

CI (continuous Improvement) Cluster Meeting McCains/Saralee 8th September Lisarow

On Friday, the 8th September, the Central Coast Continuous Improvement Cluster were hosted at the McCain Foods / Sara Lee site in Lisarow. Around 20 cluster members attended to hear from site manager Hamish Sutton, as well as McCain Foods' Global lead for Continuous Improvement, Chris Kelly, and HR Manager, Nicola Dorman.

Hamish began proceedings with an overview video of the global McCain Foods business, detailing its growth over 60 years. In 1957, Wallace and Harrison McCain, along with their brothers Robert and Andrew, founded McCain Foods, opening the first production facility in their hometown of Florenceville, New Brunswick, Canada. They began a journey to become the world's largest manufacturer of frozen French fries and potato specialties.

Hamish then went on to talk about the acquisition of 'Kitchens of Sara Lee' and its manufacturing site at Lisarow in 2013. The acquisition provided a growth platform for McCain in Australia and was complimentary to the McCain frozen food business. Hamish explained that the site was undergoing a major capital investment, with infrastructure works recently completed and a focus on upgrading equipment in the next few years.

With the business overview completed Hamish handed over to Nicola Dorna, the site's HR Manager. She took the group through the Sara Lee Lisarow people development strategy, in which the focus is on everyone in the organisation understanding their role, with behaviours and competence defined. As we have seen in other cluster meetings, culture is key, and the team at McCain / Sara Lee are pursuing the same focus.

At this point the group was divided into two, with one group leaving the room to do a site tour and the second remaining to hear from Chris Kelly, McCain Foods' Global Lead for Continuous Improvement. We were fortunate that Chris was in the country at the time of our cluster meeting. Chris joined McCain in 2008 and is based in its UK office. Prior to joining McCain, he worked in lean management consulting and spent 10 years with Sony, which included time working in Japan learning from leaders like Toyota.

Chris took us briefly through McCain Foods' experience in rolling out a lean manufacturing program. Like most organisations, it has been an up-and-down experience over the years. He gave a very good outline of what worked and what did not in implementing lean/CI tools. Ultimately, it's about ownership and leadership from the top and creating a culture of engagement and improvement.

The Continuous improvement program has been "recast" and is focused on daily improvement. Termed MDI – "Managing Daily Improvement" - the program is being rolled out initially across four plants globally, with the Lisarow site being one of those plants.

Phase 1, MDI-1, is about management commitment, visual management, measurement, communication and most importantly, driving daily improvements throughout the plant.

Phase 2, MDI-2, is focused on frontline leader (supervisor) development as leaders of change and continuous improvement. Tasks, people, information and decision-making, problem solving, standard work and abnormality management are key initiatives. The plant is currently rolling out these phases.

As the one group was listening to Chris, the second group took a tour of the croissant and apple pie production area where the group were taken through hour-by-hour monitoring boards on each line. Lines are monitored for performance against hourly outputs. When the outputs are not met, the reasons are recorded on the board, and then investigation is undertaken by the line's Team Leaders and Supervisors. When problems are seen to be trending, an "A3" plan sheet is created by the team leader which has defined processes to drive further investigation and resolution. All this is done to drive performance and engagement with the teams.

These metrics are compiled and reported on overall operations boards in the main hallway of the plant together with site-wide metrics. There were examples of ideas contributed by the team that are making real improvements to the process.

The groups then swapped places and went through the same presentations. After regrouping, there were questions and discussions around what was presented and the session ended up with a group photo.

Thanks to Hamish and Chris, and the team, Nicola, Glenn, Warick, Rosie, Rhys, Shane and Jerome for their time and openness about their CI journey.



CI Cluster group at McCain/Saralee Lisarow.