

Surface Solutions Go Much Deeper at Gay Lea Plant

With demands on the dairy industry becoming more stringent, controlling bacteria, mold mildew and microbial growth in the processing environment inhibits food borne ailments and costly recalls, optimizing the bottom line. Today's dairy plant managers are extremely concerned about protecting our food supply and reducing contamination.

Equipment sanitation can be controlled and monitored.

Historically, little attention is paid to the environment the equipment operates in. Walls and ceilings account for the largest surface area in most plants. While often not the obvious source, contamination does largely and often occur there.

Case in point; Gay Lea Foods, Toronto, Ontario, is an integrated dairy

cooperative and processor, packaging and processing milk and dairy products. The company takes pride in being an innovator in the dairy industry by utilizing state-of-the-art technology. When Gay Lea required clean rooms at one of its Toronto plants, it looked for a complete system not only to provide a sanitary environment hospitable to its high tech equipment but a system that would decrease spoilage and effectively increase production—not to mention the added bonus of reducing maintenance costs.

Gay Lea's only acceptable choice was a system that was able to withstand the severe conditions found in the dairy processing environment. A system that was installed quickly and efficiently and was easily and quickly maintained (extremely important for a high volume plant producing perishables) and was USDA accepted. Gay Lea Food's choice was the Hunter Wall & Ceiling Systems, Toronto.



Durability and flexibility needed

Like many other multinational food industry decision makers, Gay Lea executives looked for a system with exceptional strength, flexibility, accessibility and integrity usually not found in conventional systems.

"Our main concern in the design elements was a system that included walls designed for easy cleaning that were also durable, and strong," says Zbigniew Ewertowski chief engineer and plant mgr. at



Gay Lea. "In addition, the walls were required to support window, doors and conveyor openings. All wall joints had to be positively sealed as the room will be under positive

pressure. A 10'x12' removable panel was to be incorporated into one wall for future accessibility."

The ceiling system had to be strong enough to be accessible and support light and H.E.P.A. filter systems.

"It had to be a sealed system," he says. "In completing this project custom sized doors and windows were required. We were looking for one company to handle the complete package."

Hunter had the components to build the kind of room Gay Lea needed. The wall and ceiling panels used had a FRP surface for easy maintenance and durability. Sandwiched in between was a 4" expanded polystyrene core. The wall panels were full height with

no horizontal joints. All flashings are stainless steel. To provide a positive seal, panels were joined using Hunter's extruded aluminum threshold system with no exposed caulking.

For the accessible ceiling a Hunter HD grid system was used. The grid has a 2" section and is extruded aluminum. The grid system is flexible enough to allow custom sized H.E.P.A. filters and panels.





Aluminum extrusions have been specially anodized to withstand chemicals and acids associated with dairy operations. Once installed this ceiling system meets and exceeds American National Standard A58.1-1982 for accessible ceilings.

Energy efficient light fixtures were used. This fixture has an aluminum body with 4-T8 bulbs and reflector for greater light reflection. The fixture has a sealed and gasketed aluminum lens frame.

The bulbs recommended provide high intensity lighting with a CRI of 85%. Specifically for the clean room a different fixture was used. This fixture was a 2'x2' fully gasketed, aluminum bodied, metal halide fixture, with a hinged lens. The doors were custom made with stainless steel hardware and trim and FRP wear surfaces.

Cooperation and communication

“Our systems are custom engineered to meet the special demands of our customers,” says Paul Hunter, president of Hunter. “Our manufacturing process allows us to produce cost-effective specialty walls, ceilings, doors, windows and lighting systems, engineered for extended life and durability under food plant conditions.

“We have full confidence our panels are durable, resist abrasion, wear and tear, do not warp or peel and are resistant to bacterial growth that we automatically warranty them for five- years.”

For Gay Lea the service and expertise provided by Hunter were as important as the durability of the products.

“I was very pleased with the knowledge and experience brought to this project by Hunter, Ewertowski says. “They handled everything from the floor up to the ceiling including the lighting. This installation proved the cosmetic, hygienic and monetary value of clean rooms. We have since used Hunter Wall & Ceilings Systems on three additional projects.”

Hunter says his company understands the need for cooperation and communication.

“Our crews are well aware of the intensified needs for short time frames, sanitary conditions, safety, and communication when operating in this type of shared environment.” he says. “Our systems are engineered to provide extended life and durability in dairy plant environments. Our policy is not accepting jobs that aren’t a good “fit” for what we do best, even if it means turning down easy money”. ■

Hunter Wall & Ceiling Systems designs, supplies and installs specialty wall and ceiling systems for the food industry. The systems are engineered to provide extended life and durability for food plant environments. For additional information, or to learn more about other projects completed, please visit www.hunterwallandceilings.com or contact Hunter Wall & Ceilings by phone during regular business hours at 888/818-3132.