

SP Group launches retortable, microwaveable VSteam pouch

SP Group has unveiled a new advance on its VSteam bag solution, significantly boosting its suitability for the convenience food segment. SP's R&D and Innovation department has developed better techniques to ensure that, in addition to being frozen at low temperatures, the bag can now also withstand pasteurisation and sterilisation processes, and then be cooked in a microwave.

VSteam development will enable clients to use the pouch in the ready meals and sauces segment: a market that is expected to grow annually by 3.1 per cent (CAGR 2018-2021). Pre-cooked products are submitted to heat treatments inside the package, but normally pouches do not have devices to heat or cook them in the microwave.

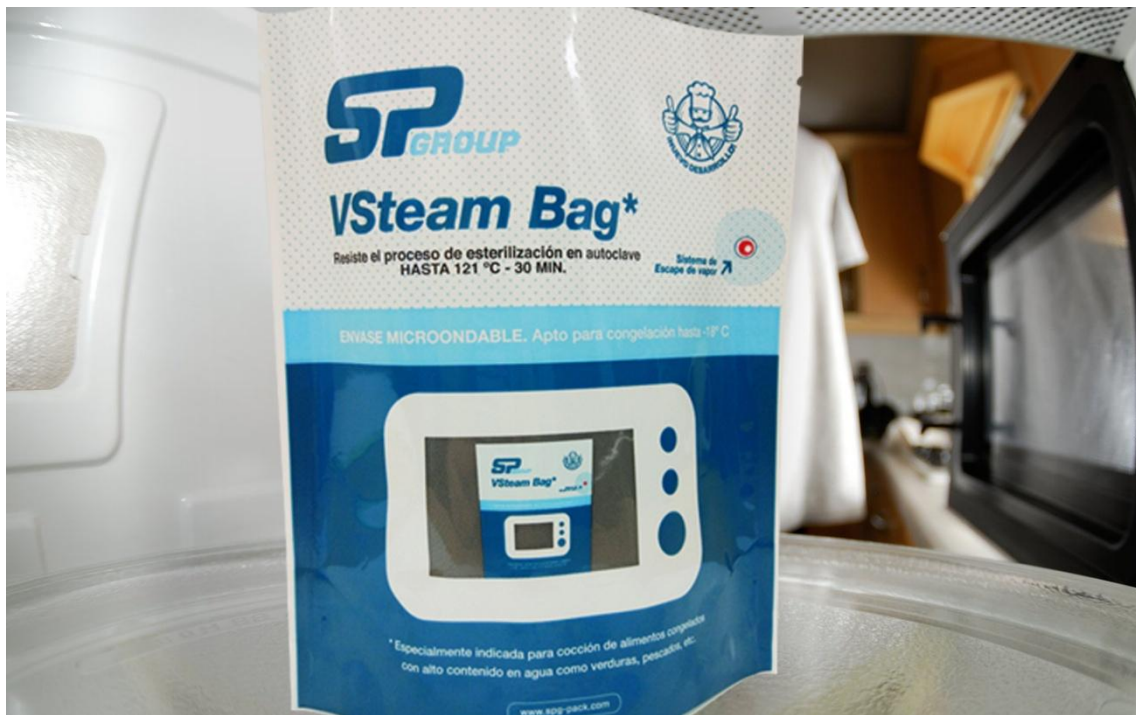
SP Group provides the solution to this problem with VSteam, which includes a patented valve that opens with the heat from the microwave due to the internal pressure of the pouch, allowing steam to escape from inside and cooking the food. The valve also allows retorted, pasteurised or frozen bags to be microwaved without prior perforation.



The tests performed on the sterilisable VSteam pouch demonstrate that the valve withstands the pasteurisation and sterilisation of the product in industrial autoclaves with counter-pressure at a temperature of 121°C, and without any risk of breakage or losses (under controlled conditions).

SP Group aims to provide innovative solutions for companies and consumers in line with consumer habits and new lifestyles to ensure products are easier to use. This particular innovation was devised in response to increasing demand by senior citizens for food products that can be easily and safely cooked directly in the microwave.

More broadly, the improvements to the sterilisable VSteam packaging provide a solution answering the trend for convenience foods. ‘Convenience’ places third among the top innovation drivers in the European food market.



“VSteam is a packaging solution that is easy to use, saves time and energy in both the manufacturing process and later cooking in the home, and generally facilitates the consumption of the product,” remarked María de Guía Blanco, responsible for the project.