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## On a mission: producing safe food

**In recent years Panvita MIR, Slovenia's leading manufacturer of meat products, has undergone major strategic realignment. As a supplier of industrial gases, Messer has been aiding the company's development. In an interview with on air, Plant Director Igor Kolar and Danilo Lukač, CEO of Messer Slovenia, describe their successful cooperation.**

on air: Mr Kolar, you set very high quality standards in the manufacture of meat products. How does the application of gases assist you in this objective?

Igor Kolar: We use gases at various stages in our production process. Our fresh sausage meat is packed in an inert-gas atmosphere. This means that we carefully regulate the composition of the atmosphere in the packaging to avoid undesirable influences, such as bacterial infection or mould. This necessitates the application of a precisely-defined mixture of nitrogen and oxygen. In the production of our Čevapčiči meatballs, which are made from mince, we use liquid carbon dioxide for cooling the meat in the mixer. The carbon dioxide is fed directly into the mixer which rapidly lowers the temperature and protects the product from the heat generated during mixing, thus keeping it fresh. As no cooling water is required, the mince retains a low water content.

on air: What criteria do you use to select your preferred suppliers, and why did you opt for Messer?

Igor Kolar: In order to remain competitive and successful on the European market we focus carefully not only on maintaining product quality, but also on nurturing a partnership with our suppliers. We select suppliers commanding extensive experience in implementing new technologies on the European market. We build up successful partnerships based on the principle of mutual benefit. Only by optimising the manufacturing process can we acquire the flexibility to offer our customers new types of products. Last summer, for example, we launched "Čevapčiči kebabs" onto the market – which will mean a lot less sticky fingers at the next family barbecue!

on air: Mr Lukač, as a supplier, how would you describe the nature of your cooperation with Panvita?

Danilo Lukač: As a supplier of gases we know exactly how the properties of our products can influence and protect the fine quality of foodstuffs. However, each and every technical advancement in the production process must be coordinated with our colleagues at Panvita. We engage in regular discussion over the various technical issues, inspect the production halls and have become closely acquainted with the manufacturing processes. Although a new development may require only minimal technical effort, it can have a huge impact – and this requires excellent cooperation.

on air: Mr Kolar, what importance do you attach to quality control on the part of the suppliers?

Igor Kolar: Of course, certification assumes a crucial role in the production of foodstuffs, particularly in the meat-processing industry. The gases supplied to us by Messer are certified according to HACCP – as are our raw materials. HACCP stands for "Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point", which, in practice, means that product traceability must be guaranteed at all times across the entire production and supply chain. We are delighted to be able to provide our customers with this safety guarantee. As one of only a handful of companies in Slovenia, we are also certified under the international foodstuffs standards. However, the most important factor for us is the award from the Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Foodstuffs in recognition of the quality of our fresh meat products. We are proud of this.

## 16,000 tonnes of fresh meat annually

The brand name Skupina Panvita encompasses the three interrelated sectors of agriculture, meat and meat products, as well as energy. The production of meat under the company name Panvita MIR has its roots in the town of Gornja Radgona, near Maribor. Founded in 1922, the small company has grown into one of Slovenia's leading meat processors.

Panvita MIR is the only meat processing enterprise in Slovenia certified to process both white and red meat, which is supplied by the

company’s own pigbreeding plant and poultry farms. Each year Panvita MIR brings 16,000 tonnes of fresh meat and other meat products onto the market. The company cooperates with all the leading food-store chains in Slovenia and a number of major retailers across the former Yugoslavia and the European Union. 15 per cent of the entire production output is sold abroad. In line with its corporate mission statement, the company is committed to the environmentally friendly production of foodstuffs.

<https://newsroom.messergroup.com/en/on-a-mission-producing-safe-food/>

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