



Quebec Wild Blueberries Sorts It All Out with VERYX®

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Quebec Wild Blueberries is dedicated to making a good thing better. Starting with wild blueberries that burst with flavor, they invest in the most advanced technology to create individually quick frozen (IQF) berries beyond compare. In 2016, this progressive industry leader installed a VERYX® digital sorter from Key Technology to produce the highest quality products. This new sorter removes more foreign material (FM) and defects from their product at the same time it improves production efficiencies.

“When we replaced an existing laser sorter with a VERYX camera/laser sorter last year, we improved our product quality and reduced false rejects. We also doubled our throughput with the same number of workers, which decreased our production costs,” said Pascal Hudon, Director of Operations at Quebec Wild Blueberries. “Compared to our previous sorter, VERYX has increased our defect removal rate by about 3000 percent. It’s simply incredible.”



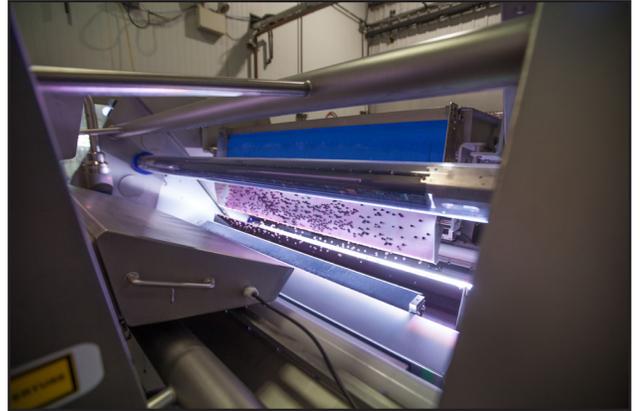
Designed to meet the needs of each application, from basic to complex, Key tailors each VERYX sorter with the ideal sensor types, sensor positions, lighting, ejection system, product handling and software to address the product’s characteristics and the processor’s objectives. Key configured Quebec Wild Blueberries’ VERYX specifically to sort blueberries coming out of the freezer and programmed it to find and eject twigs, bits of wood, stones, moss and other FM as well as blueberries with attached stalks and foreign berries.



To sort up to nine metric tons of frozen berries per hour, Quebec Wild Blueberries selected the high-volume chute-fed VERYX C140, which features a 1400-mm wide inspection area. To maximize product quality, this sorter is equipped with front- and rear-mounted laser sensors and color cameras and Key’s advanced multi-sensor Pixel Fusion™.

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Front- and rear-mounted sensors achieve all-sided surface inspection to fully view each object in the product stream with no blind spots. Color cameras provide superior detection of color, size and shape, while the laser sensors distinguish structural properties to achieve the best FM detection and removal. Pixel Fusion combines pixel-level input from multiple cameras and laser sensors sharing the same line of sight to more clearly differentiate good product, defects and FM. This fully-loaded VERYX sorter removes even the most difficult-to-detect FM and defects without false rejects to help Quebec Wild Blueberries exceed industry standards while maximizing yields.



“In addition to the power of Pixel Fusion, one of the first things that attracted us to VERYX was the precision of the ejection system. Other sorters space their air valves 10 mm apart, but Key designs VERYX with variable valve spacing that’s tailored to the application. For blueberries, Key recommended valves every 5 mm. With double the air nozzles, this sorter is more accurate in removing defects and FM and not ejecting good product with it. We’ve improved our defect removal rate at the same time we’ve virtually eliminated false rejects,” explained Hudon. “We used to re-sort our reject stream to recover good product. Now, there’s no comparison – only rejects go to the reject stream so we can send it straight to the trash.”



Every aspect of VERYX is designed to maintain the highest sorting accuracy. Next-generation cameras and laser sensors offer twice the resolution of previous generation sorters to detect smaller FM and product defects. Specialized infeed and collection shakers, designed for each application, further improve the sorter’s performance. Quebec Wild Blueberries selected Key’s Iso-Flo® infeed shaker to separate and singulate product prior to VERYX. Within the sorter, Key’s patented Chycane® chute features a concave shape that stabilizes product as it enters the inspection and ejection zones, since a consistent trajectory improves FM and defect removal and reduces false rejects.

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As one of the largest blueberry processors in the world, Quebec Wild Blueberries understands that their success depends on their ability to consistently deliver the highest quality berries to their private label customers around the world.

“VERYX is easy to use, which helps it operate at peak performance. The UI is simpler than other sorters, and it presents different interfaces to workers of various levels. The sorter connects remotely to Key, which supports our operations, and it’s connected to our plant-wide network, too. We use the sorter to collect data and produce reports, so we’ve got a lot more information than we’ve had in the past. That data is very useful in that it allows us to have better control over our production,” said Hudon. “The people at Key are also high performing. Their service is superior to other suppliers.”

“Our clients’ quality requirements evolve as their customers get more and more demanding. We stay ahead by leveraging the most advanced technology,” noted Hudon. “Thanks to VERYX, we’re packaging the highest quality blueberries on the market.”



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