



SEFAR **Over 185 years of excellence in precision fabrics**

by Daniel Kinek, Product Manager, Sefar AG

Sefar looks back on over 185 years of producing fabrics for technical applications. From the beginnings when it was hard manual labour by local Swiss farmers to mechanically weave the silk cloths, up to now with state-of-the-art weaving and finishing facilities in Switzerland, Romania & Thailand.

The portfolio of polymer-based yarns encompasses more than 25 different types, carefully selected for each of the various applications. Polyamide and Polyester are by far the leading yarn types found in milling applications. Hence, Sefar produces the majority of these yarns itself through integration of yarn manufacturing facilities.

Bolting cloths or milling fabrics still represent one of the core businesses that Sefar caters to. But alongside the still important application of screen printing mesh, Sefar nowadays is also successful in custom fabric solutions for anything from dry foods to iron ore and alumina. Just to name a few.

To sum things up: Sefar is the leading manufacturer of monofilament precision fabrics for customer-specific solutions in separating, coating and dosing for industrial processes and technical applications. Worldwide, approximately 2200 employees work hard every day to produce the best possible precision fabrics and support customers through our 26 international subsidiaries. In countries where Sefar does not have own operations, we typically work with knowledgeable distributors. Close relationships with OEMs worldwide also ensure, that Sefar is always on the forefront of customers' needs and industry trends.

Food safety requirements for today's food production

Just like in the last century, millers require mesh for their sifters that produce reliable and accurate sifting. After all, a good yield and precise separation are what generates profit for a mill, no matter if they are small in capacity or like it does for major milling corporations. But with seemingly more and more

concerns with food safety and related scandals within the entire food producing industry, it is not surprising that an increasing number of aspects within the entire production chain are being regulated. Regulations by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the EU Commission (European Union) plus several sometimes more local laws and norms try to ensure unified





with fabrics produced specifically for the milling industry. A similar level of caution should be applied when consumables are sourced from manufacturers or distributors with questionable reputation. At the end of the day, millers and decision makers in a mill need to have peace of mind. In order to focus on what they do best: produce excellent quality flour.

Beyond mesh

Sefar looks at the whole milling process in its entirety. Beyond what a single machine like a plan sifter can do. That is probably one of the core reasons why Sefar is a trusted partner throughout the milling industry.

The product offering of fabrics is kept at the highest possible quality level and innovations carefully introduced where we see the need for it. For example our all-new NYTAL Sieve Cleaners* that take a new approach on cleaning performance together with blue colouring of the body to enhance food safety by better visual detection in the unlikely case of fragments breaking off. With cleaners that are white or transparent in colour, any fragments breaking off are much harder to visually detect when mixed

standards, aiming to make our foods – including flour – as pure and healthy as they should be.

However, the awareness and the importance of compliancy with national / international food safety regulations are sometimes not fully understood by millers and/or decision makers for the purchasing process. Baring in mind that not only the plan sifter machine itself but also all consumables more or less come into contact with the flour, adhering to the highest food safety standards should be part of the mind set when selecting these types of components for a mill. This responsibility is also on Sefar – and we take it very seriously.

Peace of mind – the Swiss way

Sefar has always had a quality approach to its product offering and its role in the industry. Maybe it is the Swiss way of doing things. Millers today can have the confidence that SEFAR NYTAL® mesh and the accompanying accessories are not only produced to delivery excellent performance and offer unique variety. All fabrics comply with FDA Regulations Art. 21 as well as the European Unions Regulations 1935/2004 and 10/2011. And it is similar with the Metal Mesh product line, conforming to the FDA's article 21 and the EU Recommendation "Guidelines for Metals and Alloy". And for important accessories like sieve cleaners, connector sleeves, dust filter bags, adhesives or stretching equipment our focus on quality is just as high.

As the flour has to migrate through dozens of screens, the mesh has an exposed role when it comes to food safety. Any potentially dangerous substances on the mesh or in the case of screens breaking and yarn particles getting into the product stream, need to be controlled. At this point it's hard to comprehend, that sometimes mills – knowingly or unknowingly – use screen printing mesh in their operations. While these types of mesh may share the same weaving specifications (polymer type, mesh opening etc.), adherence to food safety regulations is not of the same high level as

with the more or less same colour end product.

In addition, our knowledgeable Sefar representatives support millers wherever possible in their needs. For example, frequent training sessions on-site are important to improve or secure the understanding when it comes to fabric choices, screening of frames or the role of preventive maintenance with a focus on consumables – especially in control sifters/rebolters. This may seem like a no-brainer to some customers, other may feel it is overly cautious.

At the end of the day, the mill will have to take these decisions, but for example by changing frames and mesh as well as sieve cleaners on a strict 3-month routine including frequent checks during each interval this will drastically improve food safety. Any contamination in this last production step will most likely go straight to your customer, for example a bakery. Certainly a scenario that we all want to avoid!

As with the aforementioned sieve cleaners, understanding food safety conformity should reach beyond just the mesh. Sefar applies this thinking also to other accessory lines like connector sleeves, dust filter bags and adhesives. All these may appear to be less important when it comes to keeping the end product food safe. The adhesive is important as it ensures a strong bond between the mesh and the sifter frame. Then again, it's clear in colour and used in a somewhat smaller quantity compared to other materials in the process.

However, Cyanoacrylates – the standard type of adhesive used in milling applications – should only be used if it is FDA compliant. The same logic applies when thinking about connector sleeves and dust filter bags. Running a mill is a complex operation with many productions steps and machines and procedures. Each of these end up requiring many consumable parts. But only if food safety is understood and broken down to each and every component, we can be sure that the mill has done everything possible to not only produce nutritious but also safe flour! ☺

* Currently available in selected regions