

Butcher Sells Meat From German Vending Machine

Persistence paid off for Rick Reams; he is the first butcher in the U.S. to import a meat vending machine from Germany. Two of them were filled and running before Memorial Day in front of his business, RJ's Meats in Hudson, Wis. With 44 slots, he can fill the machines with up to 500 packages of meat.

"The size of the package doesn't matter. I can adjust every 3 millimeters whether it's for bacon or pot roast," Reams says.

The machine's versatility to dispense everything from his popular burger blend to his prize winning sausages, brats and wieners, caught his attention the minute he saw one at an international meat trade show in Germany. That was four years ago, when the European manufacturer, Regiomat, wasn't ready to sell to North America.

At the 2016 trade show, Reams connected with a salesman, who had attended the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. Reams convinced him that RJ's Meat should be the first U.S. buyer.

The refrigerated machines have many safety features including UV-protected, triple pane safety glass. He places them under his shop's overhang out of the direct sun, and there are food safety measures in place. For example, if the temperature goes too high, the machine won't dispense anything. Reams can also be notified through his phone, or be informed when it needs to be restocked with product or change. The machines are set up for cash or credit cards, with the prices the same as in the shop.

Memorial Day was extra busy, and Reams added products three times. He notes the items that sell changes from day to day.

"On Sunday bacon was selling like crazy, but not much sold on Memorial Day," he says.

Though it was a substantial investment (about half the cost of his first home), Reams anticipates a two-year payback. But the biggest payback may be customer service and a little more personal time. Customers who commute to the Twin Cities in Minnesota have been asking for later hours (after 7 p.m.) Monday-Saturday and longer hours on Sunday. After nearly three decades of running the family-owned business, Reams didn't want to take away more personal time from his family or employees. The vending machine extends the hours and is convenient for customers who need to shop early in the morning or at night.

"Reception has been fantastic," Reams says, noting he has seen postings of customers taking selfies with the vending ma-

chines. An acquaintance reported that he saw seven people waiting in line in the rain.

Though Reams doesn't know if customers will wait in line on cold winter days, the machines have frost heaters and work down to 20 degrees below zero.

Winter sales could be just as good, especially during Viking and Green Bay Packer football games. And he can only speculate what meat needs fans will have during the 2018 Super Bowl in Minneapolis, less than 30 miles away.

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Butcher Rick Reams uses a vending machine he imported from Germany to sell meat direct to customers. It dispenses everything from his popular burger blend to prize winning sausages, brats and wieners.



Water-driven, self-cleaning screen is designed to work in water as shallow as 4 in.

Self-Cleaning Shallow Water Screen

Anyone who depends on surface water for irrigation will be interested in this self-cleaning screen that's designed to work in water as shallow as 4 inches.

"It draws water that's only 2 inches below the surface, which is usually the cleanest water. There's nothing else on the market that can pump out of such shallow water and also clean itself at the same time," says inventor Bob Wietharn.

The Riverscreen floats on four pontoons and draws water from more than 35 sq. feet of screening area. Water is delivered through a pipe available in 4, 6, 8, 10, or 12 inch diameter with 150 gpm to 4,000 gpm capacity. A screened rotating drum is supported by an aluminum frame that mounts on

the pontoons. Flowing water moves past a series of paddles, which force the drum to rotate while a stainless steel spray bar mounted inside the drum cleans the screen.

An optional electric drive can be added for use in extreme conditions such as manure lagoons. Also optional is a galvanized lift boom that lets one person quickly swing out and gently lower the Riverscreen to the water surface.

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