

Touch of quality

US dairy producers Oakhurst Dairy give their reaction to the new touch screen software available with the MilkoScan™ FT2.

Wendy Donovan Landry, Director of Quality Control at Oakhurst Dairy is directly responsible for ensuring consistent quality of Oakhurst brand name products supplied to their New England customers. If there is an issue with quality control, it is Wendy that gets the call, day or night! Hardly surprising then that she has a keen interest in the effectiveness of analysis operations.

She describes how analysis is a constant daily demand, from checking the supplied milk to testing finished products. The laboratory is certified for official testing of all raw milk entering the plant. “People pay extra for the Oakhurst name and package and we want to protect it,” says Wendy.

Oakhurst Dairy acquired a MilkoScan™ FT2 in April this year to replace a MilkoScan FT120 that had seen many years of constant service. The aim with the new FT2 was to continue where they left off with a former FT120, using it to test all the raw milk as well as the finished product. The dairy then took up the offer from FOSS to try out the new touch screen concept for three months.

Touch and walk away

The touch screen software was tested in the QC laboratory for analysis of fat and total solids on finished products and analysis of protein, lactose and total solids on

raw material. It was also tested by production operators, typically to check butterfat and total solids at the start of a production run and then butterfat in the middle and end.

The new software was a particular hit with the production operators as Wendy explains: “It is very friendly for the daily operators to use and they are the ones using it around the clock. They can just touch and go and we save a lot of time that way,” she says. The ease of use was crucial in this respect. “It stopped the phone calls in the middle of the night,” says Wendy.

To do an analysis with the touch screen software the user simply selects the product from an icon on the screen. If the required product is not displayed it can be selected from a complete list of products. Then the test is started and that’s it.

The instrument at Oakhurst has been set-up to automatically clean one minute after the analysis. “We made it as easy as possible for them to select the product and get the result and then they could just walk away,” says Wendy. She also explains how the simplicity of use worked well with the dairy’s monitoring policy. “We always track the results and operators fill out a hardcopy report. So if I have a customer complaint about a gallon of whole milk with low butterfat content I can see if it has been tested properly. It holds the filler operators very accountable.”

From FT120 to FT2

The MilkoScan FT2 has proved to be familiar and modern at the same time. Calibrations from the FT120 were transferred and new calibrations were also supplied, ready-to-go. Installation of the new FT2 took around a day and a half. The FT120 was run in parallel to check results with duplicate samples with very consistent results.

The touch screen and software took about three hours to install and operators were up and running with it within about

ten minutes. As far as Oakhurst Dairy’s quality control manager is concerned the verdict on the touch screen software is clear. “I loved using the touch screen within about five minutes of trying it,” she says.

by Richard Mills, FOSS (rim@foss.dk)

Background

Oakhurst Dairy from Maine is Northern New England’s largest family-owned, independent dairy company. Quality control is paramount for brand protection.

The dairy had used a MilkoScan™ FT120 for nine years before upgrading to a MilkoScan FT2 earlier this year. The touch screen software was tested for three months.

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Point and select: The touch screen software makes it simple to select the required product

