Cool Things We Saw at IFFA Dairy Entry #1

It’s on again. Every three years the German city of Frankfurt hosts the International Trade Fair for the Meat Industry - or IFFA for short if you’re reading the German translation. It’s the largest meat industry trade fair in the world, and this year a total of 860 exhibitors from 44 different countries are showcasing the latest in slaughtering, cutting, refrigerating, packaging, cleaning and maintenance – and we’ve sent a Wiley delegation to take it all in.

We’ve dispatched two of our best: Senior Process Engineer Tim Fitzpatrick and Engineering Specialist Peter Finnie. They’re relaying back their learnings, which we’re turning into a three-part journal on the coolest exhibits and discussions at IFFA. This is the first edition and covers the show’s opening weekend. Here’s what Peter and Tim nominated as their favorite things from each day.

Photo here

Tim Fitzpatrick

Coolest Thing I Saw Day 1: Actually, it wasn’t a thing it was a fact. Did you know that Hall 8 at Messe Frankfurt, where the expo is held, is roughly 180m square? That’s huge and especially in comparison to the Brisbane Convention Centre at Southbank, which is only 75 meters wide. Also, the Messe has 12 halls most of which are just or slightly smaller than Hall 8. And while I’m here I just want to mention that alternative chicken (there’s a lot of alternative protein on display) tastes a lot like chicken.

Photo

Peter Finnie

Coolest Thing I Saw Day 1: It was this kabab assembly robot. The unit is composed of two small Staubli robots in an overhead frame which load skewers at two stations from meat and vegetables randomly placed on the belts. A camera and vision software orientates the robots’ tools when picking items from the belt. The system defects the position of the skewer point as loading continues and adjusts for any defection caused by the increase in weight during loading. The demo model we saw was loading chocolate brownies and jubes onto the skewers and it was very cool.

Photo

Peter Finnie

Coolest Thing I Saw Day 2: Without a doubt it was this robotic beef splitting saw developed by AiRA Robotics and on display at the Frontmatec stand. Its capabilities aside, I just liked how menacing it was. It’s a large Fanuc robot that carries this big heavy tool. It’s fitted with guide wheels that open while the tool engages and clamps either side of the spine as precision cuts are made.

Photo

Tim Fitzpatrick

Coolest Thing I Saw Day 2: I really liked this prototype pneumatic tool from German company EFA. It’s designed to clean cut lines on dirty stock post-slaughter and works with its own drop pot vacuum system to boot.