



Press Release

White cheese finds its way to Saudi Arabian consumers

Almarai introduces cheese delicacy in carton packs from SIG Combibloc

June 2008. Anywhere in the world where there is milk – whether its cows, sheep, buffalo or goats that are providing the raw material – there is almost certainly cheese. Cheese was first made in the Middle East, but now it is France, The Netherlands, Greece, Italy and Switzerland that have established themselves as the world's leading cheese producers. Appetite for cheese is undiminished and demand is growing outside Europe, too.

White cheese is now available in carton packs from SIG Combibloc. In filling its special cheeses in *combibloc* carton packs, Saudi Arabian food manufacturer and exporter Almarai is rounding off the final stage in switching its system to SIG Combibloc. The cheese is available in four varieties: white cheese with 40 % fat i.d.m., with reduced fat (25 % i.d.m.) and in a low-salt variety or with premium vegetable oil in *combiblocSlimline* 500 ml and *combiblocSmall* 200 ml.

Mobile unit provides flexibility

The special feature of the filling process is that the cheese is initially filled into the carton pack as a liquid and coagulates inside the carton pack after all the ingredients have been added. The white cheese gains its characteristic firm consistency only after this coagulation process has taken place. The necessary enzymes are mixed into the liquid cheese in a mobile mixing and dosing unit shortly before the filling-process. From this unit the cheese is filled into the carton packs on SIG Combibloc filling machines. This external equipment, which ensures that quantity dosage and product mix are exactly right, was developed by Danish

manufacturer Primodan. The mobile units in use at Almarai are compatible with the filling machines CFA 712 and CFA 310 for combibloc*Small* and combibloc*Slimline* respectively. These units are attached to the machines externally, thus the filling unit of the SIG Combibloc machines is not involved in the cheese filling process and can be used to aseptically fill other dairy products. Existing installations can be retrofitted with this external equipment.

This convenient modification gives Almarai new versatility in terms of product range and the proven volume flexibility of the filling machines from SIG Combibloc. Michael Payne, Plant Manager of the division 'Fresh and Long-Life Products' at Almarai in Riyadh: "Because the mixing and dosing unit for the cheese product is mobile and can be attached to and detached from the filling machines as required in next to no time, we can use the machines to fill both our cheese products and traditional dairy products – all in a wide range of volumes. This versatility is tremendous, and for us it is one of the strongest arguments for using filling machines from SIG Combibloc to fill our products".

The four cheese varieties available in carton packs from SIG Combibloc are fully set two hours after filling and are then left to settle for 24 hours before finally being chilled to around 5 degrees. In the cooling chain and stored at a constant temperature, the products can be kept for around twelve months.

Almarai was founded in 1976, and today is the biggest manufacturer and exporter of milk and dairy products in the Middle East. The company with its head office in Riyadh has a reputation as one of the region's most innovative companies and a distribution network that is second to none in the area. Consumers in the Middle East associate products from Almarai, which translates literally as 'green pastures', with freshness and quality. The company employs more than 4,000 staff and holds a 40 per cent market share of the milk and dairy products sector in the Gulf States.

Picture caption (Almarai):

White cheese is now available in carton packs from SIG Combibloc. Saudi Arabian food manufacturer and exporter Almarai has launched the cheese in combibloc*Slimline* 500 ml and combibloc*Small* 200 ml.

Photo: SIG Combibloc

SIG Combibloc is one of the world's leading system suppliers of carton packaging and filling machines for beverages and food. In 2007 the company achieved a turnover of 1,235 million Euro with around 4,000 employees in 40 countries. SIG Combibloc belongs to SIG Holding AG in Switzerland, which is part of the New Zealand based Rank Group.

Your contact:

Heike Thevis – Press Officer
SIG Combibloc GmbH
Rurstrasse 58, D-52441 Linnich, Germany
Tel: +49 2462 79 2608
Fax: +49 2462 79 17 2608
Email: heike.thevis@sig.biz