



Klondike packs savings into its operation.



Company brings packaging in-house, generating cost and time savings

The Company

Klondike Cheese has been producing award-winning cheese at the same location in Monroe since the late 1800's. The family-owned company employs 80 people and is a major area employer.

The Buholzer family is focused on sustainability for financial reasons and also because of their concern for the environment. "We're focused on sustainable practices to reduce the ecological impact on the community, where our family has lived for four generations," said Ron Buholzer, president of Klondike Cheese. "And along with continuing to offer consumers products they want, we are committed to growth so that Klondike Cheese can provide more manufacturing jobs in Wisconsin."



Ernesto Barron fills forms with fresh feta cheese at the state-of-the-art Klondike Cheese facility in Monroe

Results

With an approximately \$150,000 investment in equipment, Klondike expects the following returns:

- ▶ **\$75,000 annually in costs related to shipping**
- ▶ **Hiring of four full-time employees**
- ▶ **Savings of 1600 gallons of diesel fuel**
- ▶ **Approximately 16 metric tons of CO2 emissions not going into the environment**

The Wisconsin Profitable Sustainability Initiative

"As soon as we heard about the Wisconsin Profitable Sustainability Initiative (PSI) pilot program, we applied," Buholzer said. PSI is a state-funded program to accelerate the adoption of sustainability strategies by small and midsize manufacturers. The goal is to help participants reduce costs, gain competitive advantage and minimize environmental impacts. PSI brings together a team of energy, environmental, logistics and lean experts to work with manufacturers to identify and implement improvements. Projects are prioritized based on business needs, fast payback and high ROI.





KLONDIKE
CHEESE COMPANY
MONROE, WISCONSIN

The Issue

A comprehensive PSI diagnostic revealed that the greatest opportunity for impact was to focus on reducing energy use and optimizing manufacturing processes. “Klondike’s management was very interested in learning about the ways to reduce environmental impact both by using fewer resources and by developing ways to better handle the waste water from their manufacturing processes,” said Rick Ray, WMEP manufacturing specialist. “There are a number of projects related to energy and waste water treatment that Klondike expects to pursue in the future, but after a Lean and Clean review, they determined that the project with the most immediate impact was to bring the cut and wrap packaging operation back in-house.”



Mike Brisco places bricks of feta cheese onto a conveyor that will take it to the packaging line.

A Lean and Clean review maps out all of the manufacturing processes to discover where wasted time and resources occur. The review found that an immediate opportunity to reduce cost, time and

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*President
Klondike Cheese Company*

pollution was in the cut and wrap packaging process that was outsourced to other companies. “Currently, we’re outsourcing the cut and wrap process,” said Buholzer. “The Lean & Clean review found that if we purchase packaging equipment to finish the product in-house, we can eliminate a bottleneck in the production process, cut our product delivery time by 70% and reduce fuel use and pollution resulting from shipping our product to and from packaging companies.”



The bricks of feta cheese are placed into plastic pouches for vacuum sealing.

Results

Klondike purchased packaging equipment (partially funded by a PSI grant) and is now providing employee training for the process. "Once we're in full production, we'll be adding four new employees to the operation," said Buholzer.

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Klondike Cheese has other PSI projects on the drawing board for the next few years. "We are committed to growing the company and investing in our community," said Buholzer. "PSI has helped us get focused and get started on projects we'd been thinking about for quite some time. I'm excited about the plans we have for the future and I can't wait to get started."



Shane Caruso guides a rack of feta cheese bricks into a salty brine to be steeped and aged overnight for flavor.

About WMEP

WMEP is a private, nonprofit consulting organization committed to the growth and success of Wisconsin manufacturers. A leader in Next Generation Manufacturing, WMEP brings best practices to Wisconsin firms to help them achieve world-class performance through innovation and transformation. During the past five years, WMEP-assisted manufacturers have reported nearly \$1 billion in economic impact with 6,557 jobs created and retained.

For more information, visit www.wmep.org or call 877.856.8588.