



## **Beating a drum for the environment!**

For Friars Pride, one of the UK's leading suppliers of ingredients and consumables to the fast food sector, cleaning the reusable drums in which it delivers its popular frying oil was becoming increasingly problematic. The company's washing processes were labour intensive and relied on the uncertain performance of an ageing washing machine.

A new custom-designed carousel drum washer from Industrial Washing Machines (IWM) not only provided a complete solution, but also delivered valuable additional benefits in terms of cost reductions and environmental impact.

Unlike most suppliers of frying oils, Friars Pride delivers its oil in 25-litre returnable drums. This benefits the company's customers, as they don't have to dispose of the empty drums and, potentially at least, it benefits the environment as the drums can be used many times over before they are eventually discarded. It also means, however, that the company needs an efficient, cost-effective and environmentally friendly means of cleaning and sanitising drums before they are reused.

Recently, however, it was becoming clear to the Friars Pride management that the cleaning procedures the company was using were failing to meet these objectives. The procedures were labour intensive and therefore costly, and they relied on a washing machine that was approaching the end of its useful life and could no longer

meet the company's throughput requirements. The machine also fell far short of the energy efficiency achieved by more modern equipment.

For help in devising a better method for cleaning the drums, Friars Pride approached IWM, a company that has wide experience in developing and manufacturing custom washing systems that achieve economy in energy and water usage while delivering the highest standards of washing performance.

After carefully analysing Friars Pride's requirements, the engineers at IWM developed a purpose-designed carousel-type washing machine that has a throughput of 200 drums per hour. It delivers drums that are clean and dry both inside and out, and are, therefore, ready for immediate reuse.

The machine uses a detergent hot wash, with the wash water recirculated from a heated tank to minimise both energy and water consumption. A hot rinse from fresh water is provided and, after washing and rinsing, the drums are dried by a high velocity air knife system. This achieves excellent energy efficiency as the rapid movement of the air automatically raises its temperature, which means that only a low-energy heat source is required.

An important feature of the design is that the drums are indexed through the machine rather than being fed continuously. This means that the drums come to a halt in the wash, rinse and drying sections of the machine, allowing these processes to be optimised, thereby guaranteeing that consistent results of the highest standard are obtained. The machine incorporates comprehensive safety features, including light curtains and the latest fault-tolerant safety relay systems.

IWM has designed the new machine to be fully automatic in operation – only the loading and unloading of the drums require manual intervention – and the labour costs associated with operating it are therefore low. This is only one of the many benefits it is providing, however.

For example, in terms of washing efficiency, the machine is not only meeting Friars Pride's requirements but substantially exceeding them, as was convincingly demonstrated during proving trials at the IWM factory. As an aid to setting up and checking the mechanical functions of the machine, Friars Pride had supplied a number of sample drums.

When the Friars Pride representatives examined these after the test, they expressed considerable surprise – the machine had cleaned all of the drums perfectly and they were ready for reuse. Unknown to IWM, however, Friars Pride had anticipated that the drums might be damaged during the tests, and had therefore supplied a selection that it considered to be ready for disposal as it believed that they were too heavily soiled to be cleaned effectively!

As a direct result of the efficiency of the IWM machine, Friars Pride has found that it can now clean almost all of the drums returned by its customers. This saves the company money on the purchase of new drums, and it also protects the environment by greatly reducing the number of drums that have to be disposed of as waste.

As was anticipated, the new machine is also using far less energy, water and detergent than its predecessor, leading to even more cost savings and further reductions in environmental impact.

“Even with our old washing machine, adopting reusable drums for the delivery of frying oil was better from an environmental point of view than using the disposable containers that are so common in our industry,” said Nigel Swepson, operation manager of Friars Pride. “With our new machine from IWM, these environmental benefits have been increased many times over, and they are now accompanied by very substantial cost savings.”

“IWM’s expertise and attention to detail ensured that every aspect of this design, manufacture and install project went smoothly. We’re delighted with the results and there is no doubt that the savings the machine makes possible will mean that we will very quickly recoup the money we’ve invested in it and its installation.”

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