

Maintenance procedure and process



MAINTENANCE TIPS

Both provide the foundation for successful operations on the plant floor

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When it comes to defining the role of maintenance departments in processing facilities, it varies greatly. Maintenance departments have three basic responsibilities. First, as the name implies, is to maintain the assets of a company. Next is to repair equipment when it breaks down. And finally, the third role, which varies from plant to plant, is to have an active role in plant expansions and new equipment installations.

What does it mean?

Let's focus on the first role. What exactly does "maintaining the assets of an organization" mean? Some would answer it is to delay the inevitable breakdown. An even better question is, "How do we know we are effectively maintaining our equipment?" Is it measured simply by the amount of time a piece of equipment is out of service? An evisceration department in a poultry facility may measure whether or not maintenance is keeping the equipment adjusted (or whether they are completing proper weekly preventative maintenance on the equipment) by tracking the number of attached vents.

World-class maintenance organizations begin by aligning their preventive maintenance (PM) program with the equipment manufacturer's recommendations. This is the starting point for the creation of specific PM's for each piece of equipment. Unfortunately, many preventive maintenance work orders



consist of vague line item descriptions such as, “grease bearings.” What bearings? How many bearings? What kind of grease? How much grease? Or, “check belt tension.” What should the belt tension be? How is it measured? What is to be done if it is too tight or too loose?

The point is that the best PM programs have the detail printed on the PM work orders. These work orders will also tell the mechanic what safety equipment and tools are required, as well as an estimate of how long the PM should take.

So what happens when, for instance, a bad bearing is discovered during the PM? If the PM work order says to grease a bearing but the bearing is bad and needs to be replaced, is this part of the PM or is this now a repair? Again, the world-class maintenance organizations will step out of the PM work or-

der and create a corrective work order for the repair. This allows for a true picture of what is actually occurring with the equipment. When the repair cost is lumped into the PM cost, it blurs the true cost of ownership. An organization’s preventive maintenance costs become inflated and the repair costs are understated.

It also makes it difficult to get to the next step: predictive maintenance. Creating the corrective work order for the repair makes it much easier to determine how often particular parts are failing and allows the world-class maintenance organizations to predict failure and add changing of parts at regular intervals before failure occurs. Then if failure begins to occur between those intervals, this becomes a red flag signaling something more severe is wrong with the equipment.

Next is the equipment performance issue. Accuracy is a measurement of maintenance effectiveness in the equipment in first processing operations, like stunning, killing, picking, venting and eviscerating, etc. Maintenance is often charged with making adjustments on this equipment based on different flock sizes.

The maintenance department’s effectiveness is now measured as equipment efficiency and/or a yield rating for the department. Several areas of concern here are where does the data get measured and how do the results flow backward in the process? For example, an improperly adjusted stunner may cause broken pulley bones, which don’t get discovered until deboning operations two to six hours after the birds have left first processing. There must be a process of reporting information backward in the process (or better yet, there should be checks done before leaving first processing) in order to make adjustments to improve the operation. The same holds true for various measurements like broken wings, bloody wings, over-scald, torn skin, feathers, etc. This is where consistent application of a root cause analysis, or the FMEA process, will begin to remove the variation in the process being analyzed.

Foundation for success

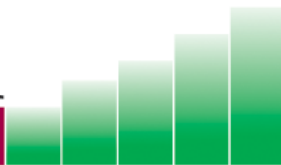
Well-run maintenance organizations, just like their production counterparts, consist of procedures and process. These procedures and processes provide the foundation for successful operations on the plant floor and provide management the tools to continuously improve their operations. Future articles will explore how to track downtime and how drive to the root cause of maintenance issues. **M&P**

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