

Grading system improves quality and margins

The combination of intense competition in the meat industry, rising input costs and increasingly stringent retailer and consumer quality requirements means pig processors need to maximise the yield from every carcass.

According to food and drink IT specialist CSB-System, this has resulted in strong demand for its Image-Meater® industrial vision device, which automates pig carcass grading. The company says the system delivers an objective result which can be used to accurately calculate the market value.

Offering a grading speed of up to 1,300 pig carcasses per hour, the CSB Image-Meater® uses proprietary software to identify and measure key muscle and fat cross sections from a photographic image and calculate the grading results according to a verified formula. Image-Meater® displays and records the SEUROP grade, lean meat percentage (LMP) of the carcass - and the weight, percentage and LMP of key primals within the carcass.

As well as providing an accurate assessment of the grade and market value of carcasses at the abattoir, the Image-Meater® can also be used downstream for sorting carcasses to optimise yields. According to CSB, this has delivered gains of around two Euros per pig.

"In competitive markets, maximising yields while maintaining quality is vital," said Mathew Simpson of CSB-System. "Image-Meater's software driven solution delivers highly consistent results, as the error prone job of accurate probe placement is eliminated - along with the risk of repetitive strain injuries. And manual data recording can be removed so the results are more reliable as well as more accurate."

All of the information from the classification process is automatically archived and can be reproduced in customisable reports. This includes the photograph, lean meat content, grade, date, grader code, slaughter line number and date of slaughter. This gives both farmer and processor end-to-end traceability and transparency.

The Image-Meater's compact dimensions mean it can easily be integrated into most slaughter lines. It's non-invasive measurement process ensures maximum hygiene, and the low-maintenance system means near-zero downtime. CSB says return on investment for carcass sorting and cutting optimisation projects can be less than one year.

The Image-Meater® has been installed in factories across Europe and beyond, including Belgium, China, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain and the UK.



Demand for automation solutions is increasing, says Ishida

Ishida Europe says demand for automation solutions is increasing in Romania and Moldova and throughout Central and Eastern Europe (CEE).

The company, a world leader in weighing and quality control solutions, including multihead weighers, checkweighers, X-ray inspection systems, tray sealers, seal testers and bagmakers, recently announced the creation of two extended sub-regions as part of a wider transformation. Romania and Moldova are an integral part of this setup and Ishida has been present in Bucharest since 2008, combining localised knowledge with fast response sales and service support.

"Both during and coming out of the pandemic, shortages of skilled workers and increased input costs have resulted in more and more companies seeking long term solutions through automation and integrated weighing and packaging," said Dinu Stroescu, Ishida Romania's

Area Sales Manager. "Ishida's solutions lead to higher accuracy and increased energy efficiency combined with reduced giveaway and less reliance on labour. Payback in investments is often achieved in less than a year."

"Another development driving growth is the popularity of ready meals and other convenience foods in a variety of sectors including meat, poultry and plant-based alternatives, snacks, frozen foods, dairy, and salads. The wide range of equipment offered by Ishida means we can help customers of all sizes, from the supply of individual models to the design and installation of bespoke lines through our experienced project division."

Ishida continues to invest to provide high levels of support for its customers in the CEE region. Most recently, this has seen the opening of Ishida Poland and the establishment of its Centre of Excellence in Prague in the Czech Republic.



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