

BA Systèmes completes AGV automation of FrieslandCampina's 2nd cheese factory in Gerkesklooster (NL)

Press Release - Rennes, February 23, 2017 – BA Systèmes, the French leader in AGV-based intralogistics systems has successfully completed the AGV automation of the FrieslandCampina cheese factory in Gerkesklooster.

One of the world's largest dairy companies relies on the French AGV leader

With an annual revenue of 11.3 billion euro, FrieslandCampina is one of the world's largest dairy companies and employs over 22,000 people. FrieslandCampina produces and sells consumer products: dairy-based beverages, infant nutrition, cheese and desserts in many European countries, in Asia and in Africa. Dairy products are also exported worldwide from the Netherlands.

Gerkesklooster is a major FrieslandCampina plant for the production of the well-known "Gouda" cheese and foil cheese. About two years ago, following a fire which totally destroyed the warehouse and part of the brining unit, FrieslandCampina decided on a EUR 30 million investment for reconstruction of the plant and a new, automated cheese warehouse.

A fleet of heavy-duty counterbalanced AGVs for maximum productivity of the reconstructed plant

Based on the positive experience of the successfully implemented AGV system in FrieslandCampina's cheese plant in Marum, BA Systèmes was again selected as the partner for the fully automated handling of heavy 4500-kg steel frames with Gouda cheese and 1500-kg boxes filled with foil cheese in Gerkesklooster.

A fleet of 8 heavy GF type of AGVs transports the heavy frames from the 3-frame-high block stacks (top of the 3rd frame at 9 meter height) in the maturation cells towards the two cheese treatment units and vice versa.

A fleet of 5 smaller GF type of AGVs handles the 1500 kg boxes with foil cheese, storing them as 6-high block stacks in the buffer storage, before preparing sequenced truck loads in due time for shipments. Returned empty boxes are buffered by the same AGVs in a drive-in racking system.



The deployment of the AGV solution has led to:

- A substantial productivity increase of the 24/7 maturing process,
- An optimal reproducibility and reliability of the process,
- A 100% product traceability,
- A marked improvement of the product quality and drastic reduction of spills and rejects.

The complete AGV system is controlled through AGV Manager, BA Systèmes' fleet management software, which orchestrates the following tasks:

- Interfacing with and controlling of the maturing process,
- Optimization of AGV deployment and routing, thus minimizing "empty" drives,
- Location management of the frames and boxes through the integrated WMS software,
- Automated battery management and battery changing,
- Real-time visualization of plant layout and AGVs, including load tracking and tracing.

Jaap van de Werfhorst, engineering manager of FrieslandCampina's cheese division is highly positive about the solution: *"We set high standards for our suppliers. BA Systèmes has more than met our expectations, not only regarding delivery, commissioning and performance. It has proved to be a safe, reliable system, backed with good support. The best proof of our satisfaction is that we are now starting up a 3rd system in Born, and that discussions regarding a 4th cheese plant are planned to begin this summer."*

About BA Systèmes

French leader in intralogistics systems based on AGV, BA Systèmes supports industrial companies in the full automation of their flows. Over 300 sites in Europe are equipped with BA Systèmes' solutions, hence improving the productivity, flexibility and reliability of processes of Nestlé, L'Oréal, Kraft Food or even Heineken. Involved in a permanent innovation process recognized by international awards, BA Robotic Systems group develops its expertise in mobile robotics to provide its customers with the cutting-edge technologies. Innovative applications are implemented by dedicated subsidiaries in the medical, port and industrial fields. More information on: <https://www.basystemes.com>

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