

Press Release

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FORMULA FOOD MANUFACTURER ZEROS IN ON CONTAMINANTS

Product trust is important for any food manufacturer and Northants-based Cambridge Weight Plan Ltd is slimming down risk of contamination in its weight management snacks following the installation of three metal detectors from Fortress Technology.

Even without retail pressure being applied, Cambridge Weight Plan has always safeguarded followers of its weight loss plan since it was founded over three decades ago. Over this period, the company has procured metal detectors from various manufacturers, but three years ago took the logical step of streamlining its inspection suppliers.

"We decided to start buying all our metal detection kit from one company. This would make it easier for our operators, who wouldn't have to learn how to use five different systems, and would make more sense for servicing and maintenance," says Colin Webb, engineering manager at Cambridge Weight Plan.

The backbone of the Cambridge Weight Plan is a range of branded shakes, bars, soups and porridge, which are manufactured at the company's facility in Corby and distributed via a network of consultants in over 25 countries. *"For us, it is imperative that we are confident that the food we are sending out to consumers is safe for consumption,"* emphasises Colin.

One of its equipment suppliers recommended Fortress Technology and when Colin looked at the specification for the company's Stealth metal detector, it matched his own wish list.

To kick-start the rationalisation programme, in 2012 Cambridge Weight Plan replaced an old head on one of its recipe blending lines with a Fortress Stealth detector. As the company's newest generation of detectors, the Stealth inspection system features FM software. Among the benefits, this software helps achieve better sensitivities, in some applications by at least 40%, further satisfying FSMA or customer specification requirements.

This increased sensitivity is especially beneficial for bulk loose product, such as milk powder, a mainstream ingredient in Cambridge Weight Plan shakes. The powder blend is sieved and transported via a 45 degree flighted conveyor belt where it is scanned for any metallic contamination before flowing into a bulk container. If metal is detected, the line stops and potentially contaminated powder is removed.

Around the same time, Cambridge Weight Plan replaced the metal detector on its bar line, as operators found the original system complicated to use.

For Colin and the team, several other factors also came into play when making the switch to Fortress, including user-friendly features like automatic calibration - enabling detector set-up within seconds. The weight plan food manufacturer also zeroed in on Fortress' 'never obsolete' commitment, which protects customer's investments by offering performance upgrades to existing Fortress detectors, without having to purchase an entirely new machine. Being a privately owned UK engineering company was another plus point.

“There are three key reasons why UK companies like buying from us,” claims Kevin Shackell, head of UK sales at Fortress. *“Firstly, our equipment is easy to use - not just for engineers and QA personnel, but operators too. Our equipment is never obsolete - we are committed to supporting all Fortress machines in the field, and our customers do like the fact we’re a British manufacturer.”* Fortress also continues to give Cambridge Weight Plan full access to their courtesy product testing service, providing assurance and validation that the machine will deliver the sensitivity levels required on a product-by-product basis.

In April 2014, Cambridge Weight Plan made their third Stealth purchase. Featuring a 200mm x 150mm aperture and pusher reject for checking Cambridge Weight Plan powder products for metal contaminants once placed into 150g plastic pots, this new system is running at speeds of 32 packs per minute.

Expressing his satisfaction with the build quality, functionality and performance, Colin adds: *“We hold a high degree of confidence in the Fortress equipment, service and company ethos. They have successfully responded to all of our requests and a strong relationship has resulted.”*

Fortress has already quoted for further product inspection solutions at the Corby facility, with potential installations in 2015.

