

REDUCING SANITATION TIME, INCREASING PRODUCTION CAPACITY

ABOUT FRESHPET KITCHENS. Freshpet Kitchens manufactures fresh, natural food for pets, combining the best of both pet and human food and changing the industry through positive innovation. Based in Bethlehem, Philadelphia, with 120 employees, Freshpet delivers fresh meals for pets to over 500 retail fridges and one million pet owners across North America.

THE CHALLENGE. After undergoing a relocation and capital expansion project in order to meet projected sales growth, the company identified sanitation as an area that often reduced production capacity. Several factors contributed to the downtime associated with line sanitation, including equipment scheduling, associate skill level, and workplace organization. Freshpet reached out to the Manufacturers Resource Center (MRC), a NIST MEP affiliate, with the goal of reducing sanitization time from 6 hours to 4 hours per 24-hour workday.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. MRC's recommended solution set included a Lean Manufacturing overview and "Plan-Do-Check-Act" (PDCA) problem-solving training, as well as the creation of "I-OPT" profiles for key team members. MRC worked with a team from Freshpet to observe the current state of a target production line and better understand the gap in the sanitization process. The team conducted a Root Cause Analysis and designed a solution using the most appropriate Lean tools.

"The Freshpet Kitchens sanitization process benefited significantly from process mapping the sanitation tasks to identify wasteful activities," said MRC's Strategy Manager, Gene Kaschak. "This enabled team members to better understand the critical tasks they needed to achieve during every sanitation cycle, and created a daily dialogue to make sure that the improvements put in place during the project continue to benefit the company."

Freshpet successfully eliminated duplicate tasks, increased production capacity, and reduced sanitation time by one-third. The company is on track to add 60 jobs as part of its production and employment expansion.

"MRC's elimination of duplicate tasks—organizing specific tasks in equipment groups—helped us reduce a significant amount of effort. Setting a specific order to each of the tasks, and the correct labor for that task within each equipment group, gave an ordered approach and was an important next step."

-Steve Baas, Environmental Health, Safety & Training Manager

RESULTS



Increased production capacity
8.3%



Reduced sanitation time by
33%



Adding up to 60 jobs

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