



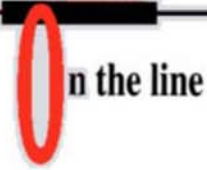
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Shaking Things up at Chef Boyardee

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The American Home Foods' plant in Milton, PA, processes and packages CHEF BOYARDEE canned pasta, Franklin Crunch N'Munch coated popcorn snacks, and Gulden's mustard. Staffed with approximately 2,000 production/support personnel, including central R&D labs, the plant is the flagship facility of American Home Foods, a subsidiary of American Home Products Corp.

The processor has been working with PRO Scientific, Monroe, CT, on the development of a customized high-speed blending/homogenizing system for its canned pastas. After homogenizing pasta samples in-can to a pureed state, analytical staff proceed to test the product for protein, vitamin, carbohydrate, moisture, fat and sodium content. This data is then directly and easily transferred to the company's quality control operations.

New Products Development Leader Jed J. Levinson told *Food Quality*, "The need for rapidly prepared, consistent, representative blended samples for chemical/physical analyses is an everyday necessity. To meet that need, PRO Scientific brought prototype units to our labs on two separate occasions. The first trial was performed in the labs under very controlled conditions. During the second trial, the unit was brought out to the production floor on a wheeled cart. During both trials, a trained PRO Scientific representative demonstrated the unit's capabilities and gathered feedback about required refinements to suit our specific equipment

parameters and operating conditions." Then, back at PRO Scientific headquarters, President Richard Yacko personally oversaw CAD/CAM redrawings to deliver the best possible design for AHF's needs.

The final customized design incorporates a PRO 250 motor unit, which is a standard model handheld or post-mounted lab homogenizer; a 30mm x 380mm long stainless steel rotor-stator generator; a special assembly stand; and a one-size-fits-all dome and base unit that accommodates can sizes ranging from #10 (603 x 700) down to 7 oz (202 x 409). The unit is easy to set up, operate, and clean. Capable of handling samples from several ounces to several liters at variable speeds up to 30,000 rpm, the blender/homogenizer offers AHF great versatility for use in its analytical/QC labs, product development pilot kitchen, and on the production floor.

Levinson notes that the supplier worked with the processor closely to ensure the unit is 1) simple to operate for a wide range of skill levels; 2) production-ready; and 3) reproducible for a number of different product consistencies. "Not only is the unit capable of homogenizing 'in-can' our main meal items [containing pasta, sauce, and meat], but it also can handle raw or cooked meat and dry pastas. With high-speed blending of the products in their original containers, the demonstrated time for sample preparation, aliquoting [evenly dividing samples], and clean-up are substantially reduced versus our previous blending system," Levinson says.



CHEF BOYARDEE in-can homogenizes ravioli, tortellini and other pastas for compositional analysis using a customized PRO 250 lab homogenizer