

Company

Hilton Meats

Originated in the United Kingdom in 1994 Hilton Meats currently owns eight plants spread across Europe. However, these plants all have their own approach in e.g. material use and machine settings. Hilton Meats' business model is to be 'dedicated supplier' to large supermarkets like Coop and Tesco. As being a large purchaser of packing and machines, Hilton Meats is in the position to influence the products they receive. The relatively young company is an ambitious grower: on average every two years a new plant is built or added to Hilton Meats. 'Dynamic and progressive', as self-described.

Hilton Meats Zaandam

The production plant in Zaandam is the only plant of Hilton Meats in the Netherlands. As dedicated supplier of fresh meat for the largest supermarket chain in the Netherlands, Albert Heijn, Hilton Meats is a large player on the national market of fresh meat.

Hilton Meat processes 1200 tons meat per week, among which 400 tons of ground beef. The meat products are always on the move and typically have shelf-lives of eight to nine days. Products are not produced for stocking, but on order only. The production capacity of Hilton Meats is very flexible, because of the short processing time of meat and the continuously changing demands. In prior to Christmas, for example, many temporary employees are attracted to fulfil the consumer's Christmas demands.

Problem description

At this moment there is not a complete overview of all activities and approaches of the different plants. There is enough room for improvements in terms of knowledge about machines, processes and products.

For Hilton Meats Zaandam the impact of parameters and how they relate to each other can be optimised. When Hilton Meats purchases different products, e.g. a thinner foil, the lack of insight in their own processes results in 'one-dimensional thinking': only the direct effects of the foil are considered, but secondary consequences, e.g. those on the machine are not.

Research approach and goal

A stocktaking of the production process in Zaandam is necessary in order to identify the parameters that determine the 'best practice'. The leading requirement is cost-efficiency. Sustainability and consumer convenience play a role too, albeit to a lesser extent. The optional next step is to involve other plants of Hilton Meats: the different approaches have to be analysed, compared and it should be researched how the plants can learn from each other. Goals of the research are:

- Giving insight in the parameters of the machines, processes and products of Hilton Meats Zaandam. This consists of monitoring the throughput of the process and analysing the efficiency by means of mathematical models.

- Describing their relations in order to determine the 'best practice' in terms of cost efficiency (leading), durability and consumer convenience.
- Optional: using the 'best practice' to compare the plant in Zaandam with different plants of Hilton Meats, including an advice on how the plants can learn from each other.

Additional information

- Term of the internship will be approximately six month.
- Start as soon as possible.
- The student will be located at the plant in Zaandam

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