

# A "Honee" of an upgrade

*One cutter replaces nine for the largest private label supplier of asparagus in the world*

FOR DECADES, LAWTON, MICH.-BASED Honee Bear Canning relied on Model 30 Cutters to slice asparagus product. In fact, the company purchased its first such cutter from Urschel Laboratories in 1951, and bought several more over the years for a total of nine.

With just routine maintenance, the machines performed well over time. And Honee Bear had no trouble keeping the equipment busy. The company is the largest asparagus canner in Michigan and the largest private label supplier of asparagus in the world. During asparagus season, from May to mid-June, the company's ranks swell to 250.

Although the Model 30 has been the standard for the green bean and asparagus cutting industries since the 1920s, Honee Bear plant manager Toby Fields recently encountered a new method of cutting asparagus — Urschel's TranSlicer 2000® cutter. "At first I thought the [Urschel] salesman was crazy, but then I went to the plant to watch the equipment run and was very impressed," Fields recalled. "The 30's were running fine. [But] after seeing that particular machine work, I believed it would take over the market. And I knew that it would lower our labor costs."

With the TranSlicer 2000, product is delivered onto two high-speed feed belts sloping together to form a V-shaped feed trough. The two feed belts are synchronized with a 20-in.-diameter rotating slicing wheel to ensure proper advance of product per revolution of the wheel. Knives under tension serve as spokes to support the rim of the wheel, and are slightly twisted to create a uniform pitch from the hub to the rim. The number and pitch of knives on the slicing wheel together with the matching feed belt determine the thickness of the slice. One



With the TranSlicer 2000, product is delivered onto high-speed feed belts sloping together to form a V-shaped feed trough. The two feed belts are synchronized with a 20-in.-diameter rotating slicing wheel to ensure proper advance of product— in this case asparagus.

slice is made at a time to prevent any crushing of the product, with cut slices then discharged into a hinged, contoured chute to reduce their speed before exiting the machine.

The stainless-steel cutting wheel motor utilizes a dynamic braking system — meaning there are no moving parts requiring routine maintenance. Hinged and sliding access panels make the TranSlicer 2000 easy to clean and maintain.

As Honee Bear's Fields discovered, the TranSlicer is ideally suited for elongated products, including cucumbers, peppers, celery and carrots, as well as bread loaves, pepperonis and wieners. By last winter, Honee Bear had found a buyer for its nine Model 30 cutters and placed an order for a TranSlicer 2000 Cutter. "The 30's had been here so long and held up so well that we knew Urschel was a quality company," Fields said. After revamping its existing line to accommodate the new cutter, Honee Bear was able to reduce its labor



force by 30 workers. The upgrade also increased the amount of available floor space in the 250,000-sq.-ft. plant. The TranSlicer 2000 runs at about 14,000 lbs. per hour, and has vastly improved the overall operation of the plant, including clean-up efficiency.

Urschel Laboratories, Inc., 2503 Calumet Ave., P.O. Box 2200, Valparaiso, IN 46384. Tel: (219) 464-4811; fax (219) 462-3879. Email: [info@urschel.com](mailto:info@urschel.com), [www.urschel.com](http://www.urschel.com)

TranSlicer 2000® is a registered trademark of Urschel Laboratories, Inc. 1786 NOV 2001.