

# Key Technology Helps Agrilink Bring Vegetables from Grower to Retailer with Marathon



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“Farm to market”: a rural family with a wagonload of produce? Not today! Agrilink Foods is a leader in contemporary farm-to-market strategies. A cooperative of over 600 grower/owners, Agrilink grows, processes, and markets some of the nation’s favorite products. It is the nation’s largest processor of frozen vegetables, including the Birds Eye® brand. And Agrilink relies on [Key Technology](#) for much of their processing equipment, including Key’s [Marathon™](#) “long-distance” vibratory conveyor.

The Marathon is available in lengths up to 100 feet. With use of the latest engineering software and predictive modeling, the Marathon is designed to require less support structure than competing long vibratory conveyors.

The all stainless-steel construction is very sanitary and requires no maintenance when compared to mild-steel painted conveyors. Marathon conveys product efficiently, utilizing two

synchronized vibrating motors for its driving force. Agrilink’s processing plant in Bergen, New York, replaced a competitor’s conveyor with a 45-foot-long Marathon from Key Technology, in time for the 2000 processing season. Mounted about 7 feet above the plant floor, it is used to distribute fresh, husked cob corn to the kernel cutting machinery. Jim Newcomb, Facility Manager for the Bergen plant, states that competing vibratory equipment used in the past has “been a problem as far as longevity, and we are hoping that the technology behind the Marathon will eliminate those problems.”

And Marathon is performing up to Agrilink’s expectations. Agrilink installed their Marathon, with Key assisting in startup and training. Mr. Newcomb states that installation and startup “all went very well.” Since then – the Marathon is now in its second season – Mr. Newcomb states that the Marathon has had no problems and has run exceptionally well. He also remarks that “ease of sanitation is excellent.”

Agrilink is also pleased with Key’s personnel and service. Key’s representative “gets us all the information when we need it, and is ‘Johnny-on-the-spot’ when we have problems.” Each year Agrilink calls in a Key service technician to “check everything out before startup” on Agrilink’s Key equipment, because “it ensures that at startup all is correct” – an efficient way to minimize service and enhance performance.

In addition to the Marathon, Agrilink's Bergen plant uses a Key Technology [Turbo-Flo® Blancher/Cooker](#), which Mr. Newcomb characterizes as simple and reliable. The plant also runs several [Tegra®](#) optical sorters and [Iso-Flo®](#) vibratory conveyors. Mr. Newcomb states that "Key is not the cheapest but they are competitive. Key's commitment to improve and stand behind their equipment is one reason we have purchased more (Key equipment) in the last few years." Responsibility to the customer, and dedication to quality – Key Technology goes the distance.

