



FMEG

FOOD MANUFACTURING ENGINEERING GROUP

Challenges in Food Manufacturing

Mike Mountain
Vice Chairman

**Connect.
Collaborate.
Evolve...**

The Network for
People
in the Food
Manufacturing
sector

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Food Manufacturing Engineering Group

- Who we are
- Aims and objectives
- Support activities
- Future challenges

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Who we are

Established in 2000 as an interdisciplinary forum, at the request of (MAFF/DEFRA) to bring together the key players in the sector including food manufacturers, machine and automation suppliers, systems integrators relevant academic and other research groups and major retailers to identify key technical and other problems that were hindering progress and create a dialogue that would hopefully provide a roadmap for future development.

No funding was available initially all contributions in time and effort had to be on a voluntary basis.

Subsequent Defra funding became available to provide part time Administrative support. But all major activities still depend on Voluntary contributions from the sectors involved.

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Aims

- To identify key problems in the application of automation to natural food products. Identify academic and other research groups who could address these issues and form academic, industry partnerships to formulate R/D proposals.
- To raise awareness in the food manufacturing sector of the possibilities of using automation procedures and the availability of the technical expertise in academia and elsewhere.
- To highlight the issue of the lack of professional engineering infrastructure in the sector and encourage the provision of relevant training facilities.

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Support activities

- Organise technical workshops to disseminate the results of relevant ongoing R/D activities which could impact on the food manufacturing sector and to highlight best practice in the uptake of advanced technology.
- Host a website that has recently been refreshed which promotes our activities and provides information on relevant technical data and R/D opportunities.

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Future challenges

- Trends in consumer requirements that impact on marketing and thus on the dynamics of the supply chain.
- The need for flexible automation systems to address an increasingly volatile market place.
- The trend towards completely integrated, efficient and optimised supply chains supported by machine interconnectivity that allows increased autonomous operation.
- The need for enhanced food security and product traceability which fosters innovative sensor technology and innovative data storage, management and processing technology.
- The need to develop the skill base within the sector in order to enable the uptake of the opportunities presented by the emerging technologies.

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