

PRESS RELEASE

A pioneering leader in organic agriculture, Mapeks was founded in Izmir, Turkey, in 1999. From its four production facilities in the country - in Bilecik, Usak, Afyon, and Malatya - the company markets 35 different organic fruits to 80 countries on seven continents. As well as exporting frozen cherries, sour cherries, apricots, and figs, Mapeks is Turkey's largest global exporter of organic strawberries. In fact, of the 20,000 tons of organic strawberries shipped annually from Turkey, 10,000 tons are from Mapeks. The annual value of the company's exports is \$35m.

To ensure high product quality, food safety, and high yield, Mapeks continuously develops its facilities and invests in cutting-edge technology automation. Its latest investment, a TOMRA Blizzard optical sorting machine, has improved product quality and increased capacity.

Mustafa Memur, the Chairman of the Board of Mapeks Organics, explained: "Frozen organic fruit production is an important and emerging industry for the future. Today our Mapeks products are sold at 12,000 sales points around the globe. Some 80% of these are located in the United States, where our organic packaged fruits can be purchased in supermarkets all year round."

"It is essential that our products are of high quality and comply with food safety and hygiene standards. Utilizing optical sorting machines offers many benefits in crucial areas such as increasing product quality, ensuring food safety, retaining high product standards, and reducing product loss. That is why we chose the Blizzard optical sorting machine and placed it in our facility in Afyon."



Mapeks Organics is using the Blizzard mostly for processing strawberries, cherries, apricots, and pomegranates. Compared to traditional manual sorting methods, the new machine is much more efficient: it now takes 15 minutes rather than 40 minutes to process a ton of product, which will enable Mapeks to increase its monthly production tonnage by 25%.

Producing 40,000 tons of frozen fruit annually

Mustafa Memur makes the point that consistent product quality and yield should be achieved at the same time as high production volumes. He says: "With the Blizzard we will be able to remove defective products and foreign materials from the production line, hence increasing yield. We also aim for minimizing product waste. The fact that we are going to process different products in different seasons is an important factor. We know that despite our varying product types and challenging working conditions, the Blizzard sorting machine will achieve a higher performance even in long shifts."

The Blizzard's high-resolution cameras are combined with pulsed LED light for strong

imaging contrast, achieving an accuracy close to that of sorters with laser technology. This results in the highly efficient removal from the production line of foreign materials and products with color and shape defects. And because of its compact, space-saving design, the Blizzard fits well in most production lines.

Turkey's frozen fruit and vegetables industry growing fast

In the last 10 years, frozen fruit and vegetable production has increased in Turkey for both the export and the domestic markets. The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated this growth - during this period Mapeks' capacity has grown 50%.

Mustafa Memur observes: "The pandemic has reshaped some of our consumption habits. Foods that can be stored for longer periods without losing nutritional value, and which contain no additives, have become more popular. This means demand for frozen foods has increased, which is speeding-up the process of consumers changing their habits, especially in Turkey. To meet the increased demand, Mapeks has increased its capacity and retained and upgraded product quality by using cutting-edge technology. We are absolutely sure that our TOMRA machine will benefit us in these areas."

TOMRA Food Turkey's Sales Manager for Processed Food, Bugra Bulut, said: "The sorting performance and effectiveness of the Blizzard is impressive. Unwanted product defects, foreign materials, and shape distortions are removed with such precision that waste of saleable product is minimized and yield is maximized. This is due to the intensity of the pulsed LED lights, which ensures more accurate sorting than traditionally lit machines.

"Despite difficult and sometimes dirty working conditions, the Blizzard's performance does not deteriorate significantly over a long shift. But most importantly, the Blizzard has an unrivaled cost-yield balance. Compared to other camera-based machines, the Blizzard is more like sorting machines with camera-laser combinations. It offers an extremely cost-effective performance for IQF fruit processors."