

## Reliable ribbon blenders help to spice up batch processing

*Ross equipment reduces blending, cleaning times*



Whether for a secret family recipe, a BBQ competition or a meat processor, St. Louis-based McCarthy Spice and Blends Company processes batches from 5 to 2,500 lbs. with its mixers and ribbon blenders

58,000-sq.-ft. facility in 2016, after the company outgrew its smaller facility.

### EBAY PURCHASE STARTS BLENDER FLEET

With batches that can range from 5

to 2,500 lbs., McCarthy utilizes several different-sized mixers and blenders. In 2008, the company went to eBay to purchase its first Ross ribbon blender. "We were looking for a mixer that could handle 100 to 200 pounds of seasoning," Klein explains. "We had two other ribbon blenders at that time—a 65-cu.-ft. model and a 25-cu.-ft. model—as well as two planetary mixers."

The machine worked so well, that McCarthy bought more. "The quality construction, sanitary design, blending speed and blend consistency were so impressive that we made the decision to begin replacing all our ribbon blenders with Ross models." McCarthy's equip-

ment lineup consists of Ross models 42B-5 (5 cu. ft.), 42B-18 (18 cu. ft.), 42N-25 (25 cu. ft.) and 42N-52 (52 cu. ft.), as well as one unknown brand 65-cu.-ft. ribbon blender. In its lab and for smaller batch processing, McCarthy has Hobart model planetary mixers, including 60- and 120-qt. floor mixers and a 12-qt. stand mixer.

"Our last blender installation was in November of 2017 when we replaced an older model ribbon blender from an unknown manufacturer with the Ross 42N-25," Klein says. "The blender motor and gear box of the previous mixer failed, and rather than repair it we chose to upgrade to newer equipment. We wanted to work with Ross because of our satisfaction with the performance of our existing Ross blenders and because we knew that they would have the blender up and running in four to six weeks, keeping reduced production volume at a minimum."

### RELIABILITY IS KEY TO SUCCESS

The most important quality for equipment in this industry is reliability, Klein notes. "If we are not blending, we are not making money. If it is installed correctly, there is not a lot that can go wrong with a ribbon blender. However, if issues do arise, we have found Ross to be an excellent partner in responding to our needs."

Asked what efficiencies and improvements he has noticed since the latest installation, Klein says that several of spice blends have a deep color and re-

**WITH THE TAGLINE** "custom creation specialists," St. Louis-based McCarthy Spice and Blends Company works with a range of clients, including meat processors, other food manufacturers, entrepreneurs looking to get their family's secret BBQ rub on a store shelf, competition BBQ teams, small and medium chain restaurants, commissaries, and any other business seeking quality spices for consistency in their recipes.

McCarthy President Eric Klein says that 2019 marks the company's 25th year in business. "We are a family-owned and -operated business with 30 employees. We specialize in small- to medium-size custom spice blending, wholesale spices and private label, with focuses on quality, customer service, a fast R&D turnaround and short lead times." McCarthy moved to its

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McCarthy Production Manager Jose Casillas, left, and President Eric Klein in front of one of the company's Ross ribbon blenders

quire extended blending times for color development. "Since the installation of the 42N-25, the required blending time for these blends has been reduced by a third. We have also noticed an increase

in cleaning efficiency, including decreased clean times."

Most of McCarthy's small-batch clients have unique stories, he notes. "One of my favorites is when a client was

looking to commercialize his family's spaghetti sauce seasoning. My understanding is the recipe originated with our client's great-grandmother in the mid-1800s in Italy and was passed down through the generations and made it all the way to our R&D department and then to retail shelves," Klein remembers.

McCarthy's business is strong, and the next equipment upgrade will replace its unnamed 65-cu.-ft. unit with either a Ross 80 cu. ft. or 100 cu. ft. in the next 18 to 24 months. The company has no immediate plans to expand operations, but "if our current pace of growth continues, we will be looking to expand in the next few years," Klein says. 🌟