Inclusive solution is more effective

Westfleisch uses SAP Meat and Fish Management by msg to successfully optimise meat processing

Digitalisation is in full swing in the meat processing industry too. To meet the challenges of the future, it is important to get on track now. The SAP environment and the industry solution known as SAP Meat and Fish Management by msg ensure everything is in place.

By Hans-Peter Jordi

Westfleisch is one of the leading meat processing companies in Germany and in Europe. The core competencies of the Group are slaughtering, disassembly and processing. The Westfleisch Group employs over 5,000 people and exports to more than 40 countries globally. Annual production in 2017 was approximately 980,000 t, with sales of €2.7 bn.

Each year, approximately 8 mill. pigs, 360,000 cattle and 70,000 calves are slaughtered at seven meat centres. The subsidiaries WestfalenLand (fresh meat), Westfood (convenience), Gustoland (sausages and meat products) and IceHouse (deep-frozen products) carry out the processing work involved.

The Group was founded in 1928 and is supported today by more than 4,000 members and farming families, who breed pigs, cattle and calves under cooperative agreements. "From farmers. Directly" is the cooperative's core mission statement. It has its roots in north west Germany and its head office in Münster/North Rhine-Westphalia.

In 2014, Westfleisch and Softproviding AG started the W-IT-O project with the aim of replacing the existing self-programmed IT environment IFIS with a fully integrated SAP solution. Thanks to the extremely flexible SAP industry solution, over 80% of Westfleisch processes could already be mapped in the standard version of SAP Meat and Fish Management by msg. All other requirements were covered by additional developments within the project as defined.

Bespoke customisation for maximum efficiency

Processes, as well as stock type- and plant-specific characteristics, can be configured in the individual modules of SAP Meat and Fish Management by msg according to customer-specific requirements (customisation). As the solution is fully integrated in SAP, the master data is only maintained in one system.

This saves costs and makes the user's day-to-day work much easier. For industry- and process-specific data, there are individual transactions to enhance master data. To enable simplified management of master data, data can be maintained in a hierarchy in what are known as "determination applications". The planned

The recording of the lots is carried out by SGS employees; visual inspection of the scales for settlement and the billing application as well as the assignments of the lots takes place subsequently.

delivery of animals for slaughter can be recorded in the system in advance using SAP Meat Management procurement planning. Here, it is possible to create both a general plan for a supplier within a certain period and a detailed plan for the delivery of livestock at a specific time. At the same time, important process-dependent data is determined and processed for the subsequent process. Particular attention is paid here to the determination of quality characteristics and origin data, as well as mapping planning data for the highly complex and efficient slaughter process.

Livestock reception, barn management, the AutoFOM system, lot control, recording of veterinary findings, or the scales used for settlement: all the data from the slaughter line can be recorded automatically via the touchscreen-based shop floor applications. Calculations of index points as well as complex bonus entitlements are prepared online on the scales used for settlement.
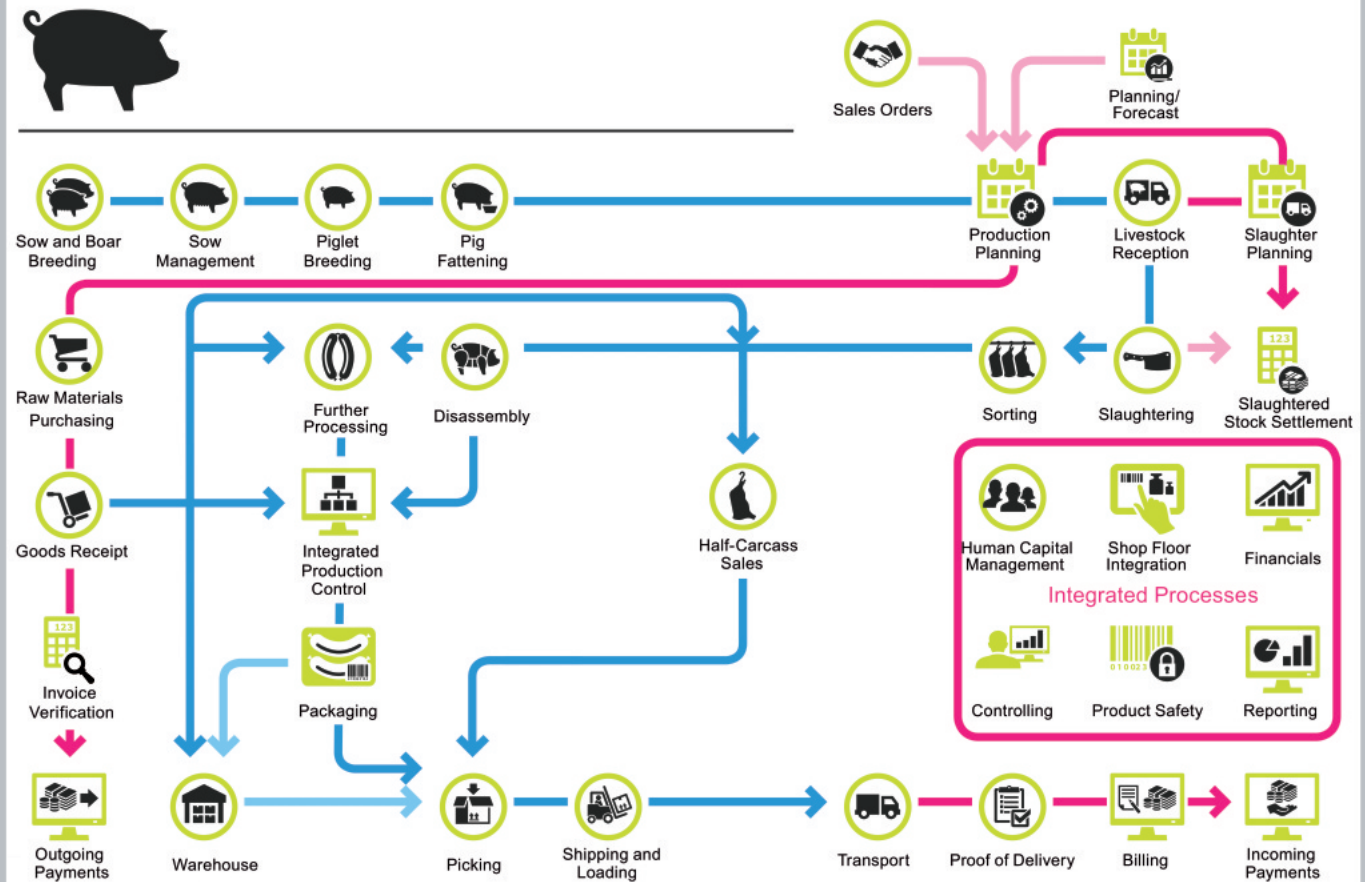
The shop floor applications communicate directly via the Softproviding Communication Server with material flow control or the Auto-FOM system. With the integrated function for finding the warehouse group, the origin and quality features are embedded in an application-oriented way.

Integration of various modules

The high level of automation, simple operation and also the stability of the application are critical to the current ambitious slaughtering speed of over 600 animals per hour. The solid preparation and basic training provided in advance ensured employees were sufficiently on board with the new arrangements. A feature worthy of particular mention is the DPS/RAF framework (Data Process System/Remote Application Framework) contained in SAP Meat and Fish Management by msg, which Softproviding uses to map the shop floor interfaces for employees on the line, from livestock reception and veterinary services to the weighing, labelling and storage process. The applications supplied with DPS/RAF are integrated in the SAP ABAP workbench and can be very easily and efficiently

Process diagram

Source: Softproviding AG

FLEISCHWIRTSCHAFT international 3_2019

The integration of the components and digitalization of the slaughter lines were the greatest challenges in the Westfleisch Group's project and today this shows a clear stabilization in comparison to the old merchandise management system, which was introduced before.

adjusted to the new process requirements. The DPS/RAF applications run on all common operating systems (Windows, Windows Mobile, iOS, Android) as well as directly in the web browser or as the SAP Fiori app in the Fiori client. This also includes the use of the integrated camera as a barcode scanner or for recording documents.

Customer-specific functional modules are often needed and can also be included at any time. The repository contained in the delivery already includes a variety of usable functions.

The above interface appeals to the Westfleisch users thanks to its high level of user-friendliness. Scales, scanners, AutoFOM and the material flow system can be integrated seamlessly into the slaughter process using innovative technologies from SAP or Softproviding. Thanks to the inclusive solution proposed by SAP Meat and Fish Management by msg, the entire process chain is able to dispense with interfaces.

Further improvements in efficiency were achieved in terms of downstream administrative and commercial activities. Improvements here are also primarily due to the integrated applications in SAP Meat and Fish Management by msg. An important factor is the online processing of data in the slaughter data cockpit. Another aspect is dealing with complex billing in relation to animals for slaughter, where the following key challenges are completely covered:
■ Complex pricing
■ Pre-calculation and actual billing
■ Making subsequent payments
■ Mass price changes

■ Blocking and unblocking orders for billing purposes
■ Tolerance checking in relation to the prices established for animals.

Thanks to a high level of operational reliability and the structured nature of the process, it was possible to virtually eliminate errors and massively reduce processing times.

The first go-live at the Coesfeld Meat Centre was implemented on a pilot basis as early as January 2016. The first rollout at the Gelsenkirchen plant was carried out in 2017 and further rollouts are planned. Thanks to the highly standardised processes in the upcoming rollouts, the implementation time for further operations by the Westfleisch Group can be significantly reduced. This potential is already obvious in terms of implementation at this site, with only five months passing between the planning and preparation phase and the go-live, a remarkably short time for a project of this scope. It was possible to maintain a high slaughter rate, even during the changeover phase. The goal of implementing highly standardised processes without

losing out on flexibility or individuality was duly achieved. Comprehensive customisation also ensured that any subsequent, unforeseen challenges were dealt with without excessive effort or long delays.

An industry solution today must be highly standardised, yet adaptable to the production processes of individual companies and sites. To this end, Westfleisch is successfully building on the SAP industry solution known as SAP Meat and Fish Management by msg.

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Linx

Control via cloud connection

Linx Printing Technologies is a leading global supplier of continuous ink jet (CIJ) printers, case coders, laser coders, thermal transfer printers and thermal inkjet printers. Its printers and coders are used when product identification codes, batch numbers, dates and barcodes are required. All Linx products are designed with low cost of ownership in mind and are distinguished by reliability, robustness and ease of use. They code and mark millions of items every day, ranging from single bottles and packages to cans.

Further enhancements have been made to Linx PrinterNet, Linx Printing Technologies' secure, cloud-based service, enabling increased printer connectivity to its customers.

Linx PrinterNet offers remote monitoring and control of Linx printers via a simple and secure cloud connection. The latest release of Linx PrinterNet enables customers to use a range of different printing technologies, such as CSL lasers and additional Linx CIJ equipment, to manage their entire printer fleet from a single interface. Designated users can receive real-time email alerts for faults,

warnings, consumable replacement and proactive advice and maintenance from the Linx Technical Support team, all designed to anticipate and avoid downtime.

The PrinterNet KPI dashboard can show at a glance whether production is on target for each batch, enabling production managers to track production jobs against targets, and make changes to ensure batches finish on time to meet customer deadlines. In addition, the remote backup and restore facility guarantees users that a copy of their printer settings and messages are safely stored in a secure cloud, eliminating the need for a USB drive. The secure message store allows managers to control which messages are stored on each printer to reduce the risk of operator error through selection of the wrong message or by editing messages incorrectly. Furthermore, customers decide when to run a software upgrade to fit in around their production schedule, saving valuable time and making sure their printers always have the latest software and security features, and all without the disruption of an engineer visit.

The printernet connects users to their coding via cloud.

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Scanlab
High-precision marking using small spots

With over 35,000 systems produced annually, Scanlab GmbH from Puchheim, Germany, is a leading and independent OEM manufacturer of scan solutions for deflecting and positioning laser beams in three dimensions.

The compact-class scan system is using small spots for marking.

Now the company is expanding its lineup of entry-level scan heads with the new basiCube 14. This compact-class scan system features excellent price/performance and a 14-mm aperture for high-precision marking using small spots. It is mechanical compatible with the well-established Scancube series. The new model assures 600-cps writing speeds, additional productivity can be realized through the proven 'on-the-fly functionality' of the RTC control board.

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