

## Molls Bacon Boosts Thermoformer Output with Markoprint®

Molls Bacon implemented a five head, centrally controlled Markoprint® coding solution based on HP INKJET TECHNOLOGY. The capital cost was a third less than the thermal transfer overprinter (TTO) units that are usually specified for these thermoformer applications. The bacon producer is now enjoying low running costs thanks to exceptional ink economy, reduced set-up times and zero servicing.

From its Birmingham slicing and packaging facility, Molls Bacon supplies the food service and retail markets with vacuum and MAP packed bacon. Products are sold under its Cole Valley brand as well as under other customers' own labels.

Prior to implementing Markoprint®, Molls Bacon had been overprinting labels with coding data, then using a label applicator to apply the labels across the web path. A move from labels to pre-printed film prompted the bacon processor to look at direct coding options. The industry standard solution for coding film on a thermoformer is to use TTO in conjunction with an indexing unit. However, these large systems are expensive to buy, and to operate. Ribbon is often wasted, and the disposal of the ribbon and cores is an added expense.



In recent years, an increasing number of companies have replaced TTO and Continuous Inkjet (CIJ) printers with clean, cost effective Markoprint® units from AT Information Products. Markoprint® does not require ribbons, significantly reducing cost of ownership on simple coding jobs through savings on the ribbons themselves and time spent changing ribbons. Markoprint® units are also lighter and more compact than TTO machines, so they are easier to mount onto a thermoformer and occupy less line space than a TTO printer.

Then there is the issue of upkeep. TTO printers have a lot of moving parts such as springs and pulleys that require maintenance. By contrast, Markoprint® coders have no replacement parts other than the inkjet cartridge. All these benefits combine to yield a much lower cost of ownership for Markoprint® versus TTO.

Because of space limitations, the inkjet coders were installed at Molls Bacon in a staggered configuration on two frame assemblies; one below the other, with three on one row and two on the other. The film web is coded in a vertical position before being applied to the pack.

A further benefit of this set-up is that rather than having individual control panels on each unit, the coders are all networked to a central PC.



Markoprint® X1JET



AT Information Products offers a range of solvent-based inks that print directly onto plastic film used by thermoformers. Standard ink colors include black, red, green, yellow, white and two shades of blue. Custom colors are possible if the production volumes warrant it.

The printhead and ink supply are located all-in-one unit, so each time you replace the cartridge you get a new printhead too. This is another source of savings for Markoprint® as compared to TTO and CIJ.