Historically, starch jelly candies have been one of the basic production items in traditional multiline candy plants. A major share of production time in the starch-moulding department has always belonged to jelly candies, along with secondary volumes of crèmes, caramels and marshmallows.

The late 1950s into the early 1980s was the heyday of starch jelly candy production across a broad spectrum of U.S. candy plants. During this time frame, three significant technology introductions changed the nature of making starch jelly candies: high-speed starch mogul systems, high-amylose cornstarch and high-volume continuous cookers.

The coming of high-speed starch mogul systems increased production rates from 12 to 14 starch trays per minute with the old National mogul systems to 20 to 30 “boards” per minute on the newer machines.

The development of hybrid high-amylose corn varieties yielded quick-setting confectioner’s starch products. Starch jelly curing-room time was reduced from 48 to 24 hours with the new high-amylose starch formulations.

In keeping pace with increased production floor capacities and high-temperature cooking requirements, the high-volume continuous steam injection cooker systems came onto the scene. A 2-inch Staley jet cooker can process jelly candy at 18 gallons/minute (200 lbs/min) at 335°F, in a 20 percent moisture slurry. This performance was adequate for properly cooking the more cook-resistant high-amylose starch, supplying the high-speed starch mogul systems and accommodating the reduced curing-room drying time. Older Farley and Votator pressure cookers became simply insufficient and were replaced.

With all of this new technology available, starch jelly candy really started flowing through the candy plants. In the mid-1970s, U.S. starch suppliers were selling in the area of 25 million lbs/year of confectioner’s starch for jelly candy production (25 million lbs starch = 260 million lbs jelly candy).

Another major milestone in the history of the starch jelly was the introduction of upscale jelly candy products into the marketplace. Gourmet jelly beans revitalized what had become a commodity Easter jelly bean market into a year-around treat. Ordinary jujubes with fruit juice added and supermarket sales hype have become fruit snacks and a major product line. And, thirdly, European gelatin-based gummi can-