



Safety and yield benefits from automation project at ANZCO's Rangitikei plant

An innovative approach to installing new \$10 million automated cutting equipment at its Rangitikei plant enabled MIA member ANZCO to almost halve the usual installation time and keep the site operational throughout.

The technology features an X-ray machine, which works with automated cutting equipment, allowing a very high level of accuracy in cutting. This has reduced health and safety risks - replacing five bandsaws.

The equipment, which also improves yield, removes the four-quarter and leg and debones the full middle, ensuring precise cutting to the exact specifications of each carcass.

"The increased yield comes from improved accuracy, which will have a positive financial impact," says Darryl Tones, ANZCO General Manager Operations.

"For instance, achieving an extra 5mm on French racks, compared to it being on the flap, is substantial."

To ensure a smooth transition, two ANZCO engineers worked with the team at Scott's Dunedin site, while engineers at the Rangitikei plant worked with employees who would be using the equipment. This process included building a life-sized model of the equipment at the plant, to ensure everything worked as it should and to help with refining ideas.

"Keeping the plant operating throughout installation worked well," says Darryl.

"If we found anything wasn't working correctly, we were able to revert to the old process, so there wasn't any impact on production."

No jobs have been lost as a result of the new equipment. Staff who previously operated the bandsaws have been incorporated into the wider processing team.

ANZCO built the Rangitikei sheep processing site in 2005. It employs around 400 people and processes 1 million sheep/lambs annually.

ANZCO Rangitikei directly contributes more than \$128m to the local economy each year through wages, salaries and farmer and supplier payments. The economic contribution has been further enhanced with 40% of the \$10m project cost being spent on a range of local service providers working on the project and equipment installation, and 60% comprising the new equipment.



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