

Packaging breakthrough for Grimsby firm

■ Fish box technology is global winner

By Vince McDonagh

A REVOLUTIONARY breakthrough in the packaging and transportation of fish has signalled a major success story for a Grimsby company.

Tri-Pack Plastics has completed a £750,000 investment at its South Humber site to cope with growing demand at home and abroad for what it claims are its world-beating and unique range of Coolseal fish boxes.

Designed specially for the cold chain delivery of chilled fish, Coolseal boxes are, say the company, rapidly penetrating the traditional expanded polystyrene packaging mar-

ket. The flat-packed 100% recyclable polypropylene boxes are simply stacked or baled for collection or disposal after delivery of the fish.

Patented technology is used to seal the edges of the fibre-free fluted material resulting in a strong yet extremely lightweight and hygienic pack.

Company founder and managing director Stephen Clarke said the branded poly-propylene package is flatpacked pre-use, saving huge areas of expensive factory space, and can be stacked or sealed for collection or disposal after delivery of the fish.

Mr Clarke said he was delighted with the success of the Coolseal boxes - a project he has been working on for the past 15 years. "Customer feedback has been excellent because there is much less of a disposal problem than with polystyrene boxes. The major UK retailers have told us that

this is a massive advantage for them and we have had some excellent feedback from the French retail giant Leclerc."

The savings for processors, forwarding companies and su-

permarkets have led to a staggering three million boxes a year already leaving the Grimsby plant.

The new equipment to cater for the increasing demand has seen 10 million identified as a new target. Mr Clarke said although he perfected the Coolseal concept some time ago, the market wasn't ready for them until relatively recently.

"Environmental issues have suddenly come to the fore, driven by the supermarkets and airfreight requests for easier transportation. Retailers need a pack that fits in with normal distribution channels, they want to deliver fish on the same vehicles that they take poultry and meat in."

The investment to increase production levels was made possible after an Icelandic packaging company took a 35 per cent stake in Tri-Pack over a year ago.

Tri-Pack has boosted staff numbers from 50 to 60 and Mr Clarke has space on his site for further expansion.

• See *Grimsby & Hull* feature pages 24-31.



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