

10th May, 2006

Controls cut the workload at Ragus Sugars

Spirax Sarco controls have proved so successful in automating one of its sugar processing units that Ragus Sugars now plans to install the same equipment in similar applications throughout its refinery. Where the previous, manual control system called for the attention of an operator throughout the cooking process, the new controls now allow operators to start the process and walk away.

As well as saving huge amounts of operator time, the new system controls the temperature of the process vessel to $\pm 3^{\circ}\text{C}$, which results in more consistent product quality. It also saves energy by not overshooting the required temperature range. "We can't put figures on the benefits at this stage, but we're so confident that the new controls are saving money that we're planning to install more of the same elsewhere in the refinery," says Mr Peter Eastick, Managing Director, Ragus Sugars.

Ragus Sugars is an independent sugar refiner that makes a range of specialist products for baking, brewing, confectionary and pharmaceuticals. The company's refinery in Slough processes a wide variety of sugars, using steam to dissolve each batch in a pan and water to cool it down at the end of the process.

Spirax Sarco supplied new valves to control both the steam and the cooling water flow to one of the pans, but the biggest benefits all stem from the improved control on the steam side.

The new pneumatically actuated KE steam control valve is connected to an SX25 electronic controller, which is ideal for constant set-point applications. “The operator can now essentially set the required temperature and move on to other tasks,” confirms Eastick.

