



**Kent Quality Foods
“Sets It and Forgets It”
With The ShurSEAL[®]
Solution**

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Hot dogs are an American staple. According to the National Hot Dog and Sausage Council, in 2015 alone, more than \$2.5 billion was spent by consumers on hot dogs in U.S. supermarkets. That equates to 350 million pounds – or 9 billion – hot dogs.

Among the producers of these tasty picnic must-haves is Grand Rapids, Mich.-based Kent Quality Foods (KQF). Since 1967, family owned KQF has supplied national restaurant chains, food service companies, broad line distributors and the further processing industry with a variety of frankfurters, sausages and specialty meats.

At KQF, products must be manufactured to the highest standards and conform to the strictest measures of food safety and quality. The company maintains its USDA-inspected meat processing facility at temperatures between 35 and 40 degrees Fahrenheit, and shuts down each night to dedicate a full eight hours to cleaning, inspecting and recalibrating equipment.

Interruptions to the Packaging Process

Manufacturers, like KQF, rely on properly functioning packaging equipment to ensure finished goods are packed properly and ready to enter

their distribution chains. When KQF started to recognize too many cases were leaving the case packing area poorly sealed or untaped, it was time for a closer look at the case sealing system.

Reworking cases was costing the company valuable time and money. Not to mention the waste stemming from resealing cases and throwing away unusable rolls of tape.

The packaging problems were also creating tension on the plant floor. “There was a high level of frustration in the production teams from the constant interruption in flow due to case sealing problems,” said Jason Austin, Purchasing Manager at KQF. “It was typical for an operator to have to literally run down case taping problems, as they often didn’t show up until poorly sealed cases impacted palletizing.”

Austin set out to find a better way to securely seal cases and eliminate the unscheduled downtime that was causing



Since 1967, Kent Quality Foods has produced frankfurters, sausages and specialty meats at its location in Grand Rapids, Mich.



Purchasing Manager Jason Austin sought a better way to seal cases, not only to address time and costs associated with reworks and material waste, but also to alleviate frustration on the production floor.

negativity on the plant floor. “If there’s a problem that everyone knows about, you have to address it or it starts to affect morale. At KQF, we like to say, ‘Don’t walk by a problem,’” explained Austin.

Addressing the Problem

In March 2014, Austin worked with Jonn Belding, a sales engineer with Technical Packaging Systems (TPS) – a distributor of Shurtape products – to find options that would resolve the company’s case sealing issues and increase productivity.

Based in Kalamazoo, Mich., TPS prides itself on solving its customers’ packaging problems. “KQF continued to have cases enter the conveyor sorting system and palletizing area without any tape applied to the case,” explained Belding. “These cases had open flaps and caused jams in the system and repetitive downtime.”

Belding recommended KQF try The ShurSEAL® Solution, a case sealing system offered by Shurtape that combines Shurtape HP Series packaging tape and PrimeLoc™ tape application technology. “The ShurSEAL Solution is much more reliable than other case sealing systems. It also runs the tape to the core, allowing the customer to get full use of every roll they buy,” said Belding.

Each element of The ShurSEAL Solution delivers value to KQF’s packaging lines. HP Series packaging tape is designed with a unique hot melt adhesive formula and offers the highest holding power to fiberboard in the industry, which helps keep cases sealed throughout the

supply chain. Given the cold temperatures in the facility, Belding suggested KQF use a specialty tape formulation called HP 132, a cold environment packaging tape that produces an instant, permanent bond in subfreezing temperatures, to seal both the top and bottom flaps of nearly 90,000 RSC corrugated cases per week.

The tape is applied with PrimeLoc tape applicators that deliver unmatched wipe-down force. Multiple, flexible wipe-down points on the tape applicator allow for full utilization of the tape’s adhesive to create more secure case seals. And, with ongoing technical support provided by TPS, the ShurSEAL systems continue to stay in peak, like-new condition.

KQF further increased the reliability of its case packing operations by including a tape monitoring system called Prime-Alert to the ShurSEAL configuration. This system alerts the operators with visual and audible alarms to signal five major case sealing issues: low tape, no tape, broken tape, uncut tape and case jams. For KQF, Prime-Alert confirms that cases are properly sealed prior to leaving the case packaging area so that any issues can be addressed immediately, rather than creating jams in the conveying system or problems in palletizing.

A Boost to the Packaging Line

ShurSEAL was installed on all packaging lines at KQF – a “surprisingly easy” install into the company’s existing machinery. “The functional, adaptive design of the PrimeLoc tape



The ShurSEAL Solution case sealing system was installed on lines in March 2014, and is used to seal the top and bottom flaps of nearly 90,000 corrugated cases per week.



The 35 F to 40 F temperatures of the facility can impact the reliability of case seals, so Kent Quality Foods uses a packaging tape that’s specifically designed for colder environments.

applicators eliminated a lot of guesswork,” said Austin. “The teams from TPS and Shurtape were well prepared, which meant there was little disturbance to production.”

And the spirit of continuous improvement is catching throughout the company. Employee morale on the production floor is much higher, and with the case sealing issues addressed, the company can turn its attention to other areas to improve its processing lines.

“Honestly, I didn’t know what to expect,” Austin said of switching case sealing systems. “By installing The ShurSEAL Solution, we were able to shift our focus to more important issues. Now it’s almost like ‘set it and forget it.’”

Since installing The ShurSEAL Solution, Austin shared that the company is achieving nearly 25 percent savings in tape purchases,

attributed to the fact that all of the tape is used to seal cases – with no more reworks or unused rolls.

Additionally, Austin cited waste and downtime due to tape issues were cut by over 98 percent. By eliminating poorly sealed cases, and the associated labor and materials required to rework them, KQF is realizing over \$60,000 in yearly savings, which is directly impacting the bottom line.

“Most importantly to me, a daily problem was solved and the team can continue to concentrate on product quality and overall production needs,” said Austin.



Placing The ShurSEAL Solution into existing machinery was “surprisingly easy” for Kent Quality Foods – and required minimal capital investment and production downtime.

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*<http://www.hot-dog.org/media/consumption-stats>
*<http://www.hot-dog.org/culture/hot-dog-fast-facts>

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