

"With the Variable Frequency Drives we can reverse the air flow in the machine and speed up or slow down the fans to suit the exact requirement of the embryos. They are a really good idea and save energy too."

*Steve McLaurin
Peco foods Live Operations Manager*



SINGLE-STAGE STORIES



USA

Peco Foods Inc.

Sebastopol, Mississippi, USA



*Main picture: Inside the Avida A18 setter showing all three sections
Inset: The setter roof mounted Vertical Fan Drive unit*



Peco Foods Opens New Single Stage Hatchery

During the IPE Poultry Show in Atlanta I was invited to take a 350 mile trip to visit the prestigious new Peco Foods Inc. hatchery in Sebastopol, Mississippi where Chick Master had been selected to supply their latest Avida single stage incubation systems. Many people in the industry had already told me what an excellent facility it was so I was delighted to accept the chance to see it for myself.

Peco Foods Inc., is one of the industry's leading privately owned suppliers. It started as a small hatchery and feed mill in Gordo, Alabama in 1937 and over the years has grown into a fully integrated poultry processing and packaging company. Today, Peco Foods has processing plants throughout Mississippi and Alabama as well as four hatcheries making them the 11th largest producer in the USA.



"We do see a lot tighter hatch window here. What I really like is the uniformity of the chicks. The birds look good and strong."

Charlie Cox - Hatchery Manager

predominantly with Jamesway multi-stage incubators. "We went with single stage because, long term, we can see that the whole industry is going that way. Single stage is definitely the way forward" commented Steve McLaurin, Peco's Live Operations Manager. I asked him what it was like at first having to operate a different system. "Single stage is a different way of working, locking up the machine for the first 6 or 7 days takes some getting used to. We only set one incubator to start and I must admit that once we got to the three day

mark we did take a quick look to see that everything was okay, just for our own comfort levels. We did it again at 7 days and then at transfer to check that we still had viable embryos. Once we got past that first initial stage we were fine." He continued, "to be fair we had already seen Avida systems working at Gold'N Plump in Wisconsin. Charlie Cox, our Hatchery Manager here, spent a week up there with the Gold'N

Plump guys. They were real helpful, especially in our decision-making process and our pre-operations training. I really appreciate what they did for us." Charlie Cox now joined us and recalled, "It was a transition for me having been around Jamesways for 20 years. At first it was difficult, it seemed wrong, but not any more."

The hatchery currently has 36 Avida A18-165 systems installed out of the planned 72. "When the proposed new feed mill is up and running it will drive the completion of phase two in year or so" said Charlie.

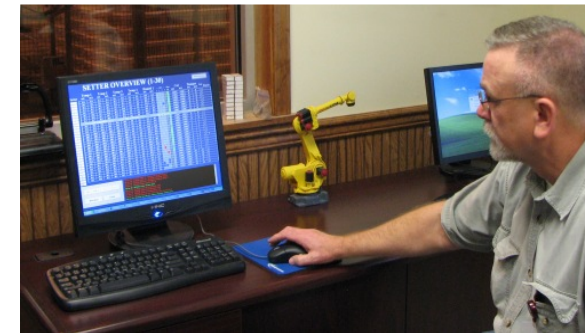
Another amazing feature of this hatchery is the spectacular robotic automation system. I had never seen anything like this before in a hatchery and seemed more akin to a sophisticated automotive plant. Charlie commented, "The robots are great, their

costs were coming down just as our labor costs were rising, so it made perfect sense."

I asked Steve about the performance of their Avida systems. "We are very pleased with their operation to date. They are competing well and have operated up to expectations" he said smiling broadly. "We really like the Galaxy hatchery monitoring system. It gives us data in real time that we can reach easily and act upon. I know a lot of hatcheries now use these systems, even on multi-stage, but we didn't."

Charlie added, "I find the humidity graphs to be a great tool that I go to it quite often. It gives me a snapshot of where we are and a good status indicator, especially when deciding the sequence to use to pull birds from the hatchers. We don't have any added humidity in our setters or hatchers so the

humidity graph is going to tell you when the chicks are dry and that is what you've got to target." Steve continued, "Charlie has it lined up that when they set hatchers



Charlie Cox using the Galaxy Hatchery Management System

doesn't have to come down here on Saturdays to start up the hatchers." Steve went on to praise the support they received from Chick Master. "The construction process and the start ups were very smooth. It involved many months of planning and a close cooperation with your installation and start-up team and we met all of our deadlines. He continued, "with all installations of this kind there are always small issues and these were always solved in a timely manner. Along the way, and since, Chick Master has always been very cooperative. Peco is very satisfied and pleased to do business with Chick Master".

With that endorsement still ringing joyfully in my ears I set off on the long journey back to Atlanta happy that Chick Master's reputation for building long term relationships with their customers that goes beyond the sale of incubation systems is as strong as ever. Now, off to the next customer. What a great job.

up for transfer on Saturdays he does it from home and checks them from home. He



Charlie Cox and John Tally checking chick quality



Robots are used here to improve hatchery efficiency



Our tour party - hygiene and health and safety measures are taken very seriously here at Peco's Sebastopol hatchery

Choosing single stage incubation systems for their latest facility was certainly a departure for Peco Foods, having four other hatchery facilities all operated

