

PRESS RELEASE

Cooper split bearings are ideal for sugar-mill maintenance and upgrades

21 May 2019: Split bearings from Cooper Bearings, available from leading supplier Bearings International (BI), are ideal for maintenance and equipment upgrades for sugar mills in Southern Africa. This is the view of **Matthew Tyler**, Cooper Bearings Product Manager at BI, who recently paid a visit to various sugar mills in Swaziland and Mpumalanga.

Cooper Bearings represents one of BI's oldest agencies, which has been distributing the brand since 1937. The main advantage of the Cooper split bearing is that the unique design makes assembly a lot easier. Unlike conventional bearings, rolling surfaces and seals can be inspected frequently during operational life for preventative maintenance.

Bearing replacement minimises downtime, with no need to dismantle or remove any auxiliary equipment on the shaft. "The main advantage of the Cooper split bearing is its unique two-half configuration, which means it is totally split to the shaft to facilitate simple installation, inspection, and maintenance, without the need to disturb auxiliary equipment," Tyler explains.

A lot of Southern African sugar mills were designed and built in the UK, the home of Cooper Roller Bearings. Hence the bulk of sugar mills in Southern Africa have Cooper split bearings, representing a major market for BI in terms of both maintenance and upgrades.

"A solid bearing can take up to 24 hours to remove, while a Cooper split bearing can usually be changed in under two hours," Tyler stresses. The latest development from Cooper is the SNQ angled pedestal, now available across the standard range of SN and SD equivalent pedestal housings.

This pedestal makes it even easier to fit Cooper split bearings, as the angled joint allows the pedestal to be slid under the shaft. "The main advantage of the SNQ angled pedestal is that the bolt holes and centre heights, from the bottom of the base to the shaft centre, is a direct equivalent. This allows for a straightforward bolt-on, bolt-off approach, without any modifications required," Tyler notes.

Sugar mills generally close down for the off-crop period from December to March, and crush cane non-stop for the rest of the year, depending on the crop output. Any breakdowns during this period of maximum production has a significant impact on uptime.

"The entire sugar mill could come to a standstill while a bearing is changed-out. The advantage of Cooper split bearings in critical applications such as sugar mills makes such changeout quick, easy, and cost-effective," Tyler points out.

Cooper split bearings start from a 40 mm shaft size / 1.5 inch, with the bearings for sugar mills being over 1 000 mm in diameter on the diffuser shaft alone. Due to the long lead times, BI maintains an extensive local stockholding at its Parkhaven, Johannesburg head office. Additional stock is held at BI branches in Nelspruit, iSithebe, Richards Bay, and Durban to meet the requirements of the sugar industry.

"We carry metric sizes for new applications, and hold a very good stock on the imperial sizes due to the age of the mills. When these were built over 50 years ago, everything was imperial, so we cater for both," Tyler stresses.

"The advantage of Cooper split bearings for sugar mills is that some of these have not been replaced for decades. The good sealing arrangement translates into a very long life. However, proper maintenance and lubrication are essential, as well as proper balancing of the equipment," Tyler concludes.

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Notes to the Editor

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About BI

BI is a member of the Hudaco Group. BI is a leading distributor of bearings and power transmission products in Southern Africa. With its customer-focused approach, BI is committed to delivering value to all its stakeholders, while offering quality solutions that make a real difference to optimising plant availability and turnaround time. With over 60 years in the bearings and power transmission industry, BI puts its experience to good use by going great lengths to ensure their product range and services meet the changing needs of clients, industry and business. Backed by an elite technical team, BI covers the full spectrum of customer requirements, and is able to ensure immediate availability of products through a nationwide network of branches.

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