

BFM[®] fitting snap-in connectors installed on flour line to simplify maintenance

The challenge

BakeAway is a UK-based company that has been manufacturing high-quality dough for pastry, pancakes, pizza, and cookies for over 15 years. The site runs 24/7 and produces up to 1.8 million units per week. An integral ingredient handled on site is flour, which they utilise 10,000 tonnes of each year.

As part of the production process, flour is transported from weigh heads into mobile mixers across four different lines. Fabric sleeves were used to connect the two pieces of equipment on each line, for the flour to drop through.

Each sleeve is approximately two metres long and was ordered from the OEM. The sleeves required replacing every six months, creating an unnecessary recurring cost. Often, lead times were long, and delays were common.

The fabric sleeves were attached to the mixers and weigh heads using jubilee clips. Due to the requirement of tools, when lines were disconnected for the weekly clean, the Hygiene team relied on the Engineering team to remove the sleeves.

Moreover, it would take around 20 minutes to disconnect each sleeve. A scissor lift was needed in order to access the top of each sleeve, which required an IPAF and work at height permits.

The Engineering team leader was looking for a more efficient solution to the problems faced as a result of the current sleeves. In particular, they were looking for a sleeve/connector that would last longer to help mitigate some of the supply chain issues they were facing. Having heard of BFM[®] fitting before, they contacted UK distributor ProSpare to enquire about installing the system on their lines...

7 months
to achieve payback with BFM[®] fitting

No tools required
to disconnect BFM[®] fitting



Fabric sleeve attached to mixer with jubilee clips

ProSpare

Make it better.

The solution and improvement

The BFM® fitting system combines a unique snap-in, blue-banded flexible connector with specially formed steel spigots. Connectors are designed to standard diameters and lengths in a comprehensive range of sizes. Lengths start at 80mm, then range from 100mm up to 6000mm in 50mm increments.

BakeAway selected one of the lines for a trial run with a model of mixer that allowed the team to install a BFM® lipped spigot, via a quick-release clamp, without the need for welding. Spigots were installed in conjunction with a Ø300mm x 1850mm long Seeflex connector. Four stainless steel support rings were specified to keep the connector “open” when the vacuum was experienced during loading, helping ensure unimpeded product flow.

There are no jubilee clips needed for BFM® fitting flexible connectors. The snap-band inside the cuff of the flexible connector provides outward pressure, sealing the connector perfectly into the corresponding spigots. Crucially, for the staff at BakeAway, this means the Hygiene team can now disconnect the connectors with ease when cleaning the lines, rather than relying on the Engineering team, as tools are no longer required.

Additionally, the fabric sleeves would take 20 minutes to remove when cleaning the lines. With BFM® fitting, the connector can just be snapped out from the bottom spigot, only taking five seconds. Over the course of the year, this has saved the Engineering team over 16 hours, and once all lines are converted, it could be +60 hours saved every year. This is valuable time that the Engineering team can now direct to working on other areas around the plant.

Furthermore, whilst the fabric sleeves required replacing every six months, BFM® fitting has been in operation for over a year and is still performing well. In this application, BFM® fitting has achieved payback in under 7 months. For BakeAway, BFM® has provided not only a safe and hygienic solution, but a cost effective one too.

The Engineering Team Leader told us:

“BFM® fitting is fantastic, it’s so easy to use! It has even improved the extraction system on the mixer, which is a massive bonus. The whole team is really happy with how it is performing and keep asking me when the other lines will be converted.”



1850mm BFM® connector with stainless steel support rings

 **BFM® fitting**

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