



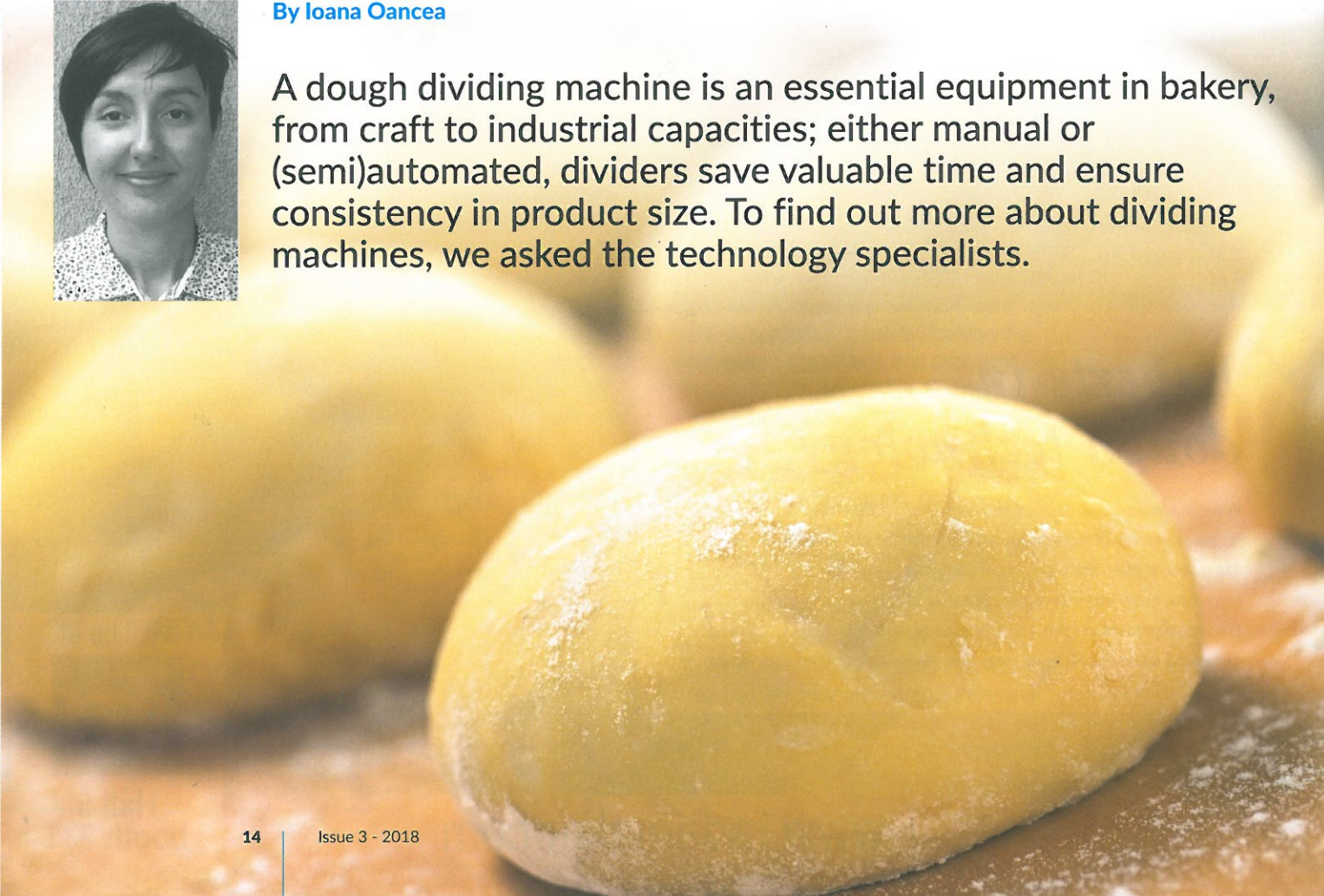
Divide et Impera

(when It Comes to Dough)!

By Ioana Oancea



A dough dividing machine is an essential equipment in bakery, from craft to industrial capacities; either manual or (semi)automated, dividers save valuable time and ensure consistency in product size. To find out more about dividing machines, we asked the technology specialists.



Dough dividing equipment must answer specific requirements, among which gentle dough handling to preserve its properties, and accurate weight division are vital. Versatility is another important attribute, as doughs with different textures (i.e., pizza, white, brown, integral, rye and gluten-free) and ingredients should be able to be processed. A high production capacity is required for industrial production, and this means the machine should have a solid construction with food-safe materials; it must be easy to operate, maintain, clean and utilize on the long term.

HOW TO MAKE AN EQUIPMENT ACQUISITION

To find out what are the general rules to consider when equipping a plant with a dough divider, *European Baker & Biscuit* spoke with the experts from Benier company, part of the Dutch Kaak Group. The company's main activities are focused on dough quality and gentle dough handling, which is the case for dividing or molding processes.

When choosing equipment for manufacturing steps in which dough is handled, the final product is very important, and the type of dough

that goes into making it, as the biggest influencers for a divider. "There is a big difference between dividing pizza dough or French baguette dough," the specialist explains. Then the specific requirements given by the production facility and capacity desired are considered, including the parameters of the line, capacity, and weight range. Space required how to feed dough in the hopper, placement of control units for operators of the line and, last but not least, the complete process behind the divider are all things that need to be discussed before purchasing any divider, Benier/Kaak says. The properties of the dough (including that used for biscuits) influence the design and functionality of the divider equipment. "Dough is the most diverse aspect in any production line. Any baker can tell you that each batch of dough can be different. So, in order to manage these differences, there are many different options to include in any divider. For instance, a dough controller behind the divider is used to control the weight accuracy; this machine will weigh every dough piece and is able to adjust the divider if necessary. You can also buy a complete servo-controlled machine as the Dough Master, where you are able to adjust every parameter of the dividing mechanism," the specialists add. >



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> They also add that any dough can be divided by a volumetric divider, from very soft ones and high water content doughs, all the way to dry rusk doughs. Choosing the suitable dividing principle also has a lot to do with the complete process of the line, end product and capacity, Benier says. An Xtrueder has a very high capacity of 15.000 pieces per hour, for example. A volumetric divider, on the other hand, is able to divide dry dough as rusk, or very high water content doughs.

CHALLENGES

Each part of the baking processed has its challenges, so why would the dividing be different? Cleaning and maintenance are the most important aspects to guarantee an efficient dough divider throughout the years, Benier says.

“Cleaning the divider daily is absolutely important as the dough can stick to all nooks and crannies in a machine. If this is not cleaned properly, contamination of the product is a fact. Moreover, your divider could also damage as dough could get stuck inside springs, engines or bearings if not cleaned correctly,” they add. Furthermore, maintenance should be done regularly, to prevent production stops due to machine malfunctions. As with any machine used in a production line, a divider can also experience breakdowns. Possible causes include damage to the mechanism, odd objects in the hopper or any other problem you may face during production, the expert warns.

“Maintenance helps to prevent these types of problems and having spare parts on stock in the bakery is therefore always recommended,” they also add. In order to help maintenance with their work, Benier has created BSW, a portal where bakeries can log in and find any spare part they may need for their production line and can order directly.

Benier uses stainless steel for its dividers, but inside the machine, there are different types of steel, such as ni-resist iron or food-save bronze. Benier developed a synthetic main piston, meaning that instead of a very heavy main piston, a synthetic piston is lighter and easier to

handle and clean. This helps operators to disassemble the machine for cleaning. Quality wise, the synthetic main piston is just as good as the standard Ni-resist one. Benier dividers all have a mechanism inside with a backslide, measuring pistons and a knife. All these moving parts are exposed to wear and tear. When these parts are worn out, loss of dough will increase. To avoid this, the manufacturers have to regular check of the machine and replace worn parts. Malfunctions are possible in every machine, including dividers. Some can be caused by not having enough dough inside the hopper. If this happens, the knife cannot create a vacuum inside and big weight differences are the result. “To avoid this, we recommend to always having 1/3 of the hopper filled with dough. This is enough to have pressure on the knife and create sufficient vacuum to fill the measuring pistons,” the Benier specialist highlight.

Benier, KAAK Group



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