

# Automation

## Pork Processor Outflanks the Competition

**Focus  
on Success**

**Mitchell's  
Gourmet Foods Inc.**

### A 4-to-1 reduction in number of operators was just one of the savings for Mitchell's Gourmet Foods

Pork processing is a tough business. Staff turnover is high, and training is expensive. Cutting can be hazardous. To remain profitable requires a dedication to efficiency, quality and cleanliness. A keen interest in the latest technology led one leading player to "trim the fat" from his operations by automating key steps in its pork processing operations.

Industry leader Mitchell's Gourmet Food identified key goals for improving profitability in its rib-pulling operations. Among them, reducing the number of downgraded bellies, increasing consistency of cuts, and trimming costs associated with turnover and training. Minimizing industrial accidents and risk of contamination were also priorities.

CRIQ worked with Mitchell's to quickly develop a rib-pulling robot to precise hygiene, safety and cutting specifications:

- Unit scans each belly, and maps out custom cutting path.
- Industrial robot performs all cutting operations.
- Integrated controls allow easy adjustments for meat thickness and tail length.
- 600 psi washdown pressurized sanitary envelope protects the robot.
- Modem and online support for trouble-shooting and program modification.



### Success Snapshot

**Company**

Mitchell's Gourmet Foods Inc.

**Sector**

Pork Processing

**Goal**

Optimise yield on ribs and bellies.

**Solution**

Automate scanning and cutting using machine vision and robotics

**Benefits**

0.4% greater yield  
4-to-1 reduction in labor requirements

**Payback**

< 12 months

### Higher Yields and Lower Costs

The results were extremely satisfactory, with the new unit flawlessly processing 1400 bellies per hour. In addition:

- Significant increase in price and quality of ribs and bellies.
- Each carcass yields an additional 0.4%.
- Work of four operators now done by one.
- Quality and consistency improvements opened new markets.
- ROI of less than twelve months.

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