



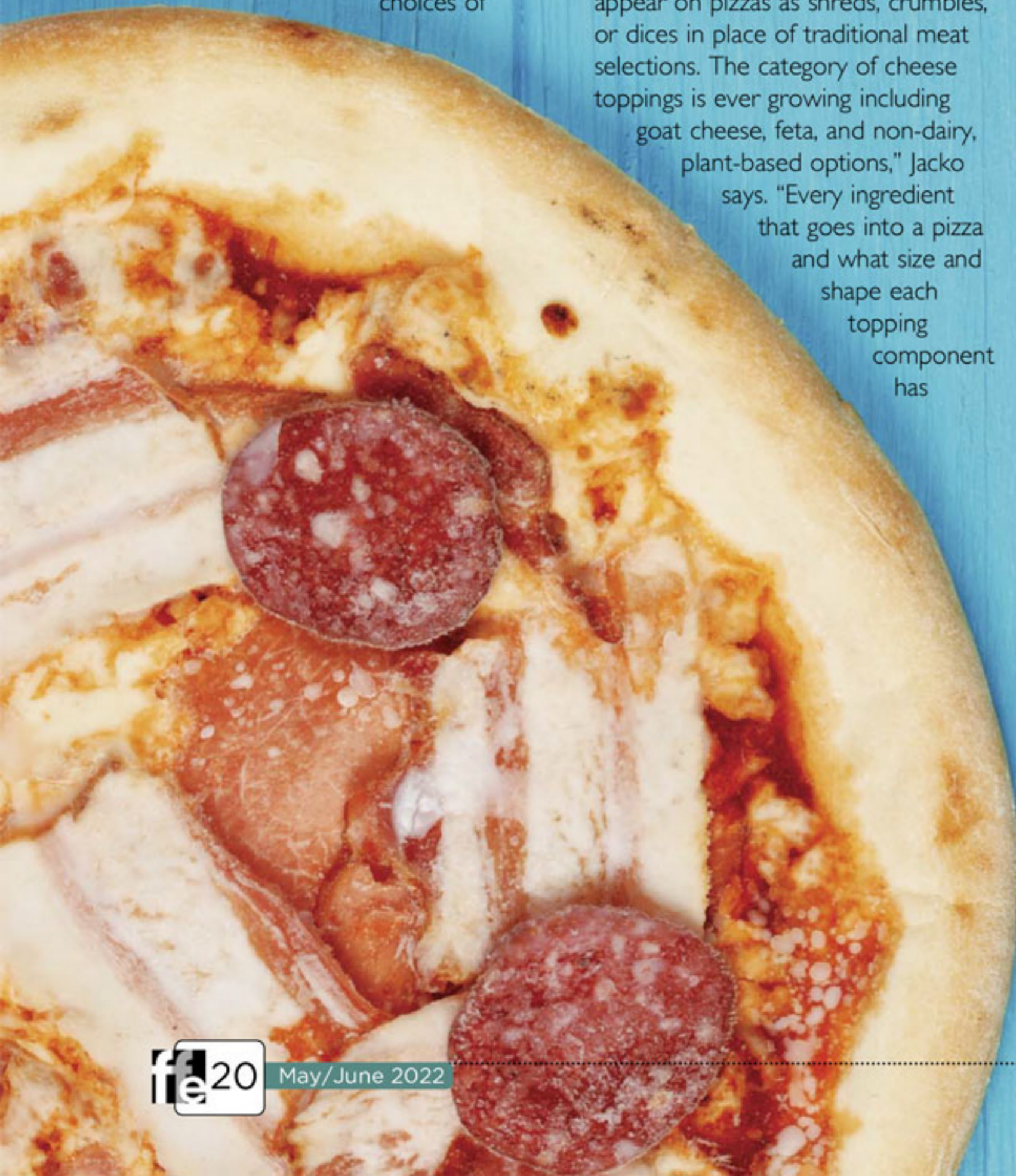
THE PERFECT CUT

While food trends might impact areas like the ingredients list or the sustainability of the production process, frozen pizza manufacturers still rely on technology providers to ensure the best quality in any given context. Cutting is obviously one of the areas where machines can make a huge difference, and the above-mentioned providers constantly find new ways to assure that the output is always inching closer to perfection.

The frozen food market, including pizza, continues to be one of the fastest growing market sectors in food processing, according to Mike Jacko, vice president of Applications & Product Development at **Urschel**. Advances in freezing methods intersect with consumer trends. Consumers are seeking healthier, convenient options. These trends include increased choices of

vegetables and plant-based proteins. Traditional toppings remain popular while niche pizza toppings and styles of crusts are ever expanding. Research and development teams continue to build on new flavors and toppings. "Brussel sprouts, beets, arugula, spinach, zucchini, and yellow squash are just a few on-trend toppings. Cauliflower crusts are also at the forefront. Alternative textured plant proteins take center stage and appear on pizzas as shreds, crumbles, or dices in place of traditional meat selections. The category of cheese toppings is ever growing including goat cheese, feta, and non-dairy, plant-based options," Jacko says. "Every ingredient that goes into a pizza and what size and shape each topping component has

should be an important consideration. This will determine the visual appeal, coverage, taste, and texture which are key in SKU success. A processor must then identify the proper cutting machinery to deliver just the right cut for each ingredient. A cut should be identified for each ingredient that will also result in the highest usable product from a profit standpoint." When considering the purchase of new capital equipment, he argues, processors need to identify the flow of their current system. If creating a new line, make sure each station will work seamlessly with the next. Safety and flow should be fully analyzed. Working with a line company offers an additional amount of security. "In analyzing a new purchase, such as cutting machinery, a test cut of the supplied customer product may be highly advantageous. The customer should make sure the machine fits their needs and any future flexibility that may be foreseen. If replacing an existing machine with a different model, check to see if there may be a turnkey approach. In addition to choosing the proper cutting machine, ask about spare parts availability, maintenance, and determine the degree of support after the sale. Urschel offers support to every customer for the long life of their cutting machinery." Urschel technology delivers precision and expertise to pizza manufacturers. With the extensive ability to effectively cut a gamut of shapes to provide precision cuts within the targeted specifications. Many ingredients go into creating different





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styles of frozen pizza and ingredients vary depending on product characteristics. For toppings, fruits and vegetables rely on gentle cutting methods, whereas alternative proteins require more aggressive cutting methods. In addition, reduction of ingredients for sauces and crusts down to micro-dimensions is necessary to produce the ideal frozen pizza. "As a powerhouse developer of cutting solutions, Urschel identifies the proper machine to pair with the desired outcome. With slicers, dicers, milling equipment, and all types of cuts, Urschel offers boundless reduction opportunities to frozen pizza processors. This may translate into a new beet sauce or cauliflower flour crust. Urschel size reduction equipment paves the way for processing capabilities," Mike Jacko points out. "Urschel partners with customers to optimize their productivity. Test lab technicians identify new cuts that bring true benefits to the processors that work with Urschel. From half-moon zucchini slices to bow-tie beet cuts, unique looks abound to help processors stand out in the competitive frozen pizza industry. Some of the key issues processors are facing include adequate labor and staffing and require more in a machine design. By engineering and manufacturing improved technology in a machine, the processor saves time, reduces staffing requirements, and improves capacity and quality of product output." He adds that customers are demanding more in a design than ever before. Cutting principles are more precise to produce tighter, increased in-spec

results, dedicated to increasing usable product. Components are constructed with ease-of-use elements, such as built-in handles, while also being able to withstand rugged production environments. Tools that accompany machines are also designed to expedite routine procedures. It all relates to time savings and cost savings. Customers are looking for a machine with components that work with their fast-paced line. Small and large companies want a robust machine that will hold precision slice tolerances throughout production runs with guarantees of parts and service when they need them. "New for the emerging

alternative protein market, the DiversaCut® series and M6 offer aggressive cutting parts and feeding spindles created to overcome products that are normally difficult to process. These cutting methods also effectively reduce traditional cooked meats," Jacko explains. Also new in meat processing, the Affinity large dicer with built-in log precutter for an all-in-one log dicing solution. For cheese shredding, the MicroAdjustable® CC series Shred Head (SH-14) offers expedited knife changeovers. Urschel machinery maintains more precise control of the shred thickness, so processors use less cheese per ounce while

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Mike Jacko, vice president of Applications & Product Development at Urschel



Photo: Urschel

maintaining a full coverage appearance. This relates to better control in cheese melting and cost savings for the processor. The MicroAdjustable head, sanitary in design, is U.S.D.A. accepted. Other U.S.D.A. accepted offerings include the CCX-D cheese shredder and the large Affinity® Dicer along with the smaller footprint of the Affinity Integra-D. Whether shredding or dicing cheese or plant-based 'cheese', Urschel cutting solutions are ever evolving to meet the flexible needs of production lines. "The Comitrol® Processor line of machinery is unique to our company. As with all reduction machinery we engineer and manufacture, all key components are crafted, constructed, and assembled under one roof at Urschel, so strict quality standards are enforced. The size reduction heads employed in the Comitrol line achieve particles down to micro-dimensions. Potential applications include sauces, pastes, slurries, granulations, rice cuts, crumbles, powders, and flours. Comitrol reductions continue to be a sought-after resource for the frozen food industry. The word «Comitrol» means controlled comminution." The Comitrol Processor uses the principle of incremental shear to ensure highly efficient comminution by rotating the product inside a stationary reduction head at high rotational speeds. In addition, continuous single pass operation achieves consistently uniform particle size reduction at high capacities. Other methods of comminution employ some type of grinding, smashing, or tearing action which can produce excessive heat and degrade the quality of the finished product. This can also generate a higher percentage of particles which fall outside the target range of the desired particle size and negatively impact the yield, quality, and final particle size. HMI options are available. The E TranSlicer® Cutter (ETRS-C), DiversaCut 2110A® (2110A) and Sprint 2® Dicers feature built-in discharge conveyors to facilitate dispensing cut product into totes. The built-in conveyors assist in effectively capturing slivered, small cuts of fruit and vegetable products such as leeks, onions, tomatoes, or peppers to promote



gentle and complete discharge from each machine. In addition to the new conveyor discharge option, the E TranSlicer may also be equipped with a bias slicing option. Also new for the 2110A, the DiversaCut 2110A equipped with a large product input. "Urschel delivers a targeted solution to processing whole heads of leafy vegetables - the DiversaCut 2110A® Dicer specially equipped with a large feed hopper and a new type of impeller. This new development alleviates precutting and minimizes product handling. The new Affinity CD-L Dicer, the most recent addition to the Affinity series, combines new technology with the utility of previous Urschel Model CD-A and L-A machines. Processors replacing Model L-A's with the CD-L achieved more than twice the capacity. Feed spindle, feed drum, and 5 HP (3.7 kW) motor work effectively with the cutting components in the successful processing of dried fruits and other products. Optional integrated oil spray system lubricates circular knives to assist in the processing of sticky products," Mike Jacko concludes.

#urschelfoodprocessing