

## Special Fruit

Pack house efficiency experts Marco have been awarded a significant contract by Special Fruit b.v. for the supply of a comprehensive twin line yield control packaging system at their major packhouse in Meer, Belgium.

Special Fruit is one of Europe's largest importer-packers of fresh produce including: berries, exotics, soft and hard fruits, delicate vegetables and a range of specialty products. Sold under their iconic 'BerryFresh' and 'Best Choice' brands, Special Fruit's products come from all six continents and are supplied to retailers, supermarket chains, hotels, caterers and other wholesalers throughout 28 countries.

Marco have unrivalled experience in supplying modular packhouse solutions that have a proven track record for increasing productivity by up to 30%. A key benefit for customers is that Marco can supply exactly the right system engineered for a particular application, including hardware, software and the all-important interface with recognised management software systems. In this installation, Marco's system interfaces directly with Microsoft's Navision platform to provide plant wide integration.

The fresh fruit market sector is evolving rapidly, fuelled primarily by consumer demand for year round produce and is driven by fashion, trends and ever-increasing travel experiences. The diversity and relative fragility of the products, together with the complexities of the order fulfilment requirements, mandate the use of manual packing processes at the Meer site.



The challenge for Marco has been to supply a comprehensive system for Special Fruit with the versatility to meet rapidly changing demands, whilst being simple to operate and manage. The resulting system ensures that the two packing lines have the capability of running together or as two separate work centres if and when required.

At the heart of the yield control packaging system are 24 LineMaster workstations, 12 per line, managed via two DataMaster control terminals. The LineMaster workstations have been developed to deskill the manual packing process, allowing operators to rapidly achieve target weight through the use of a simple traffic light system. The optimised flow of products from pre-pack through to finished, labelled product is achieved through the smart design of single and dual tier conveyors. Overall control of the conveyors is via a PLC control system incorporating a touch HMI user interface panel to make product change-over and set up very simple.

Special Fruit's Operations Director Jef Wouters is delighted with the overall design:

"Marco's extensive knowledge and experience of fresh produce packaging has been clear from the outset. They understand our challenges and their ability to undertake the design and supply of the complete mechanical handling equipment, together with the seamless interface with our Navision system, will ensure optimum efficiency throughout the packhouse. The yield control system will streamline our manual packing process and provide invaluable visibility for our operation. The reduction in giveaway and improved productivity will ensure we remain highly competitive whilst providing our customers with the highest quality produce."

**To learn more about Special Fruit [click here](#)**



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