

ISHIDA X-RAY ENSURES NOTHING BUT TEA FOR HERBAPAC

Case Study **Herbapac**

Facts and figures

- » The Ishida X-ray inspection system is being used to inspect bulk tea at a rate of 25-75kg / hour.
- » To meet the stringent monitoring standards of Japan, Herbapac switched from metal detection to X-ray inspection.
- » Using Ishida's patented intelligent GA (Genetic Algorithm) technology, the detection of small pebbles (representing 90% of the contaminants) is optimised.

An Ishida x-ray inspection system is enabling one of France's leading suppliers of luxury teas to satisfy the highest quality and safety standards. The Ishida IX model was one of the first x-ray inspection systems to be installed in France and is continuing to deliver consistently reliable performance.

Challenge

Herbapac, based in Geispolsheim near Strasbourg, had originally used a metal detector to identify any potential foreign bodies in its teas. However, to meet the particular stringent monitoring standards of Japan, one of the many countries to which the company exports its products, and also to satisfy the quality requirements of its high-end customer base, the company decided to switch to x-ray technology.

Solution

The Ishida IX is being used to inspect bulk teas at a rate of 25 to 75kg per hour, which are subsequently packed into boxes or bags. At the start of each production run the machine is set up by passing calibration test pieces of metal, rubber and glass through the system. Any foreign bodies are then detected by measuring the density of the inspected product. An x-ray beam is projected onto a line sensor. As the product passes through the x-ray beam, only the residual energy reaches the sensor. Measurement of the difference in the absorption level of the x-ray energy between the product and a foreign body enables the foreign body to be detected.





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All Ishida x-ray inspection systems incorporate the company's patented intelligent GA (Genetic Algorithm) technology. By analysing image data over multiple generations, the machine achieves an extremely high level of precision. Since the contaminants found are generally similar - the tea is hand-picked, with small pebbles representing 90% of the contaminants – the inspection can be optimised using the GA technology to maximise the detection of these commonly occurring foreign bodies.

Herbapac supplies retail networks, delicatessens, cafés, restaurants, hotels and other companies worldwide who require high-quality luxury teas with a French "savoir-faire".

"We create recipes from selected teas from China, India, Japan, Korea, Africa and South America," explains Fanny Hüsselstein, Director of the Herbapac manufacturing site. "Then, we take care of the packaging by bringing know-how and expertise in terms of regulations and feasibility.

"We are fully satisfied with this detection system that secures our production," she continues. "It is easy to use and also to clean, thanks to its ability to be disassembled and reassembled without tools."

Founded in 2008, Herbapac is a joint venture between the Salpa and the Fauchon groups. The company now employs 80 people and has enjoyed

17% growth over the past three years, with 300 tonnes of tea produced annually. It has IFS (International Featured Standards) accreditation for food safety and quality and is certified by ECOCERT for the production of organic products.

"We plan to invest about 1.6 M € over two years dedicated, among other things, to the creation of a third automated line for 2g sachets," adds Fanny Hüsselstein. "As part of this, we plan to increase packing rates from 160 to 240 sachets per minute."

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