

CASE STUDY

Basic American Foods

Food Manufacturer Expands Plant Capacity in Record Time, Ensures Reliability with Pneumatic Vacuum Conveyors.

Known as the pioneer that perfected potato dehydration, Basic American Foods is the food service source for unique, convenient potato and bean products. From the restaurant operator to the household consumer, Basic American Foods provides a variety of innovative products.

In the mid-50s, Basic American Foods established a potato processing plant in Blackfoot, Idaho, where the first instant potato product that could be rehydrated with boiling water was developed. With 40 patents to its credit, Basic American Foods now operates additional plants in Idaho and in other prime potato growing areas like Wisconsin and Washington.

Instant Changes in Operational Capacity Needed

A new line was added to the Blackfoot plant which required a major reconfiguration of existing space. The project timeline was half of what would normally be expected of such a complex project.

“The reconfiguration project would normally take about a year and a half from conception to completion because of the complexity of adding a new process within an existing plant,” said Jeff Andrews, senior project engineer with Basic American Foods. “Our timeline required that we do it all in eight months.”

The reconfiguration project affected one process that utilized a previously purchased Hapman bulk bag unloader to supply corn starch to two, new pneumatic conveyors. The conveyors would move the bulk powder about 150 ft (45.7 m) 8 hours a day, 5 days per week.



Basic American Foods underwent a major reconfiguration of its Blackfoot, Idaho operations to increase capacity within a very short time frame. One process affected by the project included a previously purchased Hapman bulk bag unloader (top) to supply corn starch to two, new pneumatic vacuum conveyors.



The pneumatic vacuum conveyors move the bulk powder about 150 ft (45.7 m) 8 hours a day, 5 days per week.

Reliable Partner Needed

Because of the seemingly impossible timeline, Andrews knew he couldn't risk working with vendors he couldn't count on.

"I've used Hapman's products over the past twelve years, both as an engineering consultant and in my current role," noted Andrews. "We have about a dozen of Hapman's vacuum conveyors at this plant that work like a charm. Hapman may not always be the cheapest, but they will be there to help engineer and stand behind their product. As an engineer, this is the type of company I like to work with."

Test Drive of Material Ensures Right Decision

Because of its very small particle size and tendency to pack under pressure, corn starch can be problematic when conveying. As the project lead, Andrews wanted peace of mind knowing his decisions

were going to be as successful in the real world as they were on paper.

"Hapman's test laboratory made it easy to ensure things would work," said Andrews. "It's a good feeling to know that when you throw the switch everything is going to work as it should."

Custom-Engineered Solution for Optimal Filter Operation

Even though the material test proved Hapman's pneumatic vacuum conveyors would successfully convey the material, Hapman's engineers were concerned with the conveyors' filters plugging with the fine corn starch particles. To combat this from happening, they engineered a custom solution.

"We were able to engineer timing circuits and pulse cleaning cycles specific to Basic American Food's process and material," said Floyd Phalen, Hapman engineering manager. "Our controls engineer customized a unique cycle specific to the configuration that ensured the best efficiency of material movement."

Engineering Partnership Ensures Project Success

Once the plant reconfiguration project was complete, Andrews was glad he chose Hapman for his pneumatic conveyor needs.

"As I've said, this was a very large project. Over the years I've worked with hundreds of equipment vendors on all types of equipment, and I would rank Hapman in the top five of the easiest to work with," Andrews said. "During these big projects, with so much going on, it is easy to let an order fall through the cracks. I had several vendors that would request information, and if it slipped on our side they used it as an excuse to charge more or say they can't make the delivery schedule. Hapman did not do this. In fact, they did the opposite."

"They were great with friendly reminders helping us push the process along. I really appreciated that and it took stress off me. That's one of the reasons I use Hapman for my bulk material handling needs."

ABOUT HAPMAN

For 70 years, Hapman has provided manufacturing plants around the world with the most technologically advanced powder and bulk handling equipment and systems, offering custom engineered equipment and systems for chemical, food, pharmaceutical, plastics, building, minerals, and other industries.

HAPMAN

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