News from 915 Labs, August 2018

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Tata Group Acquires 915 Labs

Sale of MATS/Maps Systems Continues Worldwide

Food-tech startup 915 Labs has been acquired by Tata Group and is now a US-based wholly owned subsidiary of the international conglomerate. Following the acquisition, which was finalized in 2019, Mahadev Gurjar was appointed president of the company.

"The acquisition of 915 Labs by Tata Group is a significant milestone and one that will accelerate the growth of the company," said Gurjar. "The backing of a reputed company like Tata will enable 915 Labs to expand use of the technology to customers around the globe."

915 Labs was founded in 2014 to commercialize the novel food preservation technologies known as Microwave Assisted Thermal Sterilization (MATS™) and Microwave Assisted Pasteurization (MAPS™).

915 Labs Current Operations

915 Labs is currently manufacturing both the MATS-B and a MATS-42 commercial production system (for details on current MATS/MAPS systems, read on).

The company's headquarters remain in Denver, where they were established in 2015. Roberta Brewster, vice president of business development, continues to work with customers on system sales. For information, email

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info@915labs.com.

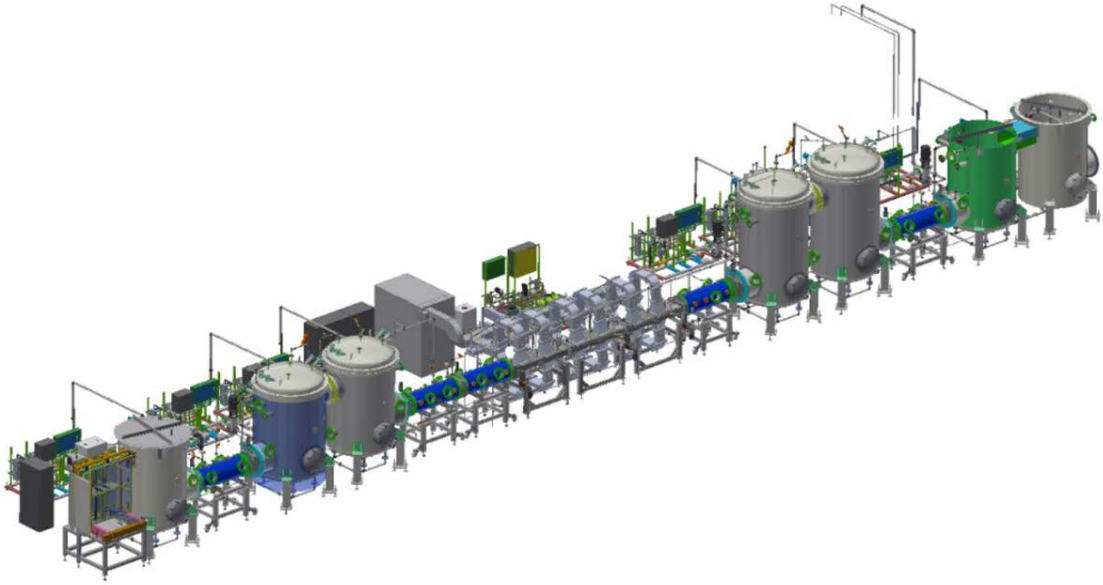
“MATS is the technology that will enable global food companies to produce the high-quality packaged foods that are in demand around the world. It’s a transformational solution that solves many of the issues facing the food industry today, including overcoming cold chain challenges, capturing agricultural surplus and reducing food waste.”

Mahadev Gurjar
915 Labs President

Higher Thru-Put MATS/MAPS Systems Now Available

New Systems Coming in '21

915 Labs is currently manufacturing both the MATS-B for pilot-scale and product development and a MATS-42 commercial production system capable of processing 17 million single-serve trays annually. The system can also process a variety of rigid and flexible packages. Email info@915labs.com for a spec sheet on the new MATS-42.



The MATS-42 Commercial Production System

Innovation Centers for MATS Product Development

Food companies are able to develop new recipes and foods for MATS and MAPS using a MATS-B pilot-scale system at four innovation centers. Personnel are available to assist in product development at each location, including:

- Tata Smartfoodz, Sri City, India*
- Ameriqual, Evansville, Indiana
- Centre for Food Innovation, University of Tasmania, Scottsdale, Tasmania, Australia
- Washington State University, Pullman, Washington.

*In addition to product development capabilities, the Tata Smartfoodz location in India also provides commercial-scale testing and co-manufacturing capabilities on a case-by-base basis.

Tata SmartFoodz Produces World's 1st MATS-Made Meals

Tata SmartFoodz, a Tata Group subsidiary, produces Tata Q, a line of 12 shelf-stable dishes, including pasta and noodle dishes, appetizers and combination meals, that are sold in retailers and convenience stores throughout India.

The company owns a pilot-scale MATS-B system and a MATS-30 and MATS-42 for commercial production and co-manufacturing.

Global Entourage Visits Tata SmartFoodz Operation

An entourage of researchers and food manufacturers from around the world joined representatives of 915 Labs in visiting the Tata SmartFoodz manufacturing facility in early 2020. In addition to processing the world's first MATS-made foods, the facility currently provides product development and co-manufacturing services for MATS/MAPS-made foods on a case-by-case basis.

Representatives of 915 Labs and its customers, the University of Tasmania, Washington State University and the Australian Defence Science and Technology Group visited the Tata SmartFoodz manufacturing facility in India in early 2020.

MATS Down Under

University of Tasmania's Centre for Food Innovation

Contributed by Prof. Roger Stanley

The University of Tasmania in Australia is a world leader in food production, innovation and safety research and education for the agriculture and aquaculture sectors.

The University leads the Centre for Food Innovation (CFI) in cooperation with the Australian Defence Science and Technology Group (DST) and the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). Its flagship research program utilizes Microwave Assisted Thermal Sterilization (MATS) technology to produce high-quality shelf-stable foods.

CFI Director and Professor Roger Stanley from the University of Tasmania has been working closely with MATS technology since 2014. Today, the CFI conducts research with a MATS-B in association with potential users of the technology. The primary objectives are to understand and address:

- expansion of the throughput of MATS meals
- what processing and storage conditions influence the retention of fresh taste, texture and nutrition, and
- to produce premium quality MATS products for evaluation.

Dr. Stanley, Foundation Director of the Centre for Food Innovation, works with a MATS-B in Launceston, Tasmania.

“The MATS technology provides food manufacturers with novel innovation options for making shelf-stable and sterile packaged foods that retain high-quality taste characteristics, which allows them to expand into new markets without a reliance on cold-chain integrity and to avoid biosecurity barriers,” Stanley said. “We can achieve this by optimizing the energy inputs to more precisely measure sterilization and avoid excessive thermal over-processing, and by using ingredient and packaging selection to combat processing and storage changes."

The University of Tasmania offers opportunities for Higher Degree Research projects utilizing MATS technology and is helping to train the future leaders in global food innovation. For more information or to discuss collaboration research and education opportunities, contact Professor Roger Stanley at CFI.info@utas.edu.au.