



News Release

GOUGH ECON TWIN VIBRATORY FEEDERS CLOSE THE LOOP IN AUTOMATING THE PRODUCTION LINE AT GIANT SNACKS™ IN PRODUCING 2.5 POUNDS OF SUNFLOWER SEEDS A YEAR

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WAHPETON, NORTH DAKOTA --- GIANT Snacks™ of Wahpeton, N. D. prides itself in selecting superior hybrids from contract growers in North Dakota to produce the best Sunflower seeds in the U. S. for its customer base.

From its original recipe of Roasted and Salted Sunflower seeds, Giant Snacks™ has expanded the line to offer a variety of flavors including BBQ, Dill Pickle, Salt and Pepper, Ranch and early in 2009 Spicy Garlic.

Sunflower seeds are sold to consumers in packages ranging from 0.8 oz to 14 oz. To process and package the over 2.5 million pounds of Sunflower seeds each year and meet its growing demand, GIANT Snacks™ operates two eight hour shifts, five days a week.

The snack foods are marketed through distributors where they are sold to convenience stores. Recently, the company expanded into Arizona, New Mexico, California and Texas. Product is also available online and is shipped throughout the United States and Canada, as well as internationally.

“Sunflower seeds are a health-promoting snack with significant amounts of Vitamin E,” said Al Engstrom, Plant Manager at GIANT Snacks™. “Quality assurance is important throughout the production process to make sure that shells are not broken

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or dirty, are firm and do not have a limp texture. All packages are nitrogen flushed to assure shelf freshness.”

Gough Econ Twin Vibratory Feeders Enhance Productivity

Just as quality is important in selecting and packaging the seeds, totally automating its two integrated packaging lines was a priority for GIANT Snacks™ to increase productivity.

To close the production loop, Giant Snacks™ added twin vibratory feeders from Gough Econ to automatically feed product into existing Gough Econ “S” Series Swinglink™ bucket elevators. Engstrom noted that automating the operation has helped GIANT Snacks™ considerably in meeting our productivity and quality goals.

Supersacks containing roasted Sunflower seeds are hung over the twin vibratory feeders. An opening on the bottom of the Supersacks feeds the seed to the 6-foot long by 1-foot wide vibratory feeders that normally operate at a rate of 3,000 lbs/hour.

Four coil springs on the frame assembly of the feeders minimize vibration transfer and assure gentle handling of the material with minimum breakage. Since product weight is typically in suspension, self-propulsion energy is used in the operation for added efficiency. Dual motors on the system operate using minimum amps.

Gough Econ Swinglink™ Bucket Elevators

The feeders discharge the seeds to the previously installed Gough Econ “S” Series Swinglink™ bucket elevators.

The Swinglink™ system consists of 180 nine-inch wide polypropylene buckets impregnated with a glass fiber resin to prevent staining and enable ease of product

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flavor change.

The buckets remain in a horizontal position throughout the circuit except at the discharge point to the form fill and seal packaging. Keeping the buckets in a horizontal position insures product integrity and keeps the buckets overlapped to prevent product spillage. Like the feeders, the line normally runs at speeds of 3,000 lbs/hour.

“This design ensures free falling of product from the buckets without product spillage,” noted Engstrom. “The smooth bucket surface eliminates product trap areas and provides an excellent means of transfer into a single plain.”

The Swinglink™ system has a heavy-duty carbon steel chain designed for long life, durability and reliability. The chain has a 1.5 pitch and the track on which the chain rides is made of folded stainless steel. The finish is made of air-dry Steel-It™ polyurethane.

For easy cleaning at the GIANT Snacks™ plant, access panels were included to allow cleaning each bucket with soap and water. Downtime for cleaning is about 4 hours, noted Engstrom.

“The Gough Econ units are a major part of our automation process and have been operating flawlessly,” noted Engstrom. “Support from Gough Econ has been excellent.”

Engstrom noted that the feeders have added reliability and flexibility into the production line and assure gentle handling of the product. He also said that the feeders operate economically and efficiently using minimum power.

Gough Econ feeder vibratory feeders or screens are typically used when applications are beyond the scope of an electromagnetic drive and in particular when

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units require lengths in excess of five feet and widths greater than 18 inches.

The Swinglink™ Bucket Elevators from Gough Econ is one of the most popular conveying systems in the industry. Due to its patented chain and bucket design, the Swinglink™ can move material in vertical and horizontal movements and is designed to handle material without damaging or spilling. Cover options can be provided to meet specific application needs and to ensure safety.

Form Fill and Seal Packaging Machinery

From the bucket elevators, product is pneumatically discharged over the end of each bucket into a hopper and gravity fed into Yamato Data Weight Sigma Plus series scales, a part of the Hayssen/Sandiacre Ultima ST Panel View 600 Model 12-19 fill and seal machine.

The scales have 14 heads, each of which accommodates weights ranging from 0.8 oz to 14 oz. When the weight is selected, the bag is filled and sealed.

After sealing, the package runs through a case taper where bar codes are added along with the size, julian date code, time packed and who packed it. Individual packages are then packed in case packs ranging 12 to 72.

About Gough Econ

Gough Econ was established in 1974 in the United States as a subsidiary of a UK company founded in 1940. Since 2004, Gough Econ's operations have been locally owned with headquarters in Charlotte, N.C. where the design, manufacturing and administrative functions take place.

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The company specializes in the design and manufacture of standard and engineered material handling systems that move and protect a customer's product. The company also provides a variety of technical services including product testing, full engineering control systems and installation management.

For more information on Gough Econ products, services or capabilities, contact Gough Econ at P.O. Box 668583, Charlotte, N.C. 28266- 8583. Telephone is 1-800-264-6844; FAX (704) 392-8706 and e-mail sales@goughecon.com. Gough Econ can also be found on the web at www.goughecon.com.

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Caption #1

Twin vibratory feeders from Gough Econ, Inc. are shown installed at GIANT Snacks™ of Wahpeton, N.D., a processor and packager of snack foods. The feeders are part of an integrated packaging line to feed existing Gough Econ bucket elevators.



Caption # 2

Supersacks containing roasted Sunflower seeds at GIANT Snacks™ are hung over the Gough Econ twin vibratory feeders as shown here. An opening on the bottom of the Supersacks feeds the seed to the 6-foot long by 1-foot wide Gough Econ twin vibratory feeders that normally operate at a rate of 3,000 lbs/hour. The twin feeders discharge the seeds to the previously installed Gough-Econ “S” Series Swinglink™ bucket elevators.



Caption #3

The Gough Econ Swinglink™ “S” Series buckets are shown discharging the Sunflower seeds to the form fill and seal machinery.



Caption #4

Sunflower seeds from GIANT Snacks™ are packaged in quantities ranging from 0.8 oz to 14 oz. 2.5 million pounds of Sunflower seeds are processed and packaged by GIANT Snacks™ each year.

