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The moment when the first Cannex Asia Pacific show in China was opened with a ceremonial cutting of a tape by local dignitaries (front row from left) Zhou Yong of the Guangdong Metallurgical Energy Technology Association, Luo Yaowu, president of the Guangdong Food And Packaging Machinery Association, Shi Fuhua, deputy director of the Department of Science and Technology of Guangdong Province, and from The Canmaker magazine, editorial director John Nutting, publisher Allan Sayers and editor Mónica Higuera

CRISIS, WHAT CRISIS?

The metal packaging industry found a haven of positive economic activity when it met at the Cannex Asia Pacific show in Guangzhou, China, last month.

There may be a slowing of investment in the North American and European markets, but from the way metal packaging professionals were either signing up deals or asking for quotes from exhibitors, the business in the Middle East and Asia is growing unabated.

Manufacturers of canmaking equipment put on a great show, with machinery either making cans, pails and ends, or overflowing from booths.

One of the exhibitors said that for the first time he had been asked to prepare two full-blown proposals at an exhibition,

Judging by the buzz and energy at last month's Cannex Asia Pacific trade show in China, the canmaking business is gearing out of the economic gloom. Mónica Higuera, John Nutting and Daniel Searle report

while another one said that he was "pretty sure" of getting some business out of companies he had met for the first time.

Key to the success of Cannex Asia Pacific, the first of its kind ever held in China, was collaboration with the Ministry of Science & Technology and local authorities. At the opening ceremony, Shi Fuhua, deputy director of the Department of Science and Technology of Guangdong Province, welcomed delegates along with Luo Yaowu,

president of the Guangdong Food and Packaging Machinery Association and Zhou Yong of the Guangdong Metallurgical Energy Technology Association.

SLAC to create China's first "canmaking city"

An industrial park devoted to canmaking machinery manufacturing and development is being built with government support at Jiangsu Province in China.

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At Cannex Asia Pacific, Wantong Can-making Machinery demonstrated this welder for making round cans between one and five litres that runs at 45cpm

Rise of the Chinese machinery manufacturers

• The emergence of Chinese machinery manufacturers was evident at Cannex. Seven out of 11 Chinese welding equipment specialists were promoting their products to canmakers.

Shantou Light Industrial Machinery Factory showcased a 350 can a minute welder with so-called intelligent digital tin control at its booth, which Thai Tech in Thailand and Hilal Ambalaj in Turkey are using in their operations.

Established in 1957, Shantou Light was first to produce double seamers in China. It sells on average eight welders a year worldwide except for Europe and the US from a range that runs at between 80 and 500cpm.

Shantou Xinli Canning Equipment Manufacturing has upgraded its 120 cpm welder to run at between 150 and 200 cpm, two of which have been recently sold to Egyptian canmakers.

The company also makes the Dodo-S400 welder that runs at speeds between 30 and 55 metres a minute. Established in 1995, Shantou Xinli also makes can body forming machines.

Dongguan Chengtai Can-making Equipment, which began operating in 1994, is about to launch what it claims to be the first automatic machine for 18-litre cone-shaped pails which also includes beading and runs at 20cpm.

Meanwhile Chengtai's 18-litre square pail canmaking line now runs at up to 25cpm. Two lines were recently sold to Hilal in Turkey. Its four-litre can-making machinery, which Dubai's Hassani Group has

bought, now reaches speeds up to 30cpm.

Zhejiang Golden Eagle Food Machinery showcased its Smart-350 welder that runs at up to 500 cpm with a welding speed of 60 metres a minute. Three have been sold to undisclosed canmakers.

Golden Eagle also exhibited a DRD press: a canmaker in Chiapas, Mexico, is one of its first customers. The line features PLC digital control,



Frank Chan shows off the Smart 350 welder from Zhejiang Golden Eagle Food Machinery (above). Below is Shantou Xinqing Cannery Machinery New Dodo series welder



touch-screen operation, servo feeding and punching. It is also equipped with double-sheet detector, overload and double-punching protection system. The maximum output is 300 units a minute with three-out tooling.

Wantong Can-making Machinery exhibited canmaking equipment for round cans between one and five litres that runs at 45cpm. It also showcased a triple seamer offering speeds between 15 and 20 cpm which National Paints is using in Dubai; and a press for DRD cans that runs at up to 150 strokes a minute for diameters between 99mm and 172mm: Algeria's Embal Metal is one of its customers.

Zhengyi Tin Can Machine Co claims to have a 30 percent market share for welders in China. Its flagship product is the so-called Yangtze River frequency converter seam welder.

The latest model is the FHZ-D for large pails of diameters between 260 and 290mm which runs at speeds between 30 and 45 cans a minute.

Its high-frequency drying system GHG-E uses induction heating technology and is said to save half the energy.

The project at Xukuo Town near Suzhou City is a joint venture between canmaking equipment manufacturer SLAC Precision Equipment and the town's development agency.

Plans for creating the 'canmaking city', thought to be the first of its type in China, have been under development for a year. "We have already finished preparing the land and the infrastructure," said Ellen Zhang, vice director of the Investment Promotion Office of Xukuo Town, and who is managing the government part of the venture. "Benefits to investors will include government tax relief and other subsidies such as the provision of land."

Eventually the buildings at the lake-side park will have some 400,000 sq m of floor space with the 200,000 sq m site including residential housing for workers and researchers.

Shu An, chairman of SLAC Precision Equipment, is the biggest shareholder in the venture with about 50 percent. "What we want to create is a park that will ▶



Industry builders Shu An of SLAC and Ellen Zhang, vice director of the Investment Promotion Office of Xukuo Town

encourage investors to come to the region," he said. "The park, which to our knowledge is the first time this has been created in the region, is being devoted to metal packaging without pollution and which uses less natural resources."

Mr Shu plans to move his company, which specialises in end-manufacturing systems, the 2km from its current Suzhou City location to Xukuo Town. "We will have a larger site which will be part of a garden-style city," he said.

Canned soup for microwaves launched on Chinese market

A new style of microwaveable soup can has been launched in China.

It is the result of the tie-up between China's fast-growing ORG Canmaking and global canmaker Impress Metal Packaging. Added-value metal packaging developed by Impress is being used in China by ORG, which in turn gets access to new canmaking technologies.

Magicool soup is being marketed in the Beijing region by Yuan Young, part of the same group that owns ORG. It uses deep-drawn decorated aluminium cans with

aluminium ends that normally cannot be microwaved.

But as part of the marketing campaign Magicool is sold in six-packs along with a plastics cup. The 99mm-diameter 425g can is placed in the cup with a little water, which when microwaved heats up the soup.

"This enables the can to be heated with the lid on," said Robert Zanetto, Impress's business development director based in Hong Kong, "so the water acts as a heat exchanger. It means we can use much deeper cans."

The cans are manufactured at the Impress factory at Schweighouse in Germany. The aluminium easy-open ends are made at La Flèche in France.

Magicool has also launched a range of luncheon meat products in the Beijing region using Spam-style aluminium cans. These are similar to those made for the Daesang brand in South Korea and are also made at La Flèche.

But the canmaker is planning to bring production to a new manufacturing facility in South Korea. This could be "very soon," said Zanetto.

The drawn aluminium cans in two sizes – 200g and 340g – are similar to those originally developed by Impress predecessor Pechiney and taken up by Spam manufacturer Hormel and feature aluminium membrane easy-open ends.

Dubai's Crown Can expands into easy-open ends

Crown Can, the canmaking division of Dubai-based food group Hassani, is expanding into the manufacture of full-aperture easy-open food ends with the order of two production lines from China's SLAC.

The move is part of a plan to reorganise Crown Can's three operations into one plant in Dubai which will be a prelude to setting up canmaking operations in Iran, Senegal and Sudan, said general manager Surendra Sharma.

Crown Can makes a range of containers for Hassani which uses them for packing dairy and tomato products some of which are already being exported to Africa. It uses about 11,000 tonnes of tinplate a year and currently sources its easy-open ends from a number of canmakers.



Smooth operators: Hengli CNC Technology Co has sold more than 200 coil cutting lines in China

Chinese machinery manufacturers

► from p29. **Shantou Xinqing Cannery Machinery** manufactures the New Dodo series of automatic welders with outputs between 60 and 400 cans a minute. About half of the company's business is for exports. Of its customers, Indonesia's INCP uses the Dodo-350.

Taiwan-based **Yuan Rox Machinery Co** was established in 1980. It makes welders, inside/outside lacquer and powder coating systems. Its YR 500 welder runs at up to 70 metres or 560 cans a minute, while the YR 400 model was recently sold to Anand Tin in India, C L Pan Mitchell told *The Canmaker*.

• Machinery produced by **Shinyi Tin-making Industrial Machinery** includes production lines for 1-18 litre cans and for 5-25 litre pails. Its most recent products are the YH-18A body forming machine for 18-litre (5-gallon) square containers that runs at up to 20 cans a minute; and the YGY-1 flanging equipment.

• **Dongguan Manguan Packing Co**, established in 2002, makes easy-open ends from 63mm to 177mm diameters which it sells worldwide except for the US. Its leading customer is Malaysia's Kian Joo, said Sabrina Lin from its overseas sales department.



Hot spot: Shantou Xinli Canning was showing this Dodo welder next to the Gold Club lounge

Milk powder customers in China include Yili, Sanlu, Nanshan, Tai Tai Le, Yashi Li, QingYong and Ai Weiyi. Sales in India and Pakistan are also growing due to operations converting from twist-off caps to easy-open ends, Lin said.

The company is moving from Zhongtang (in the countryside) to the Nan Cheng District of Dongguan City, Guangdong Province. The plant features 20 end-making lines. These include five funded by Australian milk powder and seasonings company MHC, Lin explained.



Microwave wonder: Impress's cans for Magicool soup



Soudronic showcases two welders at Cannex

World leading three-piece canmaking machinery supplier Soudronic entered the Chinese market in the late 1980s, first as a sales service centre based in Hong Kong, now as a fully-owned operation based in Guangzhou.

Soudronic (Guangzhou) Ltd specialises in medium-speed welders for the Chinese market, such as the AFB640 it had at its booth, which runs at up to 400cpm with 0.20mm tinplate. It also showed a Soucan

1080FB for speeds of up to 1,000 cans a minute using DR 0.15mm-thick material.

President Franz Marty says China is one of the company's main markets, and local production is seen as a way of counteracting Swiss manufacturing costs.

Pictured above (from left to right) are Yitao Xu, general manager of Soudronic Guangzhou; Jack Zhao, vice president of ORG Canmaking; and Jakob Guyer, president of Switzerland-based Soudronic.



Can Man's Ruedi Umbricht is particularly proud of the induction heating in his side-stripe coating system

can body, and how it is easily adjusted for different diameters while maintaining the correct distance.

The curing system has been installed at Switzerland's Stebler + Co, Netherlands-based Pac2Pack and CM Packaging, Thailand's Sahamitr, and Greek-based Elsa Vogel & Noot.

Can Man also recently installed an X8 welder at Impress's plant at Seesen in Germany, which produces mainly general line cans and pails.

Brasilata finds Chinese pail making machinery appealing

Brazilian canmaker Antonio Teixeira found plenty of interest at Cannex and was particularly taken by the pail making line displayed by Houing Group.



More welding machines were shown by Wantong Can-making Machinery

Chinese machinery manufacturers

► from p31. • An illustration of how Chinese machinery suppliers are evolving is **KunGuan Can-making Machinery Co.** The company's business has developed from repair services, to selling used equipment, and now to developing its own equipment.

Having worked in the industry since 1994 selling spare parts for Soudronic machinery and refurbishing services, general manager Lv Dehan has since 2003 acquired about a dozen bankrupt companies including Nanning Canmaking Factory and Jian Bao Le in Zhuhai with a view to selling the machinery in cooperation with MEM Holland.

In the last two years KunGuan has also developed its own powder spray coating machine with European- and US-made components. Coating thickness and spray direction is said to be easily adjustable, and the system is CE certified, Lv said.

Following Cannex, food company Hong Fang, which also makes its own cans, is due to install the powder spray coating system.

Lv said the economic downturn hasn't affected their business very much with sales concentrated in the Middle East and Europe. The company is now developing a curing system.

• **Jiangsu Huayu Printing & Coating Equipment Co** is the leading metal decorating equipment supplier in China and claims to have an 80 percent market share.

One third of the company's business are exports. Recent overseas customers for its ovens include Turkey's Aktintas, Singapore's Greif and Egypt's Misr Metalcan.

This year's orders in China include ovens for ORG in Beijing and a coating line to Shanghai BaoYi.

Huayu also makes single and double-colour metal printing presses and has annual sales of Rmb120 million (US\$17.5m).

General manager Shen Bin Yi was delighted with Cannex. "This is very good. Everyone who comes to see us is involved in metal decorating unlike the show we were at last year in Germany. I'm very satisfied. Everything here is very professional."

• **Shenzhen MICTool Technology Corporation** is a precision tool manufacturer for the two-piece beverage can industry. The company began operations in 2000 and aims to start exporting after Cannex.

MIC (Made in China) products include tooling for cuppers, bodymakers, shells, tab dies, scroll cutters and compound liners.

Equipment at Crown Can's new plant at Dubai's Investment Park, which will include Bibra shell presses and a four-colour Crabtree printing line along with the SLAC line, is already being installed. Print and fabrication lines from Crown Can's two existing plants at Al Quoz Dubai and Ajman will be transferred.

Much of Hassani's tomato products are grown in Iran where it is setting up an associated company to construct a canmaking operation. In Sudan, it already cans tomato sauce and pasta on a SIMA line.

In-show food can body production coup for Cannex

Ruedi Umbricht at Swiss three-piece welder manufacturer Can Man was in a bullish mood during Cannex, demonstrating what he claimed was the first time that finished can bodies had been made at a show.

Behind the claim was the linking of the PowerCure side-stripe coating system with an X8 welder. First introduced last year and subsequently sold to five customers, the specially-designed induction curing system is much more compact and less power hungry than thermal curing lines, which is why it was possible to fit the line into the booth.

Umbricht said he was particularly proud of the way in which the induction heating is confined to a narrow band of the

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CANNEX ASIA PACIFIC 2009



Leading Brazilian general line canmaker Antonio Teixeira admires the pail line from the Houing Group

Product briefs

- US-based conveying equipment specialist Intralox has developed a plastics conveyor belt for beverage can washers as both a main mat belt and as a hold-down belt. The hold-down conveyor, which holds empty beverage cans in place during the washing process, is typically made of stainless steel. The plastics version is much more durable," said Intralox's global container team manager Michelle Waite, and creates less friction between the belt and the steel runners, thereby reducing wear.

- TRAC Measurement Systems is currently building two Z340 internal coating analyser systems for a series of trials at four major beverage canmakers over the next few months. The Z340 is the full-production version of the UK-based company's Z341 internal coating analyser, with improved speed and accuracy. The system helps to reduce lacquer consumption, downtime, and maintenance costs, and trials have shown that a six-month payback on the cost of the unit is typical. TRAC recently installed a Z313 enamel rater at Saudi Arabian canmaker Al-Jomaih's facility in Riyadh.

- Australian company Versatile Technology was promoting its range of test and inspection equipment at Cannex, including the recently-launched DJ111B compound weight gauge for beverage can ends. The system automates the process, including automatically loading and baking the pre-weighed shells, then cooling the baked ends and weighing them again. It is said to reduce the overall processing time from hours to minutes.

"This could be just what I am looking for," he said, admiring the robust transfer line which is being sold under the C-Win-Win brand by the Dongguan-based firm.

The boss of Brasilata wants to get into packaging for viscous products in Brazil, which is mostly sold in plastics bags with carton cases that are vulnerable to damp.

"Brasilata could make thin wall tinplate containers on this line which would be better," Teixeira said, explaining that the two units of the line that expand the pails enables flanging and curling before expanding. "I like that," he said.

Teixeira said that Brasilata will soon be making metal crowns. "I recently went to a machinery auction and made the winning bid for a metal crown line made in China.

"We went to China to meet the manufacturer Ding Zhong Machinery which also makes its own crowns. That's when we saw the opportunity. It's a two billion a year market in Brazil, half of which is for AmBev beer bottles. And this line can make 20 million crowns a month.

"There was no plan to go into crowns. It just happened."

Crabtree on the road to Damascus for decorated cans

Syrian canmaker Awad Press has produced metal packaging for almost 45 years, and recently expanded its operations with a metal decorating press from Crabtree of Gateshead.

Nasouh Awad, general affairs manager at Damascus-based Awad Press, told *The Canmaker* that the company recently installed a four-colour Fastready press from the UK-based supplier.

The canmaking company produces more than 5 million food cans annually for conserve products on an automatic line, and converts around 2,000 tonnes of tinplate into decorative cans.

The company supplies its domestic market as well as Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and parts of Asia, said Awad. 