VIDEOJET

**A sweet solution
Dutch Gold Honey
Case Study**

Dutch Gold Honey harvests savings with upgraded coding solution from Videojet

What began as a beekeeping hobby for Ralph and Luella Gamber back in 1946 has evolved into a 66 year-old prospering business. Dutch Gold Honey has grown into the largest family-owned honey company in the United States. Located in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Dutch Gold Honey products include 12 different types of honey, including an organic honey offering and three varieties of maple syrup. Dealing with the demands of consumers, retailers, food service operators and food manufacturers, Dutch Gold Honey needed to be able to pack its honey in a range of containers – from eight-ounce plastic, squeezable bottles to tanker trucks.

To keep up with this demand, Dutch Gold Honey relies on a complete coding solution from Videojet Technologies Inc. to quickly and accurately code both the product and cases to successfully meet customer requirements.

Perfecting Codes on Multiple Production Lines
Dutch Gold Honey wanted to package and code its products in the most efficient manner while keeping up with its varying customers' demands. If product is incorrectly coded, they can be rejected from a warehouse or even worse, if it arrives on the store shelf, it might have to be pulled off.

"After we implemented CLARiSUITE, it eliminated 99.9% of our coding problems."

Jim Gerlach, Production Scheduler

The company was encountering the following challenges.

1. A wide range of packaging requirements

Many customers of Dutch Gold Honey have very specific coding requirements. The company was regularly dealing with more than 300 different codes. There are also special codes during holiday seasons and unique customer requests. Making sure the right code is put on the right product at the right time is a critical operational challenge.

2. Lack of coordination between primary and secondary coding

The code put onto the product needs to be consistent with the code that is put onto the cases. Both of the codes need to be consistent with the label on the product. If any two of the three mismatch, there is a potential risk of rework and recall.

3. Frequent line changeover

On average, Dutch Gold Honey changes codes three to six times per line every day. Previously, each changeover took 5-10 minutes. Operators walked to the printers and manually entered the codes for both printers. Having a manual process allows for the possibility of human error, which can cause waste and hit productivity.

"We needed a better way to coordinate our bottle printers with our case printers," said Jim Gerlach, production scheduler at Dutch Gold Honey. *"After working with Videojet for over 30 years, we've developed a strong relationship. We looked to them to help us address this issue."*

Tapping a proven partnership

Gerlach and Dutch Gold's production maintenance lead Jose Torres worked closely with the Videojet team to evaluate the needs of the coding system and determine the best solution for networking the coding operations.

Together, the team came up with a complete coding solution that included:

- Upgrading both the production lines and the printers
- Networking them through Videojet's CLARiSUITE code assurance software
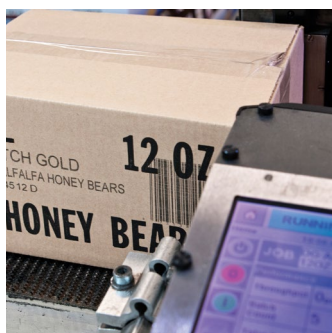
The software is designed to better coordinate Dutch Gold Honey's three Videojet 1510 small character continuous ink jet printers for the multiple plastic bottle varieties and six Videojet 2350 large character ink jet printers for the multiple shipping case sizes. It pulls critical customer data from Dutch Gold Honey's database to coordinate production and coding operations. In addition, Dutch Gold uses CLARiSUITE's Message Management feature to secure and streamline data management, enabling Gerlach and Torres to centrally create, store, and edit all messages.

Driving productivity through Code Assurance

Once the hardware and software decision was made, Videojet worked closely with Dutch Gold Honey to prepare for implementation. Over the course of a week, they pre-loaded the CLARiSUITE database with customer information such as sell by/use by dates, lot numbers, bar code data, case descriptions and graphics. More than 300 different codes were put into 15 templates, with each message being started by an operator scanning a unique bar code. After the new printers were installed, they were networked and linked to a centralized message database.

The Videojet team not only installed and tested the hardware and software but also provided on-site training to Dutch Gold Honey's operators and maintenance staff to bring them up to speed.
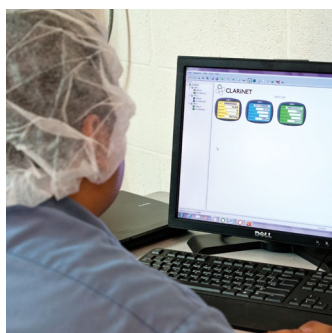
Videojet 2350 printing on shipping cases

Ink jet code on top of plastic bottle

CLARiSUITE software screen

A new Videojet Code Assurance Solution was integrated into Dutch Gold's production lines successfully. It brought the following benefits:

1. Streamline the changeover process

An operator scans three bar codes from a work sheet and a changeover is completed. The message is pulled from the database and sent to both the bottle printers and case coders. This saved Dutch Gold Honey nearly five minutes per setup, which adds up to 1.5 hours per day or 7.5 hours a week and reduced errors to almost none.

Torres states, *"After CLARiSUITE was implemented, we are confident that the codes are correct with our unique bar codes and unique numbers that Videojet helped us create in our database. It is pretty much error free. Ever since we implemented CLARiSUITE, we have not had any errors with our coding."*

2. Standardize message creation

When a new coding requirement is received, Torres opens a template that Videojet set up for them and fills in the blanks, e.g., customer name, quantities of cases, size of the bottles, etc. The new message is stored in the database and can be applied to products and cases when the corresponding bar code is scanned. According to Torres, the entire process is "extremely easy".

3. Provide immediate production information

While Torres is sitting in front of his computer, he is able to know which lines are running, how fast they are running and how efficient they are. Based on this information, he can take immediate action to improve productivity.

Priceless peace of mind

Today, Dutch Gold Honey has seen a return on investment by eliminating rework, waste and labor costs associated with having to rework miscoded products.

The combination of CLARiSUITE and the Videojet printers result in very little downtime for Dutch Gold Honey. *"There's basically no downtime when it comes to the 1510 printers,"* says Torres. *"We turn them on in the morning and turn them off in the evening. They pretty much take care of themselves, which allows my team to focus on other important tasks."*

"The Videojet project team defined the exact requirements of our application prior to arriving on site for installation so we'd be in the best possible position for the new coding solution rollout."

Jim Gerlach, Production Scheduler

Videojet CLARiSUITE key features

Videojet's CLARiSUITE code assurance solution helps diminish coding inaccuracies by removing human error during the message setup process, and helps ensure customers meet retail and regulatory guidelines for accuracy and product traceability. Additional features include:

- Job selection. Utilize hand-scanners for selecting the appropriate print job, ensuring the correct message loads automatically and is ready to run across the entire production line.
- Connected devices. Connect scanners and coders simultaneously from a single point to maximize productivity.
- Bar code validation. Scanners can be located at various points on the production line to ensure the correct raw materials are being used or to ensure the shipping container bar codes are accurate. If a scanner detects an unreadable or incorrect code, it can sound an alert, reject the product or stop the line.

Videojet Code Assurance

Videojet's Code Assurance solution ensures that the correct code is applied in the correct location on the correct product or packaging. Customer benefits:

- Drive productivity gains
- Reduce risk, rework and recalls
- Secure and streamline data management
- Protect the brand

Jose Torres, Production Maintenance Lead
Demonstrating message changeover

"...We are confident that the codes are correct... It is pretty much error-free."

Jose Torres, Production Maintenance lead

CLARiSUITE
Code Assurance Solution

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