

Veolia Water Technologies helps Premier Foods out of a pickle

Food & Beverage | Case Study

Premier Foods

- Produce the UK's best-loved sweet pickle with 28 million jars sold annually
- Fire at Bury St Edmunds site threatened production
- Emergency mobile water softening system needed



Mobile Water Services

The Client

In the early hours of the morning, a major fire hit Premier Foods' the UK's largest food producer plant in Bury St Edmunds. For twelve hours 150 fire-fighters from Suffolk and neighbouring counties tackled the blaze at the only factory producing Branston pickle. It was an emergency of national proportions; creating panic that England was about to lose what the Daily Mail called "a national treasure". The fire devastated the factory and forced production to be shut down, threatening shortages before Christmas.

The Requirement

To get production moving again and to meet the seasonal demand, Premier Foods hired in a temporary boiler to provide the steam for production needs such as cooking and pasteurisation. However, boilers need softened water, and the softeners had been lost in the fire along with the boilers. A new water softening plant to supply 30m³/h was urgently required.

The Solution

Premier Foods turned to Veolia Water Technologies who provided one of its Mobile Water Services units to be on site ready to supply the temporary boiler with softened water. The Mobile Water Services softening unit is a complete water softening plant – tanks, pumps, controls and triplex ion exchange softener – installed in a standard 40' shipping container.

Once exhausted, the complete trailer is returned to Veolia Water Technologies' central regeneration facility, which means zero discharge on site and no problems of handling or disposal of regenerant chemicals. On-site chemical systems can be completely isolated whilst maintenance or repair work is carried out.

The Result

The system was so successful that Premier Foods ordered a second unit which was on site within ten days. The two Mobile Water Services units supplied the site for 9 months until Premier Foods' new boiler-house was commissioned. And one trailer was retained for a further 3 months until the new plant had completed its proving trials.