

Making the Work Area Bigger on the Inside at Goodman Fielder Dairy

The Cultured Foods Department at **Goodman Fielder Palmerston North Dairy** had a very congested and busy Pack Off work area. With lots of activities and interactions between forklifts and pedestrians, there needed to be a change.

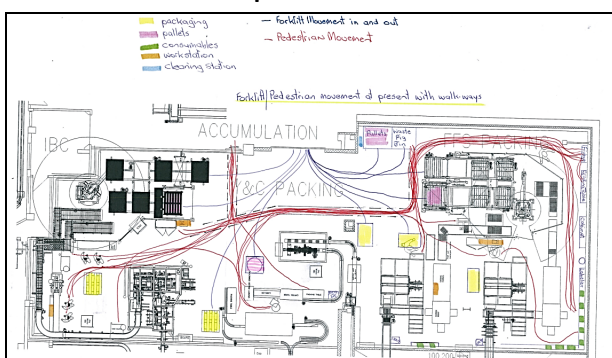


Manufacturing *Puhoi Valley*, *Meadow Fresh* and *Taranua* brands of cultured foods, and with a workforce of 8-10 people, the Pack Off Area is made up of 1 case packer, 2 sleever machines, 2 hand packing stations, a product sample grading fridge station, 2 robots, each with 2 palletising stations that were serviced by several forklifts bringing in raw materials and removing finished goods pallets.



The “Tardis” Team was formed to develop a strategy to reduce pedestrian exposure to forklifts and establish forklift and pedestrian exclusion zones to reduce the Risk Rating in the area. They then set about trying to understand the current situation by using Workplace Checklists, Operator Surveys and the use of Spaghetti diagrams to track people, materials and forklift movements.

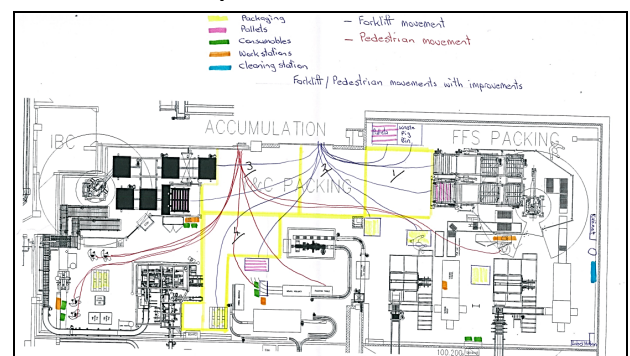
Figure 1: Pedestrian and Forklift movements before the team improvements – 264 movements



Their thorough analysis identified some Root Causes of the problems and the team identified 12 Improvement Sheets for the work area. The key points of their strategy were the:

1. *Establishment of pedestrian and forklift exclusion zones.* This replaced the traditional designated pedestrian walkway with zones where neither group could enter if one group was working in the area. So if a pedestrian is in the zone, the forklift cannot enter until the pedestrian has left the zone and vice versa.
2. *Removal of the sample grading fridge station to another area of the plant.* Operators now collect grading samples, store them at their work station and take them to the new grading fridge location on the way to meal breaks. It also means Lab Staff are not exposed to the forklifts or robots when accessing the grading fridge.
3. *Decentralising of the consumable store (tape and labels) from a central location in the corner of the room, to each individual workstation.* When additional supplies are required forklifts now deliver directly to the work station.

Figure 2: Pedestrian and Forklift movements after the team improvements – 108 movements



The results have been impressive with **11 out of 12 Improvement Sheets approved and implemented**. The number of **pedestrian movements** into the forklift working areas has been **reduced by 60%**

from 264 down to 108 movements. As a result the **Risk Rating** for the area has **dropped from High down to Medium.** A post implementation Operator Survey saw the “Tardis” Team’s improvements being rated 4 out of 5 by the area teams.

The only outstanding Improvement Sheet is about hand packing Micro 1 Line ergonomics, has been allocated to the “Achy Breaky” Mini Micro Problem Solving Team. They are in the process of modifying the conveyor and packing table heights to reduce lifting requirements.

We would like to congratulate the “Tardis” Team for their hard work and efforts to improve the Pack Off Area. The improvements made have created a safer workplace for all, showing the sites commitment to the welfare of their employees. Well done!

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