

Spiral Freezer Is a ‘Hamburger Helper’[†]



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Americans eat more than 14 billion hamburgers a year, many of which were previously frozen. While almost everyone has an opinion on how to best cook and garnish them, few realize how important the freezing process is to how good they ultimately taste.

High-quality suppliers like Schenk Packing Co., Inc., are aware of this connection, and that is one of the reasons they chose to use liquid nitrogen supplied by Praxair to freeze their patties. Schenk delivers a variety of meats to restaurants, hotels and other food purveyors around the world. They have found the chilling power of liquid nitrogen superior to that of conventional freezing methods and have been using it for years.

With demand growing, they sought to install a higher-capacity freezing system. North American Industrial Gases West Region **Business Development Specialist David Zunzanyika** and **Business Development Manager Frank Martin** convinced them to upgrade with something new: a Praxair *ColdFront*[™] ultra performance spiral freezer.

“Although Schenk had been supplying high-end-quality patties, we showed them how our spiral freezer would not only help them increase production but also save space and utilize the liquid nitrogen more efficiently,” said Martin.

“In our spiral freezers, the unique conveyor belt lets you freeze much more product with the same or a smaller footprint in the plant,” explained Martin. “And due to the unique liquid nitrogen spray pattern and new ultra performance air flows, the application of the liquid nitrogen can be better calibrated to produce a more thoroughly frozen patty, which also reduces the per pound nitrogen usage.”

To illustrate the effectiveness of Praxair’s spiral freezer, Martin invited Schenk’s President Steve Lenz to visit Praxair’s Food Lab in Burr Ridge, Il. **Food Lab Manager Debbie Benjamin** and the Food Lab team demonstrated how the



Ready to ship! John Jacobs, left, and Schenk’s Doug Richter lean on boxes of frozen hamburger patties that only minutes ago rolled off the conveyor of Schenk’s ultra performance spiral freezer, pictured behind them, at Schenk’s Mount Vernon, Wash., packing plant.

spiral freezer’s liquid nitrogen spray and vapor would help Schenk lower their freezing costs and present more visually attractive frozen patties.

“With the ultra performance spiral freezer, we were able to increase our production and improve the appearance of the final product,” said Schenk’s Mount Vernon, Wash., Plant Manager Doug Richter. “I was very pleased with how Praxair’s Wooster, Ohio, engineering team worked with us to manage the total installation from freezer to exhaust system and made it possible to keep our production schedules.”

West Region **Account Manager John Jacobs** built on the already seamless Praxair/Schenk partnership by working with Schenk to ensure continued supply of liquid nitrogen from Praxair’s Fife, Wash., air separation facility. “We’ve been supplying liquid nitrogen to Schenk for many years,” said Jacobs, “and the new spiral freezer provides an excellent fit in providing Schenk with increased productivity while maintaining their renowned quality.”

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Praxair, Inc.
39 Old Ridgebury Road
Danbury, CT 06810-5113 USA

www.praxair.com
info@praxair.com

Telephone:
1-800-PRAXAIR
(1-800-772-9247)
(716) 879-4077

Fax:
1-800-772-9985
(716) 879-2040

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