

# CASE STUDY



## Pet Food Snacks



**CUSTOMER**  
Multi-National Petfood company

**INDUSTRY**  
Food

**MATERIAL**  
Extruded Pet Food Snacks

**EQUIPMENT**  
S-5 Open TipTrak™ Bucket Conveyor

UniTrak was asked to help a multi-national petfood producer solve an existing conveyor issue, which our TipTrak™ was able to solve. The customer specializes in producing and marketing pet food, treats and litter. The company is the second-largest pet food company globally and the largest in North America.

# CHALLENGE

This multi-national petfood producer approached to UniTrak to help improve the conveyance of product at its facility. The company was experiencing problems with a traditional conveyor where buckets were “popping” out, causing a large amount of wasted product due to spillage. A further consequence of the spillage was that the company was incurring unnecessary clean up and disposal costs.

Besides addressing the spillage problem, they needed an equipment solution that would combine reliability with the gentle handling required for a friable petfood product. The new conveyor would have to service 24 x 7 operations, 50 weeks a year, and be capable of moving 12,500 pounds of product per hour, with the material fed from an extruder at 110°F, with 26% moisture content.

# CUSTOMERIZATION

Before proposing an equipment solution, UniTrak performed a detailed application review and product test for the customer. To deliver on its promise of total tailored reliability in the equipment it supplies to customers, UniTrak always encourages potential customers to test their product, thereby ensuring that the optimal equipment solution will always be provided.

Following the test, UniTrak proposed, and subsequently supplied, an S-5 open frame TipTrak™ bucket conveyor. UniTrak employed its unique customization process to ensure that the conveyor was tailored to specifically address this facility's application challenges. Specific features that UniTrak supplied on this TipTrak™ unit included the following:

- Stainless steel frame construction suitable for food-grade applications
- Bolt sleeves
- A special bucket assembly with polypropylene buckets and joint strips containing a silver ion to inhibit microbial growth
- Waterproof bearings to support washdown cleanability
- A steep (adjustable) operating system
- USDA-approved food-grade lubricants



# SOLUTION

A unique feature of the TipTrak™ bucket conveyors is the presence of a flexible joint strip between each bucket in the bucket assembly. Unlike conveyor designs which feature overlapping buckets, the TipTrak™ joint strips serve to seamlessly interlock the buckets and prevent any product spillage as the filled buckets travel through the conveyor.

The interlocking buckets in the TipTrak™ supplied to this company greatly reduced the amount of product spillage, with a commensurate reduction the costs associated with wasted product and cleanup. In addition, the interlocking buckets, together with UniTrak's proprietary rubber BeltChain, assured the gentle handling of friable product required by the customer. The result: much less product breakage and greater throughput yield.

An important aspect of this project was the installation support provided by UniTrak. This process began immediately after UniTrak had fabricated the S-5 TipTrak™. Following equipment fabrication, the customer's officials visited UniTrak to conduct a final inspection of the equipment prior to shipment. Once the equipment arrived at the customer's facility, UniTrak service personnel performed a pre-start inspection following equipment installation, and then conducted training of the customer's operators and maintenance personnel prior to first production run. The entire service support process ensured a trouble-free delivery together with a successful installation and startup of the TipTrak™.



# LET'S TALK

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