

CHER-MAKE SAUSAGE CO. SUCCESSFULLY TACKLES QUALITY STANDARDS IN NARROW PRODUCTION WINDOW

Company Profile:

For three generations Cher-Make Sausage Co. in Manitowoc has kept true to a tradition of more than 90 years of authentic sausage making. This commitment has served both its customers and employees well, allowing the company to expand physically and geographically. Cher-Make currently has 150 employees. Its branded sausage products are found throughout Wisconsin. For more than a decade, the company has had a relationship with the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers, a Minor League Baseball affiliate of the Milwaukee Brewers, which serves Cher-Make sausages at the team's home games. Beyond its Cher-Make brand, the company also partners on a national basis to craft its butcher shop quality sausages for other marketers and retailers.



Situation:

Cher-Make had ongoing aesthetic issues with a high-volume product that didn't meet its quality standards. A key factor was that the product is seasonal and only had two months of production remaining after which it would not be produced for several months. Cher-Make needed to quickly identify the issues and solve the problem before the end of the current production season and required a solution that would remain effective when production of the product resumed the following season. In addition, the quality issue had an impact on capacity.



Solutions:

A WMEP Manufacturing Solutions consultant met with Cher-Make leadership to define the problem and form a team to examine the issue. The team further defined the issue and because the window of opportunity was small, they went straight into process review and brainstorming of potential causes that were defined in each of the processes. Trial solutions were implemented in parallel with data gathering and analysis. Continued analysis and changes improved the process to an acceptable quality level. Standards were updated and the team became confident that when the seasonal product returned the improved quality levels would remain.



Results:

- Zero recorded issues for the remaining runs of the year.
- Significant cost savings were realized.
- Capacity was improved.
- Verified work standards were implemented.
- Confidence was increased among personnel regarding their team's ability to solve problems and ability to apply what they learned to other processes.

"Due to the guidance of WMEP, we were able to methodically solve our processing issue in a timely manner. Through the process, our employees learned skills that enable them to be better problem solvers along with enjoying the pride that comes through teamwork."

Tom Chermak, President - Cher-Make Sausage Co.

