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Overview

Customer:	Cheese Processing Plant
Industry:	Dairy
Key Benefits:	Time & Cost Savings, Gained Efficiency
Solution:	Paperless Plant

Motivated by increasingly stringent government regulations and inspired by their own commitment to safe quality foods (SQF) standards, the twelfth largest dairy processor in the world chose ESE, Inc. for a completely computerized data collection, storage and retrieval solution.

In one process alone, this processor has already reduced manual data entry by 80%. Multiply those gains out over several plants and dozens of processes now being performed manually, and the savings become tremendous.

Safe Quality Foods (SQF) Standards Improve With Paperless Initiative at Wisconsin Cheese Processor

Continuing their commitment to Safe Quality Food (SQF) standards, the twelfth largest dairy processor in the world chose system integrator ESE, Inc. to implement their completely computerized data collection, storage, and reporting system which is already reaping benefits of time and expense savings, data entry error reduction, gained efficiency and more accurate reporting. In one process alone, this processor has already reduced manual data entry by 80%. Multiply those gains out over several plants and dozens of processes now being performed manually, and the savings become tremendous.

Motivated by new federal government regulations and inspired by their own quality commitment, this processor initiated a paperless reporting initiative at one of their WI plants, with plans to take the paperless initiative to plants throughout their enterprise. ESE's solution includes accurate and timely reporting by incorporating process data already gathered from an existing control system's data collection processor and deploying a new document retention solution, along with custom reporting. The records solution's scalability allows for collection and reporting on a wide array of process data and its flexibility enables data collection at various points in the operation including at packaging, in the lab, at cookers, and directly at each cheese vat.

Today, this processor can follow the data pertaining to any batch of cheese through the entire records process – including the 4 to 5 data entry points where data was previously collected manually on sheets of paper. Previously, data was often read by an operator off a computer screen, only to be handwritten again on paper. As the batch flowed through the production process, a similar, manual process was followed.

With the paperless plant initiative, data is no longer written down manually on desperate sheets of paper throughout the plant at each step in the process. No longer are the records subject to errors, time delays and redundancy of information. Efficiently, all information for a production run is electronically captured, time-stamped, and archived allowing for accurate and immediate retrieval and analysis.

These electronically-captured production records are also efficiently retained for ongoing government-required record keeping – a bonus to their SQF procedures. Anticipating an increase in regulations in the next few years, this processor is already ahead of the curve.

Never compromising on the quality of the products they produce, this processor is also benefitting from having data easily accessible for mock recalls they perform twice per year as part of their quality procedures. They can quickly and accurately pinpoint lot data, vat data, and ingredient data, all in an effort to identify and isolate product issues that will benefit them in future production. Mock recalls are now much more efficient and effective with electronic data.

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Employee-owned ESE, Inc. has been at the forefront of designing and commissioning innovative plant automation systems for food and beverage applications since 1981.

ESE tightly integrates leading-edge analytical instruments with best-in-class control systems and sophisticated software resulting in improved plant utilization, increased yields, better product quality, and faster delivery.

The cornerstone of ESE's instrumentation line is the family of Q5 Near Infrared Analyzers– designed for lab, in-line and at-line environments. In use at major production facilities across the country, Q5 analyzers provide fast and accurate analysis of liquids, solids, slurries, and powders.

ESE is a stable, growing company whose committed employee-owners contribute their ideas and skills to influence and share in the success of our company and of our customers.

For more information visit us on the web at **www.ese1.com.**

In addition to gaining daily operations efficiency and audit procedure improvements at the local plant, they are also seeing how electronic data capture benefits them at the corporate office. Plant data that was previously submitted on hand-written sheets, recorded in Excel and later re-entered into an ERP system, is now sent electronically through a custom report generating only the key pieces of information the operator needs for ERP entry, bypassing the need to transpose values from the paper records into Excel.

In this one process alone, the processor has reduced the time required for manual data entry by several hours per week, which translates to hundreds of labor hours in savings annually, while reducing clerical errors, and improving data availability.

From a single station to a production line to across the enterprise, this processor is now able to meet and exceed their SQF goals thanks to these powerful reporting and trending tools.

ESE has been able to provide critical insight into the performance parameters that help them improve yields, enhance quality, reduce expense, and ultimately grow profits – and produce it within an efficient, paperless environment.

With this successful paperless plant initiative in full use at their Wisconsin plant, this processor is now looking forward to taking more it paperless. Being the twelfth largest dairy processor in the world, the largest in Canada, the third largest in Argentina, and among the top three cheese producers in the US, serving customers in over 50 countries, there is undoubtedly plenty of paper to eliminate throughout their enterprise.

The benefits of going paperless:

- Time savings from converting once manual processes to electronic
- Labor savings from reduced effort, paperwork, and redundancy
- Cost savings in labor, paper, rework, and errors
- Accuracy is improved with far less human data entry error
- Availability is improved with accessible and timely electronic records
- Compliance is improved with traceable SQF data and other records
- Improved yields are realized when data gives us more accurate ingredient measures
- Reduced handoff errors when data is electronically passed instead of manual
- Time stamping helps pinpoint specific data, specific personnel, and specific timing of processes
- Quality gains can be made from the immediate decision making made possible by reporting and trending analysis
- Efficiency is gained from all the above benefits coming together in a paperless environment

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