

Wild Thymes *in a tranquil setting*

Family-owned specialty foods firm discovers solution to production problems in *Processing*

Wild Thymes Farm in New York's scenic Hudson River Valley produces gourmet specialty foods the old-fashioned way — by hand. Enid Stettner and her daughter, Ann, recognized that in order to meet the increasing demand of its growing business, they needed to transfer production to a larger building nearby. They also employed the help of a turnkey skid-mounted steam generator system from Clayton Industries.

"We still prepare everything by hand, but to meet our new volume requirements, we had to switch from electric cooking kettles to larger, steam jacketed vessels," says Enid. "Now, instead of processing five

batches a day, we can process five batches in an hour."

Enid first read about the "amazing" Clayton machine in an article that appeared in *Processing* magazine.

"I read about Clayton equipment in a *Processing* magazine story on Seabrook Brothers & Sons (frozen vegetable processors in New Jersey). Based on that story, I picked up the phone and invited Clayton in," she says.

The Clayton generator turned out to be perfect for Wild Thymes' needs, according to Enid.

"It goes from start to steam very quickly and processes our batches, which are quite dense, in 25 minutes. We couldn't consider meeting the needs of food service customers without it."

The steam generator and an automatic labeler are the only concessions to automation for the food manufacturer that began from humble beginnings twenty years ago.

Modest beginnings

The company started modestly in the 1980s with a line of herb and fruit vinegars from original recipes, produced and bottled by hand in a colonial saltbox just down the road from the main house. Ingredients

included homegrown herbs. The vinegars were notable for unusual flavors such as opal basil, hot pepper and blueberry. Enid and her husband Fred sold them at farmer's markets and craft fairs.

But the true beginnings of Wild Thymes dates back to 1960 when Enid and Fred returned home to New York City from a Vermont weekend. Both were enthralled by a farm near Medusa, NY and purchased it shortly thereafter. Enid and Fred abandoned their respective professional careers ten years later and moved their three children to the farm year-round.

The Stettners' vinegars quickly earned praise from top retailers, such as Sutton Place Gourmet and Williams-Sonoma. In the mid 90's, Enid expanded the company's business to include new product development, manufacturing, shipping and managing a small staff of local employees. Fred focused on exports while Ann directed sales and public relations.

Now with the Clayton generator delivering the steam for increased processing, Wild Thymes specialties are delighting more consumers than ever.

For more information on the Clayton steam generator, contact Clayton Industries at 800-423-4585 or email sales@claytonindustries.com.

