

FEDERATION STYLE FLOUR (CONQUEROR BRAND)

STAGE ONE

The farmer delivers the bags of wheat to Connor's Mill where it is hoisted to the top floor. The miller then feeds the grain into the "seed cleaner". There are four main steps in the grading done by this machine. The first stage of refining the wheat is when blown air is forced through the grain to remove the chaff and light trash. The second step involves the large grid to screen out the straw, sticks and leaves.

The next grid is of a size to select the actual wheat seed from the broken straw (chaff), lupins and large foreign seeds.

If you look hard enough at the retained black objects in this screen you will find "double gees" older than you are!

The final grid strains out the smaller impurities such as Paterson's Curse and Wild Turnip. It is no coincidence that this is called the "sand tray." The cleaned seed is passed downstairs to the scour station.

The separator was made around 1900 and handled 7 tons of grain per hour; therefore it is estimated to have had in excess of 3 million tons of grain pass through it. Just like the other

machinery pieces in this display, it is operating at approximately ¼ speed.

STAGE TWO

The wheat is now subject to some pretty rough treatment. It is thrown around the scourer against the roughcast concrete liner, which is impregnated with emery. The wheat grains are stripped of their husks. The waste products of this process are called "smut dust" and are very explosive in the atmosphere: no smoking around here!!

STAGE THREE

The "Brush-Machine" is another stage of wheat cleaning: this is getting ridiculous! The "Smut Dust" is as fine as flour and must be removed. The polished wheat is nearly ready for the mill.

STAGE THREE AND a HALF

Because wheat will not crush into fine flour if it is too dry, the humidity of the grain has to be raised. This is done via the wheel, which introduces a measured amount of water to the wheat.

STAGE FOUR

Off to the Roller Mill. The grister chews the clean wheat up, then it falls to the big rollers where it is squeezed into flour. The setting of the rollers is adjustable. For finer flour it must go through a number of different roller mills.

THE 'OTHER' STAGE FOUR

Off to the Stone Mill. The wheat is funnelled into the hollow centre of the big "lifesaver" stone. The stone "grabs" the wheat. Once again the gap setting is adjustable (between the two stones) depending on the product required. Radial grooves cut into the stone "squeezes" the flour to the outside, where it builds up in the drum. When it reaches a certain depth the flour is picked up by moving stone and transported to the outlet.

STAGE FIVE

This is the Centrifugal Dresser (or the big sieve). The milled product is agitated along a silk screen. The flour falls to the "worm" conveyor where it is taken to the bagging machine. The flat cups at the left hand end of the dresser carry out the remnants of crushed wheat, which is the bran and the pollard. This is sold back to the farmer as pig and chicken food.

STAGE SIX

Bagging Machine: this, our newest machine, is only 50 years old! The operator raises the platform and fits the bag to the chute. By engaging the drive wheel, the fresh milled flour is screwed tightly into the bag.

When it reaches the preset weight, the brake is applied; the bag is taken off and sewn tightly. Then it's down the chute, into the dray and off to the Bakery.

PIESSE FAMILY

It was common practice in Victorian times for people to live very near, or even in, their place of work.

When the flour mill ceased operation, a Roads Board power station was established in the building from 1917 to 1955.

As late as 1925, Clive Piesse set up house on the top floor in the Mill following his appointment as engineer. His young wife bore twins, Maxine and Monty in this uninsulated environment.

Other than the constant noise and ever-present engine fumes, the cold of winter would have been tempered by the warming effect of the big steam engines. Summer was a different story.

Monty Piesse told us that on really hot days, his mother would drape a bed sheet over the kitchen table and trickle water all over it to create a large "Coolgardie Safe". The toddlers were then tucked under the table to keep cool.

A picture of the Piesse twins is hung in the Toodyay Visitors Centre.

PICKLING MACHINE

This little machine was to the farmer, what the big machine was to the mill.

It cleaned the wheat of impurities or "trash", by feeding the wheat in at the top and by winding the handle the farmer operated an internal fan that blew away the lighter rubbish.

The graduated grit trays were shaken and so separated large objects on the top tray and let tiny objects fall through to the "sand tray". The cleaned wheat was separated out and fed to the conveyor.

The conveyor mostly consisted of cups attached to a chain or belt. (The box ducting on the first floor represents a similar conveyor). The conveyor takes the wheat grains to be treated – or "pickled." The grain was treated to protect it against fungus and insects so that it could be stored. This grain was TOO POISONOUS TO BE TAKEN, and would be used for next year's crop.

MILLING PROCESS (Through the various stages)



TOODYAY

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