

Meat processing technology

Keeping dollars ... and sense ... always at the forefront.

Here's how one equipment company does it.

The meat processing industry is always in the process of reinventing itself – in terms of technology, how plants are run, and in responding to existential challenges like changing consumer food preferences and even the COVID-19 pandemic. But meeting those needs depends on principals that are time-honored and fundamental.



That's what Bettcher Industries – the pioneer and leading manufacturer of hand-held mechanically powered meat trimming tools – has been doing for decades. From its World War II-era founding as a machine shop for nearby meatpacking companies, to pioneering the industry's first powered hand-held meat trimmer tool in the 1950s, to today's latest generation of trimmer technology, Bettcher has worked alongside processors to develop equipment solutions that make a positive difference in product yield and quality.

Finding solutions to production challenges has always been a driver of new equipment and systems used in meat processing. But for Bettcher, innovation is very personal, too.

"Some of the best solutions come from working on the line, standing side-by-side with our processing partners to see how cutting, trimming and skinning functions can be improved using product knowledge, application and operational best practices," says Bettcher's marketing director Kevin Stump.

◀ *Bettcher Industries has been delivering innovative solutions for decades.*

The scope of the collaboration is broad. Bettcher works with processors at many levels and locations within meat plants, including knife room and plant maintenance personnel as well as production, processing and plant floor employees, plant safety teams, and senior plant managers.

In the process, Bettcher yield specialists conduct side-by-side testing of old versus new ways of trimming and skinning, while calculating the financial impact of making changes. The goal is to deliver a powerful value proposition with every Bettcher product: ***The lowest cost of ownership along with the highest yields and productivity.***

As Stump states, "We're highly responsive to processors who feel free to share their problems and challenges. We're problem-solvers, which means we look for ways to improve on the technology and equipment to achieve even higher meat yields, better product quality, and price upgrades."

Real Results

It's one thing to talk about solutions. It's quite another to "walk the walk" – literally on the plant floor – to help processors improve their product yields and revenues while saving on labor and improving worker safety and

The Problem-Solvers

Bettcher's introduction of Quantum Flex® Trimmers in 2018 represents the most effective trimmer technology yet. Not only are they faster and more powerful for better cutting efficiency, they deliver the lowest overall cost of ownership thanks to durable construction and low parts usage. With their quick-change blade housing design and specially engineered Quantum Driveline, they also avoid the numerous challenges and problems that plague other trimmer systems.



comfort. Here are several real-life examples of significant added value delivered to processors thanks to this kind of focus.

▼ *The Quantum Flex® Trimmer, introduced by Bettcher Industries in 2018.*



Beef Neckbone Trimming

A beef processing plant comparatively tested new trimmer models on its neckbone trimming line. In real-time conditions operating in tandem with its existing trimmer equipment, the results were dramatic:

- Average hourly meat yield increase (based on three test rounds): **+28%**
- Projected annual value of increased meat recovery: **\$1.9 million**
- ROI: New equipment investment recouped in just **10 days**

Pork Cheek Meat Harvesting

A pork processing plant tested new trimmer models equipped with a continuous cutting edge for pork head cheeking operations. Compared to conventional trimmers and straight knives, the improvements were noteworthy:

- Yield gain over using a straight knife: **+18%**
- Yield gain over using older-model trimmers: **+8%**

Chicken Thigh Deboning

A chicken processor tested a new trimmer model against the results it had attained when using straight knives and older-model trimmers on its thigh deboning line. The yield differences were significant:

▲ *The Bettcher Innovation Center at the company's headquarters near Cleveland, Ohio offers an inspirational space for the exploration and development of the next generations of Bettcher products and solutions.*

- Baseline (hand-deboning using a straight knife): **69% yield**
- Older-model trimmers: **71% yield** (2.0 percentage points higher than using a straight knife)
- New-model trimmers: **72.5% yield** (an additional 1.5 percentage points higher)
- Projected annual increased revenue with new-model trimmers: **\$1.5 million**

Beef Jerky Processing

A maker of beef jerky products tested a new trimmer model against a straight knife for pectoral muscle trimming. In real-time testing working side-by-side with an experienced straight knife operator, the yield and productivity improvements were impressive:

- Quantities tested: 10 cases of pectorals each
- Increased meat yield: **7% higher** with new trimmer model
- Productivity: **35% faster** with new trimmer model

A Different Approach

The process by which Bettcher comes up with product solutions is noteworthy in several respects:

- **Value-driven innovation.** Every new product is rooted in delivering better utility, productivity and value.
- **Details make the difference.** In meat processing, success is measured in incremental production adjustments that add up to big dollar improvements. Attention to small design details is the difference between offering merely an adequate product and one that makes a major impact.
- **An investment in people.** Technology is critical, but only if it's harnessed by highly trained technicians with a true problem-solving attitude.
- **Delivering "best value."** Unlike suppliers that promote products on "low price" but fail to account for the actual costs over time, Bettcher focuses on delivering the lowest long-term cost of ownership in conjunction with the highest yields and productivity.

The technical specialists at Bettcher Industries are available to answer your questions and offer solutions for improving meat yields and worker productivity. Contact them at **800-321-8763** or **bettcher.com**.

 **BETTCHER®**
Industries, Inc.