

Rougeline chooses Marco's systems to pack their grape tomatoes

Six member companies of the Les Paysans de Rougeline fresh produce co-operative are the latest French tomato growers to benefit from Marco's YCM yield control pack house technology. The innovative productivity improvement systems have been installed at pack houses in south west France belonging to the French group.

Rougeline's growers have around 300 hectares of greenhouses in three regions of the south of France, and the brand is available all year round. The way the fruits and vegetables are packed is important, with 50 million punnets packed per year. More than 20 varieties of tomatoes make up the total annual production of almost 60 million kilograms (which does not include the volume of strawberries, cucumbers and salads also packed).

The YCM installations feature Marco's ingenious 'one light-one fruit' operator display, designed to significantly increase line speeds and reduce overpack/giveaway in manual packing environments.



This technology is ideal for packing products such as tomatoes, where the fruits of individual varieties are of similar shape and size. Each light segment on the visual light display represents a single fruit.

The YCM terminals can be pre-programmed to store different types and weights of tomato, making pack line changes very simple and rapid. As pre-packed tomatoes travel down the packing lines, the packs are placed on the scales incorporated within the YCM workstations. The operators are then visually prompted to 'add' or 'take out' individual tomatoes to ensure pack weight compliance. Special software working quietly in the background continually monitors pack weight trends and adjusts target weights at the individual workstations to minimize over-pack.

The pack house directors are looking forward to the benefits the Marco systems will bring, as Thomas Leichlé, Group Supply Chain Director says: "Controlling our busy pack houses presents a number of challenges, especially given the increased consumer demand for grape tomatoes. The manual packing requires a blend of speed and accuracy. We can be penalised for underweight packs and have to minimise unwanted giveaway which directly affects our profitability. We also have to ensure the punnets we sell as of the highest quality in terms of pack presentation."

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Leichlé continues "Marco's understanding of the fresh produce sector is a bonus and their technology addresses the key challenges that affect the manual packing environment. We will now have better control across the pack house and be able to measure the performance of individual operators."



Marco's YCM system is used by tomato growers and packers around the world and evidence shows that productivity improvements of 30% or more can be achieved. The system deskills the packing operation, increases line speeds and brings accountability to individual operators. This allows the proactive optimisation of labour resources and reduces training requirements. Returns on investment are typically less than six months.

Marco's Murray Hilborne is clear on his company's unique approach to solving pack house problems: "Although the challenges facing fresh produce packers around the world have underlying common factors, our experience shows that each pack house is different, with a separate set of requirements. Therefore we provide performance solutions - not specific machines or equipment with a pre-defined scope, performance or productivity rate. These deliver a set of measuring and control tools that grow and adapt in line with the increased efficiency they bring on an individual pack house basis."

Footnote: Rougeline is one of France's leading brands, with more than 20 years' experience in the production and marketing of fruit and vegetables. The extensive product offering includes tomatoes, strawberries, cucumbers, organic kiwis and salads. The co-operative, which operates within three main production areas in Provence, Roussillon and Aquitaine, comprises 159 producers with almost 2000 employees. Their main commercial markets are in France, Germany, Spain, Eastern Europe, Singapore and Hong Kong. Annually, the group produces 70,000 tonnes of product with a turnover of 100 million euros.

To learn more about Rougeline click here

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