



La Huerta Stands Out in Its Field

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As one of Mexico's leading processors of frozen fruits and vegetables, La Huerta embodies social responsibility, environmental sustainability and an unwavering commitment to quality. They keep up with rising demand by continually expanding – they added a third production line in 2016 and a fifth automated packaging line in September 2018. Looking for world-class performance, including superior sanitation and reliability, they've turned to Key Technology many times along the way. Now, Key's Iso-Flo® vibratory shakers can be found on every processing and packaging line at La Huerta.

"Every year, the demand for food safety gets stricter, with higher standards for microbiology and sanitation and more requests for audits. In this environment, our relentless focus on quality sets us apart," said Carlos Gutierrez, Plant Manager at La Huerta. "Our equipment from Key helps us achieve our high product quality objectives at the same time it increases our efficiencies by maximizing uptime and reducing labor."

La Huerta installed Key's Veg-Mix™ in 2006, followed by an Iso-Flo dewatering shaker and an Iso-Flo fines removal shaker the next year. Since then, they've installed two integrated packaging distribution systems that each feature several Iso-Flo Smooth-Cycle™ scale-feed conveyors with pneumatic slide gates and an Iso-Flo collection shaker. They added another dewatering shaker in 2016 and a bar-style size grader, also based on Key's versatile Iso-Flo design, in 2018.

"The quality of Key's equipment is far better than any competitive solution that we've used. As our other shakers reach the end of their life, we plan to replace them with Iso-Flo," noted Luis Picazo, Project and Maintenance Manager at La Huerta. "Key customizes each of these shakers for our processes so they work perfectly, and they're designed to be easy to clean and hygienic. The support we've received from Key has also been great. Whenever we have questions or need anything, they're very responsive."



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Iso-Flo shakers have always been recognized for sanitation and reliability, and Key is continuously working to improve their designs with new features that exceed rising food safety standards. In addition to stainless steel construction, smooth beds and durable StrongArm™ spring arms that have helped define Key's vibratory shakers years, La Huerta's newer Iso-Flo shakers also feature 100 percent continuous welds, no-pinch slide gates, stainless steel motors, self-draining surfaces and the elimination of laminations that can trap bacteria. Every element of every Key system is designed for performance and sanitation.

"La Huerta has been in the 'healthy food business' since we were founded by Jose Arteaga Campos in 1957. Today, under the leadership of his son, Jose Arteaga Niepmann, we remain true to our original principles of respect, integrity, responsibility and teamwork while we evolve," said Katrin Derntl, International Sales Manager at La Huerta. "After growing our sales volume on average 10 percent annually over the last five years, we're producing more than 60,000 metric tons of finished product a year and exporting more than 40 percent to 11 countries, including the U.S., Canada and Japan, where customers have the highest quality standards. Our products go to market under our own brand and under private label customers' brand names, as well. In Mexico the La Huerta brand is by far the market leader in the frozen vegetable category with over 70% of market share in retail."

La Huerta installed Key's Veg-Mix on their packaging lines to produce bags of mixed fruits or vegetables. This system receives each product in a separate infeed hopper, then de-clusters, meters, mixes and conveys the mixed product to packaging. "Our Veg-Mix ensures the right amount of each product in the mix so we're sure to stay within specifications," explained Picazo.

The two Iso-Flo packaging distribution lines at La Huerta feature several Iso-Flo Smooth-Cycle shakers with no-pinch sliding gates. One distribution system feeds product to three multi-head weighers that each feed a VFFS machine. The other feeds semi-automated packaging stations. Designed specifically for feeding applications, Smooth Cycle conveyors eliminate the mechanical stop/start transients common in these applications.



"We rely on equipment from Key on every processing and packaging line," concluded Gutierrez. "We're very happy with the machinery in terms of its quality, performance and sanitation, and we're very happy with Key's service and support."

Published by:

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