



## Indispensable Service

**Grid-type slicing machines from MHS are proving their worth in all stores of the Stangengrüner Mill Bakery. The development of MHS and BÄKO is easy to operate, works hygienically and flawlessly – and furthermore the free service attracts more customers**

Hannelore Lehmann is thrilled: the pensioner is shopping for the first time in a store of the Stangengrüner Mill Bakery AG in Rodewisch which has been in the Hellweg DIY store for around 4 years. “My son-in-law needs a few lights and so he took me with him because otherwise I can’t get here without a car”, she explains. She purchases a loaf of bread and has it sliced by Birgit Nößler,

the sales assistant. “I can’t slice it as evenly as that at home”, the pensioner is delighted about the free service. “I can freeze the three slices in portions that I need daily.” A few pieces of tray cake and some pastries complete her shopping that is somewhat more than she actually planned.

### **Bread slicing service ever more popular**

“A lot of customers experience the same as Frau Lehmann,” explains Anett Rau, head of sales of the Stangengrüner Mill Bakery, located in Lengenfeld, Vogtland. “A lot of the 27 000 customers, who come into our current 90 stores

***The MHS grid-style slicing machines are easy for the sales staff to operate and clean quickly***

have their bread sliced immediately in the shop – the trend is still upward. Most of all young people, singles and pensioners do not want to do without this additional service. Every fourth loaf of bread now leaves our sales premises sliced”. The slices are packed in a special plastic bag embellished with the Mill bakery logo so that they stay fresh for longer. Furthermore: “In the past few months a lot of purchasers have found their way into our stores just because we slice fresh bread,” adds the head of sales. “And in this high volume of customers we notice that the sales of other bakery products have continued to increase.” With the opening of a store in a new housing estate in Zwickau there were an additional 8000 customers at once who only bought their bread sliced. But this positive development did not fall by any means in to the laps of the employees of the Stangengrüner Mill Bakery and the CEO Volker Seifert. “We

started with simple bread slicing machines in our stores that are really intended for domestic use,” Seifert thinks back with a laugh. “That had to go wrong of course because the machines were often broken due to the high strain and were in repair for weeks – very much to the disadvantage of our business.” Therefore new technology was needed which our personnel and above all our customers could rely on. Seifert had a look around at trade fairs at suppliers of bread slicing machines and got in touch with MHS Schneidetechnik GmbH from Abstatt on the advice of MD Ben Hartmann from BÄKO south and mid Germany. “We have been developing grid-style slicing machines especially for the bakery trade since the middle of the 1990s by request of and in close contact with BÄKO and developing them continuously, making them so to speak tailor made for every bakery,”





***With the help of BÄKO line technology the loaves are sliced swiftly and then packed into plastic bags***

explains Rudi-Karl Siller, managing director of MHS GmbH which develops and manufactures slicing and portioning machines for the food industry. "Our grid-style machines "MHS Basic", as used in the Stangegrüner Mill Bakery are characterised, apart from their reliable operation, by two patent solutions: the felt can be changed within seconds by sales staff without any tools and the machine works at the highest level of cleanliness as the motor and the electronics were moved out of the slicing area," explains Siller. " Our grid-style slicing machines are still extremely sought after and absolutely competitive due to the easy operability, speed

and good value for money."

**Test phase passed effortlessly**

Seifert was convinced by these and further advantages and had two machines installed on his premises in Lengenfeld for testing. Freshly baked bread was sliced here on trial, service work on the machines tried out and sales staff and the in-house mechanics were made familiar with the technology. " The machine is easy for our sales staff to operate and to clean so that cleaning time and therefore personnel costs are kept low," Seifert explained two more important reasons for the purchase

of MHS technology which is now in every store and with which all new locations are to be equipped in the future. In the next few months the number will increase to over 120.

Should, however, a serious technical defect arise the in-house technicians of the bakery and also the service employees of BÄKO south and mid Germany are there quickly to help. "That is also a great advantage of our cooperation with BÄKO," says Siller. " With the BÄKO technicians we have service staff available quickly in the respective region where the company is located." However until now such a repair order for the grid-

style slicing machine known under the brand of "BÄKO-line" was not at all necessary, Seifert relativizes. " The grid-style slicing machines have been running reliably and entirely problemfree for over a year." Furthermore, they enabled us to break away consciously from the competition in the region: "This concerns the thickness of the bread slices which we can offer in 10mm slices in contrast to other sellers. It also concerns our free slicing service for which we demanded a small amount of money before we started using the new grid-style slicing machines.

A lot of customers only come into our stores because the fresh loaf is sliced in front of their very eyes at no extra cost – per month at the moment about 200 000. They don't however "only" buy bread but additionally also rolls, cakes and pastries or they have a drink or something to eat in the snack bar. Experience in Bavaria has shown that the use of bread slicing machines has led to an additional turnover of up to 15%," emphasises Siller. This is also a reason for Seifert to equip new stores with MHS technology right from the start.