# The Impact Of Impactable Doors

Fieldale Farms Corp. is not just a major supplier of poultry to the nation's leading foodservice and restaurant chains. It is the tenth largest privately owned company in the world. This company sells hundreds of millions of dollars of its product every year across the U.S. and to over 50 countries.

Its offerings include fresh, frozen, pre-cooked and marinated whole chickens and chicken parts. They have scores of different accounts with their own formulas for marinades, breadings and cuts.

To handle this steady growth and high volume, Fieldale recently made a $50 million expansion to their plant in Gainesville, GA, for a total production floor space of 400,000 sq ft, housing seven processing lines with space to bring on more as their business expands. This facility has the latest up-to-date equipment – touch screens, PLC's, stainless steel handling lines – to enable them to keep up with the demand of running 300,000 lbs of poultry a day.

The production flow starts with the raw meat as it comes into the plant and emerges processed and packaged through ten TKO® CruiserWeight® Impactable dock doors, five doors at both ends of the process. The dock here is kept below 55°F to maintain product quality, and the trucks maintain 32°F, so minimizing the number of 8' × 10' openings is a smart strategy to minimize the risk of expensive chilled energy escaping.

But "with just ten doors and the expectations for me to move all that product," notes Plant Manager Randy Williams, "the doors have to be reliable."

It also means the doors must be available to handle the traffic and loosing anyone of them to damage or downtime can cripple the process. "We have to get poultry out and I get paid by the poundage," says Williams. That is why with all of their investments in the new facility, Fieldale and Williams decided to purchase TKO CruiserWeight Impactable Dock Doors.

"Everything comes through these doors during our 16 to 18 hour days."

Williams worked directly with the contractors on the renovation to ensure he got what he wanted on his dock. To demonstrate the seriousness of the problem, Williams showed them how banged up his old doors were.

"In our old operation," recalls Williams, "we had what I called 'beer can' doors. They were fairly cheap and you got what you paid for."

He explains that the panels on those doors were flimsy and could be easily dented

like a beer can by forklifts on the dock. Space was tight on the old location, collisions were common and they replaced doors roughly every two years. Even before their demise, slight bumps could cause the doors to form gaps between their panels and doorframe, leading to energy loss.

The TKO CruiserWeight doors ensure that these doorways are available for the steady stream of chicken and chicken products. Their impactable design means that if the door is hit, productivity and energy is not lost.

Rather than the rollers that guide the panels along a flimsy sheet metal track on their old doors, the TKO door panels are equipped with heavy-duty retractable plungers that glide along the Impact-A-Track™ V-Groove track. When a forklift hits a TKO CruiserWeight door, the door releases from the track, eliminating costly panel damage. These CruiserWeight doors are equipped with TKO's PowerHouse™ Panel which consists of a heavy duty polycarbonate facing to stand up to the worst abuse. For security and to prevent unauthorized entry, the Impact-A-Track is designed so the door cannot be pushed into the building.

The full height Impact-A-Track guide provides total protection against the most abusive impacts from top to bottom. When the old style sheet metal tracks are hit just slightly the panels can be knocked out of alignment, opening up energy-robbing gaps.

After impact, resetting the TKO door is quick and easy. Simply pull the plunger cable or the door handles to bring the panels back into the door track. No tools required and no sustained damage.

Williams' other complaint with his old doors was that they were so thin the heat would come through the door, and in northern Georgia the summer days can push the thermometer to the top. The CruiserWeight door's 1¾" thick foam core panel with damage resistant polymer interior facing provides much higher R-value and consistent temperature control than conventional steel doors.

The CruiserWeight door panel construction is corrosion resistant as well, remedying another big problem for their old doors. As a requirement in poultry processing facilities like Fieldale, one of their three shifts is devoted to sanitation and wash-down of the dock area. In the process of eating up microbes the chemicals can also eat away metal panel doors, a condition that the CruiserWeight's polymer panels resist.

The CruiserWeight door has a tight perimeter weatherseal incorporating a double loop side seal to prevent energy loss and air infiltration. The side seals are attached to the door, not the track or door jamb like standard sectional doors. This allows the seal to be out of harms way when the door is open, providing a more consistent and reliable seal when the door is closed.

"The seals on the old doors were constantly leaking," notes Williams. "We have checked the seal around the TKO Doors and found it keeps nice even temperature on the dock."

With the combination of high volume production and a customer list of major accounts, according to Williams “we wanted some of the best dock doors they had out there.”

“Maintenance is my number one thing. With all of the other equipment we have here I don’t want my crew working on the doors all the time.”

In addition to the docks, Williams has a TKO CruiserWeight on the dry storage receiving dock and one on a high traffic interior doorway.

Williams is planning on bringing up an eighth processing line soon. At the site of the current building he has the capacity to triple his space, which he figures will have to be done in the next two years.

“If we had eight days a week I’d still need one more to keep up,” says Williams. “But not having door damage to worry about and losing out to the clock makes a big difference.”

For more information about dock doors, visit www.tkodoors.com [1].

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