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PROCESSING EQUIPMENT

Natural Pet Food Company Transforms Production with New Batch Mixer

New Jersey-based pet food manufacturer Dr. Harvey's saw growth in its output after implementing a key production upgrade.

By — [Christopher Smith](#)

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Dr. Harvey's use of a Munson rotary batch mixer is reaping promising results. Source: Image provided by Dr. Harvey's

The use of a new rotary batch mixer alongside a move to a larger facility has expanded pet food processor [Dr. Harvey's](#) growth capacity, per a release from [Munson Machinery Company](#).

Dr. Harvey's previously used a ribbon blender to mix ingredients for its dog and bird food products, which left roughly 3 lb (1.36 kg) of residual material in the blender's vessel trough. The material, along with dried vegetable particles which adhered between the ribbon agitator and the trough walls, required manual removal.

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The addition of a Munson Rotary Batch Mixer in Dr. Harvey's new Eatontown, N.J. facility has allowed the company to reduce its time spent cleaning after running batches. The mixer can be cleaned in 30 to 40 minutes since it has no dead spots or recesses to trap contaminants. Moreover, the mixer is helping the company meet its increased demand, allowing it to run at least 3 batches a day.

Dr. Harvey's General Manager Caesar Salazar refers to the new batch mixer as "the central and fastest part of [the production] process." The mixer plays a role in the company's inventory increase, which could allow for future growth.

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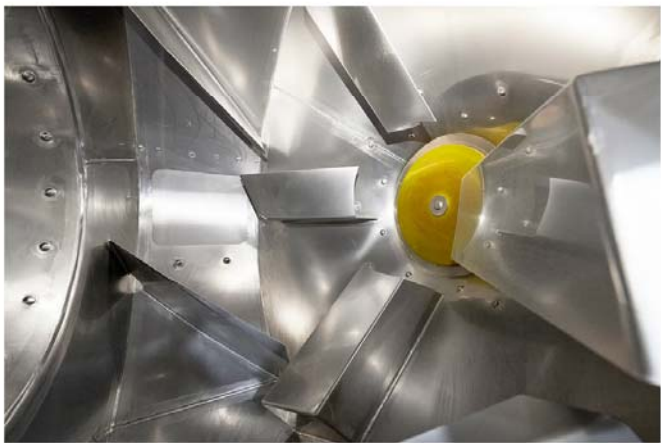
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"We are nowhere near capacity," Salazar says in the release. "At our previous location, we had no extra inventory. All of our product went out the door soon after it was made. Now we have inventory on hand, increased production and can plan accordingly for growth. We will be adding a second shift and will accelerate marketing to increase demand and output."

How the batch mixer works



Munson's mixer helps Dr. Harvey's processing efficiency in multiple ways.

Source: Image provided by Dr. Harvey's

Munson's Rotary Batch Mixer works to achieve a uniform distribution of disparate ingredients. In the case of Dr. Harvey's grain and vegetable base ingredient mixtures, the mixer receives the product through a stationary inlet while the mixer's vessel rotates. This reduces mixing cycle times and helps prevent segregation of ingredients during the later discharge.

Next, the vessel's proprietary flights perform a four-way action of lifting, folding, cutting, and turning materials without , heat, or degradation. This yields a uniformly blended mixture in approximately five minutes.

In addition, the mixing vessel's flights help elevate and direct material through a plug gate valve, which after opened, discharges the batch. For Dr. Harvey's, the discharged batches resulted in less residual material compared to the company's previous ribbon blender, despite the new mixer's 10-times greater capacity.

Caesar Salazar adds that the condition of Dr. Harvey's ingredient mixtures does not change from the mixer's processing.

"A number of fragile ingredients dust easily, but they remain in the same condition as when we loaded them into the mixer," the general manager states.

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Finally, a portable hopper containing the blended batch is forklifted above the surge hopper of the adjacent packaging machine. The hopper is discharged through a manual knife gate valve.

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Adherence to sanitation standards



The batch mixer allows Dr. Harvey's to maintain crucial sanitation processes.

Source: Image provided by Dr. Harvey's

The design of Munson's Rotary Batch Mixer allows Dr. Harvey's to reduce its cleanup time but also helps the company comply with sanitary standards.

After a completed batch, operators blast the mixer's interior with compressed air nozzles before vacuuming and wiping with hand towels.

Batches that contain dried meat products receive a dry sanitizing agent in addition to the standard cleaning routine.

"We deep clean each surface to ensure no cross contamination," states Marie Limoges, PhD, RDN Director of Food Safety and Nutrition.

Furthermore, the mixer's vessel contains clean-out doors on opposite sides that allow unrestricted access for cleaning and visual inspection of all material contact surfaces. This contributes to the plant's compliance with FDA and state requirement-incorporated National Animal Supplement guidelines.

The rotary batch mixer, packaging machine, hand batching stations, and other production posts are positioned with intake ducts of a central dust collection system to prevent contamination of the plant environment.

The addition of Munson's mixer to Dr. Harvey's New Jersey plant is helping the company remain prepared for increased demand for its health-conscious pet food products.

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