

Tough bread challenge for slicer company

A Norwich firm has proved the city is tough enough to tackle hard Russian bread after supplying specially adapted slicing machines to Moscow in a £1m deal.

Ibonhart, based on the Bowthorpe Industrial Estate, near Costessey, which employs about 20 people, beat off fierce competition from its bigger German rival

Hartmann to win the contract for 10 high-spec slicers, which cut up and package the loaves.

The order was completed in May and earlier this month the last of the £100,000 machines were shipped off to a chain of bakeries in and around the Russian capital.

Russian breads are much harder and heavier than the British equivalent.

Technical director Philip Furness (right) said: "The breads in Russia have a very high rye content so it is heavy, dark bread similar to what you get in Germany and the problem is that the rye sticks to the blades.

"We had to develop an oiling system to lubricate the blades to enable them to slice at the speeds they are looking for."

