



Leading the way for North America with GEA CookStar SuperHeatSmoke

As CEO of Grand River Foods, one of Canada's leading suppliers of private label foods, it's important to Dean Cebulski to always be evolving. That's why his company was the first in North America to debut the new GEA CookStar with SuperHeatSmoke. "We focus on innovation, so it's only natural that we gravitate towards innovative suppliers," says Dean. "It's all about bringing the latest and greatest to the table."



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Customer profile

Grand River Foods is a strong entrepreneurial food solution company with a passion for and a single-minded focus on, creating premium food experiences for a value-conscious customer and consumer. They manufacture over 200 private label food products for Canada's leading grocery, restaurant and food service companies.

The challenge

Grand River Foods first began their partnership with GEA in 2004, and are now proudly running four CookStar ovens, (one of which has the SuperHeatSmoke) along with first-class GEA coating, frying, freezing and packing equipment. Dean adds firmly: "The reason we like the CookStar is its reliability – our ovens run for 16 hours a day without fail. It's flexible, offering dry and moist heat in different parts of the oven, so we can modify our products to perfectly suit our customers' needs, such as a product with enhanced internal moisture or crispy breading. This shows the engineering excellence of the oven."



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“The partnership between GEA, our customers and ourselves has been strong since day one. In the beginning, when we needed application expertise, the GEA team at Bakel were vital – we would bring our customers to the test centre before we even had ovens installed, which was key to our early business successes.”

“We would drive the test centre guys crazy – trying to run 8 or 9 products in a day – but they’d always be able to accommodate this with flexibility and good expertise providing us the results we were aiming for!”

The right performance

Jan van Deursen, one of GEA’s founders, helped to forge the partnership between GEA and Grand River Foods. As Dean says, “When we needed solutions, we were offered end-to-end solutions, rather than just standalone pieces of equipment.”

Thanks to the SuperHeatSmoke, Grand River Foods offers quality smoked products that simply weren’t available before now.

“In 2016 at IFFA we met with Paul Verbruggen from GEA, who explained to us the possibilities of SuperHeatSmoke with the CookStar and got us intrigued by the opportunities as opposed to existing ‘batch smoked processes.’”

“We went to Bakel and tested many different protein products in only two days and the results lived up to what had been explained to us. In February 2017, after we bought the system, we started to develop products and presented concepts to customers and were successful in bringing new products to market. We were very pleased with the benefits of this innovation and the customer acceptance and we are very comfortable running multiple proteins on it, such as seafood, poultry, pork, beef and vegetarian products. It is the top of the evolutionary scale to us,” says Dean. “It is something that has not been done in the marketplace until today... and now it is. It more than lives up to the high standards we’ve come to expect from GEA.”



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GEA is a global technology company with multi-billion euro sales operations in more than 50 countries. Founded in 1881 the company is one of the largest providers of innovative equipment and process technology. GEA is listed in the STOXX® Europe 600 Index. In addition, the company is included in selected MSCI Global Sustainability Indexes.