



A slice above the rest

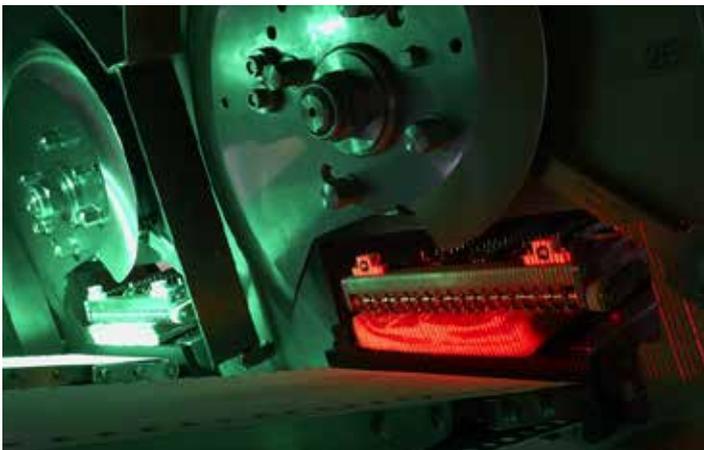
Norfolk's thriving agricultural sector has fuelled the growth of many innovative manufacturers. From specialist food and drink producers, to those who make the machinery used by farmers and processors. A good example of this is Thurne Middleby, now part of the US-based Middleby Corporation.

Thurne started life in Norwich in 1967 as a general engineering company serving a number of sectors including food producers. In 1975, it pioneered a new range of industrial bacon slicers, with variable cutting speeds and thickness controls, advanced conveyer technologies and digital counters for precision packing.

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It is now one of the world's top suppliers of high-performance bacon-slicing machines and associated equipment. This includes packaging machines, auto loaders and card dispensers. Exports account for 85% of Thurne's sales, with a strategic focus on the North American market.

It has driven this success by consistently investing in new design and innovation. Embracing technology, such as high-speed vision systems (1985) and 3D laser scanning (2010),



Thurne Middleby - Advanced Manufacturing

- Thurne Middleby started life in Norwich in 1967 as a general engineering company
- Part of the US-based Middleby Corporation
- The world's #1 supplier of high-performance bacon slicing machines

has helped it improve speed, accuracy and yields. As a result, its top-of-the-range machines now have blade speeds of over 2000 perfect slices a minute.

"Our customers want to buy a complete food processing and packaging line," says Thurne's President, Peter Jongen. "Our machines enable them to turn the raw material into fixed weight packs with the minimum amount of manual intervention. This improves health and safety as well as food hygiene."

Why invest in Norfolk?

"We're here because of our history but we stay because of our team of 70 knowledgeable, talented and dedicated people," says Thurne's Technical Director, Richard Seager. "They handle everything from concept design and development to component manufacturing, assembly and testing. We have a seven strong sales and support team in Chicago and we increasingly use secure control systems to conduct real time diagnostics and servicing over the internet.

"Although we buy programmable hardware, our own developers write all our control system software," he explains. "Maintaining that skill set is important and we've built good links with local education providers, particularly the East Coast College who specialise in electrical and mechanical engineering apprenticeships. We are proud to have won their Apprentice Employer of the Year award for 2018.

"We are also embedded in the wider engineering community through organisations like the Greater Norwich Manufacturing Group. This gives us the flexibility to call on skilled local sub-contractors to meet peaks in demand. Combine that with proximity to Norwich International Airport and reasonably local shipping docks and you can see why Norfolk is a great place to serve our global markets."

For current opportunities, location-specific information and economic insight visit:

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