



FILLING & CAPPING

BY GEORGE GUIDONI, EDITOR • PHOTOS BY DUNCAN McCALLISTER

Way Down the Line

Leading Canadian producer of nutraceutical products maintains impressive productivity and product quality with turnkey packaging lines

In the highly competitive marketplace for vitamins, nutrition supplements, herbal remedies, minerals and other so-called “nutraceuticals,” compromising on product quality is never an option—be it during the manufacturing process or right at the packaging line.

As production manager of the 100,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art, 10-year-old manufacturing facility operated by **Jamieson Laboratories** near the Canada-U.S. border in Windsor, Ont., Bill Wasylyshyn has no use for any process or equipment that can hamper the plant’s hard-earned reputation for delivering top-notch quality products to the hundreds of pharmacies, drug-stores, health-food stores and other specialty retailers across Canada under the **Jamieson** banner.

Founded in 1922, the Toronto-headquartered company has spent many millions of dollars upgrading its Windsor production site over the past 10 years—resulting in four comprehensive facility expansions—to keep its production volumes in tune with the growing market demand for its products, ranging from simple Vitamin B and Vitamin C tablets and capsules to intricate, multivitamin weight-loss formulations and “energy bars.”



A Jamieson Laboratories employee oversees operation of the recently-installed turnkey packaging line incorporating several key pieces of NJM/CLI packaging equipment, inset: UNICAP-150 capper.



Hence, nothing but the best pharmaceutical packaging machinery available on the market will do for the Windsor plant, as far as Wasylyshyn is concerned.

The plant currently operates a total of five different packaging lines under its roof, with the most recent

All in all, Wasylyshyn estimates that the 320-employee Windsor plant produces at least six billion orally-ingested products per year at the three-shift, six-day-week operation, which are retailed as more than 350 different SKUs (stock-keeping units).

The way that the plant packages all these products, Wasylyshyn relates, has a direct effect on the plant’s productivity, profitability and marketplace reputation.

one installed there in 2003 by pharmaceutical packaging machinery experts at the **NJM/CLI Packaging Systems International** in Pointe-Claire, Que.

In fact, this fifth line was the second consecutive turnkey line delivered by NJM/CLI to the Windsor factory—roughly five years after its first installation there.

Wasylyshyn recalls that the installation of the massive fifth line, snaking

over a distance of several hundred feet, was performed with the usual efficiency that has made NJM/CLI one of North America's top designers and manufacturers of pharmaceutical packaging lines, with minimal disruption to the plant's production.

"The line was successfully installed in two days. The NJM/CLI team came into our facility, and with a little help from Jamieson's maintenance staff, it quickly had the line running for tests," Wasylyshyn told *Canadian Packaging*. "I must say that both the installation and the testing went very smooth, and we were into actual production within one week."

Because both lines incorporate the electronic bottle filling machines manufactured by the Dutch-based packaging machinery manufacturer **Cremer Speciaal machines BV**—which operates its **Cremer North America** subsidiary in Laval, Que.—these two lines are code-named **Cremer One** and **Cremer Two**, explains Wasylyshyn.

"We fill a wide variety of tablets and capsules on these lines, which begin by orienting the empty bottles on the conveyor, and then fill, cap, seal and label the bottles in sequential steps," Wasylyshyn explains. "Both lines were installed as complete turnkey pharmaceutical packaging lines, set up to cover all the steps from bottle orientation to the shrinkpacking of filled, labeled and capped bottles into four- or six-pack units.

"While the actual number of units processed over a shift depends on the size of the tablets and capsules being filled, one of these lines will, on average, process about 15,000 to 20,000



CL-110 cottoner.

125 Bronco pressure-sensitive labeler.



units per shift,"

Wasylyshyn adds. "We consider these two lines to be our most high-speed, most versatile, and most operator-friendly lines."

Running around-the-clock, five-days-per-week, these lines only require three to four line operators to oversee the operation and do all the necessary changeovers and quality checks, according to Wasylyshyn.

"Prior to installing these two Cremer lines, we did our packaging in the same basic way, except with less automated machinery and with more operators working the lines," says Wasylyshyn. "I must say we have experienced very good ROI (return-on-investments) with these new lines in many different ways—such as productivity increases, quality improvements on finished goods, dependability, increased uptime, and having less operators on the lines," Wasylyshyn expands.

"Our packaging operators now rotate between different lines and different positions, which provides us the extra benefit of having a very flexible staff working at the plant."

The *Cremer Two* line incorporates four essential pieces of machinery manufactured by NJM/CLI—**UNI-CAP-150** capper, **RTQ-150** retorquer, **125 Bronco** pressure-sensitive labeler and a **CL-110** cottoner—and systems from other manufacturers,

including an unscrambling machine from **Pace Packaging Corporation** and induction sealing equipment from **Enercon Industries Corporation**.

Wasylyshyn says the high comfort level enjoyed by plant staff working with the *Cremer One* line, installed

by NJM/CLI in 1998, was one of the several key factors in the supplier selection process for the *Cremer Two* installation.

"We made our decision based on speed,

dependability, service, design, supplier reputation and previous experience," says Wasylyshyn, "and once again, the entire staff at NJM/CLI were a real pleasure to work with.

"The addition of this line allows us to process a wide variety of bottle and cap sizes, such as the 750-cc round bottles, 75-cc oblong bottles, 63-mm round standard caps, 34-mm flip-top caps ... all kinds of sizes," says Wasylyshyn, while also praising the service excellence of nearby Canadian companies supplying various packaging materials to the *Cremer* lines, including **Monarch Plastics, Mac Closures, Label AD** and **Ingersoll Paper Box**.

"These Cremer lines were added in response to Jamieson's growing share in the nutritional market. In fact, we had to expand our Windsor facility to be able to accommodate five packaging lines," Wasylyshyn says.

"As production manager, the NJM/CLI line provides me with ease of cleaning, dependable operation, a quality finished good, and a safe work environment, in that there are no pinch points and multiple safety interlocks," Wasylyshyn sums up. "It's not to say we don't have any problems with the lines, but they are minimal.

"Overall, these machines are dependable pieces of equipment, added to help meet Jamieson's expanding marketplace objectives." □