*Spanish oil company relies on ten high-capacity packaging systems of the BEUMER stretch hood series for petrochemical pellets*

**An all-around safe solution**

**For decades, a Spanish oil company relied on the shrinking method to wrap in film the palletised PE bags filled with petrochemical pellets, but some of the systems were now up to 30 years old. They no longer met the currently required safety standards with regard to both operation and maintenance. Therefore, the company entrusted BEUMER Group with the installation of ten high-capacity packaging systems from the BEUMER stretch hood A series. Within six months, the system provider supplied them to each of the company's plant sites and integrated them into the already existing palletising and packaging lines. The machines meet the high safety requirements and are also energy efficient.**

One of the major European players in the petrochemical business is situated in Spain and produces more than six million tons of chemicals per year. Two of its manufacturing facilities are located in Spain, one in Portugal. After production, the petrochemical pellets are filled in big bags, octabins or 25 kilogram PE bags and then delivered to customers. These bags are palletised and wrapped in film to protect them against environmental impacts and dust. For this purpose, the plants have been using the shrinking method since the 1980s. "The machines worked reliably, but had already been in operation for 20 to 30 years," describes the purchasing manager. "In the meantime, various problems arose that had nothing to do with the machines, but with the technology", because the heat required for the shrinking method is generated by these machines using gas or electric power. The open flame repeatedly caused small burns on the film. Thus the pellets often melted with the film. The continuous fire hazard implied higher insurance rates and the aging systems had to be maintained frequently. This was expensive and, due to the gas pipes, dangerous for our service technicians. In addition, the energy consumption of the systems in operation was high, and it became more and more difficult to get spare parts on the market.

"We were searching for an economic and above all safe packaging system that could be maintained easily and efficiently", says the project manager of one of the Spanish plants. The shrink systems that had been in use until then had been supplied decades ago by BEUMER Group, among others. Therefore this time, the responsible persons also turned to the single-source provider for packaging lines from Beckum. "Our customer was looking for a manufacturer with high quality standard, many years of experience, high reliability and world-wide references", says Plácido Valle Santafosta, sales engineer at BEUMER Group in Barcelona. In the tender process, the system provider was awarded the contract to supply systems for one of the Spanish plants, and in August 2019 to supply further machines for the other plant - a total of ten packaging systems. Both companies quickly agreed on the scope and schedule and the project was ready to begin.

**Stretch film - the economical alternative**

Stretch hooding should now be used instead of the shrinking method. "This packaging solution does not require the use of heat; this prevents the film from sticking to the product during the process", explains the project manager. In order to guarantee protection during transport and load stability, the stretch film adapts to any product that is stacked on the pallet. The film is very stretchable and its contracting forces keep the goods tight together. The development in film production is advancing steadily. Thus, more and more stable stretch films are available on the market, and since these films can also be produced in increasingly thinner layers, this in turn saves material. In the future, stretch films will be increasingly used for this purpose. For reasons of sustainability, these stretch films contain increasing amounts of recycled material and increasingly consist of bioplastics.

Stretch hooding has the ability to package the pallet for high-bay storage systems, with understretch or with different base reinforcements. Thanks to the high transparency of the stretch film, the packed goods are clearly visible. And the barcodes on the bags can be scanned quickly and consistently. Logos and text can also be printed on the film to be used as an advertising medium. A flat film placed on the pallet offers additional protection against external influences on all six sides of the stacked pellets. This ensures that the bags filled with pellets are protected reliably against environmental influences such as sunlight, dirt, and humidity during transshipment and outside storage. "This was very important to the responsible persons since they have to transport the goods safely and in perfect condition to the customers", says Valle Santafosta, sales engineer at BEUMER. In addition, the stretch film keeps the bags tightly on the pallet, preventing them from slipping.

**BEUMER stretch hood: the right machine**

The BEUMER stretch hood A is very energy efficient: A film transport system, which is particularly gentle on the material, introduces the previously cut and sealed film hood into the system. On its way to the crimping and stretching unit, the sealing seam on the film hood cools down so that it can be crimped without losing time. This allows for the elimination of energy-consuming cooling and efficiency-reducing cooling times. This way the pallets can be packaged at a high bag sequencing.

In order to facilitate the work for the maintenance personnel and to ensure high system availability, the new packaging system was designed without a platform. Maintenance work, such as changing the blades or the sealing bars, is handled at the floor level. Additional benefits include the compact design and the resulting low height and small footprint. "We have equipped this line with the BEUMER Human Machine Interface, which makes it easy and simple to operate", says Valle Santafosta. "The operators are provided with an easily understandable and intuitive interaction concept, enabling them to define the same efficient working sequences for all machines." Displays help visualise how and where to make the necessary settings. The user can for example call up video sequences that show the changing of the film roll and the film knife. For other set-up work, the operator panel includes graphics and step-by-step instructions.

**Rapid project phases**

"In winter, we supplied the first two BEUMER stretch hood packaging systems to the Spanish plant, a few weeks later two additional ones", reports Valle Santafosta. Installation took place in autumn. BEUMER Group also delivered two packaging systems to the other Spanish plant in winter and two further ones in August. Some of the systems are equipped with roller conveyors for the pallet transport system.

When being asked what the largest challenge of this project was, Valle Santafosta reflects for a moment. "For one, the short delivery period of only six months. In addition, the period for commissioning is fixed and cannot be extended, otherwise operation would be stopped for too long." Furthermore, the machines have to be integrated in the existing packaging lines. This involves combining the latest safety standards of the BEUMER stretch hood with the safety levels of the existing systems. But we have a lot of experience in this," emphasizes Valle Santafosta. "We solve this with separate safety circuits."

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**Captions:**



**Picture 1:** The easy, intuitive and reliable operation of the new BEUMER stretch hood A is especially appealing to customers.



**Picture 2:** Plácido José Valle Santafosta, BEUMER Group: "Our customer was searching for a manufacturer with high quality standard, many years of experience, high reliability and world-wide references."

**Picture credits: BEUMER Group GmbH & Co. KG**

**You can download the high-resolution pictures** [**here**](https://newcloud.a1kommunikation.de/index.php/s/jhJ6XbeTIuRtPIw)**.**

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