

VELOCITY VIDEO CASE HISTORY

A DC VELOCITY SPEED CHALLENGE

Powering pickle perfection

America's top pickle brand keeps things "green" with the value provided by Toyota forklifts.

WHEN YOU ARE AMERICA'S BEST-SELLING brand of pickles, you have to ensure that the material handling equipment you choose for your manufacturing and distribution operations can keep up with the 170 million jars you produce each year. Make the wrong choice and you can find yourself in a bit of a pickle.

Pickles, relishes, and peppers from Mt. Olive Pickle Company are sold in all 50 states. Every jar comes from the company's manufacturing and distribution facilities in Mount Olive, N.C., with a total of 1.2 million square feet. Every day, about 70 truckloads of products leave its docks.

"When we are running full-bore in production, we can't be sitting around," says Chris Whitley, Director of DC Operations, Production, and Logistics. "At times, we have 50 trucks of cucumbers waiting to be brought into the building. They are perishable, so we can't wait around."

Some 80 Toyota forklifts keep products moving through the various steps of production in this fast-paced operation. Many of the forklifts working in production need to be used indoors and in outside yards where large tanks filled with brine and other ingredients transform raw cucumbers into pickles.

A number of these forklifts feature pneumatic tires and are equipped with special attachments, such as clamps to grab boxes of raw cucumbers, rotators to dump cucumbers into washers or the large vats of brine, and extended forks to move containers of in-process work. These same forklifts also move pickles, and the glass jars that will contain them, to the production lines for packing. Completed products are then moved to docks, where they will make the short truck ride to the nearby distribution building.

Once the products arrive at the distribution center, 5,000-pound capacity forklifts with internal combustion (IC) engines take pallets loaded with cases of full jars to temporary storage, where they are floor-stacked up to four pallets high.

"The IC forklifts are clean-burning and can work in confined spaces, including our coolers," notes Whitley.

The pickle, relish, and pepper business is rather seasonal. The peak production period runs from May through October, while summer picnics and the holiday season create spikes in distribution activity. As a result, the size of Mt. Olive's forklift fleet changes throughout the year to meet demand. The company's Toyota forklift dealer, Southeast Industrial Equipment (Southeast), makes certain that Mt. Olive has the right number of dependable trucks on hand to fill current needs.

"Mt. Olive Pickle leases their equipment primarily because they want to have fresh equipment," says Michael Graham, Territory Support Manager at Southeast. "They run their equipment very hard. Having reliable, durable equipment is a key aspect to their expectations."

Mt. Olive chooses Toyota forklifts because of their long-term value and dependability. Technicians out of Southeast Industrial Equipment's Wilson, N.C., branch provide regular service on the vehicles, including planned maintenance and any needed repairs.

"Southeast has been a very good partner," says Whitley. "They're able to help us at a moment's notice. If we have an issue with equipment or have needs for additional pieces

of equipment, they are very receptive and a great partner. It's been a very good relationship."

Whitley adds that his forklift drivers enjoy operating the Toyota forklifts. "They like the ergonomics and the way the controls are set up," he says. He adds that blue safety lights on the forklifts help to assure a safer environment for others working in areas where the forklifts are operating.

Good service, reliability, maneuverability, durability, and safety make Toyota forklifts a good "dill" all around.

For more information on Toyota's full-service product line of forklifts and warehouse equipment, visit www.ToyotaForklift.com/forklifts.



To see a video of Toyota forklifts in action at Mt. Olive Pickle Company, go to dcvtv.com and click on the Velocity Video on Channel 2.