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## Zeroing in on Process Optimization

By Bryan Salvage, Editorial Director

Automation is playing a greater role in helping packers, processors optimize their processes. But just how far and fast meat and poultry companies will further automate is anyone's guess. But one thing's for certain: the evolution will continue.

Over the years, forward-thinking packers and processors have talked and dreamed about operating a totally automated plant — and how it would maximize throughput, yields, product quality, and safety, plus allow real-time feedback on processes, among other things. Although very beneficial to companies that are committed to it, process automation is still not widely used by the meat and poultry industries, many technology providers claim. But part of the problem in determining how widely it's being used lies in the translation of the term.

### Hi-tech monitoring yields results

What do you get when you marry visual monitoring that's being done remotely using a highly-sophisticated technology? The answer is the ability to measure some tasks that are currently considered not measurable, among other things.

### **A wide range of video services offered by the ADT Select Vision brand powered by Arrowsight offer both security and business solutions.**

In the fall of 2004, ADT Security Services Inc., a unit of Tyco Fire & Security, reported that Plumrose USA — a leading manufacturer of premium quality meat products — was to begin using ADT's remote video audit service to help monitor food safety at its Iowa plant. Plumrose USA is one of the largest processors of premium sliced meats, bacon, and deli hams in the United States. Its signature brands include *Plumrose*, *Dak*, and *Danola*.

ADT's video auditing service, based on remote video technology provided by Arrowsight Inc., delivers daily pass/fail "report cards" to Plumrose's management team to help them identify whether critical quality assurance

policies and procedures are being met at the plant. These e-mailed reports are then linked to video clips, providing visual documentation of the events uncovered by the auditing service.

"New technologies such as remote video auditing can help improve the safety of the nation's food supply," says Al Baroudi, president of the Food Safety Institute, who has conducted retail meat and poultry training for the USDA and dairy processing for the FDA and various health departments.

Mike Rozzano, general manager, Plumrose USA, says food safety has always been the company's top priority, and the company invested in the remote video auditing service to help managers more quickly identify whether employees are following plant security procedures and critical food-safety regulations.

"Our success is dependent on maintaining our reputation for providing the highest-quality meat products," Rozzano says. "With this service, we have access to detailed e-mail reports and video documentation to show that our quality-assurance programs are being met. As a company that has always embraced technological innovation, we are excited about the enhanced oversight this service can bring to the company."

The ADT Video Audit Service will help ensure that proper inspection procedures such as temperature control are followed, and that employees adhere to the industry's Good Manufacturing Practices, such as wearing proper attire, including coats, hairnets, and gloves.

This service also offers an extra check and balance for retailers, says Mike Snyder, president of ADT Services Inc.

"A manufacturer could share video audit reports with their retail customers to showcase the high quality of their products," he adds. "Manufacturers who can show greater traceability of their food product can set themselves apart [from the competition]."

Here's how the system works. ADT's Remote

Video Auditing Service operates through ADT Select Vision, a secure Web-based viewing service that provides access to video from any digital video recorder on a corporate network. ADT Select Vision provides authorized users with access to a secure Web site where they can view live or recorded video, control digital video recorders and cameras, save video to local hard drives, and share video by e-mailing links and comments. ADT Select Vision employs as its on-site hardware platform American Dynamics' Intellex® Digital Video Management System.

Arrowsight, a Web-based application services provider, is the leading developer of remote viewing services and software. Its remote video auditing service transforms video and related data into tools for security, operational, and marketing improvements. Arrowsight's remote viewing software was originally developed and marketed by its division, ParentWatch, and has since become the remote viewing leader for the childcare community with 10,000 users. This technology is also being used at such leading companies as McDonald's and Pfizer.

"We hired a number of very senior executives to help us drive this business [in the food industry]," says Adam Aronson, chief executive officer of Arrowsight. These executives include a former president of Armour Swift-Eckridge, a former head of quality assurance for Borden, Temple Grandin, a former senior Wal-Mart executive, and a former president of IGA.

"We have found during the past five years that senior executives are going to customer meetings and closing deals with a food-safety pitch," Aronson says.

When discussions start with executives about deploying Arrowsight's type of service into meat plants to look at critical control points, it usually ends up being "a cost item," he adds.

"A typical retail customer will send an inspector [to a vendor's meat plant] about once a year," Aronson says. "The supplier can say to his customer that he can continue to send that person once a year, but I on my own nickel am going to do this every day at every single critical control point, and I will have third-party

verification."

Any camera that could be placed inside a processing or slaughter facility for safety or animal handling monitoring can also be used to drive productivity and improve yields, Aronson says.

This technology can be used to verify equipment maintenance is correctly done, to ensure cleaning is being done properly at the right time, or even checking to verify pickle manufacturing was done correctly.

"We're seeing tremendous financial marketing and food safety/animal welfare benefits coming from companies using these new services," Aronson says. "On the animal handling side, we are working with Dr. Temple Grandin to take the work she has done in animal handling and create a vehicle to expand it on many multiples. Essentially, it gets back to economics."

Arrowsight's technology monitors the animal handling and slaughter process remotely on a random sampling basis to ensure the employees are following Grandin's principles.

"For Grandin, this is a great vehicle to expand upon her incredible work she has done in animal handling and humane slaughter, which has had an amazing impact on the welfare of animals and the economics of the beef industry," Aronson says. "I believe there are opportunities for standardization as it relates to video auditing."

But does this technology cause some to think of it as a "Big Brother" tool? (i.e., from George Orwell's "1984" where a futuristic government routinely spies on its citizens via cameras.)

"If you use it wrong, it is a Big Brother tool," Aronson says. "But if you use it right, it becomes an amazing positive enforcement tool and a reward system for the workers. The workers should look up at the camera and say, 'That's my ticket to getting promoted or being recognized for doing good work.'"

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