

Improving processing speeds without sacrificing quality has been one of the biggest challenges of the canning sector, says the newly appointed seaming business manager at CarnaudMetalbox Engineering (CMbE), Jason McCullough.

Talking to *The Canmaker*, McCullough shared some of the issues the sector has faced since last year, when the effects of the coronavirus pandemic saw demand for food and beverage cans shoot up.

“Being an international business, we observed the coronavirus’ impact varied across the globe. For example, the German and other European markets seemed to be slower to rebound, while in North America, we saw things slow down for only a moment at the beginning of Covid,” he says.

One of last year’s trials stemmed from the increased demand for canned food products, which meant customers were running at full speed to keep up with demand and pushing the equipment as far as they could:

“Fillers were extending their run-times, putting off non-critical maintenance and tooling replacement, in an effort to keep up with consumer demand,” he explains. “We saw a lull in seamer tooling sales early into Covid, but then things started to rebound.”

The shortage of beverage cans that has affected the US market since last summer has also posed challenges to seamer tooling suppliers:

“The canmaking industry as a whole

Growing pains

The recent boom in demand for metal packaging created challenges for the seaming sector, as Jason McCullough tells Danielle Ingram

is doing extremely well, with this level of growth not seen in over 30 years. One of the current challenges is supply. As a result, we are seeing beverage can ends being sourced from all over the world. This has increased sales, as different ends require different tooling.”

According to McCullough, customers might need two or three tooling variations to meet demand.

“Some seaming rolls can be used on multiple end types; however, the seaming chucks are specific to the end type. Switching between multiple end types requires the purchase of additional tooling,” he explains. “The filler encounters additional downtime for the changeover, negatively impacting asset utilisation. Also, anytime you have to work on a machine, there is always a chance something can go wrong. Uptime is key, which is why CMbE provides tooling that requires less intervention and the maximum number of closures over its lifecycle.”

With tough competition in the

canned beverage market, drinks fillers are the ones pushing the limits of seamer operations, as companies are prepared to spend more on the cans:

“With beverage cans, the ideas, design, shape and lithography are all thought out to make the product pop on the shelves and get the consumer’s attention. Innovation is ever evolving for beverage cans and ends.”

Offering a vast seaming portfolio that serves both big corporations and craft brewers, the company observes a considerable disparity in the seaming technology and knowledge available at these two very different types of market players.

“I work a lot with craft brewers and as they grow to reach customers, the packaging becomes a necessary evil that is needed to reach the masses. When it comes to packaging and double-seaming, the experience varies across the micro-brewing segment.”

The use of remote guidance is how CMbE found a way to assist fillers,

Seamer added to range of three-piece can equipment

To complement its range of neckers, flangers and beadlers for three-piece canmaking lines, Germann + Frei has launched a seaming machine.

With a production speed of between 250 and 800 per minute the CSM800 processes cans with diameters from 52 to 99mm and heights from 45 to 215mm.

The seamer features a synchronised can stop turret, a quick change-over system, automatic height adjustment as well as a can size memory function. The CSM 800 is also said to be a low-maintenance seamer, due to its completely enclosed oil lubrication circulation and accessibility to all parts through large service doors.

A few months before the planned launch at last year’s Metpack, a

CSM 800 was installed at Trivium’s plant in Dägeling, Germany to seam 99mm-diameter cans. Last December, another seamer was installed at a canmaker in the Netherlands to seam peel-off ends for the infant formula industry.

“Over the last few months, the CSM 800 has seamed tens of millions of cans. Customers are not only convinced by the excellent quality of the closure, but also appreciate the machine’s high level of efficiency,” says director of marketing and sales Dominique Engel.

The Swiss equipment manufacturer is already working on its next market launch: the CSM 400, specially designed for 99-153mm diameter tinplate cans, and with a speed of up to 400cpm.

More information from Germann + Frei AG, Martinsbruggstrasse 92, CH-9016 St Gallen, Switzerland. Tel: 41 71 282 16 40. Website: www.germannfrei.ch



especially with many restrictions still in place due to the pandemic.

“In some cases, craft brewers are supported by the container supplier. There are times that inevitably, they will reach out to us, and we are always happy to try to work through the issues with them over the phone or video conference.”

With 30 years of expertise in the packaging industry, and a diverse background including both manufacturing and customer technical support, McCullough believes that passion is an essential part of his job:

“We partner with many brewers, who share their passion for their craft, while we extol the benefits of metal packaging. It is a fun segment of the industry to work with, as new thoughts and ideas are ever flowing. It is a continual learning process that does not allow one to become myopic. New ideas are always welcome.”

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Seaming machine with automatic oil lubrication

A fully-rebuilt beverage food can seaming machine, upgraded with a vertical motor and an automatic oil lubrication recirculating and filtration system, has been unveiled by Italian tooling manufacturer Imeta.

The Angelus 120L has been designed for a continuous control of the lubricant, operated by pressure sensors. To achieve this, Imeta has developed a new oil cabinet and removed the Manzel oil pump.

The machine handles the seaming of easy-open ends on to 63mm-diameter two-piece aluminium cans. Imeta says that the upgraded machine avoids oil contamination, in addition to reducing annual maintenance and

providing oil consumption savings of up to 90 per cent.

Imeta has also recently acquired a 3D scanner to produce stainless steel castings. The scanner is able to replicate any component by sending the digital file directly to the foundry.

“We can supply any castings made of AISI 316 stainless steel to replace the original ones made of cast iron. The new stainless-steel castings guarantee a higher level of cleanliness and faster annual maintenance, as the parts will no longer be sandblasted and repainted,” explains sales director Roberto Baroni.

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