

More than just dairy technology

TDS report record order backlog

„Made in Germany“ is still an important feature when it comes to selling technical equipment and services. Joachim Haase, CEO at Tuchenhausen Dairy Systems (TDS), confirmed in an interview with EDM: „We had a 15 per cent increase of our sales to euro 105 m last year which was mainly due to our business outside Germany. Customers in Eastern Europe especially are favouring German-made high-quality equipment and plant engineering.“ TDS's proudly cherished specialty skills are in turnkey projects for which components are sourced from GEA Group or third parties. These components then are arranged to "units" which usually arrive at the customer's site pre-assembled and factory-tested, ready for on-site assembly. Mr Haase says that TDS's main asset is the concentrated know-how of 168 process technology and automation engineers who work at TDS' three German sites in Büchen, Ahaus and Sarstedt. Together they form Europe's biggest single engineering company. Close contacts with customers enable TDS to further develop equipment, components and machines both in-house and also in the GEA Group. One of the core development areas for the past years has been the area of high-hygiene technology where TDS claim to be technology leaders. High in demand are, for instance, UHT plants that process also highly viscous or particulated fluids and enable customers to develop novelty products such as smoothies. One such installation with an adjustable capacity of 14,000 to 20,000 l/h was most recently taken into operation by a German TDS customer. The plant consists basically of a multitube heat exchanger equipped with so called "mushroom-type" bends that prevent the heater from clogging even when processing 100 % pure fruit juice with 25 long fibres and six mm fruit particles. Additionally equipped with flavour recovery, this plant opens opportunities to exploit the growing market of milk-fruit-blends.

International projects

Speaking to EDM, Mr Haase points out several large projects that TDS has been awarded with during 2007, so that a good start in the current year has been given. In Kremenchuk, Ukraine, a complete new dairy plant is under construction that will be equipped with TDS units and automation. The euro 13 m plant will process

200,000 litres per day into ESL liquid milk, cream, yoghurt and kefir, whey products and babyfood. The dairy will also manufacture products for McDonald's. Another large project is the new fruit juice filling plant in Gizeh, close to Cairo, Egypt. General contractor for the multi-million euro order is again TDS partnered by Indag and ProLeiT. The plant commissioned for ICMFI will be put into operation in October and it will be up to most modern European standards. Truva's new dairy plant in Romania is in the final project stage and the number one Israeli dairy company will soon start to supply the complete Balkan area from that basis. Customers outside Germany receive the assistance of native TDS experts that work either in the country or in the larger area. They, in turn, have a full backup from the TDS and GEA Group. Smaller TDS offices like that in the Baltic just take care of sales while other are also offering engineering services. The 30 market companies within the GEA Process Engineering Division are very seldom competing as their production programme and offerings are centrally managed by GEA. But the market companies yet enjoy a great deal of freedom to be able to give the best services to their sales areas. TDS still can't offer packaging and processing solutions from a single source. A cooperation with SIG Combibloc as well



Within the GEA Group, Joachim Haase has been CEO of TDS Tuchenhausen Dairy Systems since 1999 (photo: EDM)

as the acquisition of Italian filling machine manufacturer Procomac by GEA will close this gap, however. In this field, TDS is targeting added-value fruit juice and milk drinks segments. Although GEA Group has no complete cheese making solutions in its portfolio, TDS has managed to secure orders for the fluid processing part in numerous large projects that saw the building of big cheese plants over the past years. Acquisitions that bring cheese vats or moulds into the TDS portfolio are by no means ruled out by Mr Haase. Overall target is, says Haase, that TDS can offer as much as possible to processors, from raw material reception to packaging. Simple as it sounds is TDS' strategy: "We want to be the best partner for our customers, long-term," explains Joachim Haase who refuses to define any targets for sales figures but rather thinks in terms of market position and customer-orientation. As the business with the fruit juice and beverage industry has been growing to some 30 per cent of turnover in the recent past, TDS will have the "D" in its company name (that stands for "Dairy") taking the back seat. This should be seen as a signal that TDS no longer are only offering dairy technology. 

Footprint of the new dairy plant that TDS is building in Kremenchuk, Ukraine

