

How Integrated Technologies Are Powering the Next Wave of Snack Manufacturing in MEA

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As snack and confectionery consumption continues to surge across the Middle East and Africa, manufacturers are under pressure to deliver greater efficiency, flexibility, and product quality than ever before. At the forefront of enabling this transformation is TNA Solutions, a global leader in processing and packaging technologies. With more than 30 years of industry experience, Palani Karai, General Manager of TNA Solutions, MENA, has been instrumental in supporting food producers across the region as they scale operations and navigate fast-evolving consumer trends.

In this exclusive interview with NUFFOODS Spectrum, Karai shares insights into the key market drivers shaping the MEA snack and confectionery landscape, the growing shift toward integrated turnkey solutions, and how TNA's innovative technologies, including the TNA robag 3e and intelli-flav OMS 5.1 are helping manufacturers reduce costs, enhance productivity, and stay ahead of changing tastes. He also discusses the operational challenges posed by increasing SKU complexity and highlights the future innovations TNA is bringing to the region.

What trends in the Middle East and Africa snack and confectionery markets are driving demand for TNA Solutions's integrated processing and packaging systems?

The MEA snack and confectionery markets are certainly booming, and we're seeing a clear shift towards customers wanting fully integrated processing and packaging solutions from a single, reliable supplier. Many emerging players lack large engineering teams, so they truly value the ease of operation and clear responsibility that comes with a turnkey system.

Furthermore, with growth in the region, scalability and flexibility in areas like seasoning, distribution, and packaging are paramount, alongside robust local aftermarket support from a supplier with a strong regional footprint.

How does TNA Solutions' holistic approach help producers reduce costs, simplify operations, and accelerate growth?

TNA Solutions' holistic approach is designed to fundamentally simplify operations and drive down costs. By offering unified solutions, customers deal with fewer suppliers, which significantly reduces complexity and operational risk across the line. This also extends to efficiency, as commonality of spare parts across processing, seasoning, and packaging cuts inventory costs, and consistent software interfaces simplify employee training.

Ultimately, this complete line design ensures optimal operation, efficient buffer management, and easier changeovers, all of which directly support growth and cost reduction.

Capabilities of the TNA Robag 3e VFFS system and managing high-speed production with minimal waste?

The tna robag 3e VFFS system is built for both performance and simplicity. It's deliberately designed with minimal moving parts to ensure maximum uptime, which is crucial for high-speed production. Critically, it achieves less than 0.5% wastage – a benchmark that's vital across all regions – demonstrating exceptional efficiency. It also easily supports high-speed production with the flexibility to integrate automation, even in regions like MEA where labour costs are steadily rising.

How does the TNA Intelli-Flav OMS 5.1 on-machine seasoning system help producers respond to changing consumer tastes and seasonal product runs?

As the snack and confectionery markets in the MEA region expand, manufacturers must keep pace with the changing tastes of consumers. This market growth is driven largely by evolving demands for healthier ingredients and bold regional flavours. In answer to these demands, the tna intelli-flav® OMS 5.1 is engineered for ultimate agility – crucial for responding to shifting consumer tastes and managing seasonal runs. It enables quick, tool-less changeovers between SKUs, allowing for rapid adaptation to new flavours or product variations. Its core strength lies in its precise application of seasoning, ensuring consistent, even coverage and high product quality. The system's clever design also allows for product storage during changeovers, which minimises downtime and maximises output, all while offering the flexibility to adjust seasoning strength and application rates to perfectly match specific regional flavour preferences.

Operational challenges with increasing SKU variety and shorter production runs, and how TNA Solutions supports beyond machinery?

Today's manufacturers face the very real challenge of managing a greater variety of SKUs and shorter production runs, which demands highly flexible production lines that minimise stoppages. TNA's on-machine seasoning capability allows for the simultaneous production of multiple SKUs, significantly reducing downtime and maximising efficiency. Beyond just machinery, TNA provides total solutions and line design expertise, ensuring best practices in crucial areas like product handling and seasoning retention, and taking end-to-end responsibility to reduce the risk of critical process steps being overlooked – a common issue when dealing with multiple vendors.

Innovations or developments TNA Solutions is focusing on for the MEA region?

Looking ahead, our key focus is on our core innovation pillars of achieving higher productivity with lower wastage, while guaranteeing ease of operation and overall reliability. While many of our latest developments are global in scope, the benefits naturally extend to our customers in the Middle East and Africa. Across the region, we're proud to see growing demand for our solutions, particularly as we continue to deliver proven accuracy in seasoning application at some of the world's leading production sites. It's this precision and consistency that ensure our technologies deliver real, measurable value in meeting the market's evolving needs.

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