



How Statco-DSI Built a Scalable, Vertically Integrated Dairy Processing Plant on an Aggressive Timeline

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Statco-DSI partnered with Suntado, LLC to design and build a state-of-the-art Extended Shelf Life (ESL) and aseptic dairy processing facility from the ground up in Burley, Idaho. Suntado is owned by two local, large-scale dairy farmers who had a shared desire to vertically integrate so they could bring their milk directly to market as a co-packer. The company needed to launch a sustainable and efficient plant that could effectively scale, adapt, and expand in order to meet changing needs and evolving consumer trends.

The project had an aggressive timeline, but Statco-DSI was able to overcome several external challenges, including severe weather and supply chain issues, to finish the project on time, in scope, and without going over budget.

Statco-DSI provided Suntado with comprehensive service consisting of process design, plant layout, processing equipment, sanitary installation, process controls, start-up assistance, and post-operational support.



The Client

[Suntado, LLC](#) is a beverage processing company owned by Dirk Reitsma and Jesus Hurtado, who share a lifetime of experience in dairy farming in the heart of Magic Valley. Their goal was to fulfill a lifelong dream of bringing their fresh milk in and immediately processing it to achieve the highest quality and freshest taste.

The company now provides both Extended Shelf Life (ESL) and Ultra-High Temperature (UHT) aseptic co-packing solutions for dairy and plant-based beverages at their strategically located, highly efficient facility designed by Statco-DSI. Suntado is capable of producing up to 140 million packaged units of various products each year in both gable-top (ESL) formats and reel-fed aseptic formats.

The Challenge

Suntado got in touch with our ESL/aseptic team when the owners first embraced the concept of vertical integration and bringing their milk to market as a co-packer. They shared their vision of building a cutting-edge dairy processing facility utilizing our best-in-class UHT equipment that provides them with the highest level of efficiency, hygiene, and quality.

Our dedicated engineering team got to work right away, collaborating with the Suntado team to turn their vision into reality.

The comprehensive Suntado facility design was a challenge. Our engineers needed to balance several key considerations while facing external obstacles in bringing this facility to life. Throughout the design, fabrication, and installation phases, we had to keep these in mind and find ways to overcome:

CRITICAL FLEXIBILITY

The facility needed to have a high degree of flexibility, with the capability of producing dairy (conventional, organic, and A2) as well as plant-based products into SKUs in both ESL refrigerated formats and aseptic shelf-stable formats.

AGGRESSIVE TIMELINE

The goal was to get the facility semi-operational in the span of a year. There were long lead times on critical equipment, and we had to be cognizant of these critical paths and leverage our extensive clout with key equipment manufacturers.

SUPPLY CHAIN ISSUES

Not only was this project on a rapid timeline, but it was happening post-COVID at a time when supply chains weren't always reliable.

EXTREMELY LOW MARGINS

Dairy processors can't afford inefficiencies in operations that can lead to wasted product. It was essential that our processing system designs were capable of achieving the highest level of processing efficiency while minimizing product loss (shrink).

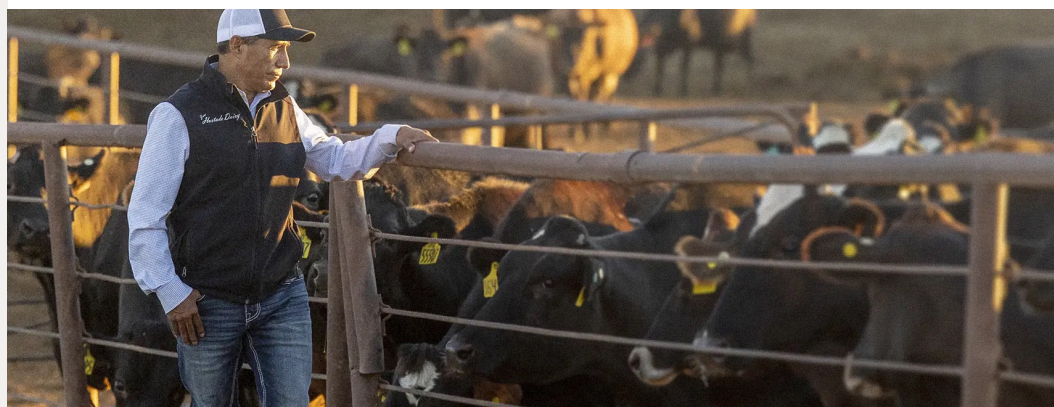
EVOLVING TRENDS

Consumer trends for dairy and milk are changing and will continue to do so as products shift from commodity to value-added. We needed to anticipate changes and how they would impact equipment needs down the line so the facility can evolve and grow to meet these changes.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

The critical implementation phases of the project happened in the middle of winter in a region of Idaho that sees heavy snowfall, winds of 40 miles an hour, and temperatures in the teens. These conditions impacted delivery and made it more challenging to mobilize crews and to offload and place equipment.

Suntado, LLC Co-Founder Jesus Hurtado watches over his dairy herd.



The STATCO-DSI Approach

Keeping in mind both the immediate goal of building this state-of-the-art facility and the possibility of longer-term expansion, we knew the key to setting Suntado up for success was flexibility and overall operational efficiency. The design we came up with needed to:

- ▶ Maximize uptime and efficiency
- ▶ Minimize utility consumption and product loss

Everything we did was designed, specified, sourced, installed, and automated to achieve those goals.

CUSTOM COMPONENTS

Our team knew that vertical integration at this scale with a greenfield facility meant all the windows of opportunity were wide open. Suntado trusted our engineers to come up with a plan that included the right equipment and layout based on their production needs.

We provided everything in the facility, from blending and standardizing equipment to thermal processing, ESL/aseptic storage, and routing. All skidded systems were customized and produced in our fabrication shops, including valve clusters, platforms, UHT modules, surge clusters, seamless routing solutions, and more.

A MODULAR APPROACH

Keeping flexibility in mind was crucial throughout the design process. We know running multiple non-compatible SKUs is complex, and Suntado had yet to determine which products they were going to run.

Our approach to system implementation is very modular, so our solutions are all flexible and expandable by design. For the Suntado facility, we took that a step further and came up with the best possible solutions for them to not only work with the widest variety of SKUs available, but also have enough scalability to easily add more SKUs down the line.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

We go into every project expecting challenges. Things happen... especially when you're up against an aggressive timeline. The Statco-DSI difference is evident in the way we recognize obstacles and act both quickly and decisively to overcome them.

We agreed on a date with Suntado and were committed to making it happen, regardless of the challenges that popped up. By working overtime and adding manpower, we were able to ensure we finished this project on time.



The Statco approach to process design is laser-focused on three essentials. Product quality, plant throughput, and operational efficiency.”

Gino Abruzzini

Vice President of Technology
for Promach Process | Founding
Member of Statco-DSI's
ESL/Aseptic Division



Suntado, LLC Co-Founder Dirk Reitsma looks on as construction of his company's new dairy processing plant comes to a close, making way for the project's commissioning and startup phase.

The Solution

The solution we came up with involved a plan for both the equipment and services Suntado would need to successfully open and operate the most efficient, flexible, and high-throughput facility available.



The Suntado, LLC facility under construction in Burley, Idaho.

BLENDING SYSTEMS

We provided QTY (2) Two-Tank Blend Systems, each with two batch tanks capable of seamless, independent batch-building or transferring batched products directly to either of two UHT processors. Each blend system is also capable of continuous standardization, in-line shear-blending, and independent circulating heating and cooling.

Both systems have dry and concentrated liquid ingredient incorporation capabilities and can simultaneously add metered ingredients of up to three streams, taking batching to a new level of accuracy and efficiency.

UHT PROCESSORS

Our team installed two Therma-Stat direct steam injection processors, the most efficient and reliable UHT processors in the industry. Each processor can easily be converted to operate as a pasteurized milk ordinance-compliant ESL processor or a low-acid aseptic processor compliant with federal regulations.

Both Therma-Stats are also fitted with a replenishable sterile air dampener system to eliminate potential hydraulic shock caused by the aseptic homogenizer and allow for extended run-times on products.

VALVE SOLUTIONS

Two Therma-Route valve groups provide zone protection between surge tanks, filler routing lines, and fillers. One is dedicated to supplying four aseptic fillers, while the other supplies two ESL fillers.

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT PROVIDED:

- Cocoa slurry tanks
- Surge tanks
- Therma-Surge valve solutions
- Aseptic dosing systems
- Surge standardizers



Blending Systems



UHT Processors



Valve Solutions

The Services

CUSTOM FABRICATION

We built all of the skidded systems for this project in our state-of-the-art fabrication shops. These fully equipped welding and production facilities allow us to design and produce custom components and systems (including control panels) on tight deadlines.

EQUIPMENT INSTALLATION

A full team of fabricators, process engineers, and automation engineers was deployed to the Suntado facility for installation. Our field crews were well-prepared by the ESL/Aseptic project team to ensure the installation was well-managed and met the highest standards.

TRAINING & STARTUP SUPPORT

Our team didn't just help get the new plant up and running, but we also supported Suntado throughout product trials and into processing. Key personnel remained on-site after start-up to ensure all of the equipment was performing reliably and that Suntado's operations and maintenance staff were fully trained and comfortable running and maintaining their new systems safely.

AFTER-MARKET SUPPORT

Our ESL/Aseptic service department took over support after the field crews left and remains available for troubleshooting support to this day. Suntado has a 24-hour contact for any potential problem, so they have the full support of our team and around-the-clock access to our service technicians.

[Learn more about our services](#)



Statco-DSI's combination Therna-Stat UHT processors – capable of producing both ESL and aseptic products in compliance with the PMO and CFR-113, respectively.



We had a lot of support from Statco-DSI throughout commissioning, water trials, our first trials on milk, and that continued as we got into processing... We were able to call for help whenever we needed it. Statco-DSI's presence was essential in helping us troubleshoot, train, and to guide us along to get the plant up and running."

Russ Lucas
Plant Manager at Suntado

The Results

With our help, Suntado successfully transformed a barren sagebrush-covered field into a fully operational 173,000-square-foot facility in the span of a year. The company officially started production in early 2024 and has the state-of-the-art equipment needed for processing and co-packing ESL and aseptic dairy and plant-based beverages.

Our project execution not only set Suntado up for optimum throughput, exceptional efficiency, and minimized shrink from the very beginning, but also gave them the room they needed to expand down the line with minimal interruption.

BUILT TO SCALE:

The UHT systems and layouts we designed for Suntado were chosen with scalability and future growth in mind. With our modular solutions, everything we initially provided can be easily expanded upon to grow with Suntado.

OUR DESIGN APPROACH FOCUSES ON THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF:

- Product quality
- Throughput
- Efficiency
- Flexibility
- Scalability

This places Suntado in a position of achieving immediate success and the potential of future industry dominance.

We know that expansion can happen within their existing space and that future SKUs will drive the nature of this expansion. We are also certain that Suntado can continue utilizing Statco-DSI's equipment and sensible design solutions as they grow - with minimal interruption to operations along the way. As Suntado's consumer base evolves, the facility will evolve along with it.



We provided Suntado with a sustainable, efficient, and reliable solution that will produce their products for many years to come.”

Kyler Jackson

Director, ESL/Aseptic at
Statco-DSI

AN ONGOING PARTNERSHIP:

Since the facility went live, our team has continued working with Suntado, providing ongoing service and guidance to support their expansion goals. Our shared business relationship and mutual collaboration have helped us forge a strong partnership.

Statco-DSI's continued support has also involved production modeling and assistance with evaluating volumes and SKUs to help guide Suntado with their production scheduling and volume growth. When Suntado reaches out with a new co-packing opportunity, Statco-DSI guides them to the best solutions... truly a win-win!

Meet the Project Team



Gino Abruzzini

Vice President of Technology for Promach Process | Founding Member of Statco-DSI's ESL/Aseptic division



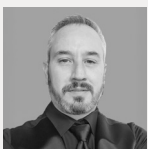
Kyler Jackson

Director of ESL/Aseptic at Statco-DSI



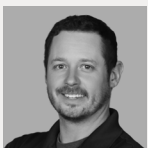
Scott Middelstadt

ESL/Aseptic Senior Project Manager



Rusty Satterwhite

ESL/Aseptic Service Department Manager



Dustin Grooms

ESL/Aseptic Manufacturing Manager



Flexibility and modular capabilities are key to our customers' success. We build every project with future expansion and growth in mind."

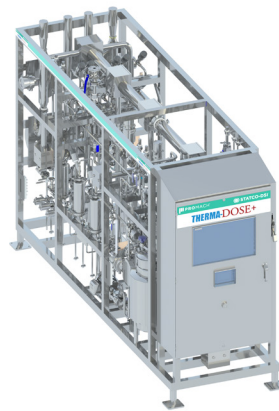
Kyler Jackson Director, ESL/Aseptic at Statco-DSI



Therma-Stat



Therma-Surge



Therma-Dose



Therma-Route



Therma-FVS (Filler Valve Solutions)



Mix and Blend



Ready to Bring Your Dream Facility to Life?

Whether you're looking to build a dairy processing facility from the ground up or just replacing equipment that no longer meets your needs, Statco-DSI can help. [Get in touch](#) with our team so we can talk about your requirements and challenges, and we can come up with a solution that works for you.

INDUSTRIES WE SERVE

BEVERAGE	DAIRY	BREWING
FOOD	CULTURED PRODUCTS	PET FOOD/CARE
BIOPHARM	NUTRACEUTICAL	COSMETIC & PERSONAL CARE

ABOUT STATCO-DSI

[Statco-DSI](#) is a design/build process integrator and a distributor of processing equipment, spare parts, and service. We provide systems for mixing, blending, separating, standardizing, brewing, filtration, pasteurization, ESL and aseptic processing, finished goods casing, and more. Our systems and equipment are designed for a wide variety of industries, from food and beverage to pharmaceutical, nutraceutical, cosmetics, and personal care.

Over the past 40+ years, we've grown significantly through increased sales, expanded product offerings, close factory relationships, and timely business acquisitions. With manufacturing facilities and sales, engineering, and service offices located in every time zone coast-to-coast, we are recognized as the largest distributor and systems integrator in the United States.

Visit www.statco-dsi.com

CASE STUDY

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