CASEY FLANAGAN | ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Family-Owned Chip Company Quickens Unloading with **Bulk Storage Bin Upgrade**

The 93-years-running Backer's Potato Chip Company upgraded its bulk storage bin system to minimize repair time and significantly speed up its unloading process.

BACKER'S POTATO CHIP COMPANY'S current owners have proven to be a chip off the old block in production innovation. The chip producer has upgraded its bulk storage bin system to cut repair time and quicken unloading, according to equipment supplier Vanmark.

Backer's has been a family business since its start in 1931 in Callaway County, Missouri. Grandma and Grandpa Backer peeled and sliced potatoes by hand and cooked them in a 16-inch donut kettle, a few pounds at a time, to begin the company's journey.

Fast-forward to today, and the company is in its 93rd year, now run by the second and third generations of the Backer family.

Backer's processes 7,000 lb of potato chips per hour at its facility, covering several types of branded and private label potato chips, all of which are gluten-free, vegan, and made with all-natural ingredients like fresh sunflower oil. The company ships its chips across the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.

Legacy bulk storage bin system showing signs of age

One reality of operating across generations is that tried-and-true equipment can eventually require an upgrade.

Backer's experienced this with its bulk bin system, which was decades old and deteriorating quickly. The system was causing frequent downtime as the company had to make repairs, contributing to



IMAGE PROVIDED BY VANMARK

The modular design of Vanmark's Bulk Storage Bin System allows for sharing of interior walls to save floor space.

challenges in keeping up with product demand.

Also contributing to production challenges was a potato unloading process the company deemed slow and inflexible.

To help alleviate these production challenges, Backer's visited Vanmark's facility in Creston, Iowa, to see the company's Bulk Storage Bin System. The system receives potatoes and holds them until they're ready for processing.

The chip producer has worked with Vanmark for decades and already has several legacy machines from the company in its facility. It chose to continue working with the supplier for this installation due to the durability of its existing equipment and support over the years.

Backer's placed an order for the Vanmark system after seeing it in action, choosing a six-bin system to support production.

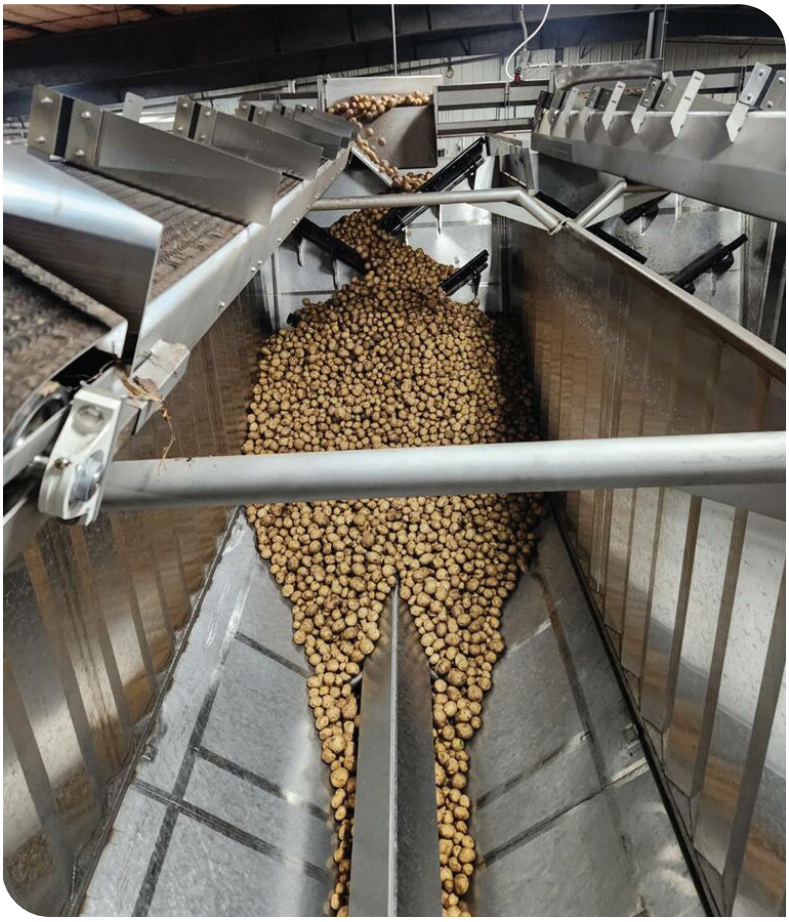


IMAGE PROVIDED BY VANMARK

The Vanmark system receives and stores potatoes, then unloads them when its time for processing.

Backer's installs a new system with modern improvements

Backer's worked with PFI, Vanmark's sister company, to install the new Bulk Storage Bin System. Partnering with PFI for its turnkey equipment and service proved less costly than completing the install through independent contractors.

The system is built to be flexible, durable, and gentle in product handling. Its modular design allows for space savings, as the bins can share interior walls.



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The inclusion of multiple discharge points allows Backer's to send product to either of its two flume systems and processing lines, rather than being limited to one or the other.

A catwalk surrounding the system also improves accessibility.

Backer's also mentioned to Vanmark during the design process that it had encountered issues with conveyors wearing out and breaking at "drop points" over time. Vanmark's engineers responded to the issue by designing heavy-duty framing for those areas, reducing wear and tear.

With the new system in place, Backer's can shift its attention away from making repairs to aging equipment, and toward the growth of its business. The speed of the company's unloading process has also increased significantly.

Valuing their long and continued relationship after the new installation, the two companies expect to continue working together as Backer's grows.