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A Dewatering Dilemma

Alaskan Brewing Company finds a solution to the waste that comes with growth.

Nearly any expansion of a beverage manufacturing process entails chess-like considerations—where to add space, what equipment to install, how to arrange it, when it will pay back and how it will impact the waste stream. But when the plant is located in an extremely remote area, advanced planning and reliable equipment take on added significance.

called for the addition of a 100-barrel brew house in 1995. A year later, an automated keg line was added, which combined with a new bottling line added in 2001, provided sufficient capacity for the company to serve the entire West Coast.

According to Plant Manager Curtis Holmes, “a lot more grain was going down the drains and into the wastewater system’s settling tank.” A pump on the bottom of the tank pulled off waste sludge, but “the bigger grain kernels settled down to the bottom of the tank and packed in densely, bonding with the sludge and setting up like concrete. The mass could be pumped with difficulty, but sometimes the combination would jam the pump. Then we would need to remove, service and reinstall the pump.”

The problem was resolved with an inclined Centri-Sifter centrifugal dewatering screener from Kason Corporation (Milburn, NJ), which was installed in the waste stream between the brew vessels and the treatment plant. As solids-laden wastewater flows into the screener, a full-length, low-pitch auger moves the material longitudinally into and through an inclined cylindrical screen. Helical paddles rotating within the screen create centrifugal forces that accelerate the liquid and fines through the screen apertures and onto the interior wall of the screening chamber. The paddles, which never contact or scrape the inside of the screen, also serve to breakup soft agglomerates. The variable-incline design of the unit increases the dwell time of material within the chamber and, accordingly, the amount of liquid removed from the solids, which are ejected through the open end of the screen cylinder and transferred to the brewery’s waste grain dryer.

Currently, the brewery generates roughly 6,000 gallons of wastewater from which the Centri-Sifter screener removes about 800 lbs. of solids. This “saves us a lot of headaches with our wastewater plant,” says Holmes.

The Centri-Sifter screener’s convenient design made installation a simple ‘plug-and-play’ operation, which saved Alaskan Brewing Company some additional capital.

“We did our own install,” remarks Holmes. Not that folks aren’t willing to come up and help out, notes Holmes, although the offers always seem to coincide with summer, when the fishing is best...a pastime that often goes hand-in-hand with a good beer. [sw]

www.kason.com

KEEPING PACE WITH a growing portfolio of brands and ever-expanding distribution gave Alaskan Brewing wastewater challenges, until Kason Corporation stepped up with an improved dewatering process.