



# Going with the Flow

## Interlake Mecalux Pallet Flow rack solves Pet Supermarket's replenishment woes

Pet Supermarket is one of the largest small format specialty retailers of pet food and pet-related supplies based in the southeastern U.S. The company operates 182 stores offering customers a broad assortment of premium and holistic pet food and supplies. In order to expand its distribution network, the retailer recently leased 97,000 ft<sup>2</sup> at the Bridge Point Davie distribution facility in Davie, Florida, and decided to equip the

space with a mix of Interlake Mecalux Pallet Flow and Selective racking.

### Customer's needs

Pet Supermarket's warehouse staff was experiencing replenishment issues at the company's 166,000 ft<sup>2</sup> facility in Sunrise, Florida, because the warehouse was running out of space to store product. This was forcing warehouse operators to continually move stock around the

warehouse in an effort to free up space. "If you look at our Sunrise facility, when we receive product, we can't put it away because we are out of space, so it sits," said Jim Sperrazza, director of logistics for Pet Supermarket. "Somebody else has to move it somewhere where there is an empty spot until there is an empty space on the rack because we have no pallet positions." The warehouse also required two or three stockers to continually backfill picked pallets.

### Proposed solution

When Pet Supermarket decided to lease its new space at the Davie facility, it called in Interlake Mecalux and warehouse equipment and supplies provider Atlantic

Rack to devise a solution that would increase storage capacity and improve replenishment processes. After conducting an engineering analysis, Atlantic Rack and Pet Supermarket decided upon a solution that would primarily feature Interlake Mecalux Pallet Flow rack.

Three-quarters – or about 70,000 ft<sup>2</sup> – of the 97,000 ft<sup>2</sup> Davie facility contains racking. Interlake Mecalux and Atlantic Rack provided frames that are 22 ft high x 42 in. wide and racking with 237 bays that are 8 ft wide and 12 bays that are 12 ft wide. The beams are 96 in. x 4 in. and 144 in. x 6.5 in. There are four beam levels at two pallets per level and 10 aisles that are 10 ft each. This arrangement also features 2,048 pallet positions in the Pallet Flow rack and 2,550 Selective rack positions for GMA pallets of 40 x 48 in. with a maximum weight of 2,500 lb. per pallet.

Interlake Mecalux Pallet Flow is a compact structure that stores up to four pallets deep. The racking features wheel track sections installed on a sloped lane, and the pallets flow from the entry side to the picking side, creating a first in, first out (FIFO) system. Pallets enter at the highest end of the wheel track and move by gravity toward the other end, where they will be available for picking. Having different loading and unloading aisles reduces handling time and eliminates aisle congestion, allowing forklift trucks to deposit and extract pallets without

#### TECHNICAL DETAILS

System type:	Pallet Flow and Selective Rack
Number of bays:	237 (8' wide) 12 (12' wide)
Frame specs:	075F – 22' x 42"
Beam specs:	96" x 4" (40E) & 144" x 6.5" (65E)
Height of rack:	22'
Number of beam levels:	4
Number of aisles:	10
Aisle width:	10'
Pallet positions:	2,048 for Pallet Flow, 2,550 for Selective
Pallet type:	GMA 40" x 48"
Pallets per level:	2
Max weight per pallet:	2,500 lbs.



interruptions. Each flow lane also can bear a different SKU, which enables easy access to a variety of products, a factor that was important to Pet Supermarket because it will be storing 3,000 SKUs at its Davie distribution center. Pallet Flow is also good for holding warehouses and dispatch areas where operators need to remove pallets quickly. "We're going to have a lot of SKUs here," Sperrazza said. "We keep

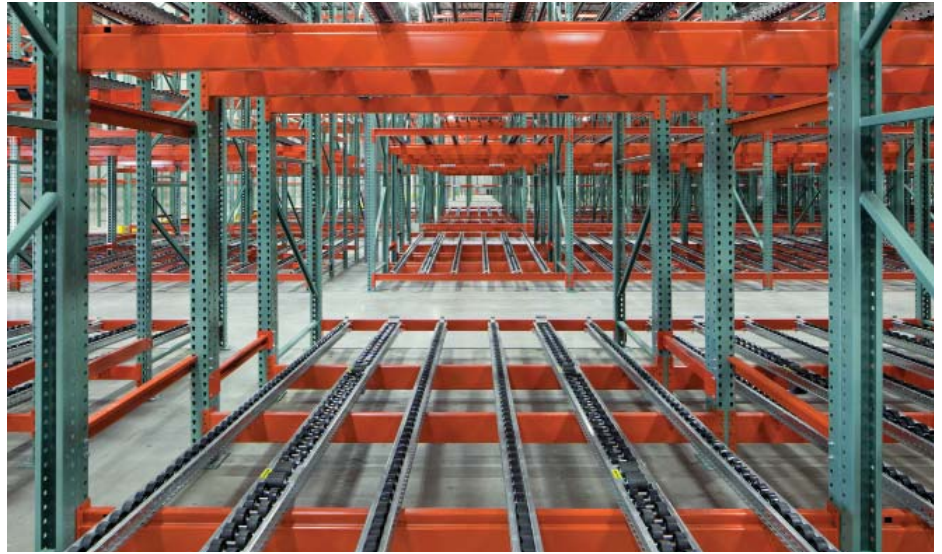
anywhere from four to five weeks' worth of inventory, but it turns pretty quickly." As a first in, first out system, Pallet Flow allows for perfect product turnover. When an operator removes the first pallet, the others advance one position. This ensures that the front pallet position is always full and makes pallet extraction simple. Interlake Mecalux Pallet Flow systems also provide an infinite variety of



layouts depending on the individual flow rates and order picking requirements.

The Interlake Mecalux Pallet Flow rack was a perfect fit for Pet Supermarket because it allowed the retailer to improve its replenishment model by 60 percent and increase storage capacity by approximately 25 to 30 percent. "Today, we can keep four pallets in a bay and continually pick with the overstock right above," Sperrazza said. "We have a higher output without having to stop and replenish and having the picker wait until product is replenished." Pet Supermarket also will need fewer stockers because of the Pallet Flow system, resulting in reduced labor costs. The Pallet Flow rack is ideal because Pet Supermarket's Davie distribution center will be housing mainly high volume bulk products with expiration dates, such as bagged and canned dog and cat food.

In addition, Interlake Mecalux and Atlantic Rack made certain not to overlook even the smallest detail. By testing the design of the Pallet Flow rack, both companies were able to detect and resolve any unforeseen problems before installation. "We found a problem on the original design with the flow after we tested," said Luis Jimenez, CEO of Atlantic Rack. "The wheels that we used and the shrink wrap of the pallets sometimes got stuck, so we changed to another wheel, which has a much bigger diameter, so it flows perfectly now." Testing also ensured that overhanging loads would not affect the system.

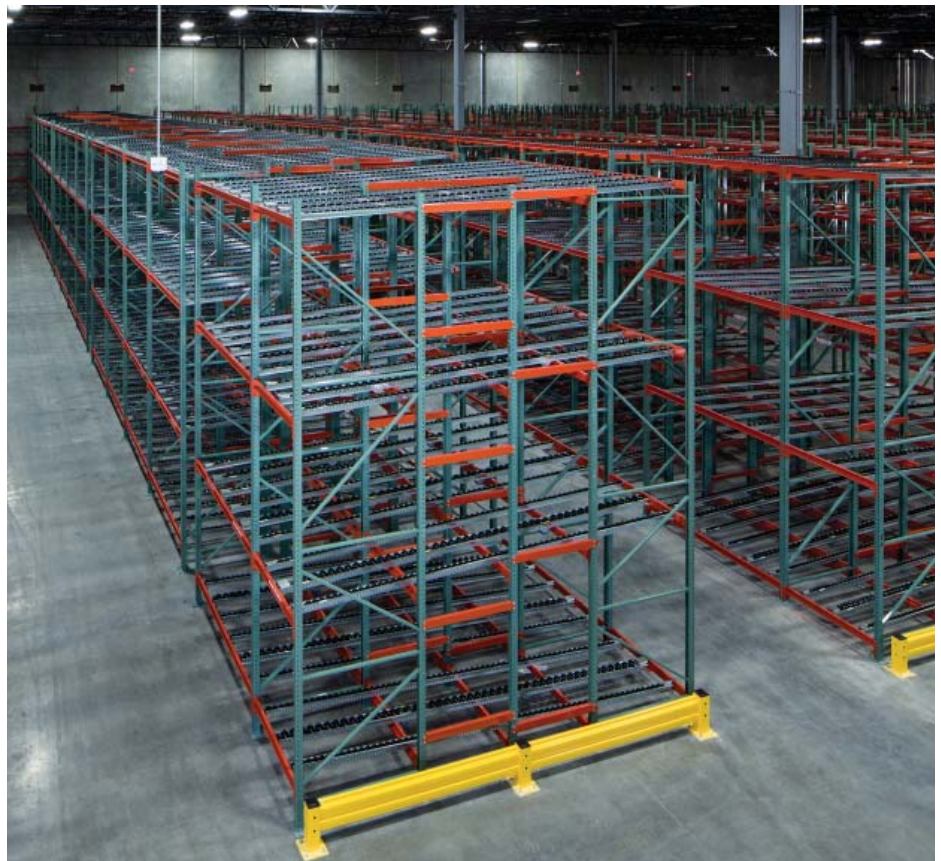


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Overall, Sperrazza is hoping Pet Supermarket's new facility will satisfy the company's storage needs for the next three to five years based on new store growth and current volume, and when the time comes to expand again, Sperrazza will most likely turn to Interlake Mecalux and Atlantic Rack again to supply the pallet racking.

"I have used Interlake racking for probably the last 20 years in any project I have done, so I'm a big fan of it. It's a very good product," Sperrazza said.

#### Advantages for the customer

- **Improved replenishment**

**process:** Pet Supermarket's Pallet Flow rack has improved the retailer's replenishment model by 60 percent.

- **Increased productivity:** warehouse operators no longer have to continually relocate stock to find space.

- **Greater capacity:** the Pallet Flow rack allows Pet Supermarket to store up to four pallets deep, so that pallets are readily available for picking.

- **Labor savings:** fewer stockers are necessary with the Pallet Flow system.



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