



FLEXIBLE EQUIPMENT SOLUTIONS HELP GOLD CREEK EXPAND

Serving up value added products



Gold Creek Foods, one of the USA's largest full-service chicken processors, supplies foodservice and retail chains with a variety of breaded and roasted products. The company chose GEA to provide the equipment needed for two new production lines to support increased demand for value added products.

Why is collaboration important?

Deciding to invest in machinery from a trusted supplier like GEA to boost throughput at its plant near Atlanta, was taken with an eye on the future. Gold Creek now has the flexibility and additional capacity to continue to grow and expand further in multiple markets, especially in value-added products at a competitive price.

Previous experience with GEA's solutions and a proven track record in the breaded poultry sector, was a crucial factor for Gold Creek. To date, they have purchased two CookStar 1000 GEN 3 ovens, multiple MultiDrum breaders and two Aero-freeze freezers. These are rolling out universally popular chicken products, such as nuggets, fillets, patties and wings.

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Delivering high quality products while increasing yield and managing labor is crucial for Gold Creek. Don says of the CookStar: “With both towers and the impingement section in the middle, we’re able to deliver very high yielding breaded products that are a crispy outside and juicy inside. The entire spiral cooking process is quicker than traditional processes and therefore also results in more succulent roasted chicken with a more attractive, richly browned color.”

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Why bang the drum for productivity?

Explaining why GEA was chosen, Don Dubnik, vice president of operations at Gold Creek who has over 30 years’ experience in the industry, says the company prides itself on investing money wisely so confidence in its suppliers is vital. “GEA provides a lot of technical expertise and processing knowledge as well as ticking all the boxes for after sales service and equipment which is efficient, easy to operate and maintain.

“This was a major capital investment and I’ve not been disappointed. The MultiDrum breaders, I believe, are the best in the market. They do a tremendous job spreading the product across the full width of the belt. This enables us to run boneless wings with reduced labor, so labor can be deployed on more productive tasks.”

MultiDrums create the homestyle, texture coating that Gold Creek wants, while achieving high productivity, consistent quality and maximum uptime. The machines can be recharged with breadcrumbs without stopping and production lines can be switched quickly – another automated operation that takes away the more mundane labor tasks.

What are the juicy benefits?

The products are cooked in GEA’s CookStar GEN 3 spiral ovens, a highly accurate piece of technology which cooks each product on the line evenly and rapidly without drying out the product. This means juiciness is retained. The CookStar GEN 3 uses combined horizontal and vertical hot airflow in a patented impingement zone, for an even distribution of airflow across the width of the belt all products are rapidly and equally cooked at the same time. The two-direction airflow also reduces overall cooking time, allowing for increased throughput.

Gold Creek’s employees also benefit from GEA’s CookStar master class cooking courses, designed to help operators understand, and get the best out of the technology. The GEA after-sales service program helps to keep the lines running at their peak around the clock. GEA’s team of experts are available to share knowledge via telephone conversations, video calls and in person if needed.

Freezing out the competition

Completing the line-up are two freezers – what should food manufacturers be looking for from freezing equipment? Well, the key drivers being stringent hygienic requirements, high product quality and yield, minimum energy consumption and effective frost management for long operating times. According to Don, all boxes are ticked. “The reliability of the freezers is outstanding. They are very low maintenance, very hygienic and easy to clean.”

As Gold Creek continues to grow and expand, the company expects to collaborate further with GEA. Staying at the forefront of technology and increasing the use of automation will provide the cost-effective quality and capacity the company needs to remain competitive.

