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Three Thoughts on Reliability

Take care of your assets and they'll return the favor.



Predictive Maintenance for Form/Fill/Seal Machines

By EquipNet

Predictive maintenance is the key to making sure your food packaging lines stay up and running during critical production times. Sensory inspections, while beneficial, do not identify internal equipment defects early enough to prevent breakdowns. Costly downtimes can be avoided by monitoring the condition and performance of the equipment during operation to detect and eliminate defects before unplanned downtimes occur.

Condition based monitoring technologies, such as vibration analysis, infrared thermography, and motor circuit analysis, detect defects and accurately assess the condition of parts. These tools provide the analysis needed to know which parts to replace and when to replace them. Planning ahead saves time, saves money, and minimizes downtime.

When it comes to packing products with high volume efficiency, manufacturers in the following industries know the significant role Vertical Form Fill Seal (VFFS) or Horizontal Form Fill Seal (HFFS) machines can play in their production lines:

- Hard candy, snack, and confection industry
- Meat and poultry industry
- Dried meat industry
- Pet foods and pet treat industries
- Coffee, tea, and other ground or powder food products
- Dairy and cheese industries

- Liquid detergent and chemical industries
- IQF (individually quick frozen) product industries

The suggested preventive maintenance for FFS machines varies depending on the capacity and frequency of the machine. Most FFS manufacturers have preventive maintenance kits or programs for each of their models.

In addition to predictive maintenance, some preventive maintenance can also be done to prevent problems in just a few minutes during changeovers or short down times:

- Remove, clean, and inspect, then lubricate and re-install the front cross jaw beam on a monthly basis.
- Ensure all the lubrication points on the cross jaw housing are serviced with the proper lubricant.
- Properly document all changes made to the machine.
- Visually inspect the drive belts, shafts, and bearings on a monthly basis.
- Inspect all wiring that moves with each machine cycle on a monthly basis.
- Ensure all film path rollers are clean from debris and static bars are working correctly.
- Ensure photo eyes are clean from dust and cutting clamps have no burnt film residue on a daily basis.

Don't wait to fix something until it becomes a problem. By performing predictive maintenance on your food packaging machinery you will reduce your risk of breakdowns and line downtime. 