

Trico Serves Up 'Hot Savings' for Famous Pancake Maker

For a bakery plant, pancakes are an everyday item on the menu – 33,000 an hour to be exact! That's just part of the business for this premier maker of frozen food breakfast items, whose eatables also include biscuits, French toast, breads and muffins. But like most food manufacturers faced with a rigorous production schedule, one of the company's biggest and most recent challenges was keeping its lines of production moving along without interruption. That's when they turned to industrial lubrication products specialist Trico Mfg. Corp. for answers.

The food processing plant's main equipment for making pancakes is a series of 12 pancake process griddles that rely on three 100-foot-long chains to keep the lines moving. The problem was, the pilot flame charged with cooking the products was in constant contact with the chains -- requiring a very demanding maintenance schedule to keep the chains lubricated. In the past, the company's staff used oil-filled spray bottles and a gravity-feed oiler, but the lack of consistent lubrication was forcing them to replace up to two chains per year. The cost per chain: \$24,000.

The challenge for Trico was to find a way to automate the chain lubrication process for more consistent and reliable results. After careful evaluation, Trico recommended a PE-30 Series Central Lubrication Pump. The idea was, with a centrally located reservoir that included a timing mechanism, the burden of manual lubrication from different operators would disappear and the notion of regular oiling intervals throughout the day would dramatically improve chain life.

The Results

The bakery plant decided to implement the central lubrication pump with a series of three applicators, one per chain. A total of four pumps were installed, one for each pancake process griddle. With the timing mechanism automatically controlling the pumps, all three chains are now lubricated simultaneously on each pancake process griddle. And because lubrication takes place automatically while the equipment is in operation, it has allowed for reduced repairs and maintenance costs on the machinery. In the end, the bakery plant was slated to save more than \$70,000 year over year.



PE-3000 Series Central Lubrication pump mounted on the outside of a pancake process griddle.



Applicator brush lubricating one of the chains on a pancake process griddle.