

ISN

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BIOFACH 2017

From 15th – 18th February, BIOFACH will once more welcome the world's Leading Trade Fair for Organic Food. More than 2,300 exhibitors from the national and international organic sector are expected at BIOFACH 2017. Enter the world of organic products and taste, too – into organic.

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Fresh thinking, Served

INTERVIEW WITH HANNA RÜDEL, FOOD SERVICE DIRECTOR, MICVAC.

ISN-Q-1-Can you tell us the history of Micvac, How did it start?

It actually started in the 70ties when Dr Joel Haamer, founder of the company, wanted to find a way to preserve mussels. After harvest, mussels are very sensitive to oxidization and they have a very short shelf life. Dr Haamer got the idea that if he could heat up the mussels very quickly (microwaves) and in the same moment take away all the oxygen, it would be a way to keep the quality of the mussels and extend the shelf life.

At that time the microwave technology was not so developed but in year 2000, Dr Joel Haamer, patented his idea and started Micvac. Today, the company has customers all over the world producing chilled ready meals, seafood, soups, salads etc. The Micvac has several patents; the method, the valve, the Flextray etc. Until now, Micvac has specialised within microwave heat treatment. Micvac constructs their own microwave tunnel especially designed for the method. The last two years, Micvac has engaged itself in the food service sector.

In this case, the customer can use a standard steam oven to do the heat treatment together with the Micvac packaging (tray + film and valve or pouch + valve). The process time is, of course different if you compare microwaves, but the pasteurisation and the extended shelf life is the same. The quality and the nutrition values exceed standard methods and you can use bigger sizes of trays and pouches than with microwaves. Micvac calls these two business segments "retail" (food producing industry to retail chain) and "food service" (restaurant, catering, industrial big kitchens or similar).

ISN-Q-2-How do you achieve a long shelf life without any additional preservative?

The Micvac-method is a way to combine two different preserving methods; heat treatment (pasteurisation) and vacuum-packing. The fact that the heat treatment and the removal of oxygen is done at the same time, in a sealed package means a high degree of product safety. This is valid for the method no matter if you process in a microwave tunnel or a steam / combi oven.

ISN-Q-3-What is your formula for international Market, suppose a food producer from another country want to use your technology, equipment, and your know how. What would you offer them.

Retail: Micvac offers the set up for a specialised continuous production line; from filling of the trays to the wrapping of sleeve around the finished product.

Micvac always supplies the microwave tunnel and the valve applicator. The other equipment can be done by Micvac or the producer itself. The customer is trained in the Micvac method to achieve the best way to develop the recipes.

Food service: No major changes to your kitchen, staff or equipment are needed. All you need, apart from conventional kitchen equipment, is the packing material and a sealing machine.

This is what we offer together with the know-how how to cook food in a package. We have put together a new cookbook with recipes specially developed for the Micvac-method – so it is easy to get started!

ISN-Q-4-With a very fast world and getting faster, how do you see the future of the Microwave food, and do you think we will see a more advanced technologies in the future?

There are demands for new ways of thinking when it comes to how we utilize our resources and then I mean both the raw material, the personnel, production facility and resources like water and electricity. One big and relevant issue is that we are still throwing away far too much of the food that we produce. At the same time we have increasing demands for convenience and flexibility in place and time when you want to eat.

I don't think it needs to be advanced technologies but there is a need for a new approach and a new way of working. Micvac gives you a smooth production method no matter if you opt for the microwave solution or combi oven solution. The result is a production flow with minimum waste all the way through to the consumer of the food.

Microwave produced food is the most healthy alternative you can have today due to its short heat treatment. The consumer also likes the convenience of just putting the meal in the microwave being able to eat it within a couple of minutes.

ISN-Q-5-What are the future challenges for Micvac?

The challenge for Micvac and everyone who challenge existing (traditional) processes is that, initially it requires extra time and commitment, at several levels in the company. But when the changes have been made and the benefits are obvious, everyone are winners.




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