



Alfa Laval Unique Single Seat Valves ensure reliable aseptic processing of tomato-based products

Inox Food Technology, Piacenza, Italy

Case story



Alfa Laval Unique Single Seat Valves (SSVs) contribute to uptime, safety and higher quality of tomato-based products for Inox Food Technology's customer Steriltom, one of Italy's largest producers of chopped and pulp tomato for pizza and pasta sauces.

When expanding its processing facilities in Piacenza, Italy, Steriltom SRL, the country's largest producers of chopped and pulp tomato for pizza and pasta sauces, contracted tomato processing plant designers Inox Food Technology (IFT). The challenge? To incorporate a new cost-effective processing line into Steriltom's aseptic production and thereby ensure the reliable, cost-effective processing and quality of premier tomato-based products. To do so, IFT chose Alfa Laval Unique Single Seat Valves (SSVs), which handle product acidity, viscosity and large particles and seeds with ease.

Valve reliability ensures more uptime

Peak tomato processing season is short and intense, so downtime is unthinkable during the tomato-processing season. Steriltom processes about 150,000 tons of tomatoes each year in 60 to 100 days so the plant must work at maximum capacity, continuously processing fresh, ripe tomatoes 24/7 in order to prevent spoilage and inferior product quality.

The hygiene level and reliability of the processing lines are therefore essential to plant productivity and profitability. Based

on past experience, IFT recommended Alfa Laval Unique SSVs as a worthwhile investment because the valves are reliable and easy to work with, and require minimal maintenance. The smooth surfaces and hygienic design of the Alfa Laval Unique SSVs enable extended production runs without intermediate cleaning.

"We recommend Alfa Laval to our customers for two reasons: the excellent quality-price ratio and the backing of a global company with a local service network for genuine spare parts and top-notch service," shares Mr. Soldati. "We installed Alfa Laval Unique SSV valves in other processing lines at the Steriltom plant so we know that the aseptic version of the Alfa Laval Unique SSV range is very reliable and cost-effective for hygiene-critical applications."

Straightforward, high-quality hygienic valves

A total of 15 Alfa Laval Unique SSV Long Stroke units are installed on the new Steriltom processing line. Unlike conventional butterfly valves and ball valves, the Unique SSV design gently handles fluid products containing solids and delicate particles such as diced tomato yet enables complete cleaning

of the valve seat during the Cleaning-in-Place (CIP) cycle and extended running times between CIPs.

Engineered to the highest hygienic standards and demands in the processing industry, the Alfa Laval Unique SSV is a robust pneumatic seat valve with a smooth, weld-free valve body pressed from a single stainless steel disc. In the aseptic configuration, it features a one-piece diaphragm that hermetically seals the valve against possible contaminants from the atmosphere, thereby ensuring true aseptic process conditions with full protection against the effects of microorganisms during processing. The range also provides full traceability in compliance with the EU Food Regulation 1935/2004.

Aseptic tomato processing plant design

To maximize aseptic processing and productivity, IFT designed Steriltom's new facilities with quality and cost-effectiveness in mind, selecting equipment that meets strict food safety standards. Equipment selection included Alfa Laval Unique SSVs, which are EHEDG-certified and authorized to carry the 3-A symbol.

"Steriltom uses aseptic technology to preserve the quality as well as the natural taste and appearance of its partially processed tomatoes," says Leonardo Soldati, principal and one of the chief designers at IFT. "We chose valves for the new processing line in keeping with Steriltom's policies."

Soldati explains that the Alfa Laval Unique SSV Long Stroke is ideal where larger product openings are required to provide a more gentle and smooth flow control of viscous products with a high solids content, such as tomato-based products with chopped tomato and seeds.

Optimized performance backed by solid service

IFT and Steriltom are aware of the advantages offered by Alfa Laval Unique SSV, namely:

- The interval of time between scheduled service visits is long and does not affect the peak production season.
- Service parts do not require frequent replacement and genuine spare parts, when required, are readily available.
- Local Alfa Laval service engineers are on call 24/7, even during peak production season in the summer months.



Alfa Laval Unique Single Seat Valves provide exceptional valve hygiene, greater valve durability and low total cost of ownership.

"We have been working with Alfa Laval from the start because Alfa Laval components, such as the Unique SSV valves, meet our and our customers' strict requirements for reliability, hygiene, safety as well as for fast and affordable replacement parts," Mr. Soldati says.

Continued focus on quality and cost-effectiveness

When asked about what lies ahead for IFT, Mr. Soldati is optimistic about the future and remains committed to quality and cost-effectiveness.

"IFT looks forward to working together with Italy's tomato producers to shape the future for processed tomato products," he says. "We aim to incorporate advances in processing technology into the production lines of Italy's tomato-based product manufacturers. Continuing to work closely with Alfa Laval's distributor here will help ensure that IFT remains on the cutting edge."

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How to contact Alfa Laval

Contact details for all countries are continually updated on our website. Please visit www.alfalaval.com to access the information direct.