



Downtime Reduction (Food)

Bob's Red Mill Natural Foods Inc, USA, mills a range of flours, meals and cereals 24 hours a day, 6 days a week. They had a time-challenge with the difficult cleaning and refitting of their traditional clamp-and-sleeve connectors when switching product runs. They were also searching for a solution to the dust leaking from the connectors into the factory. Since installing BFM® fitting to their production line, they've managed to significantly reduce downtime and improve overall production efficiency and hygiene.



VIBRATORY SCREEN DISCHARGE TO AUGER FEEDER INLET - BEFORE



VIBRATORY SCREEN DISCHARGE TO AUGER FEEDER INLET - AFTER

The Challenge:

Each machine is designed to package more than one product, requiring thorough cleaning between product runs. The connections from the vibratory screener's discharge to the auger feeder inlet can be difficult to access and the traditional clamp and sleeve connectors took considerable time to remove, clean and re-install during product change-overs.

This not only caused significant downtime, and operator safety issues, but if incorrectly installed, could become dislodged, causing product loss and bag-metering inaccuracy. Even when installed to the proper position, they would often leak product, requiring constant cleaning to maintain hygiene.

The Solution:

After seeing the BFM® fitting at a trade-show, the company installed two Seeflex 040E connectors on the screener discharges and feeder inlets to test. They found that they dramatically reduced the time it took operators to remove, clean and replace the connectors. The set length, no-tool installation also meant they were fitted fast and easy each time.

The leak-proof design seals the product within the production system with no potential for dust or product escaping to cause cross-contamination. Packaging operation efficiency and overall plant hygiene has been dramatically improved. All connectors have now been replaced with BFM® throughout the plant.

The Benefits:



REDUCED DOWNTIME: Fast and efficient cleaning in between product runs means downtime has been significantly reduced.



IMPROVED HYGIENE: There is no more dust leakage, eliminating cross contamination of products and reducing general housekeeping costs.



QUICK CHANGEOVERS: The simple snap-fit of the BFM® makes changeovers easy, and standard length always fits correctly - no metering accuracy issues.



BETTER HEALTH & SAFETY: No need for tools to remove or install the connector in difficult positions means its much safer for staff to change-over.

"They're one of the best things we've found...since installing the first two fittings, we've been replacing all of the remaining clamp-and-sleeve connectors in the facility with BFM® fittings. I've been putting them everywhere there's a transfer point because they make things so much easier for our operators." *Superintendent of Engineering and Maintenance*

Case Study provided courtesy of BFM® Distributor Powder-Solutions Group, USA