process weighing and traceability system is playing an important role at Vale of Evesham based Kanes Foods Limited. The comprehensive system is at the heart of Kanes' dedicated production line for preparing pre-packed coleslaws, fresh pasta salad and sauces for the one of the major multiples.



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Kanes have built an enviable reputation for their innovative chilled salad products and this has seen the company grow rapidly over the past 10 years. Their reputation in this sector has come from building strong partnerships with both suppliers and leading retail outlets. Their open management policy stimulates and nurtures fresh ideas, promoting a philosophy of never being satisfied or standing still: always looking for something different and imaginative.

Their mouth-watering choice of coleslaws includes prawn, cheese and fruit as well as the more traditional recipes. In the same area Kanes also produce trayed pasta salads, tubs of salad and over 50 different sauces.

For companies like Kanes, keeping up with the rapid fluctuations in demand can be a daunting task. This can be affected by a number of diverse factors including regional preferences, weather patterns, holidays and even major sporting events. Their ability to react to demand is pivotal to success and product traceability plays a vital role in meeting schedules. Producing several million trays of speciality coleslaws a year requires not only a highly automated process, but also clear real-time visibility of the process itself, together with availability and location data on the large number of ingredients.

Marco's association with Kanes initially started with the supply of two Datamaster recipe control workstations as part of the sauce recipe system. When they wanted to install the new coleslaw line they turned to Marco to design a fully integrated system that would give them the control and flexibility to maintain their leading edge in this fast moving consumer market.

The solution at Kanes is based around the Marco Trac-IT software suite offering a unique blend of control, visibility and traceability, which in turn ensures optimum production flexibility and efficiency. The system has no fewer than 33 weighing points, including 15 Datamaster workstations, bulk and intermediate storage vessels and mixing vessels.

Controlling mayonnaise production is a critical part of the overall process and over 20 tonnes are mixed and used each day. There are three different blends and each batch is freshly mixed from the five main ingredients in two individual 1000 kg capacity mixing vessels. The weighed mixing vessels use a combination of weight and torque data from the mixer to produce the 'perfect mix'. Eleven 2000 kg capacity holding tanks act as a short term buffer supply for the main production line.



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The main coleslaw mixing hopper is mounted on three load cells. The required weights of diced cabbage, carrot and onion, together with the other ingredients, are automatically fed by conveyor into the hopper before the mayonnaise is pumped in and the recipe mixed. The dynamic weight trend is fully recorded and any anomalous changes are instantly detected and flagged up.

This data allows management to monitor and track the ingredients throughout the process, whilst having the ability to produce management information on demand, from any key performance indicator (KPI) in the factory.



The Marco system uses unique trace codes, which are assigned and affixed to products in the form of bar coded labels or tags. A specific code may refer to individual containers or bottles, trays of produce or individual items. Every time product moves to a different location, the label is read via an RF bar code reader and the database updated. If the product changes through processes such as slicing, dicing, shredding or cooking, a new trace code is assigned to it, which also carries details of the original trace code. If more than one ingredient is mixed together, the resulting trace code for the mixture carries previous details of the trace codes for all the ingredients.

As Marco's MD Murray Hilborne explains: "Although traceability is very important, we see it as just one part in of the overall manufacturing process. Our experience shows that many companies have little information on what actually happens in real time throughout their process and this adversely affects their manufacturing capabilities. Simply put, our system fills that void by acting as the 'middleware' link between ERP/ MRP systems and the factory floor."

Kanes' Production Manager is very upbeat about the system: "I continue to be amazed and impressed with the level of visibility I have of the overall process. Real time data is available instantaneously and I can tell at a glance what is happening on the shop floor. I can locate any ingredient in the factory at any time, complete with all current date code information. Having the ability to control and track products throughout the process is invaluable for meeting both current schedules and planning future requirements. Data from the storage silos are also at hand, ensuring we never run out of vital ingredients.

Our production process is a blend of high level automation and hand made bespoke recipe mixing. In the past, line supervisors kept their own little black books with cryptic notes pertaining to the idiosyncrasies of particular recipes. We were concerned initially that there might have been some reticence about using the Marco system but everyone has signed up to it wholeheartedly. It makes their jobs easier and the black books have long been discarded."

**To learn more about Kanes Foods click here**

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