

P.26 PROCESSORS EYE
CYBERSECURITY GAPS

P.37 WANTED: GOOD
PLANT MANAGERS

P.62 GOODSIR'S GLOBAL
MEAT DIPLOMACY

04.22 meatingplace.com

meatingplace®

Building plants
around people is
the blueprint for
Simmons Foods'
success in a market
with uncharted labor
issues and cost
constraints

By

DESIGN



**PRODUCT:**

Rana Meat Lasagna

PRICE:

\$9.99 to \$12.97 per
40-ounce package
(sale price of \$7.99)

PLUS:

High-quality ingredi-
ents and bold flavors

PROBLEM:

Meat is **too finely**
ground

THAT'S *armor*

Rana sets a new standard with its meat lasagna

“Comfort food” is defined as something that provides a bit of nostalgia or sentimental value, or a food that’s just delicious and fills you up with a familiar flavor. That’s how many people feel about lasagna, but often they don’t have the time or impetus to actually make it — and the frozen selections take forever to bake.

We discovered refrigerated Rana Meat Lasagna, which delivers a 2.5-pound lasagna from your home oven in about 20 minutes or, if you’re

craving immediate comfort, in only 8 minutes from your microwave oven. Let’s hear what our tasters have to say about this hearty find.

This is a product of Rana Meal Solutions LLC company based in Bartlett, Ill. Following Giovanni Rana’s innovations in Italy, his son, Gian Luca Rana, brought the concept and manufacturing to the U.S. in 2012. From that base, the company (which takes pride in being a family-owned organization) has created a range

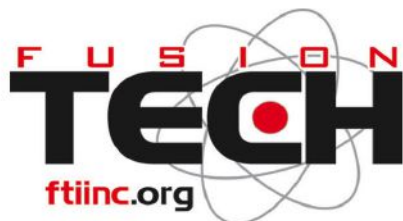
SANITARY AND ROBUST CONVEYORS



Custom designed and built sanitary conveyors.

Whether it's a single conveyor or an entire processing line, our team can design, manufacture, and install sanitary and robust conveyors to meet your needs. We've designed it all — from simple, straight conveyors to complex rotating, indexing, and sortation conveyors. You'll see your conveyor and layout in 3D, making it easy to approve the design before we start building. From concept to completion and onto support, you'll love the simplicity and ease of our conveyor design process. **Learn more at**

ftiinc.org/conveyors



FTIINC.ORG/CONVEYORS
309.588.4803

TASTEtest

of pasta innovations that are changing grocery shelves. This refrigerated lasagna represents a new iteration of the strategy.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Our tasters included some who were familiar with the Rana brand, many who are comfortable turning to convenient kitchen short cuts, and some who make homemade lasagna.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

There were some disagreements, among our tasters, on the packaging for Rana's lasagna. While some tasters found the cardboard "simple and earthy," "homey and organic," and consistent with a "high end" product, others found it "lazy and cheap" and inconsistent with Rana's other packaging, which is defined by its bold colors.

Similarly, while a number of tasters loved that the product was refrigerated, and not frozen (one taster remarked "I knew it would taste fresher"), one taster wished the packaging stated whether or not the product could be frozen after purchase to increase shelf life.

APPEARANCE

Our tasters were universally pleased with the appearance of Rana's lasagna.

"The lasagna looked like homemade lasagna after being cooked — better than I was expecting," said one taster.

"The pasta was perfectly cooked, not mushy at all, which can happen to even the best lasagna maker," a second taster said. "There was a nice layer of ricotta and a separate layer of beef mixture. A very good ratio of both."

And a third taster remarked, "The layer of cheese on the top turned golden. It smelled so good. If you blindfolded any of us, we could not tell it was a mass-produced lasagna."

TASTE, TEXTURE AND MORE

Consistent with their praise of the product's smell and appearance, our tasters were universal in their praise on the lasagna's taste.

“
The price per ounce, when not on sale, is higher than Stouffer's, **BUT WAY BETTER.**”

“This lasagna tasted good, with a flavorful tomato-based meat sauce layered with cheese and not mushy pasta sheets,” a taster commented. “Both appearance and flavor were similar to homemade lasagnas.”

Other terms that tasters used included “excellent,” “well seasoned,” and “high quality.” Likening the product to a prominent competitor, one taster said, “The price per ounce, when not on sale, is higher than Stouffer’s, but way better. Better cheese, browned cheese, more meat.”

Interestingly, despite the universal agreement on the product’s quality, there was debate about the meat Rana used for the lasagna. Although many tasters appreciated the quality and amount of meat — one described it as “high quality” with “no fat, no gristle” — not all tasters were fans of the meat’s texture.

“The meat tasted like it was pureed, so it seemed like a taco lasagna,” one taster said. “It’s taco meat, so it doesn’t taste like homemade lasagna.”

A second taster likened the ground beef’s texture to taco meat. “The meat texture is a little fine for me,” they said. “I’m used to slices of meatball, or sausage crumbles. This is more like the texture of fine taco meat from a fast food place, but still ok.”

And a third taster remarked, “My husband ate it first and described the meat as being Taco Bell- or Chef Boyard-ee-like. I didn’t really understand what he meant until I tried it myself. The meat was so smooth, it was an odd texture or lack of texture?”

Other remarks from tasters included “I just wish the meat wasn’t pulverized” and “I prefer chunky bits [of meat].” And while one taster said the meat’s texture was “a little different than I was expecting,” they ultimately “thought it was fine this way and tasted good.”

Outside of the product’s quality, one taster shared a useful observation about portioning: “I didn’t feel like it could serve six for dinner. I cut it in four and served each quarter with a side salad for dinner. Perhaps a 1/6 serving with a salad could be a nice lunch portion.”

UPSHOT

Unsurprisingly, many tasters were quite positive in their overall assessment of the Rana Meat Lasagna.

“This was a winner all around,” one taster said. “We were all very pleasantly surprised. I don’t say this often, but I will buy this.”

“This was far superior in all aspects, including the price

FAST & ACCURATE PORTIONING



Try it at our
Innovation
Center
ftiinc.org/innovation

Safely cut frozen or chilled product into accurate portions.

The Mainali RB-1 Automatic Band Saw is designed to automatically and safely cut any frozen or chilled product into consistent portions. The double-sided blade allows for cutting in both directions, reducing cut time and increasing efficiency. Perfect for meat, poultry, fish, vegetables, and more, the RB-1 is the most accurate and adaptable band saw on the market.

Learn more about the RB-1 at ftiinc.org/rb1



FTIINC.ORG/RB1
309.588.4803

point,” another taster remarked. “It is excellent quality for the price.”

Two other tasters noted the price point. The first stated, “This could be a family go-to instead of a rotisserie chicken, especially when on sale at \$7.99!” while the other shared, “Even at the full price of \$13, it’s still really affordable. When on sale for \$8, people should stock up!”

Other taster statements included “the quality is good and it’s easy to make,” “it looked good, tasted good, had good texture,” and finally, “We all loved it!” A taster added, “The tomato sauce is so high quality, selling it alone would be a very logical line extension.”

Some tasters, though, did share some constructive criticisms of the lasagna. Two remarked on the product’s saltiness and how the high sodium content would prevent them from buying it consistently. And another taster shared, “The meat was very small, not a chunky ground beef. It was a skimpy lasagna, so I wouldn’t buy it again.”

“
I don’t say
this often,
but
I WILL
BUY
THIS.”

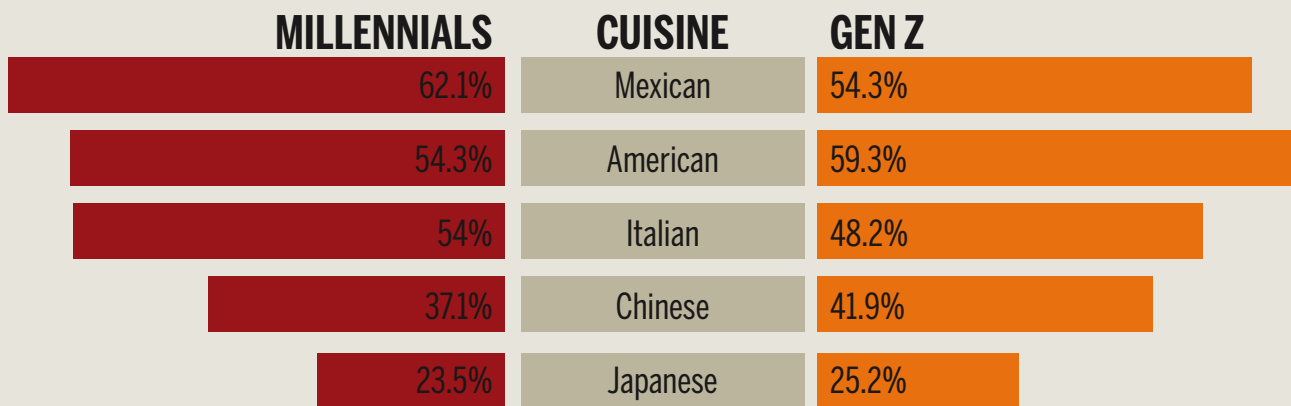
CONCLUSION

Rana Meat Lasagna made some terrific first impressions with the following: its brand name recognition; the product being refrigerated, not frozen; and, for most, the product’s packaging. Regardless of the serving size, which our tasters said could range from three to six servings, all found it a good value, and an exceptional value when on sale.

Depending on their frame of reference, most enjoyed all components of the lasagna, except the texture of the meat, which some found to be “too fine” or “taco-meat-like.” A “crumble” texture, which would be a little larger, is what our tasters wanted. That said, the quantity of meat provided was thought to be excellent, beyond expectation, and above what is offered by leading frozen brands. Although none mentioned “comfort,” most seemed to enjoy this hearty lasagna and appreciated its great value.

Rana has set the bar for others! Can its competitors follow?

TALKIN’ BOUT MY GENERATION



Italian cuisine is well-liked by a majority of millennials and a near-majority of Generation Z. According to research by Segmenta, 54% of millennials report that Italian is among their favorite cuisines, as do 48.2% of Gen Z.

Source: Segmenta, compiled by Statista