

There is hardly any product which cannot be packed into a pouch made of flexible film.



Flexible packaging

Fast FFS machines with components from Germany

The Barcelona area produces packaging machines of all kinds. Mespac specializes in manufacturing horizontal form-fill-seal machines, offering the right pouch machine for any requirement.

■ About 30 minutes by car from Barcelona's historic downtown lies the small town of Santa Perpètua. This is where the Spanish packaging machine manufacturer Mespac is located. The company, which was founded in 1994, is one of the leading suppliers of horizontal form-fill-seal machines and also builds stick-pack machines.

Today, there are already over 1,000 Mespac machines in operation worldwide at over 600 customer plants. "About one third of our machines go to multi-national corporations such as Unilever, Nestlé, and Procter & Gamble. But we also have many SME's among our customers," said Enric Martí, Mespac's CEO. The company's reliable machines are used primarily in the food,

household, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals sectors. "There is hardly another manufacturer who offers such a wide range – from horizontal machines with an output of 80 to 400 pouches per minute to stick-pack machines with an output of up to 900 pieces."

The flexible packs can be made with three or four side seals; volumes of up to ten Liters can be handled for stand-up pouches. Different fill and dosing systems for solid, liquid or powdered products or granulates can also be installed upon request, as can modules for manufacturing blister packs, tear-off corners, Euro slot hangers, and pour spouts, zippers and drinking straws can be applied. The horizontal machines with their balcony-style design present additional advantages: They are very accessible and allow fast and easy change-overs.

BBVerpackungsmaschinen based in Aichtal near Stuttgart, Germany, is responsible for the quality machinery "Made in Spain" as Mespac's representative for Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Managing Director Bernt Binder, who is convinced of the quality of the machinery believes that, quite wrongly, Spanish packaging machinery is often ignored. "Mespac is a service-oriented, innovative company known for robust pouch makers, reliable technology, flex-

ible design, fast changeovers, and a variety of product dosing systems," says Binder, who has been working in the packaging industry for 20 years.

About 30 machines are currently being assembled

The Spanish packaging machine manufacturer, which was founded in 1994, is growing so fast that a new building the company moved into four years ago has already become too small again. The modern, bright production plant is a tight fit: About 30 machines are currently being assembled. Construction of a new building will soon start on the company's premises; move-in is scheduled for this September already.

This will add 3,000 m² to the existing 3,700 m² of production area. "Fortunately, there is room on our own lot so that we can expand without problems," says CEO Martí. Last year, Mespac built 124 packaging machines, and for the past five years, it can boast a 25% growth. Out of their 100 employees, 18 are exclusively responsible for developing new machinery – with an upward trend since Mespac wants to continue to increase investments in the development area. "We will also continue to invest even more in service in 2011," says Martí.

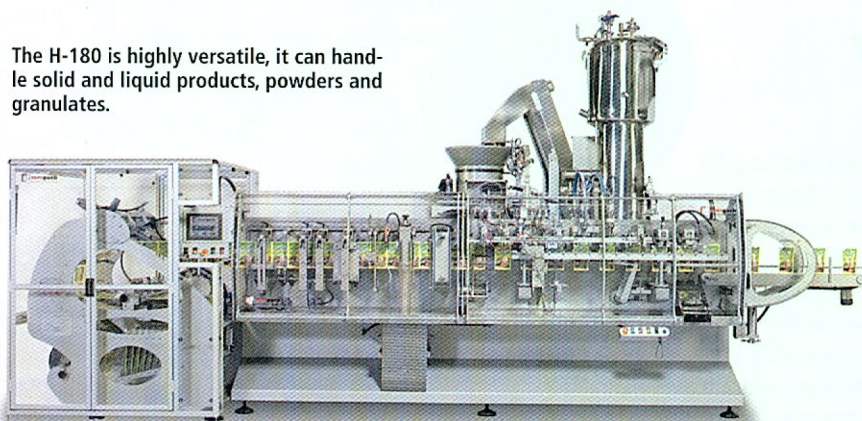
Information

Horizontal FFS-machines

- Mespac's portfolio includes 14 basic machines, each of which has a variety of sub-types, for a total of about 240 machine configurations.
- It covers systems for small batch volumes to high-speed, high-output machines.

The H-180 is highly versatile, it can handle solid and liquid products, powders and granulates.

Photos: Mespac



Reliability, a personal relationship with its customers, and perfect After-Sales service are just as important to the company as is the high quality of its machines. Enric Martí believes, "it is only with innovation and good service that we can hold the low-price suppliers from China and India at bay."

The components for the machines are fabricated by suppliers in the area and assembled in Santa Perpètua. The electronic components – motors or controllers – come primarily from Germany.

Mespac states that they have the right machine for any requirement in their portfolio. An example is the compact, flexible H-100 with its 100 pouches/min output, which is particularly suited for contract packagers or companies that do not fill more than six million 100 mm x 130 mm pouches per year. For large volumes and maximum pouch sizes of 420 mm x 400 mm, the high-performance H-420 with its 160 pouches per minute is said to be the right system.

All machines can process hot-seal film from rolls, or pre-fabricated bags. Most types of film can be used – mono films as well as laminates made of cellophane-PE, paper-PE, polyester-PE, paper-aluminum-PE, OPP-PE, and many more.

For the first time now, film rolls can be changed without stopping the machine. Film will be supplied from a long buffer until the new roll is ready.

A new process for inserting spouts must be absolutely leak-proof. Double heat-sealing is the process that guarantees that bags won't leak around the spout. But machines from Mespac can also produce two-chamber pouches: Specifically for the Central American market, a stand-up pouch was developed that can hold powdered milk and sterile water in two separate chambers. Once the internal film is perforated, the powdered milk will mix with the water

to produce the finished milk product. "The kicker is that only the interior film seal is allowed to give when pushed in, while the outer seals must hold, of course," explains B. Binder.

In addition to that, vertical stick-pack machines are also produced, with up to 15 lanes (depending on stick-pack size) and different filler heads for liquids, granulates, or powder. "Customers are increasingly asking for stick-pack machines; so we have developed a new line for different applications," says Enric Martí. "The new concept also allows making tubular bags on the stick-pack machine."

Then the system will work in four-lane mode only, with an output of 200 units per minute. "These machines are already running at several customer plants, serving a growing market, such as for packaging portioned laundry detergents."

"Totally new concept!"

Lately, business in Europe hasn't been as good as they had hoped, but Enric Martí is looking forward optimistically to interpack. "I have a very good feeling as I prepare to go to the fair in Düsseldorf." The Spanish company will be taking nine machines, three of which are new, to present them on about 600 m² of exhibit space. And Martí makes us curious: "We will be showing a totally new concept for packaging that in this form does not yet exist in the market!"

Doris Bünnagel ■



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