



No-nonsense Nijland puts innovation first

# Focus on industrial craftsmanship

Nijland B.V., a company that processes and produces chicken and vegetarian products, always listens to the market. By using the latest technology, they continuously respond to client and consumer demands with new innovations.

It is no coincidence that we visit Nijland B.V. in Goor during the National Meatless Week (11-17 March). And that means all hands on deck because, even though Nijland may be known for its chicken and convenience food products, they are also making a name for themselves with vegetarian alternatives for meat. These products are produced and/or packaged in a completely separate factory. The boxes containing rolls of stickers (promoting the Meatless Week) are ready to be used. The department manager: "We have now nearly doubled our volumes compared to an average week".

## ALGORITHMS

They work at high speed. Behind the packaging machine, with a conveyor belt that processes 80 packages per minute, we find a checkweigher made by Jansen Techniek that contains a Penko weighing module. This equipment can handle the high speed thanks to the technology that is capable to realise 1600 weighing moments per second. The actual weight is filtered out by using special algorithms. Packages that fall outside the tolerance rate are faultlessly recognised and ejected. Marco Nijzink, co-shareholder and managing director of Nijland's two production facilities is very satisfied with this weighing system. "It works really well. We also integrated the metal detector into the line, which also works very efficiently."

## MARKET DEMAND

Nijland recently celebrated its 40th anniversary and if there is one thing that defines the company, it is their no-nonsense mentality. Marco: "We have a horizontal organisational structure with around 230 people. People are extremely loyal, some of them have been working here for 33 years". At the same time, Nijland focuses strongly on innovation and quality. One of their more recent products is the 'New Standard Chicken' which is sold at the Jumbo supermarkets. "You see, in the old days, we processed what we got from the slaughterhouses but, nowadays, we go back much further in the chain because we know what the market demands. The market wants better animal welfare, for example, and regional products."

## CHICKEN THIGH

In order to follow these trends closely, Nijland has a product development department that travels the country to talk to clients, consumers, and food professionals. An example of such a trend? Marco: "The popularity of chicken thigh meat has risen hugely. It has become so popular that, last year, the price per kilo was, for a short time, even higher than the price of chicken breast. We invested heavily in special boning machines, and the development of our chicken thigh skewers still continues".

## MENTALITY

Bert van de Weerd, Senior Regional Sales Manager at Penko and involved in the implementation of the before-mentioned weighing module, recognises the innovative ambitions of Nijland. "We always aim to advise our clients as best as we can and at the most practical level. Our strength is a mentality that focuses on solutions. It is always nice to deal with a client who has a similar innovative mentality."

## TASTE TEST

For Nijland, the term 'industrial craftsmanship' is their core value. This means that technology and automation are just one side of the coin. "We use the latest machines that comply with the latest standards and requirements. Some of them are unique and specially made for us." On the other side, you have to know how to make tasteful



products. "Our chicken meat is cooked in an artisanal way", continues Marco. "It needs time and you will always be able to taste that during the tests." The same applies to the skewerless saté that they created. "It may seem like a simple innovation, but the meat must not fall apart."

## SIX EATINGS MOMENTS

So they know everything about both technology and taste. But that is not all because, as a modern-day 'protein supplier' (both animal and plant-based), you have to know in which direction the trends are going. And Marco knows this. "I see a number of developments. First of all, there is a need for fresh products. Secondly, we have more eating moments during the day. In the old days, we sat around the table three times a day. Now we are moving to six eating moments per day. We get a sandwich at the petrol station, we order something online and have it delivered to our home. But it all has to be freshly made."

## 2025

Marco Nijzink also notices more combinations that we would not even have considered a few years ago. "For example, Nijland uses apple or pear in some of our vegetarian products. And we also have to think hard about packaging. I believe that we are pioneers in that regard. The packaging requirements the retail sector has set for 2025, such as 100% recyclability, is something that we have already achieved".

[www.nijlandfood.nl](http://www.nijlandfood.nl)  
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Marco Nijzink