

# Rica Group opens the Dominican Republic's first pallet AS/RS

A leading producer and distributor of dairy products, juices and food boosts logistics productivity by 35% with Mecalux technological solutions.

Country: **Dominican Republic** | Sector: **food & beverage**



### CHALLENGES

- Speed up the putaway of dairy products, juices and food from the production lines.
- Maximise space utilisation to accommodate goods from multiple warehouses.

### SOLUTIONS

- Automated Pallet Shuttle with a stacker crane.
- Easy WMS warehouse management system.

### BENEFITS

- 35% increase in Grupo Rica's logistics throughput.
- Storage capacity quadrupled without expanding the facility's footprint.

Renowned for its commitment to quality and innovation, Rica Group has become a trusted brand for millions of consumers in the Dominican Republic. The company operates six distribution centres that supply a wide network of corner shops — its main sales channel — as well as supermarkets.

» **Founded: 1966**

» **Presence: 22+ countries**



“Logistics automation is crucial for achieving operational excellence, delivering high-quality products and building a faster, more efficient supply chain.” Alejandro Rojas, Logistics Director at Rica Group, underscores the importance of the new automated storage and retrieval system (AS/RS) from Mecalux at the company’s Santo Domingo headquarters. This AS/RS — the first of its kind in the Dominican Republic — marks a national milestone. It will enable Rica Group to double its export capacity in the coming years and strengthen its presence in more than 22 countries.

To meet growing demand, the business has made strategic investments in the past few years to optimise its milk and juice production capabilities. More recently, it has shifted its focus to logistics, consolidating products previously distributed from multiple warehouses into a single facility. Through automation, it has increased its logistics productivity by 35%.

“As part of our commitment to innovation, we’ve implemented the Automated Pallet Shuttle system. This AS/RS has maximised space utilisation and quadrupled our storage capacity without expanding the facility,” says Rojas. Centralising its logistics operations has enabled Rica Group to gain stricter control over its processes and SKUs, lower operating costs and provide faster, more efficient customer service.

According to Rojas, when selecting a supplier to install the Dominican Republic’s first AS/RS, the decision was clear. “We chose Mecalux as our strategic partner because of its leadership in warehouse automation technology, strong presence in Latin America and extensive experience across a range of industries.”

The new automated warehouse is fully integrated into Rica Group’s production process. The company’s Santo Domingo facility holds



Grade A certification from the US Food and Drug Administration, ensuring compliance with stringent food safety and quality standards. This accreditation is essential for exporting dairy products to the US market.

#### **Uninterrupted product flow**

Automation is the ideal solution for the major challenges facing Rica Group’s food logistics operations; it enables the continuous movement of goods and accurate traceability of perishable items.

“Mecalux’s comprehensive solution ensures a steady and efficient product flow, minimises disruptions and optimises inventory man-

**The new AS/RS can store and dispatch up to 120 pallets per hour**



agement. It provides us with more rigorous control over our dairy products, juices and food,” says Rojas. “These benefits have significantly boosted our production capacity.”

The new AS/RS can store and dispatch up to 120 pallets per hour. Before its implementation, managing that same volume took three hours — highlighting a remarkable improvement in both speed and productivity. Automated conveyors installed along the front and side of the AS/RS feed pallets from production into the system without manual handling. This technology reduces physical strain on personnel and increases operational efficiency, streamlining the flow of goods.

Rica Group’s Automated Pallet Shuttle system stands out for its compact, high-performance design. It combines efficiency and capacity across three 60-metre-long aisles with 21-metre-tall racking. The company can now store nearly 10,200 pallets in less than 2,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

#### **Warehouse synced with production**

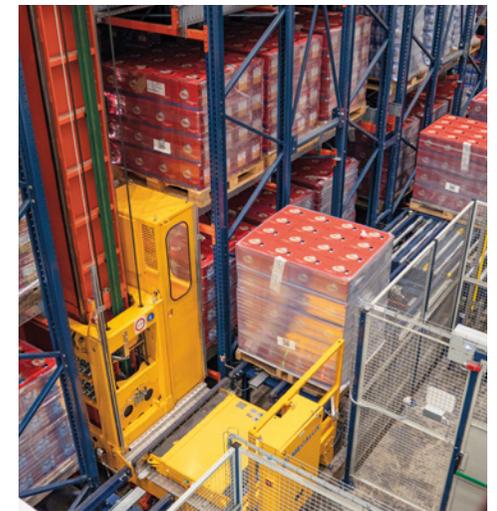
Integrating Easy WMS with Rica Group’s ERP software has synchronised production and logistics in real time. Now, the warehouse management system identifies finished goods from the factory in advance, giving the company control over which products it will ship. “Digitalisation guarantees strict inventory management based on weight, quality criteria and expiry date,” says Rojas.

Pallet monitoring is vital for Rica Group’s logistics operations: “We have full traceability of our goods. We know at all times the number of SKUs, their location, quarantine period and batch number,” says Rojas. Rica Group’s finished products undergo a thorough quality control process, making them fully suitable for consumption. During this process, items remain in quarantine until they pass inspection and are subsequently distributed.



*“Mecalux’s comprehensive solution ensures a steady and efficient product flow, minimises disruptions and optimises inventory management. It provides us with more rigorous control over our dairy products, juices and food.”*

**Alejandro Rojas**  
Logistics Director, Rica Group





Digitalisation enables real-time tracking of SKUs, their location, quarantine period and batch number.

When shipping goods, Easy WMS applies the FEFO (first expired, first out) inventory management strategy, prioritising items with the nearest expiry dates. This method fosters stock turnover, reduces waste and maintains product quality until delivery.

**Centralised, interconnected logistics processes**

“Thanks to our close collaboration with Mecalux, we’ve successfully designed and implemented a system that drives our logistics operations and growth,” says Rojas.

Rica Group’s new automated warehouse in Santo Domingo is a capital investment aimed at optimising product distribution across the Dominican Republic, the Caribbean and the US. Additionally, it will reinforce the company’s leadership in the regional food sector.

