

Automation as a key to greater productivity and resource conservation

Swedish trading company uses German processing line

The Grönsakshallen company - one of the largest greengrocers and freshcut producers in Sweden - is currently investing in modern, automated production. Recently, KRONEN GmbH installed a new processing line at the production plant in Hägersten, with which large quantities of lettuce and vegetables can be processed in a continuous process. The result: higher productivity, less use of resources and maximum product quality.

Grönsakshallen was founded in 1985 in Sorunda. At that time, managing director Gunnar Netz went from door to door at the town's restaurants to sell his goods - potatoes and eggs. Today, Grönsakshallen is one of Sweden's largest greengrocers and freshcut producers and sells a variety of products throughout the country: fresh fruits, berries, vegetables and lettuce, as well as freshly cut produce and frozen fruits and flowers, herbs and eggs. Around 300 employees now work in the company at six locations, 35 of them in production at the Hägersten site. With around 50 own and a number of leased refrigerated vehicles, the goods are delivered fresh nationwide every day.



Above: middle part of the processing line

Below: Front part of the same system

Saving resources

The corporate values are of central importance for Grönsakshallen. "Our highest priority is given to the quality and freshness of the products in order to optimally meet the demands of customers - restaurateurs and professional kitchens all over Sweden. Innovation is another part of the foundation of our corporate philosophy," says Purchases Manager Peter Frohm. "Grönsakshallen offers a wide selection of products. Some 465 different products are produced in our own factory each day, an immense number. And the portfolio is constantly being updated and expanded. Environmental sustainability and cost-effectiveness are also important factors for the company."

The service also plays a major role: the sales team is available to customers from 6 am to 1 am, meaning that these customers can place their orders not only during the day, but also late in the evening. About ten years ago, Grönsakshallen also set up a webshop

with which customers can order flexibly online. The orders enter directly into the software of the company and everything can be played out and implemented there. This ensures that every order is completed as quickly as possible, on time.

This year, Grönsakshallen has invested in a new KRONEN lettuce and vegetable processing line, further expanding its own production. The producer already uses several individual machines from the manufacturer; the vegetable and salad slicer KSM 100 and the lettuce spinner K50. The aim of the new acquisition is to automate production and save resources. One challenge is that Swedish staff are not only expensive, they are also extremely difficult to find.

Fully automated

The automated line, where all machines are networked together, reduces the personnel required from seven to five people. At the same time, efficiency and thus productivity increases. Grönsakshallen mainly processes various lettuces - including iceberg and mixed salad - but also white cabbage, carrots and other vegetables on the line. Depending on the product, between 1,000 and 3,000 kg per day are processed with it, seven days a week. This is already a significant increase in output, but the capacity of the line is not yet fully exhausted.

But the line also brings many advantages in terms of resource use. It is not only designed to save space, so that as little room of the production area is used as possible. It also guarantees efficient use of water. "We are very satisfied with the line and the resulting product quality," says Magnus Agneborn, production manager at Grönsakshallen. "We will be able to reduce our water consumption by its use, even if we can not give you an exact number at this time."



Washing process with mixed salad

Specifications of the processing line

The fully networked processing line is used to cut, wash, dry and weigh leafy lettuce and a variety of other vegetables. In the first step, lettuces and vegetables are cut in the GS 10-2 slicer; the products are prepared by hand and then placed on the feeding belt. The line then processes the products in a continuous, automated process - with a capacity of 400 to 1,000 kg per hour, depending on the product.

It consists of the following KRONEN machines: the belt cutting machine GS 10-2, two washing machines GEWA 3800V PLUS with vibrating discharger, drying system K650 and the crate weighing system KWS. Depending on the consistency, shape and size of the product, processing times and speeds of the processing line can be regulated via a touch screen. This allows for an effective, gentle and short processing cycle. It is the first line to use the K650 drying system introduced in 2018.



The user Grönsakshallen is one of the largest fruit trading companies in Sweden

All KRONEN machines are optimally matched to fully exploit the throughput potential of each machine, maximizing the overall output of each machine. This prevents bottlenecks or product jams in the processing. At the same time operating, maintenance and repair costs are reduced and there is energy-saving. Furthermore, a simple cleaning and maximum hygiene is guaranteed, according to the applicable international standards. Each line is individually adapted by KRONEN to the needs of the users. Accordingly, the machines used are also variable. For example, the crate weighing system can be flexibly replaced or supplemented by a packaging machine.

Mechanical engineering for 40 years now

KRONEN GmbH develops and produces individual machines, special machinery and complete processing lines for preparing, cutting, washing, drying, peeling, packaging and disinfecting food, even on larger scales. Today, the family-owned company employs over 100 people and is a global machines and systems supplier to the fresh cut, convenience, catering, delicatessen and food industries, with global representation in over 80 countries. The products are delivered to over 100 countries worldwide. In close cooperation with customers and international partners, KRONEN preserves traditional values such as quality awareness, but also wants to recognize and implement the challenges of the global market in a creative and substantive manner. In 2018, the company celebrates a double anniversary: 40 years of KRONEN and 20 years of Zillgith/KRONEN. KRONEN GmbH was founded in 1978, and in 1998 the KRONEN industrial division was taken over by Rudolf Hans Zillgith as managing partner.

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