

# Environs

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## Kroger Increases Dependence on Desiccants Dairy uses technology to protect production integrity

Desiccant systems are becoming increasingly popular in food production facilities, primarily because of the effect moisture content has upon product quality. The Kroger Dairy in Indianapolis installed its first desiccant system nearly three years ago, and the second will be operating soon.

At Kroger, the integrity of the production system was the primary consideration in adopting desiccant technology. The facility transforms whole milk into bottled products and ice cream every day.

Two and a half years ago, the company decided to switch from manual pallet stacking to an automated robotic production system. "When we did that, we wanted to make sure the air was dry," explains Facilities Engineer Will Debolt. "We needed to keep frost out of the room. We have almost 100 photo eyes and almost 100 motors and drives linked in a PLC-controlled system and didn't want frost or ice crystals affecting the performance. The system is so dependent on the photo eyes for pinpointing where the product is at in the system that frost could endanger the line's integrity."



Employee and visitor entrance at the Kroger dairy.

Kroger's corporate engineer had worked in another ice cream processing plant. He had been impressed with the performance of gas-fired solid desiccant systems at that facility and arranged for WMI of Fort Wayne to handle the installation of a Concepts & Design Inc. system.

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 Citizens Gas

 Citizens Thermal Energy