BEEF UP THE VOLUME!

Cutting-edge product innovation and inspired packaging execution driving venerable frozen meat producer on to greater marketplace glories

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Canadian Biotech Enlists Green Solution for its War on Waste

For companies whose very purpose in life is to help keep the planet clean, using sustainable packaging for its products comes naturally. Founded in 1996, Quebec-based Biometrix International Inc. produces a broad range of biological waste treatment products found in countless food preparation and processing locations in North America, Europe, South America and Asia.

The company's biological digesters are composed of 100 percent naturally occurring, non-pathogenic microorganisms that have been specifically selected for their abilities to degrade target substances without the use of chemicals.

About a year ago, the company placed its first order for the new EcoSol brand of a water-soluble, biodegradable, polyvinyl alcohol (PVOH) film manufactured by the St. Paul, Minn., based Cortec Corporation.

Developed specifically for packaging applications required where dissolvability and biodegradability, products packaged in EcoSol film can be thrown directly into the treatment area without removing the film, according to Cortec.

After a few minutes of immersion in water at the right temperature, EcoSol will dissolve into a harmless, non-toxic aqueous solution of polyvinyl alcohol, releasing the packaged product to do its work. The film's polyvinyl alcohol byproduct will further degrade into simple carbon dioxide and water about 30 days after being exposed to common microorganisms found in water treatment plants.

Using the EcoSol film for different Biometrix biotechnology products for natural cleaning, waste and agricultural treatment has left Biometrix production manager Walter Luis impressed.

"The Cortec film is a better and superior film to what we were using before," says Luis, who now uses it to package all Biometrix products of a certain size.

While the EcoSol film is not a core business for Cortec—whose primary focus is to formulate corrosion-resistant coatings and other surface-preparation products—producing it in-house has been helpful.

"It's beneficial because we have full control over the quality control here and are never really held hostage by other people," says Tim Bliss, manager at the Cortec Advanced Films Division (CAFD) business unit.

Bliss says the CAFD has been making the film for about 10 years and has been using it in various Cortec products, such as the innovative Boiler Lizard and MCI Grenades powder packs.

However, the dissolvable characteristic brings its own challenges to producing EcoSol film.

"It's very moisture sensitive, so it has to be kept in barrier bags so that the moisture can't get to it," says Bliss, adding that EcoSol provides up to two-year shelf life if the barrier film is kept intact and the product is kept in dry storage at room temperature.