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**PACKAGING AUTOMATION SECURES NEW
HIRE CONTRACT WITH PREMIER FRESH FOODS**

The UK's leading manufacturer of heat sealing machinery, Packaging Automation, has won its first hire order with Premier Fresh Foods, a leading supplier of fresh chickens and chicken portions, with the supply of a PA2016.

Premier Fresh Foods specialises in supplying the major multiples and boasts a number of well-known household names amongst its customer base. Formed from the merger of a number of businesses in 1992, the company operates from Scunthorpe, employing just under 2000 staff.

A need to hire a semi-automatic PA2016 at Scunthorpe was prompted by the introduction into one of the UK's leading retailers of two additional chicken dishes. These comprise a mouth-watering chicken and tomato casserole and tasty chicken drumsticks in onion gravy. Both meals are aimed at the growing convenience food market and represent a new sector which Premier Fresh Foods is keen to develop.

Sharon Thomas, development manager for Premier Fresh Foods, says the expansion of the range into the convenience market required the introduction of an ovenable leak proof pack. The company spoke to a number of suppliers before eventually choosing Packaging Automation.

Mrs Thomas says: "Packaging Automation has a good reputation in the industry and were able to provide a straight forward solution for the company's new products.

Arising from the initial machine presentation, Packaging Automation worked closely with technologists from Premier Fresh Foods to ensure that the product packaging was just right. A smooth walled Ecko foil tray was eventually chosen as the container, sealed using a KM packaging film.

A key part of the contract was the requirement to provide a strong seal due to the potential risk of gravy spillage arising from the contents. Although Premier

Fresh Foods was not new to heat-sealing, the move to ovenable foil trays lead to some new challenges for the company.

Premier Fresh Foods were impressed by Packaging Automation's professional approach and commitment. A formal product launch took place at Premier Fresh Foods on September 26 and the new lines are already selling well.

Neil Ashton Sales Manager for Packaging Automation said: "We were delighted to secure this hire order and will follow Premier Fresh Foods advance into convenience meals with great interest."

The PA2016 is a semi-automatic, rotary heat-sealing system with the option of modified atmosphere packaging. Capable of operating at up to 15 cycles per minute, the machine proved ideal for Premier Fresh Foods requirements.

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