



# ConAgra Foods “The team spirit”

Featuring small character inkjet printers  
traceability of popcorn ■ ■ ■



“Markem-Imaje gave us excellent service, from the initial order right through to delivery and installation of the equipment.”

**Scott Gerig,**  
engineering manager

**Name:** ConAgra Rensselaer

**Location:** Rensselaer (Indiana), USA

**Business:** production of microwave popcorn bags and tubs (ACTII and Orville Redenbacher brands)

**Number of employees:** 230

**Annual production:** 100,000,000 pounds

**Group:** ConAgra Foods, 90 plants across the USA, 25,000 employees, 65 brands.

## Lending an ear to the popcorn giant ■ ■ ■

ConAgra Rensselaer (Indiana) is one of 90 factories belonging to the US food industry giant ConAgra Foods. The facility operates round the clock, 7 days a week. Production is organized in 4x12-hour shifts. “We make microwave popcorn packaged in bags and tubs on 18 production lines,” explains the factory’s engineering manager, Scott Gerig.

Each package is coded with the following information: the plant and time code, the expiration date and the product description. On the line where the bags are manufactured, the speed is 150 bags per minute. The bags are marked on the side with a small character inkjet printer. The printhead is positioned horizontally. Regarding the tubs, the speed is lessened to 40 tubs per minute. Here again an inkjet printer is used but with a printhead positioned below as to print the code on the bottom of the tub.

ConAgra was already familiar with Markem. They had in fact already been using Markem laser and thermal transfer coders for other applications. “We were very satisfied with this equipment,” states Scott Gerig. “On the other hand, we were no longer satisfied with our inkjet printers. We had two major issues: they were costly in terms of maintenance and consumable consumption,” he adds.



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the team to trust ■ ■ ■

## Taking a pop ■ ■ ■

“At the beginning of 2008, we decided to change our obsolete equipment with new inkjet printers capable of keeping up with our high production speeds. We also needed them to be easily networkable,” states Scott Gerig. “Equally important, we needed an ink that would not be damaged or erased when put into the microwave.”

At the end of 2008, ConAgra’s production site managers asked Markem’s sales engineers to find them the necessary inkjet equipment. With Markem and Imaje joining forces, they presented the 9040, a small character inkjet printer perfectly suited to fit ConAgra’s needs.

**The ConAgra plant in Rensselaer chooses a Markem-Imaje small character inkjet printer to code its popcorn bags and tubs.**

Based on the reputation of eleven other 9040 printers installed in its sister popcorn plant in Hamburg (Iowa), they decided to start off with a trial. The equipment was installed in April and the trial lasted several days.

“The Markem-Imaje sales team installed, programmed and verified the equipment was working properly before starting operator training. They proved to be receptive to our needs and were therefore very efficient. They even came during the weekend, late at night and early in the morning to adjust start-off details,” comments Scott Gerig. Based on this successful trial, ConAgra Rensselaer purchased twenty 9040 printers.

“Markem-Imaje provided us with excellent service. They were efficient at taking our order, delivering and installing the equipment. Above all, the sales team was highly professional during the trial,” concludes Scott Gerig.



**The 9040 inkjet printers allow for 2 lines of print on every popcorn bag at the speed of 150 bags per minute.**

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