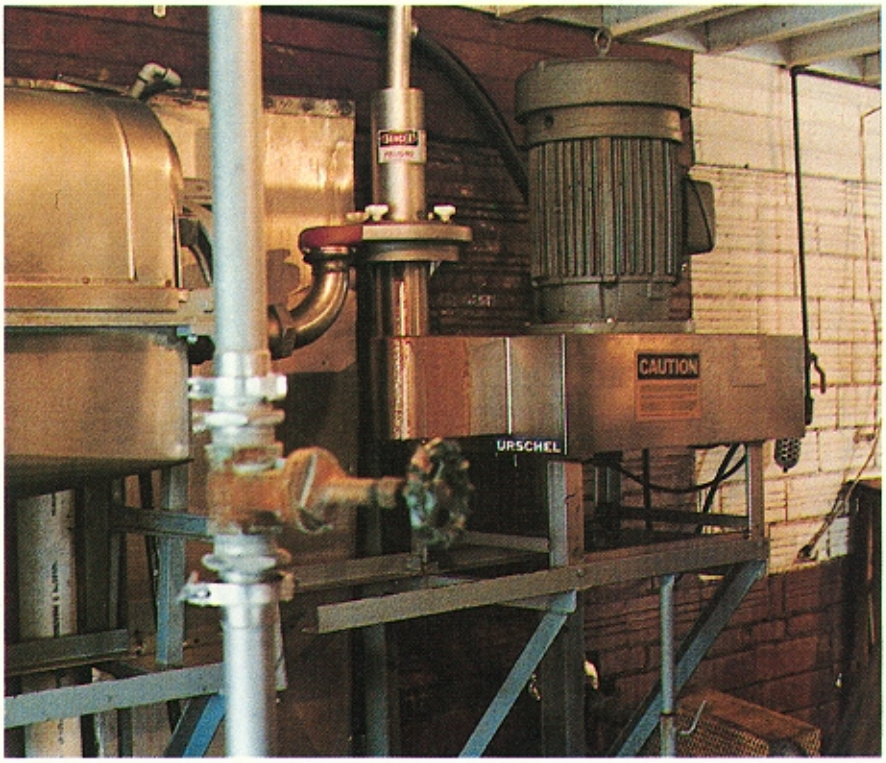
Field Report

Thick, smooth catsup with no watery residue



The finishing process, using this size-reduction machine, is a key step in producing thick, smooth catsup for Sharp Canning Company.

Incoming tomatoes are washed, inspected, then fed to the hot chopper.

Sharp Canning Company, Rockford, Ohio, thinks and breathes tomato catsup. Catsup is their only business at the Rockford plant and company president Warren Weisenborn considers every batch crucial.

Since the tomato season is relatively short, last year the decision was made to use tomato paste for their catsup when fresh tomatoes were not available. The results have been most pleasing. In fact, Mr. Weisenborn defies anyone to tell the difference between his fresh tomato catsup and his catsup made from tomato paste.

Sharp's process

One of the key elements in producing a thick, smooth catsup is the finishing process. Here, Sharp uses an Urschel Comitrol® size reduction machine. The special, turbulent cutting action of the machine provides Sharp with the perfection they demand. The catsup remains in a suspended state and there is no watery residue upon opening a bottle of it.

Overall, Sharp's tomato catsup processing line is as follows: Fresh tomatoes arrive by truck and are unloaded by washing them down a chute directly into water conveyors which have a vegetable detergent added for cleansing purposes. The tomatoes are inspected, then, still water-conveyed, they are fed into a hot chopper.

Next, they travel into a pulper (60 mesh screen) where the waste is drawn off. The pulped tomatoes are then fed to a Fitzmill to break up the fibers and from there to holding tanks. As needed, the plain tomato juice is then pumped, along with liquid sugar, vinegar, salt, onion powder and spices, to three huge stainless steel cooking tanks with rotary coils inside. This mixture is boiled down until it is 50% concentrated. The next step is the finishing process with the Comitrol machine.

Before the finished catsup is pumped to holding tanks, one last quality check is made and the Chief Technician also draws samples for further analysis. Meanwhile, as needed, empty catsup bottles are conveyed through a sterilization chamber and then to a filling machine.

Simultaneously, the catsup is piped from the holding tanks to the filling machine at 195 degrees F. The filled catsup bottles proceed through a capping machine and then a coding unit. The capped bottles are then slowly conveyed through a cooling rinse cycle which takes a total of 40 minutes and lowers the temperature of the catsup to 90 degrees F. Finally, workers pack the catsup bottles into cartons which are conveyed to the labeling area.

If the catsup is to be made from tomato paste, the paste first goes through a blending cycle and then follows the same procedure as the fresh tomato catsup.

For complete technical information describing Urschel size reduction equipment, including the Urschel Comitrol® machine, contact:

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