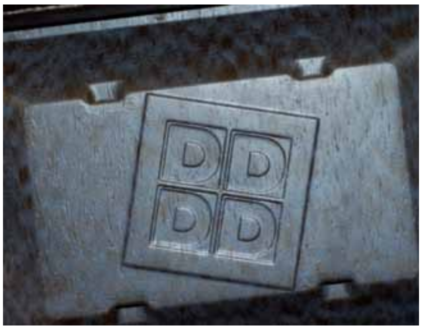

Polypack, Inc. (Booth #S-2166) continues to expand its line of pick-and-place equipment designed to reduce packaging material. The ROKH® robotic system can handle ellipsoidal packages and unstable products. Because it has no pusher, the infeed system can collate and load products directly from a conveyer onto the film of the shrink wrapper, allowing for accurate transfer and fast changeover. The discharge system can be reoriented in many different configurations for flexible unloading and transfer products from the shrink wrapper onto another conveyer. Lastly, the gantry is a compact pick-and-place system that loads shrink-wrapped products from the shrink wrapper into cases, minimizing transfers for better control.

Packaging equipment allowing brand owners to implement thinner packaging is in high demand. However, there are other considerations. For example, less-substantial packaging can be prone to leaks and breaks during packing. To combat that scenario, equipment manufacturers are creating solutions for the entire line, including conveyors that exert less pressure and drop packers that use less force, resulting in minimal damage to thin-gauge packaging.

Secondary packaging systems under development use flat cartons, and significantly less material and glue for shrink wrapping than conventional four-walled cartons.

From product handling to cartoning and palletizing, brand owners need equipment and materials designed to fit within a sustainable operation.

Packaging may seem to play a background role in a comprehensive sustainability program, but even specifying the right polymer during the design stage can mean ultimately achieving functional, financial and environmental stewardship goals. With truly sustainable materials and processes, packaging can help manufactures make strides in environmental responsibility and maximize their investments.

Key No. 84689

Egyptian Packaging and Food Processing Industry are Weathering the Turmoil

Mainly due to their young populations, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco are three of the top ten consuming countries in Africa. And the outlook for these three countries is positive.

For Egypt, three key factors stand out in particular. Firstly with 90 million inhabitants, the country is the most populated of the MENA Region. The capital city Cairo comprises about 17 million inhabitants, making it the center of the largest metropolitan area in Africa and the Arab countries, as well as the tenth-largest urban area in the world.

Then, Egyptians are natural-born consumers, especially for food and ready-meals.And finally, agriculture is the backbone of the economy. This all means opportunities for the food processing and packaging industry. **Dominique Huret** reports on this market in constant evolution which attracts international investors looking for new opportunities.

The food market in Egypt has been one of the sectors least affected by the uncertainties of the 2011 revolution.After it faced a slowdown in growth in 2011, the packaged food market kept growing again in 2013 with volumes rising by 3% in 2013. Today, the packaged food market volume performance is back to the same levels as the pre-revolution years.

The lion's share of the market goes to artisanal bread and rice, accounting for 79% of market volume in 2013. However, higher growth rates are limited by the continued competition from unpackaged and traditional alternatives.

In 2013, the curfews imposed by the Egyptian government boosted consumer expenditure on packaged food.

Consumer foodservice was drastically affected by reduced custom brought on by the curfew. However, consumers swapped their evening outings for in-home entertaining which led to consumption of a wider range of products, and greater use of staples, such as bread and rice.

Lower priced imports are shaking companies into action.

Following the revolution, Egypt faced a change in import restrictions. As currency weakened, imports from markets such as Turkey and Lebanon became suddenly more attractive. As a consequence, domestic companies decided to invest in brand development and SKU expansion to swamp the market with Egyptian options and suffocate new entrants out of modern retailing shelf space. For instance, foreign giant companies such as Ülker from Turkey started to place emphasis and gained substantial market share by expanding their factory in Egypt and obtaining a leading position.

Modern retailers win larger channel distribution shares.

In the last two years, the shift away from grocery retailers and open markets toward supermarkets and hypermarkets continues. Hypermarkets face one of the fastest growth rates in value share. They continue to offer wide product ranges at competitive prices against traditional grocery retailers thanks to

economical bulk packs and attractive price promotions. Safety concerns and curfews due to the political upheaval resulted in hypermarkets proving a safer and more attractive environment for consumers. Metro, Carrefour, Hyper One and Spinneys are burgeoning in the major city outskirts.

The packaging market is huge and on the raise.

Packaging market size in 2011 confirmed by the IMC (Industrial Modernization Center) highlights the following constellation : 80 % of the packaging market is reserved to small factories, medium size factories range to 6% and big players count for 14%. This trend toward larger players is confirmed by recent news.

For instance, the Faragalla Group, one of the top three suppliers of packaged juice and dairy products in Egypt, opened four new plants in 2011. Together with Tetra Pak, a new liquid food factory was created in 2012 outside Alexandria. This first fully automated factory of its kind in the Middle East continues its 17-year relationship in the Egyptian food processing and packaging sector.

In August this year, the Turkish packaging company Elif, global supplier of flexible packaging solutions for food and beverage, home care and cleaning, and personal care products hit the news. Elif officialized its globalization with a key stone investement for a new state-of-art factory in Egypt with support through loans of the World Bank Group's International Financial Corporation.

And food producer giants follow...

In June 2014, Nestlé inaugurated its first local confectionery plant on the west side of Cairo.

This "first-ever confectionery plant" represented an investment of over EGP 65Mio intended to introduce new chocolate products. "Egypt has massive consumers and labor potential, making it attractive for investment in the region," said Nandkishore, Nestlé's Executive Vice President. He added that Nestlé factories in Egypt produce and supply some of the company's biggest brands for the region. "Nestlé's latest expansion project in Egypt is particularly special for the company", Nandkishore added. "Since 2011, we have invested close to EGP 1 Bio in Egypt and doubled our local work force from 3,200 to our current 6,300 employees.

The market is booming: no surprise that Afro Packaging Exhibition will gather again the region's professionals in Cairo in June 2015. The exhibition will take place at Cairo International Conference Center, from 19 until 21 June 2014. A total of 300 exhibitors have already booked their spot, while 12 000 visitors are expected. This is the third fair organized by the Arab-African Conferences & Exhibitions. Powerful brands from the national and international market will showcase their products and brands. This could be a nice gateway to the Middle Eastern, North African and Gulf markets.

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