



Large and small
character inkjet
Macsween
Case study

Specialty meat producer expands their business with simple innovation from Videojet

Macsween of Edinburgh, UK, is a third generation family business originally established as a butcher's shop in the 1950's. The company has been passed down through a family of natural entrepreneurs and is today run by brother and sister, James and Jo Macsween. The company recently celebrated over 60 years in business.

Macsween was the world's first dedicated haggis production facility and is passionate about making the best tasting foods. Creating unique products has allowed Macsween to attract additional consumers and take haggis into new and wider markets. Such innovations have included the first vegetarian haggis, the microwaveable "Haggis in a Hurry" range, plus seasonal special editions including venison and three bird haggis. There is also a popular black pudding range.

“Videojet inkjet technology has revolutionized what used to be a very dirty job. It is the best equipment on the market. Coding can be that easy”.

**James Macsween, Managing Director
Macsween of Edinburgh**



Macsween of Edinburgh now accounts for approximately 40% of the haggis market. They process an average of eight tons of product daily, which equates to an average of 25,000 units. They are also one of the first food companies in Scotland to recycle 100% of its waste.

Macsween’s continuous innovation has made them an award-winning company. Accolades include the prestigious ‘Morrisons Award for Outstanding Business’ at the IGD Food Industry Awards, and the highest accolade of 3 Gold Stars from the Guild of Fine Foods – the only haggis to ever have won this award.

The company has quality, innovation and environmental responsibility at its heart; core values which Videojet shares.

In recent years, product development has been driven by changes in how consumers use and cook the products. This has led to new packaging solutions designed to enhance versatility and maximize convenience. In turn, this has introduced a wider variety of packaging materials and formats, including clear shrink wrap packaging, ‘sausage’ shape, traditional ‘round’ shape, vacuum packed sliced black pudding and haggis in black packaging.

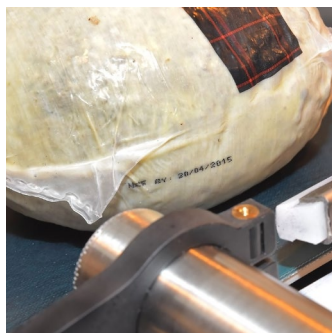
New packaging design, together with the need to track supply throughout the UK and Western Europe, led to changes in the company’s product coding requirements. As the business grew and Macsween secured contracts with large supermarket retailers such as Marks and Spencers (M&S), manual and hand-held product labeling became inefficient and dated.

Previously, the company predominantly used a ticker press code gun to apply sell-by dates to their products. This approach had an inherent lack of control, especially as the company’s production increased. UK retailers such as M&S expect their suppliers to follow strict quality guidelines and to have processes in place to ensure consistent and accurate date coding. This helps to protect their consumer’s health and their own brand.

James Macsween, Managing Director for Macsween, approached Videojet in search of an automated coding and printing solution that would help them address the new demand for increased traceability. Initially they needed a solution for two coding needs:

1. Coding tags with all mandatory production information that goes onto a nylon loop around a shrink wrapped haggis
2. Coding Julian date accurately and clearly onto jet black packs of sliced black pudding





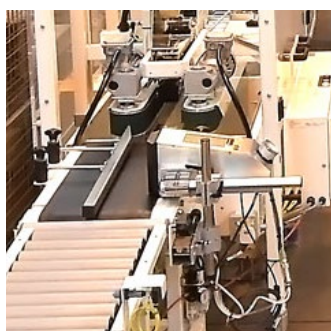
The variation in packaging materials and colors meant the printing solution had to be flexible and not a 'one size fits all' approach. Due to the broad range of technologies and products that Videojet offers, Macsween was able to select one supplier to meet all their new coding and printing needs. This provided a huge benefit in terms of integration simplicity and training requirements; something which can burden customers when investing in new suppliers and packaging equipment.

James Macsween said, "When the need for an automated coding solution arose, Videojet was the obvious choice... if I can buy equipment that makes things as simple as possible for my staff, then that benefits the whole company".

Videojet was able to present a solution for both the primary products and the outer cases with their latest inkjet innovations. Macsween chose four of the simple and reliable Videojet 1000 Line models to address their primary coding requirements. This included two Videojet 1710 pigmented systems to mark high contrast text in a bright blue color onto the black flexible film packaging – a requirement stipulated by the M&S quality team. This particular application required printing from underneath the line, which can present print quality problems for traditional continuous inkjet printers. The unique CleanFlow™ printhead design of the Videojet 1000 Line helps ensure there are no issues with ink build-up on the printhead, eliminating nozzle blockages and maintaining high-quality, consistent codes.

“The printers are very user friendly, the system is easy to navigate and setting up new jobs is quick and uncomplicated...you can’t get the date wrong!”

Karen Alexander, Line Leader
Macsween of Edinburgh



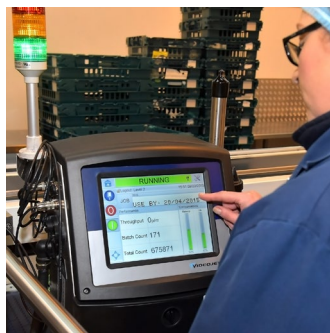
James Macsween went on to say, “The technology is effective, reliable and very clean... If you look after them and follow the on-machine advice, they just go on and on. The cartridge-based ink system is fool proof for my team – the cartridges go in and out with no mess and there is significantly less waste”.

In addition to the continuous inkjet printers, Macsween purchased three Videojet 2300 large character inkjet printers to handle their outer case labeling. The previous method consisted of a mix of manual and semi-automatic labeling. Using the 2300 printers to mark high resolution text and bar codes direct to the cases has removed the cost and waste associated with the previous labeling method, plus it was cleaner, more efficient and achieved ANSI grade A codes.

James Macsween explains, “The changes to the outer case coding have been transformational. Throughput has increased, downtime reduced and the print quality has helped with our rebrand to look more professional. In addition, we have reduced the cost per print and have been able to reduce head count on the line, allowing extra time for key training of staff.”

The newest Videojet products come with one common user interface, which is very intuitive and user friendly. The CLARiTY interface features a bright color touch screen with simple icons which helped Macsween operators navigate the systems quickly, reducing the time it takes for job changeovers and message set-up. It also helps enable the entire production team to effectively operate the printers when needed, removing the need for any special training or equipment specialists – an important benefit for the family run business.

The interface has built-in Code Assurance features which proved a huge advantage to Macsween’s operatives. For example, the new CIJ printers allow set-up criteria to be selected from defined fields, greatly reducing the chance of any errors by operators inputting the incorrect date. The CLARiTY interface together with on-board Code Assurance helps staff on a day-to-day basis, and allows management to have faith in the entire coding process.



Karen Alexander, Line Leader for Macsween confirms, "The printers are very user friendly, the system is easy to navigate and setting up new jobs is quick and uncomplicated...you can't get the date wrong!"

James and Jo Macsween invested in a Videojet care package to help ensure the equipment was always properly maintained and running at peak performance.

According to James Macsween, "The machines run very smoothly and we do very little maintenance ourselves now... some of our operators have used the technical support helpline for instant support and found this very good."

Videojet was proud to assist the company in automating their coding and labeling process as well as providing Macsween with new opportunities to improve operational efficiency and reduce costs. The UK Videojet team hope to be part of new projects as the Macsween brand continues to grow.

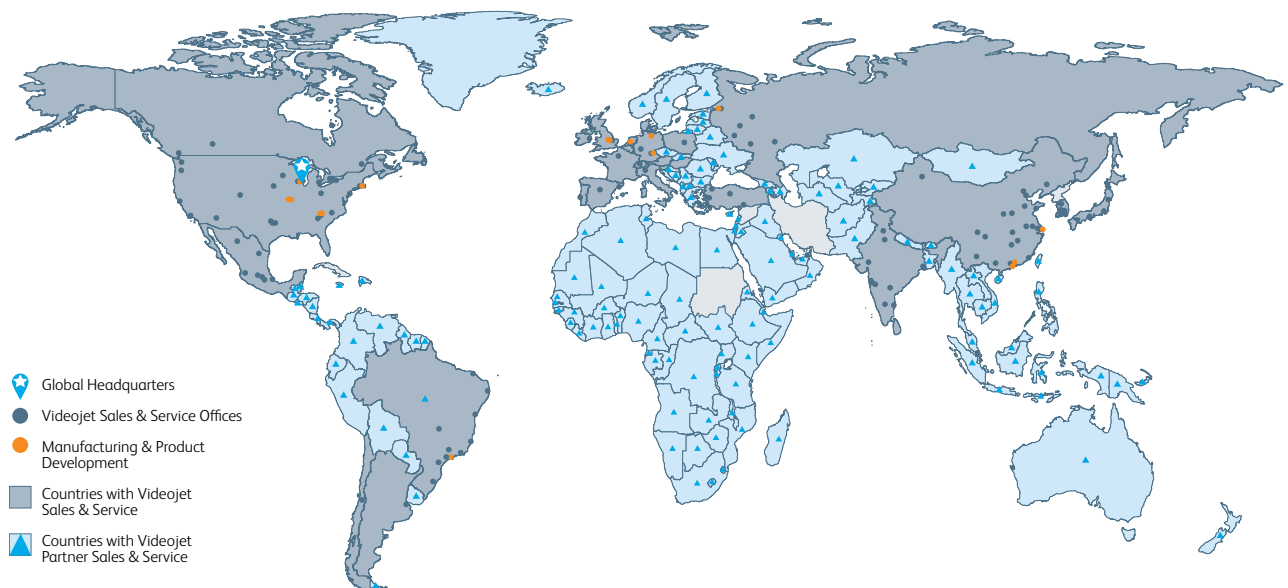
James Macsween concludes, "Videojet inkjet technology has revolutionized what used to be a very dirty job. It is the best equipment on the market. Coding can be that easy".

Peace of mind comes as standard

Videojet Technologies is a world-leader in the product identification market, providing in-line printing, coding, and marking products, application specific fluids, and product life cycle services.

Our goal is to partner with our customers in the consumer packaged goods, pharmaceutical, and industrial goods industries to improve their productivity, to protect and grow their brands, and to stay ahead of industry trends and regulations. With our customer application experts and technology leadership in Continuous Inkjet (CIJ), Thermal Inkjet (TIJ), laser marking, Thermal transfer Overprinting (TTO), case coding and labeling, and wide array printing, Videojet has more than 325,000 printers installed worldwide.

Our customers rely on Videojet products to print on over ten billion products daily. Customer sales, application, service, and training support is provided by direct operations with over 3,000 team members in 26 countries worldwide. In addition, Videojet's distribution network includes more than 400 distributors and OEMs, serving 135 countries.



Call **+971 4 550 8713**
Email **MEA.Sales@videojet.com**
or visit **<http://www.videojet.eu/me/en>**

Videojet Technologies Inc.
3rd Floor, Al Zahrawi Building #34
Dubai Healthcare City
Oud Metha
P.O.Box 71569
Dubai
United Arab Emirates

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