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Cutting Technology Under Pressure: Translating Product Innovation Into Industrial Reality

Pressure to differentiate potato products no longer stops at seasoning, coating, or packaging. Processors are being asked to deliver new shapes, textures, and cut profiles that stand out in both retail and foodservice. What looks like a product development exercise quickly becomes a processing challenge once those cuts have to be produced at industrial scale, across variable raw material, and at the speeds modern lines demand.

By Tudor Vintiloiu

EQUIPMENT CAPABILITY ACROSS APPLICATIONS

Within industrial potato processing, **Urschel Laboratories** structures its cutting solutions around specific application requirements, covering slicing, strip cutting, dicing, and particle size reduction across high-capacity production environments. At the core of its potato chip processing offering is the CC Series, which the company describes as "the leading high yield potato slicer across the globe in use by over 90% of all commercial potato chippers." The platform supports a wide range of slicing configurations through interchangeable cutting heads, enabling processors to produce flat slices, V-cuts, crinkle slices, shreds, strips, and other profiles aligned with product specifications.

For lattice and specialty cuts, Urschel includes the CCLL slicer, designed for "corrugated cuts to create potato lattice chips or thicker potato waffle fries." The system is engineered for higher-capacity production compared to earlier models, incorporating multiple cutting stations and an enlarged cutting chamber to support increased throughput.

FROM SLICING TO DICING AND PARTICLE REDUCTION

Beyond chip slicing, Urschel extends its cutting capability through the DiversaCut Series, which provides flexibility in producing crinkle, deep crinkle, and straight-edged dices and strips for French fries and other potato products. These systems are designed to handle a range of product sizes while maintaining consistent cut geometry under continuous operation. For applications requiring further size reduction, Urschel deploys its Comitrol line, described as "a purpose-engineered line for potato particle reduction." The technology is used in processes such as flake production and other applications where controlled particle size is critical. Designed for continuous operation, the system uses fixed-position reduction heads and high-speed impeller action to achieve uniform results at high throughput levels.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN CUTTING TECHNOLOGY

Urschel is introducing a new cutting concept with the Little Gem Aspire Dicer, developed by its Innovation and Development team. According to the company, "The Little Gem employs patented Urschel technology to create precision cutting methods, engineered through extensive R&D."

The system is designed to produce slices, strips, and dices within a compact footprint, with configurations supporting flat slices from 2 mm up to 20 mm and a range of strip and dice dimensions. The machine incorporates a StatiCut assembly and specialized knife configurations intended to reduce cell damage and support juice retention, contributing to improved product yield and consistency.

ALIGNING EQUIPMENT WITH PROCESSING REQUIREMENTS

Urschel places emphasis on aligning cutting equipment with the broader processing environment rather than treating it as an isolated unit. As Scott Klockow, Director of Applications and Product Development, explains: "We speak to customers to understand their processing line, their product, and their yield goals first. That way, their Urschel equipment is aligned with their operation from the start and integrates seamlessly into their production."

This approach is supported by in-house manufacturing of critical components, including knives, which contributes to operational reliability and supply continuity. Dennis Wong, Director for Urschel Asia Pacific Singapore, notes: "Because we manufacture critical parts and knives, we can control inventory levels better and we have reduced supply chain risk."

Taken together, the input from both companies points to the same broader conclusion: cutting is where product ambition collides with raw-material variability, mechanical limits, and line-speed demands. As processors continue to pursue new formats and tighter operational performance, cutting technology is being asked to do more at once: create more distinctive products, preserve product integrity, maintain repeatability, and fit cleanly into increasingly integrated production lines. •

Slice | Dice | Strip | Mill

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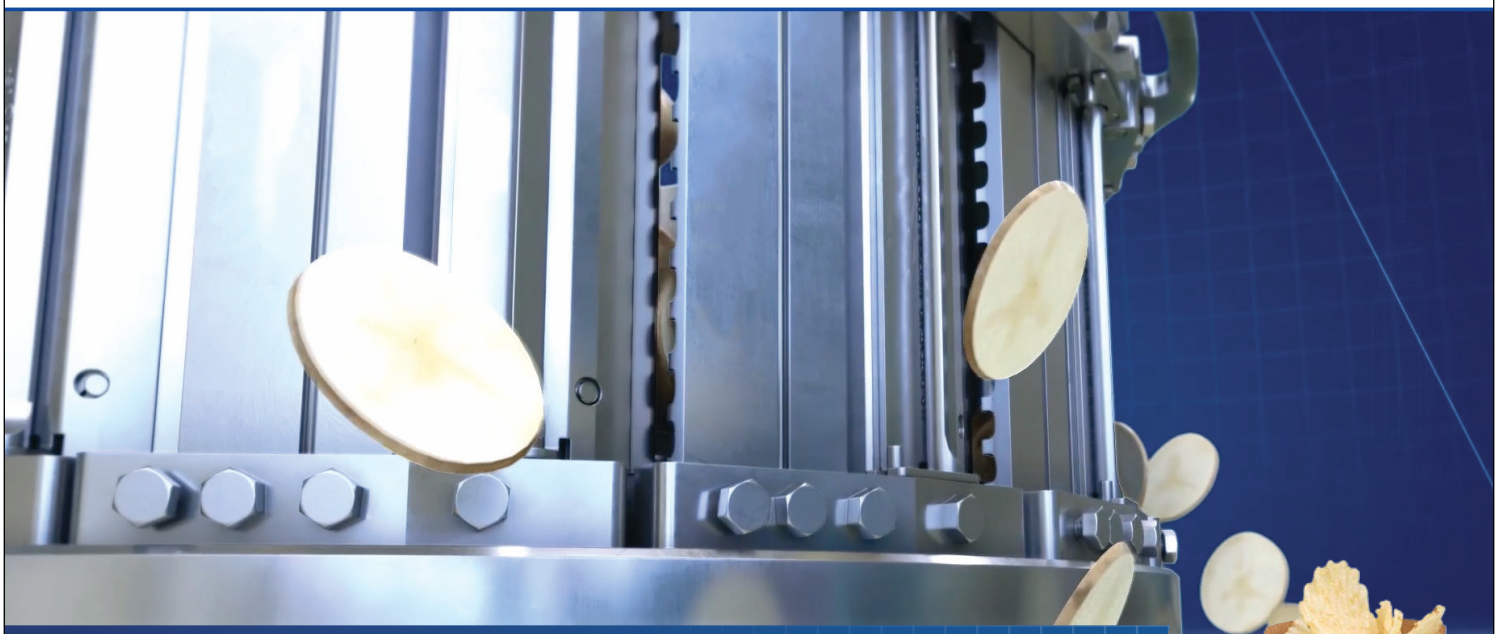

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- The sharpest knives team up with rugged components at powerful speeds to deliver the highest quality cuts.

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