

Starring in Las Vegas

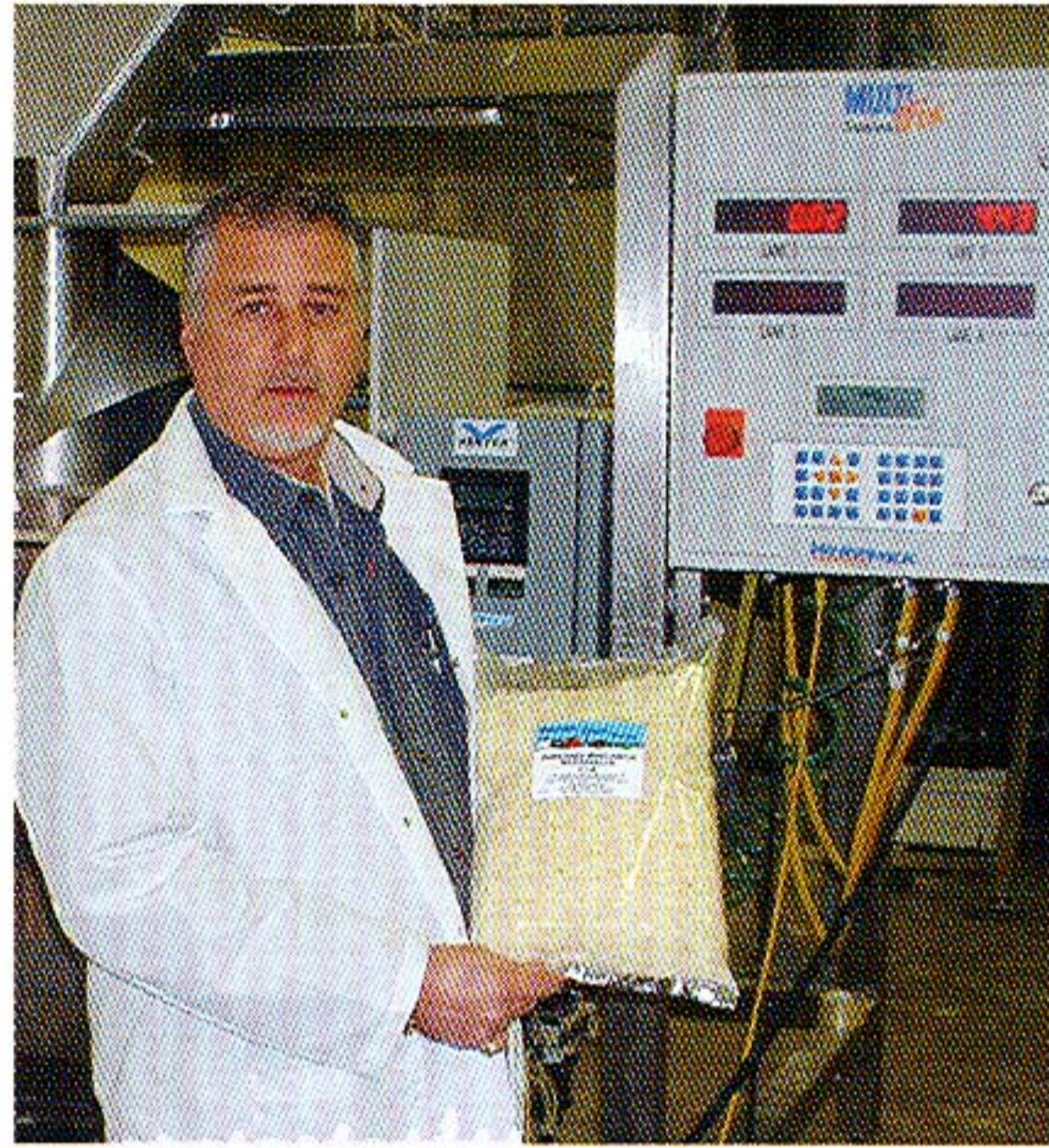
BY ANDREW JOSEPH, FEATURES EDITOR

Canadian made machinery helps Las Vegas cheese producer shine in local market

While the mere mention of Las Vegas immediately brings to mind images of high-stakes gambling, beautiful showgirls and around-the-clock nightlife at ritzy casinos, there is much more to Nevada's dazzling metropolis, one of North America's fastest-growing cities, than its self-styled attraction as a "Disneyland for adults."

For many years, the State of Nevada has also provided a home to various other key prolific industries, most notably mining and aerospace products, as well several thriving dairy products manufacturers catering to the gastronomic and nutritional needs of the millions of tourists, as well as local residents, in this one-of-a-kind Sin City.

Located at a state-of-the-art, 20,000-square-foot facility, a nice distance away from the bright lights and ringing din of slot machines echoing through the famed Las Vegas strip, **Custom Dairy Products** is a successful processor of specialty, custom-made cheese products that earns its daily bread-and butter by supplying the kitchens and chefs of a number of high-profile, world-renowned hotels and



Custom Dairy Products president Greg Gaglio holds up a bag of shredded cheese filled and packed on a WeighPack form-fill-seal machine.

restaurants, as well as selling its products through both regional and nationwide grocery chains and foodservice operators.

"We can customize different types of cheese to achieve certain flavor profiles that chefs are looking for, and we can make it for them quickly and affordably," explains company president and chief executive Greg Gaglio, who founded Custom Dairy Products after having amassed over 25 years of experience in the cheese processing business.

"For example, we could customize a cheese for you that is 90 per cent of this and seven per cent of that, with an additional three per cent of some other cheese," Gaglio told *Canadian Packaging*, adding that the Las Vegas

plant turns out an average of 80,000 pounds of cheese products per day.

"You think of it, and I will combine it and process it for you," he says.

"If a restaurant chef wants a specific flavor to go with a new creation, we will work with that chef to ensure that they get the exact blend of cheese flavors together

to give their food creation that certain *je ne sais quoi*," expands Gaglio. "And we've been told often by the chefs, here and out-of-town, just how much they appreciate our personal touch in helping make a perfect accompaniment for their cuisine."

Employing 35 people at the Las Vegas plant, and another three workers at its distribution center on the West Coast in Rancho Cucamonga, Ca., the company today services most of Las Vegas casinos, Gaglio relates, and it also supplies its cheese products to the U.S. military.

In addition to retailing its successful flagship **Mountain Creek Farms** brand across the U.S., the company also ships many of its cheeses to other food manufacturers who incorporate them in their own products to achieve better tastes and flavor, he adds.

In fact, the company produces so many different flavor profiles and special cheese blends at any one time, that Gaglio says he often finds it hard to keep track of just how many SKUs (stock-keeping units) it produces at a given time.

"We sell monterey jack, asiago, jalapeno and cheddar, and various blends, like a 70-percent-mozzarella and 30-percent-provolone mix," says Gaglio, "so we must process well over a hundred different cheeses ourselves.

"Also, we have an amazingly large number of purchased cheeses that we use for blending flavor profiles for our clients."

Naturally, the company's customized approach to cheese production also extends to its packaging, according to Gaglio.

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WeighPack Systems Twin Lane conveyorized Tiger Scale with VERTEK 1150 vertical form-seal bagger.

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“We try to offer packaged cheeses in workable sizes for our customers,” he states. “We pack our cheese in six-ounce bags all the way up to 50-pound bulk bags. And, if you don’t see a size you need, we’ll make it for you, and if you don’t need it all at once, we do offer a storage service to keep your cheese until you actually need it.”

To keep the packaging side of its operations humming, the company runs two filling lines comprised of reliable, state-of-the-art filling and packaging machinery manufactured by the Montreal-based equipment manufacturer **WeighPack Systems Inc.**, which opened up a Las Vegas office about two years ago to take advantage of the booming local economy.

Founded just over 15 years ago, WeighPack has quickly grown to become one of the world’s leading suppliers of precision weighing, filling and bagging machinery for end-users across a broad range of industries, having installed equipment to package diverse products such as hardware goods, cheese, coffee, pharmaceuticals, snack-foods, seafood and more.

The company’s equipment portfolio includes popular brands such as **Tiger-Scales**, **VERTEK** form-fill-seal machinery, and the **Zippy** and **Bingo** horizontal baggers, among others.

“With installations throughout the U. S., Canada and all over the world, WeighPack Systems has become an industry leader and an innovator. Because we manufacture all ranges of scales,

bagging equipment and conveyors, unlike our competition, I can truly offer my customers a single-source solution for all their packaging needs, which is so important when establishing trust and peace of mind,” explains Nicholas Taraborelli, sales manager at WeighPack’s Las Vegas office.

“With sales and service offices in Las Vegas, Toronto, Chicago and eventually in Miami, it allows us to provide our customers the best service possible.”

WeighPack offers its customers high-quality, user-friendly and affordable equipment. All of its scales are modular-designed, making expansion simple, with all contact parts offering tool-less removeability for easy cleaning and proper sanitation.

All the scales come equipped with a top-of-the-line **Multi-Trix** control panel that features auto-calibration, auto-tare, active history screen, a recipe screen, quick disconnect cables and other value-added features, he adds.

“Custom Dairy currently operates two complete packaging lines from WeighPack: one for five-pound bags of

shredded cheese, and the other for 20-pound bags of shredded cheese,” Taraborelli elaborates. “For the five-pound line, they are using our two-lane C-9 conveyORIZED scale and VERTEK 1150 vertical form-seal bagging machine, while for the 20-pound line they are using our single-lane V-25 vibratory scale, and the VERTEK 1600

vertical form-fill-seal bagging machine.”

WeighPack’s VERTEK brand of vertical form-seal bagger offers a number of productivity-enhancing standard features, including:

microprocessor-based touchscreen controls; a powered film unwinding system; a vertical sealing bar; a digitized heater control; and pneumatically-operated horizontal sealing jaws.

For his part, Gaglio says that Custom Dairy is more than happy with the equipment lines purchased from WeighPack, pointing out that a second line was added less than a year after it purchased and installed the first line.

“Believe me, if there’s a cheese flavor out there that you like, we can make it for you,” Gaglio says, adding that the company has even invested in complementary cheese packaging equipment, a **CJ 400-2** machine from **Johnson Industries International Inc.**, to attach different colors of wax to the different types of cheeses.

“For example,” explains Gaglio, “gouda cheese usually has a soft red wax around the outside of the cheese, but for decorating purposes we could add a green or blue wax to it, and the same holds true for whatever cheese or flavor profile you may want us to create on your behalf. We can even custom-blend wax colors to match any company logo for you.

“It’s what we do; we are bringing a world of cheese to the Las Vegas market.” □



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