

SIZE AND COLOUR NO DRY TOPIC

'An extraordinary use for an extraordinary machine' is how Sundown Foods MD Peter McGee describes the thinking behind colour grading and sizing of tomatoes destined for the growing semi-dried market.

McGee says the installation of a Compac Sorting Equipment 3 lane sizer answered a big question that its processor, Ellis Farms, had – how to reliably achieve the exact size and perfect colour needed to optimise the dehydration process.

Sundown chose Compac technology because of the innovation inherent in the design that enabled them to meet the tight size tolerance; the company's service record and response also played a large part, according to Mr McGee.

"For us, the challenge was how to grow our dehydrated business to take advantage of our growing export markets, and improve our accuracy," he says. "We found the Compac unit, which we'd already seen used at other tomato packing facilities, hit the mark on price, value, service and professionalism."

The technology behind the tomato sizer, which sees 25 fruit per second passing under colour grading cameras and over the weigh-bridge, has given the company more control not only over its end product off the grader and into the dehydrator, but also in managing costs. The ability to size and grade reliably to strictly set parameters has enabled Sundown Foods to source cheaper raw materials.

Sundown's Melbourne dehydrating processing site has an input of 36 tonnes a day during Victoria's fresh tomato packing season, early January through April.

"Within the past three months, we've noticed that the Compac has given us much greater consistency," says Peter McGee.

Compac Sorting Equipment's marketing manager, James Flocchini said the challenges presented to Compac included meeting tight colour and weight specifications.

"We were confident of meeting these more effectively than other options Sundown Foods were considering. Working together with Sundown Foods and their project designers we were able to fully meet everyone's expectations for a successful outcome."

More information:

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About Compac Sorting Equipment:

Manufacturers of high speed, accurate sorting systems for fruit and vegetables, Compac is a world leader in fruit sorting technology, through on-going commitment to research and development.

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