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PACKING

High tech with a future

Cabinplant A/S has been awarded the prestigious Danish Engineering Product Prize for its patent-pending robot trimming and packing line.

The awards encourage engineers and other technologists in Danish companies to develop new high-tech products and solutions for the global market. 33 companies were nominated in six different categories. To win the award, technology and design of the product, combined with a business view, must form a synthesis. Furthermore, the product must be developed either in Denmark or by Danish resources overseas. To increase the focus on the significance of design in product development, the engineering product prize award was this year arranged in co-operation with the Danish Design Centre.



Cabinplant A/S, a world leading supplier of tailor-made processing solutions for the food industry, has taken a completely new approach by combining different processing and packing steps in a robot-supported handling system for fish and shrimp. The innovative pick, process and place machine streamlines fish processing operations, replaces manual labour by an automated process, improves operation efficiency, and reduces give-away considerably. Ralf Astrup, managing director of Cabinplant, says, "So far robot technology has focused on the pick and place principles only. We thought, why not process the food between the two packing steps?"

Cabinplant believes that the pick, process and place line also has unlimited possibilities in other industries, such as for meat processing, other types of fish, or even cut vegetables. Depending on the product type, size and weight, the robot can process and pack between forty and fifty pieces per minute. By combining multiple robot modules, the average system will be capable of handling three hundred fish per minute.

Ralf Astrup says, "There is a great deal of interest worldwide in the pick, process and place line, as many fish processing facilities are dealing with a dual problem - finding adequate and skilled labour and facing increasing labour costs. This forces many companies to outsource the work, which means they lose control. The pick, process and place line allows them to regain control and also reduces the risk of error since there is no manual handling."

On presenting the award, the jury said, "Robots of this standard are rarely seen in the food industry, but they show perspectives beyond imagination. One of the fantastic features of this robot is that not only does it move the sardine from A to B. It actually picks up the sardine, processes it (cuts off its head and tail and guts it in 0.5 seconds), and finally places it in a can. That's cutting-edge technology." Cabinplant's CFO Jan Hølskov Hansen adds, "No one has been able to do that before."

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