Best Practices for Allergen Changeovers and Sanitizing of Confectionery Equipment

Following equipment hygiene and cleaning protocols ensures consistent, allergen-free production cleanliness.

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The confections industry has special requirements for equipment cleanliness, including appropriate hygienic sanitizing for allergens. What are the machine design requirements needed to handle allergen changeovers? What can machine suppliers do to support allergen cleaning for a confectioner's sanitation team? Herein is an overview of equipment hygiene and cleaning methods necessary to ensure consistency in machine sanitation protocols. We'll investigate different types of cleaning and hygiene validation, and look specifically at an example of sanitary design and related considerations applied to a bar forming line.

Ideally, isolating production between allergenic and non-allergenic products would be accomplished using completely separate facilities, which would include separate raw materials, production lines, personnel, air handling systems and more. Of course, this is prohibitively expensive and impractical. The next best scenario would separate production lines within the same facility, however, this is only economical if the production volume for both types of products is high enough. In reality, both allergenic and non-allergenic products are typically produced on the same line, and this is where hygienic design and effective cleaning of all areas of the production line and surrounding confines is key. Validating and verifying that cleaning processes have been followed is imperative to maintaining consistent hygienic production.

What specifically is hygiene? Many definitions of hygiene exist. A suitable definition is that hygiene is preventive work necessary to maintain the health of individuals. For our understanding, this preventive work begins with the design of the production line and continues with effective, consistent hygienic practices.

Cleanliness is another term used often in this context. Cleanliness is characterized by the absence of dirt, and presents itself as a process of continuous boundaries. This process of continuous boundaries means that cleaning and validation needs to be continuously verified to maintain conforming hygienic production. Hygienic production involves ensuring that all measures by which the health, safety and satisfactory condition of products at all stages of manufacturing, packaging and post-production are taken.

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