

Innovation, research and development

Independent is a marketing-orientated organisation, which believes that markets respond to innovation, backed by research and development.

Independent's record in these areas has established the group as an international market leader.

In the 1950's, Ed Flomen chairman of Independent, developed a technique for shirring (wrapping) pre-determined lengths of accurately-graded casings on to a plastic sleeve, or "tube". This technique enables natural casings to be used in high speed automated sausage making plants.

Tubed casings are now commonplace in the natural casing business. The tubing machinery was developed by Independent along with machinery to manufacture the plastic "tube".

In order to minimise labour costs and to achieve the highest possible level of quality control in the tubing process, the group is continually investigating and developing new techniques including new types of container for marketing and the use of vacuum packing. One example is an automated grading device which reduces human error and has created a highly acceptable product for end users.

In the 1960's, Independent employed Dr S. V. Brich (since deceased), the first full-time research scientist in natural casings. His pioneering work led to significant improvements in cleaning, processing, packaging, preserving and storage. There has been a substantial improvement in productivity at many processing plants both through increased mechanisation and reduce wastage as a result of Dr Brich's research.

When natural casing users sought a machine which would stuff sausages to specific lengths, then twist the casing, Independent developed an attachment that would allow this. These machines have enabled those manufacturers who prefer natural casings, to improve their productivity in line with the productivity gains achieved by manufacturers using collagen and cellulose.

Independent is engaged in a research programme supported by the Federal Government of Canada under its PAIT (Program for the Advancement of Industrial Technology) scheme. This is aimed at developing saleable natural casing products from the substantial quantities of animal gut which are presently discarded or converted to meals and fertilisers.

The world's first international conference on natural casings was organised by Independent at Christchurch in 1969 and was attended by all New Zealand freezing companies and by most of Independent's competitors.

The group's operations are fully computerised internationally, providing a sound base for expansion.

It also provides substantial support for the International Natural Sausage Casing Association (INSCA), believing that cooperation between companies is beneficial to an industry. The group supports the Association through five separate memberships and by way of special grants for advertising and public relations purposes.

Independent is particularly active in providing follow-up after sales technical and advisory services to its customers. It is also willing to work with customers in developing casings products to their specifications.



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Upon cleaning the hanks are either sorted (1), and salted for export (2), or they are tubed (3), a technique which enables natural casings to be used in high speed automated sausage making plants. Here tubes are prepared ready for use by buyers world wide.

After packing into barrels (4), the barrels are shipped to Europe, USA or elsewhere for further processing or purchase (5).

A German sausage maker uses one of Independent's distinctive blue "tubes" (6).

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INDEPENDENT CASING CO LTD