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Heinz raises energy efficiency with ABB drives

A new energy centre for a Heinz factory will be 14% more efficient thanks to help from ABB drives.

The energy centre has four boilers and replaces the existing boiler plant, which is now at the end of its operational life. Each boiler has two gas-fired burners supplied by Hamworthy Combustion, fitted with fans to push air into the flame. These eight fans are controlled by eight ABB standard drives, rated 55 kW, which vary the speed of the fans to control the amount of air injected depending on whether a high or low flame is required.

This ability to vary the flame to match steam demand is expected to make the energy centre 14% more efficient than the existing steam plant.

Barry Aspey, Environmental Compliance Manager for Heinz, says: "I specified variable speed drives for use on the plant so we could take account of the variations in demand.

"We have a six day a week operation and although steam demand stays reasonably flat, it does ramp up slowly over a period of 36 hours and ramps down over a period of 24 hours. It also varies from summer to winter, when there is a greater demand for heating and we also produce more soups. Variable speed drives are more responsive than mechanical dampers, which tend to introduce a time lag when demand changes direction."

Reducing the energy used also cuts the levels of Nitrous Oxide emissions. John Pilborough, Senior Control Engineer for Hamworthy says: "We offer variable speed drives as an option on our burners and usually use ABB drives."

The Heinz factory, at Kitt Green in Wigan, produces over 1.3 billion cans of food a year, including soups, beans, pasta, infant foods and puddings. This huge production requires the generation of 100 tonnes of steam every hour, which is used for both space heating and sterilisation of canned foods.

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Caption: A new energy centre for a Heinz factory will be 14% more efficient thanks to help from ABB drives, as these are more responsive than mechanical dampers. The Heinz factory at Kitt Green produces over 1.3 billion cans of food a year, requiring the generation of 100 tonnes of steam every hour.

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