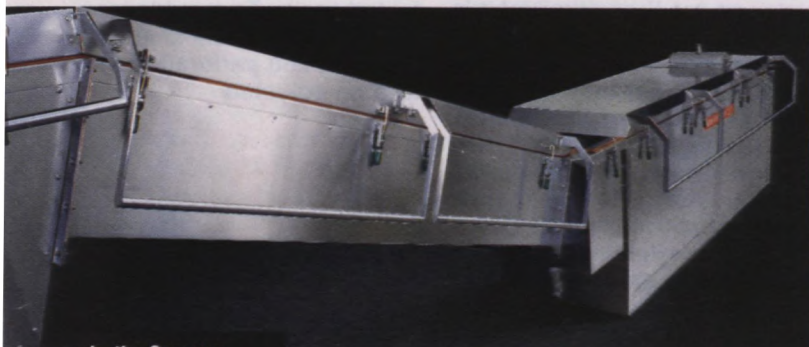


Cryogran Provides Eggs-act Portions



In the Cryogran process, liquid nitrogen is used to freeze droplets of eggs solid in just five seconds, with the water content maintained in the product.



The Cryogran process freezes eggs into homogeneous, pea-sized pellets. One cup of pellets equals one cup of eggs.

Although "scrambled Cryogran" doesn't quite have the same ring as "scrambled eggs," a unique Canadian process may soon be changing the way eggs, and many other foods, are produced and prepared.

Cryogran is a patented process for freezing liquid and semi-liquid foods into homogeneous pellets. IQF Inc. of Mississauga, Ontario, is the only company in the world that manufactures Cryogran equipment and that also produces one of the end products of the unique process — pelletized eggs.

Conventionally frozen eggs posed problems

Restaurants, hotels, and others in the food service industry traditionally had a difficult time using conventional frozen eggs. The eggs were frozen in pails and had to be thawed for use. But freezing took 36 to 48 hours, allowing time for bacteria to grow. The time it took to thaw the eggs posed the same problem. And even if a cook needed a small portion of eggs, the entire pail had to be thawed, mixed, and used quickly before the eggs went bad.

The Cryogran process solves those problems by freezing eggs into pellets. In the process, developed by Agriculture Canada, liquid nitrogen is pumped from a tank onto a series of trays. Droplets of eggs, with the yolk and albumen already mixed, flow from nozzles onto the nitrogen "river," and are frozen solid in just five seconds. The pea-sized pellets are then carried until they reach a wire-mesh belt. The liquid nitrogen falls through the belt, and the pelletized eggs are collected.

Unlike freeze-drying, which extracts water from food, Cryogran freezes water content into the product. "The eggs require no water to be reconstituted," explains IQF vice-president Bosko Milankov. "If you need half a pound of egg for a recipe, just scoop out half a pound of pellets and put them in the mix." The eggs suffer no loss of quality by undergoing the Cryogran process, and remain as fresh as when they were frozen until the moment they are used.

Process has diverse applications

Cryogran eggs are proving particularly useful to large bakeries and restaurants. The Harvey's fast-food chain, for example, uses Cryogran eggs in its western omelettes. In addition to supplying egg pellets, IQF leases its equipment for use on other foods, such as dairy products, as well as on some non-food products. One American firm even uses the equipment to produce frozen microbial cultures.

With so many diverse applications, the future of this revolutionary process looks promising. Anyone for "Cryogran over easy"?