

Exclusive on MULTIVAC

MULTIVAC: High-quality packaging for high-quality meat



La Granda is more than a vision. La Granda is a consortium, which has dedicated itself to revitalizing an old cattle breed from the Piedmont region and allowing traditional rearing methods to be revived. The responsible handling of animals and the careful processing of their high-quality meat brings tasty meat products to the consumer's table not only in the Italian province of Cuneo but also far beyond its borders. With its needs-based packaging solutions, MULTIVAC makes an important contribution to increasing the required production capacity at La Granda and thereby supporting its establishment in the market.



La Granda was founded in 1996 on the initiative of Sergio Capaldo. The veterinary surgeon, who was born in 1953 in Fossano in the province of Cuneo, fights passionately to preserve the "White Giants", a traditional cattle breed from Piedmont, whose meat is particularly tasty and low in fat. While the meat of other cattle breeds is generally about three percent, the figure for this Piedmontese breed is only some 0.5 to 1.0 percent. In comparison with conventional methods however, the rearing of these cattle proved to be barely economic, which meant it increasingly disappeared into the background. At the end of the 1990s, the population of these Piedmontese cattle had shrunk to around half of the herd in the 1960s - at that time there were still about 680,000 animals.

Sergio Capaldo recognized the danger of a progressive weakening of this cattle rearing tradition in Cuneo and decided to act. The energetic animal lover, who since 2004 has also been the National Livestock Manager for Slow Food, as well as the Quality Meat Manager for the Eataly Group, was quickly able to win over the first cattle breeders to his idea and convince them that through their work they were at the centre of the process chain, and therefore had to live up to a high sense of responsibility.

Animal and human welfare take pride of place

The declared aim of La Granda is to link tradition and innovation. The old-fashioned rearing methods had to be updated, while animal welfare needed to be pushed to the forefront. Among the few, simple rules is that the new-born calves are suckled by the mother cow for four to six months in accordance with the

rhythm of nature, and they grow up during this time in the cattle stall. Based on the maxim "Animals are what they eat", only traditional and typical agricultural products are used to feed them. La Granda feels a responsibility not only towards the animals and humans, but also towards the region. The correct balance between social and cultural responsibility on the one hand, as well as collective growth and efficiency on the other, is therefore a constant challenge.

The right marketing is crucial for success

La Granda Trasformazione S.r.l. arose in parallel with the work on the breeders' association. The company's business mission is to bring the meat of the Piedmontese cattle to the consumer - at fair prices to all involved. It is also thanks to the systematic efforts by the cooperative initiative to convince consumers, that they are now more prepared to pay a reasonable price for the high-quality product. This closes the circle, since the breeders are appreciated and rewarded accordingly for their painstaking work in rearing the cattle. The incentive is therefore correspondingly high.

The level of transparency in the whole process is equally high - in addition to legal requirements, this is also due to the fact that the consumer today wants to know exactly where the bought meat comes from, what the constituents of the product are, and who has processed it. In this way, La Granda is striking a chord with the times.

Expanding capacity due to high demand

The great popularity of the product with consumers, who appreciated the whole project as

much as the meat products of the La Granda brand, did however make a new production site necessary. Naturally the rising demand for the beef had to be satisfied. In 2011 therefore, La Granda left its old 300 square metre factory which was no longer large enough for the new production quantities, and moved to a new site. This had an area of 1,200 square metres and also housed a restaurant and a retail sales business for meat products. MULTIVAC has constantly been accompanying this progress, particularly with regard to the two most important La Granda products: Giotto, a hamburger made of 100 percent meat from Piedmontese cattle, and Carne Cruda, a calf meat steak tartare, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2017.

Thermoforming packaging machines for a high level of flexibility

As part of the new production process, the first MULTIVAC R 120 thermoforming packaging machine was introduced in place of the old chamber machine. Thanks to its compact dimensions and high level of flexibility, it is suitable for packing products of different weights between 50 and 500 grams. Its two thermoforming dies also enable large pieces of meat over 1.5 kg to be packed, as well as enabling collation packs to be produced.

A short time later, this site too was bursting at the seams. A new extension was therefore absolutely essential. Today the total surface area is 4,000 square metres. Every day 3,000 kg of meat portions and 4,000 hamburgers of different weights are produced.

The constant growth led eventually to the purchase of a further thermoforming packaging machine. Due to the highly positive experience with the R 120, the outstanding advice from the experienced MULTIVAC packaging specialists and the close contact with MULTIVAC's Italian



subsidiary, La Granda turned with trust to MULTIVAC for the second packaging machine as well. This time the decision was for a F 100 model, whose dimensions met the packaging requirements for the Giotto hamburger. The product is supplied by La Granda in five different sizes to all the most important restaurant chains and enjoys great popularity.

It was the flexibility of the machine as regards different pack formats, which was at the forefront in the first phases of the project. The thermoforming die installed on the F 100 enables both individual packs and collation packs to be produced. The variable forming depth down to a maximum of 80 mm is also of great benefit.

Ideally equipped for the future

Today the two installed MULTIVAC machines play an important role in the meat producer's production process. Some 15,000 packs are produced every day. These are of course figures, which are far removed from those of industrial-scale production, but they represent a significant mark for La Granda. The production quantity fully meets all the company's requirements, while the pack quality and high-quality products fulfil the demands of consumers - there is even the sense of a hand-made product in its production method, a quality feature that La Granda wants to continue to retain.

La Granda is moving on a course of expansion and continues to expand its product range as well. Thanks to MULTIVAC and the far-sighted ideas of Sergio Capaldo, the Carne Cruda product from the front part of the animal today enjoys great popularity, not only in Piedmont but throughout all the regions of Italy. And the company's growth is not yet completed. La Granda is well set up and prepared to cross new borders. It can count on the support of reliable partners like MULTIVAC - a choice which has proved to be ideal and offers many options for the future. ♦

