



SCHOEPS CONTROLS OUTPUT QUALITY OF GRATED CHEESE BAGS USING *SealScope*

When SCHOEPS appointed a new general management in 2018, one of the first objectives was to increase outgoing product quality. With the company's vision to deliver premium quality cheese products to their worldwide customers, they opted for *SealScope*® to 100% inspect their grated cheese bags for defective seals. As a result, the number of compromised outgoing products reduced drastically, to almost zero.

SCHOEPS S.A. - situated near La Louvière - is a leading Belgian company active in cheese processing and packaging. They offer a wide variety of grated cheeses and block cheese. Schoeps' customer portfolio comprises of manufacturers of ready-made meals like pizza, lasagnas, sauces, etc. and distributors who supply restaurants, institutional kitchens and so on. SCHOEPS has a wide range of grated cheeses, including Mozzarella, Emmental, Gouda, Cheddar, Maasdam and several different mixes. The grated cheeses are packed under a modified atmosphere in bags (neutral, printed, private label) starting from 500 grams to 5kg. SCHOEPS' vision is to provide their customers on a daily basis with a premium service and a high-quality product.

“ We are very pleased with the *SealScope*® solution. We drastically reduced our customer complaints on badly sealed packages. About 1% of the total outgoing production had micro-leaks and was returned. This has now dropped to a few packages.”

General manager of SCHOEPS S.A.



Schoeps outputs a yearly production of 35 tons



Wrinkles in the seal can lead to leaks in the cheese package



Cheese parts in the seal in a bag rejected by **SealScope®**

In 2018, the new owner decided to appoint a new daily management and one of the main objectives was to increase the outgoing product quality. A common issue with gassed bags of grated cheese is that micro-leaks in the seal can lead to defective packages. Defective packages can be caused by plies or folds in the seal or by cheese particles stuck in the seal. Due to micro-leaks, the cheese bags lose their gassed condition and this is often only noticed after delivery, with the consequence that the products are returned to the manufacturer.

To cope with their vision on delivering premium quality products, SCHOEPS had too many issues with defective seals. About 1% of the total outgoing production had micro-leaks and was returned to sender. Schoeps initiated a research to find a solution to inspect each single seal. Engilico, the Leuven specialist in seal inspection and monitoring was contacted to provide **SealScope®** for 100% inspection of seals of flexible packages.

In-line 100% seal inspection

To inspect the integrity of seals, Engilico® retrofitted two distance sensors on the sealing bars of the packaging machine. The responses of these sensors are measured during the closing of the sealing bars for every produced bag. A reference signal is built from good seals and during production the response from every sealed bag is compared to this reference. Plies/folds or product in the seal cause a different signal than the reference response. When detecting a defective seal, **SealScope®** reports the error and returns a signal to an ejector to eliminate the compromised bag.

After installing **SealScope®**, the results were impressive. The outgoing quality increased significantly and today Schoeps has almost

no customer returns of badly sealed packages.

The general manager of Schoeps comments, "We are very pleased with the SealScope solution. We drastically reduced our customer complaints on badly sealed packages. About 1% of the total outgoing production had micro-leaks and was returned. This has now dropped to a few packages. We fully rely on this system that checks every individual product. This automated inspection is so much more effective than an operator that manually checks samples from the production."

Monitoring of the sealing process

Other major benefits of **SealScope®** are the reporting and monitoring capabilities. **SealScope®** logs date, time, total packages, number of good/bad packages per product type. As SCHOEPS produces different variations, this enables them to analyze reports per bag or per product type. The issues with specific bags can be quickly identified and resolved. The monitoring function also enables to finetune the packaging process to find a balance between productivity and product quality.

"We are very satisfied with the cooperation of Engilico", concludes Schoeps, "As an example of our excellent relation, we have already hosted visits to our facilities for Engilico and other potential customers. ○"

