Alternate Solutions

RGF Environmental Group rolls out new technology for treating ground meat contamination without chemicals. **By Kat Zeman**

>> Riviera Beach, Fla.-based RGF uses various technologies to provide microbial reductions in food processing plants.

Bacterial contamination capable of causing human illness is a serious concern for ground meat processors. Mixing meat and trimmings from multiple animals can cause surface contamination throughout the product.

To help eliminate that risk, most food processing plants treat the trim pieces prior to grinding the meat with chemicals such as lactic or peracetic acid. But RGF Environmental Group – a leading manufacturer of air, water and food purification products – is rolling out new technology that treats the meat as it is being ground and without the use of chemicals.

"We've replaced the lid on a meat grinder with our technology," says Bill Svec, vice president of water and food products. "It's a unit that will go on top of a meat grinder and greatly reduces the amount of pathogens that may be present during the grinding process. As far as I know, nobody else is treating the product as it is being ground. It's really impressive."

Riviera Beach, Fla.-based RGF uses various technologies to provide microbial reductions in food processing plants. This new product uses the company's patented oxidation gas process, called Photohydroionization™ (PHI).

PHI is a chemical-free, advanced oxidation technology utilizing high-intensity broad spectrum ultraviolet light rays on a hydrated quad metallic catalytic target. The resulting oxidizers, such as hydro peroxides, are very effective for reducing contaminants and safe to use in a facility where workers are present.

The technology is used for treatment of plant air as well as equipment surfaces and direct treatment of product. RGF also offers advanced oxidation systems for treatment of water, which is used in process or for plant equipment wash down, as well as systems for treatment of brine and marinade solutions.

Eco-Friendly

RGF manufactures more than 500 environmental products for air purification, water treatment and food sanitation – none of which contain chemicals.

"Chemicals have been the norm in the industry for many years," Svec says. "We are replacing chemical

company profile

RGF Environmental Group
www.rgf.com
Headquarters: Riviera Beach, Fla.
Specialty: Environmental products
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treatment. Most chemicals are very corrosive because they are acidic and then there's the ongoing cost of purchasing chemicals."

RGF's largest product line is its air purification systems that are growing in popularity amongst restaurants, food manufacturers, hospitals and schools.

Its chemical-free solutions are used for both air purification in production facilities as well as for direct treatment of food products.

"For example, when you cut steak and put it on a conveyor, our technology eliminates any surface bacteria before the meat is packaged," Svec explains. "That increases the shelf life of the product and our technology does not affect the color or taste of the product."

In the restaurant industry, RGF is seeing an increasing interest in its solutions for treating ice machines. "We have a small rectangular unit that hangs next to the ice machine," Svec says. "Our patented technology electrically takes the moisture in the air and converts it into a hydro peroxide vapor. That's blown into the ice maker head and bin, which reduces maintenance intervals and prevents any mold buildup and cross contamination."

RGF's technology can be also mounted into the duct work of an air-conditioning unit. That will treat the air in the restaurant or facility as well as things like cutting tables and floor drains.

"It will treat any surface," Svec adds. "And if someone sneezes, those oxidizers will destroy the virus in the air."

RGF's chemically-free air and food solutions are an alternative to using ozone generators. Ozone has long been an accepted antimicrobial agent for use with food processing and considered a cost-effective option for disinfecting food.

"But ozone is more corrosive, harder to control the output levels and usually require continual safety monitoring," Svec says.

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Total Turnkey

RGF was incorporated in 1985 for the purpose of designing, engineering and manufacturing total turnkey environmental systems. Its founder, Ron Fink, started the company in a 1,500-square-foot shop where the company developed a closed loop washed water recycle system for filtering water that had been used for washing construction equipment.

"From that product, we developed oxidation technologies for tanks of stored water to prevent algae in sitting water," Svec says. "Then we took that technology and kept modifying it for air purification purposes and later the food industry."

Today, the company sells on a global scale and operates out of a 100,000-square-foot headquarters with a manufacturing facility, warehouse and offices. In 2013, RGF acquired AFL Industries, a manufacturer of oil water separators, oil stop valves, safety sumps and rotary pipe oil skimmers to expand its industrial water treatment division. Its most recent acquisition was BioControls, which offers a variety of air filtration systems designed for use in hospitals and healthcare facilities. **FD**

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