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RFG warns against French rail restructuring

The UK's Railfreight Group (RFG) has expressed "strong concern" over the French Government's proposals to restructure French railways, bringing infrastructure manager RFF and incumbent operator SNCF into a single organisation.

The new structure, announced by the French Government on 30 October, creates a holding company (GIE) which will effectively control infrastructure management through a 'Groupement d'Infrastructure Unique' (single infrastructure group) that will manage the infrastructure, the timetable (through an SNCF subsidiary) and with SNCF Infra the maintenance and renewals of the network. GIE will have strong links to SNCF, RFG says, while the future of the existing infrastructure manager, RFF, is unclear.

The government statement came a day after President Hollande announced that his government was to propose a 'durable' pact covering "all the dimensions of competitiveness", including the cost of labour."

But in a statement RFG retorted: "Presumably this does not include the railways since, in the 30 October statement, the French Government is proposing that all railway operatives, including those employed by the other freight companies, should have the same conditions of employment as those of SNCF."

RFG suggests that this could "kill competition and ensure that SNCF retains an increasing monopoly position until it closes rail freight completely, having already lost 50 percent of its rail freight traffic in the past 10 years".

To ensure fair competition with road freight, RFG suggests that the same social conditions should imposed on the road freight sector in France.

RFG members have a strong interest in growing rail freight through the Channel Tunnel to France and beyond. RFG alleges that operators who are not SNCF, such as Europorte and Euro Cargo Rail (DB Schenker,) suffer from unfair train path allocation and "general obstruction" in the development of new services in France.

Tony Berkeley, RFG chairman, said: "Rail freight has been shown to prosper in open, competitive markets, such as in the UK. These proposals move away from such a model, and are likely to be damaging to the prospects for rail freight growth between the UK and France, via the Channel Tunnel. We are deeply concerned about the intentions of the French government, which are both anti-rail freight and anti-European.

He urged the European Commission to investigate the proposals and their compliance with the First Railway Package and the emerging proposals for the Fourth package.

RFG says the new holding company will effectively control infrastructure management, timetabling and maintenance

CargoBeamer running

On a brighter note for cross-channel rail, intermodal transport system CargoBeamer is starting commercial operations in Europe. This was marked by a successful test drive from Leipzig (Germany) to Calais (France), completing a series of tests demonstrating that CargoBeamer "fulfills all technical and operational requirements" to run on the European rail network.

CargoBeamer is a European transport system consisting of special wagons and terminals with innovative cargo handling that allows non-crane handled semi-trailers to be shifted from road to rail.

"Freight traffic on European roads is forecast to grow by 75 percent until 2025, threatening to take the continent's road infrastructure to the verge of traffic collapse," said Hans-Juergen Weidemann, CEO of CargoBeamer. "CargoBeamer anticipates this development and has the potential to counter the situation by shifting cargo efficiently from road to rail."

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Hempt expands

Peter Hempt GmbH & Co has opened a new tank container storage facility at its headquarters in Worms, Germany. The company has now doubled its storage capacity to around 2,000 units. Hempt invested a total of €6.5 million in the new facility, increasing the total area to 65,000 cbm. In addition, a dangerous goods storage facility was constructed in which filled

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Changing the face of barging?

Bodewes Binnenvaart BV, the inland waterway shipyard of Damen Shipyards Group, and inland shipping company QaGroup are to launch a new inland waterway vessel concept that runs purely on liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Permission to use LNG as fuel has been granted by the Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ADN-UNECE), meaning that the vessel can travel on all international inland waterways. The LNG concept operates alongside another innovation developed by Bodewes Binnenvaart, the air lubricated hull ‘ACES’. Working in combination, the designers claim these innovations lead to “astonishing” fuel savings and emissions cuts.

Although the LNG/ACES system can be fitted to any inland ship, at the moment the system has been designed around a 110m long vessel, the EcoLiner, which is based on the well-known Damen River Liner 1145. The new vessel has a bunker capacity of approximately 45 cbm of LNG and it will be fully classified by Bureau Veritas.

The vessel is equipped with four generator sets that power everything via a comprehensive power management system which ensures efficient energy generation, distribution and storage. For example, more power is needed going up river from Rotterdam to Basel than on the return, so the management system will automatically switch the generator sets on and off as needed.

Rob Schuurmans, director of Bodewes Binnenvaart and Jan Sneekes, QaGroup CEO, explained: “We expect this new concept to appeal to shippers of consumables particularly, oil companies and logistic operators, keen to get their cargo off the roads and keen on having one partner, one contact to deal with.

“Because the concept is built up on a modular basis, shippers, and barge operators can pick and choose. For example, we can provide the vessel including crew for one client, but just a financing arrangement for another, while handling all for a third client. We can tailor the concept to the customer’s exact requirements, providing an integrated shipbuilding, ship management and financing solution.”

Schuurmans added that a typical ship engine runs most efficiently at a load of 80 percent of its full power. With four generator sets the power management system will ensure the engines do so. Energy created can be stored when using less power or instead it can be used to heat or cool cargo, or for cooling water or heating accommodation. “In addition, waste heat is used and becomes energy, so absolutely nothing is wasted. On top of this, there’s the 15 percent fuel reduction because of the ACES hull,” he said. Trials have demonstrated that fuel savings of around 25 percent can be achieved on the EcoLiner.

The partners are exploring markets in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, but also they are looking further afield in Brazil, China and India and say they have received a positive response worldwide from shippers and barge companies.

“This gives shippers the chance to operate along ‘green corridors’ and to reduce their total cost of ownership because ultimately they can make huge savings on transport costs,” said Schuurmans.

BEST in Spain

Barcelona Europe South Terminal (BEST), part of Hutchison Port Holdings (HPH), has launched a new rail service connecting the Spanish cities of Barcelona and Pamplona, 480km apart.

The BEST-Pamplona Express service connects BEST with cargo from Pamplona and the surrounding region, including from the Iberian Peninsula. Shippers and logistics operators in Pamplona have access to the same services as if they were in the Port of Barcelona, such as Customs inspection services, consolidation and de-consolidation, and container depot services. The BEST-Pamplona Express runs three weekly connections in each direction between the Pamplona (Noain) terminal and BEST. The trains have a capacity of 62TEU with a transit time of 20 hours.

The Pamplona terminal has connections to transport cargo from and destined for Navarra, Basque, La Rioja and southwestern France. BEST operates the country’s largest dock rail terminal with eight tracks of 750m.

Hoyer on track

Hoyer and Etihad Rail, the master developer and operator of the United Arab Emirates’ national railway, are co-operating closely on the transport of liquid products in the UAE.

The two companies have signed an MoU that sees the Hamburg-based group’s wholly owned subsidiary Hoyer Global Transport BV and Etihad Rail working together to develop “a safe and sustainable bulk liquid transportation system across the UAE”.

“Based on our experience as a supplier of logistics services in Europe, we know the advantages of using rail as a carrier. We have chosen to work with Etihad Rail so that we can offer our customers a safer, more reliable and more ecologically sustainable mode of transport of liquid products, by rail in the UAE as we have done in our other areas of operation,” commented Menno Douwes Dekker, managing director of the Deep Sea Middle East & India business unit of Hoyer Global Transport BV.

Hoyer has been a part of the Etihad Rail commercial advisory panel for the development of the overall rail project since 2011. Etihad Rail is in the process of developing and operating the UAE’s national rail network, a key element of the developments creating in the UAE a logistics hub for trade and industry in the region. The network will span a total of 1,200km across the Emirates. Hoyer has been in the UAE since 1999 with an office in Dubai managing liquid bulk transportation in the region.

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CargoBeamer says that today only 15 percent of road cargo transport can switch to combined transport due to technical constraints. CargoBeamer allows transhipment of semi-trailers without previous modifications for crane handling. The semi-trailers are placed onto special loading palettes without the train being present. Drivers therefore do not need to wait for trains or cranes, or indeed vice versa. Due to parallel and automated loading of trailers onto rail wagons in CargoBeamer’s terminals, the entire loading process is reduced to 15 minutes. Including additional inspection time, the trains are ready for departure approximately one hour after arrival. Compared with conventional transport of semi-trailers by truck, the technology reduces emissions by up to 70 percent and energy consumption by up to 60 percent, the company claims.

CargoBeamer plans to build a terminal in the new Calais Premier logistics hub, investing €25 million. With 3.2 million trucks passing Calais annually, the city is predestined to become the CargoBeamer gateway to the UK, the company says, and to play a key role in its European logistics network. From Calais, CargoBeamer targets two major European routes with high traffic volumes: east-west-route to the Baltic states via Benelux, Germany and Poland; and north-south to Italy via France, Germany and Switzerland. With the start of operations planned for 2014, the terminal will have the capacity to transfer more than 800 semi-trailers a day from road to rail.

In addition to Calais, CargoBeamer gateways are underway in Hagen (Germany), Legnica (Poland) and Mockava (Lithuania).

Semi-trailers are placed onto special loading palettes without the train being present, so drivers don’t need to wait for trains or cranes

Standing up for shortsea

Volatile freight and charter rates, high fuel prices, unemployed vessels and the problems of ship financing are leading to structural changes in coastal and inland waterway shipping. Experts are agreed on that. Yet what does this actually mean for the future of the shortsea, feeder and inland waterway ship trades? And how can companies prepare for the transition?

At the invitation of the ShortSea and Inland Waterway Shipping Promotion Center (SPC) and Port of Hamburg Marketing (HHM), these and other questions on short sea and inland waterway shipping topics were discussed at the 9th ShortSea, Feeder and Inland Waterway Shipping Dialogue in the Hamburg Chamber of Commerce in October.

Feeder and shortsea shipping companies confront immense challenges on account of the difficult economic environment just now. From 2015 stringent ceilings will apply to sulphur emissions in the North Sea and the Baltic; and while the first overseas liner services are offering direct calls in the Baltic region a chronic shortage of empty boxes exists in the hinterland. Plus imbalances of trade along with a highly volatile feeder market demand flexibility and agility from shipping companies.

Jesper Kristensen, CEO of Unifeeder, presented one potential solution: "By combining feeder and shortsea services, we can profit from the well-developed network of transport links, securing larger capacities and at the same time achieving cost savings and ecological benefits."

Formation of alliances could also assist in achieving a sustained recovery in the coastal shipping market. Joachim van Grieken, managing director of European Minibulk eG, said that he was convinced of this: "An alliance cannot solve all the problems of coastal shipping, but precisely in times of change it can furnish crucial support, offer expertise and create ideas for a successful future. It is essential that, especially now, shipping companies should actively shape their future, if they do not want themselves to be subject to shaping," he added.

In order to relieve strain on roads, the environment and transport budgets, the EU Transport White Paper has the declared aim of transferring around 30 percent of goods transport by road covering over 300kkm to other means of transport such as ship or rail by 2030, and more than 50 percent of it by 2050. Michele Nahlop, Seago Line Germany's trade & marketing manager Germany and Austria, was delighted that numerous companies have already recognised the advantages of seaborne transport on short routes and are making increased use of it. "Feeder transport is the first alternative to the overloaded road network and the restricted capacities of rail transport. Deserving special emphasis are the lower environmental strain compared to other means of transport, as well as a general reduction in the logistics needed," said Nahlop.

As for inland waterways, calculations by the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research indicate that a modern inland waterway ship with a capacity of 2,100 tons can replace up to 105 trucks, each with a capacity of 20 tons, producing no more than 33.4 grams of CO2 per ton-kilometre. By comparison, rail transport produces an average of 48.1 grams of CO2 t/km, and with trucking the figure reaches 164 grams t/km. From the economics angle, the inland waterway ship is also advantageous. With an average fuel consumption of 1.3 litres of diesel per 100 t/km it is very cost-efficient. Comparable consumption for rail is 1.7 litres t/km and for a truck 4.1 litres t/km.

'By combining feeder and shortsea services, we can profit from a well-developed network of transport links' - Unifeeder

Hergen Hanke, managing director of Börde Container Feeder GmbH and UHH Umschlags- und Handelsgesellschaft Haldensleben, appealed to shippers to make increased use of the combination of ship-plus-port. In addition, he called on seaports to provide equality of treatment for inland waterway craft and other carriers. "Terminal operators should also be committing themselves to securing the political and infrastructural operating conditions for a shift of services to inland waterway craft. Among these are not just adequate water depths in the Upper Elbe, but also fair treatment on costs," said Hanke.

Robert Baack, COO with IMPERIAL Shipping Holding GmbH, was also convinced that inland waterways are an indispensable and viable means of transport: "Inland waterway shipping's contribution to the transport industry should not be underestimated. The requirements of our customers in German industry confirm for us that a transport world making economic and ecological sense will not function without the inland waterway ship."

In the interests of integrating inland waterways more strongly in multimodal transport chains, however, shippers are also demanding increased reliability of pre-carriage runs to the port. Dependable locks and ship-lifts in canals are indispensable for reliable operations. The Waterways and Shipping Administration of the German Federal Government (WSV) maintains the descent structures, modernising these in line with market requirements. Since 2008 the Scharnebeck Shiplift on the Elbe Lateral Canal, among others, has been fundamentally overhauled.

By 2016 the German government will have invested around €47 million in new engineering technology, refurbishment of concrete, civil engineering and building technology. Ingelore Hering, President of the WSV Central Area, presented planning for a new lock in Lüneburg that could be constructed 50m away from the shiplift. This new lock would enable modern and larger fleets of ships to use the Elbe Lateral Canal as a transport route. Currently the dimensions of the Scharnebeck Shiplift restrict the length of vessels handled to 100m.

The concluding discussion once again made shippers' requirements of modern waterborne logistics very clear: reliable transport chains, a functioning infrastructure, equal treatment for inland waterway vessels at port terminals, improved utilisation of existing capacities and more attractive cost systems.

Co-operation will be needed if these are to be fulfilled. If inland waterway shipping companies succeed in pooling container volumes at terminals by the use of larger craft and coupled barge trains, then this reduces operating costs on the terminal side as well as for ship owners. This will also enable shippers to be offered more attractive prices, larger volumes to be transported and ship fleets to be fully utilised.

More services to Paris

Just one year after the launch of a weekly rail shuttle between Port of Dunkirk's Flanders Terminal and the Bonneuil-sur-Marne Terminal in the Greater Paris Area, Greenmodal (part of CMA CGM Group) is doubling the frequency of the service.

As of 10 December 2012 Greenmodal will run two 80TEU shuttles a week between Dunkirk and the south-east of the Paris region. The operator's aim is to provide a multi-line combined transport offer for the many shippers in the south-eastern suburbs of Paris.

This new link is available to all maritime operators, and is scheduled to synchronise with calls of mother ships at Dunkirk, operating overnight. It will leave Dunkirk every Monday and Wednesday evening for delivery at Bonneuil-sur-Marne on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, and leave Paris on Tuesday and Thursday evenings to arrive at Dunkirk every Wednesday and Friday morning.

With a port railway network comprising more than 200km of tracks and traffic in excess of 10 million tonnes, Port of Dunkirk has long been involved in consolidating its overland transport volumes.

Commenting on the initiative, Daniel Deschodt, commercial director of Dunkerque-Port, said: "This offer represents a new stage in the strategy of extending the hinterland of France's foremost rail port. The shuttle is fully synchronised with the shipping services in place (Asia, India, Pakistan, the West Coast of Africa, Morocco, Russia, etc) and will meet the needs of many shippers, consolidate the existing coverage and attract new clients."

Via Switzerland

Hupac has introduced a new shuttle train between Ludwigshafen KTL, and Novara CIM via the Loetshberg-Simplon tunnel for P400 semi-trailers. Daily shut;les connect the hub of Ludwigshafen with the terminals of Antwerp Combinant, Zeebrugge and Terneuzen. Hupac says the link strengthens its network for intermodal traffic of semi-trailers between Italy and northern Europe via Switzerland.

Elsewhere, since the summer Hupac has been running container trains up to three times a week for Borusan Logistics of Turkey. The 1,500km route runs from Edirne on the Turkey-Bulgaria border to Vienna and back. All container spaces on the train are reserved to Borusan Logistics. The traction is provided by WLC Wiener Lokalbahn Cargo together with its partners Gysev, DBSC Romania und BDZ Cargo.

Hupac is in charge of the operational and administrative processes.

International strength

Suttons Group has strengthened its international senior management team with the appointment of a new head of commercial, Europe & Americas.

Gilles Letard has joined Suttons International from Norbert Dentressangle, where he had a variety of senior positions, most recently as commercial director in its road tanker division.

Andrew Palmer, group managing director of Suttons, said: "Gilles brings a wealth of commercial experience to this key role and understands the sector and its challenges. He has a strong track record of putting into practice high levels of compliance and safety in the area of specialist services and will greatly assist our growth in this area of our business."

Fresh solution for Puerto Rico

Bulk liquids consignees operating between Puerto Rico and the US mainland now have an alternative logistics solution.

Aqua Gulf Transport, headquartered in Deerfield Beach, Florida, has formed an alliance with Hawaii Intermodal Tank Transport (HITT), an operator of food-grade intermodal tanks, to provide specialised temperature controlled ISO tank capabilities for the Puerto Rico and Caribbean bulk liquid industries.

The alliance will combine Aqua Gulf's logistics and shipping network with HITT's fleet of refrigerated and super insulated tank containers. Together, customers in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean will be provided with the most modern equipment available for transporting bulk liquid commodities that benefit from temperature control, from loading facility to final destination, the two partners said.

"Combining Aqua Gulf Transport's well established logistics network and market presence with HITT's expertise with worldwide food-grade bulk shipping, customers will take advantage of the most innovative tank technology and competitive logistics solutions," a joint press release stated.

"It is a clear example of a co-operation that brings about improved synergies and capabilities, making the whole greater than the parts," added Bahman Sadeghi, managing member of HITT.

The alliance between Aqua Gulf and HITT claims to result in the world's largest fleet of Aseptic tank containers

"Ocean ISO tank shipping is a multi-billion dollar industry and we'll deliver tremendous efficiencies and remove costs for all stakeholders through the use of modern energy efficient high technology equipment within our established customer base and logistics networks," said Sergio Sandrin, president of Aqua Gulf Transport. "We look forward to expanding from food grade products into other bulk liquid products moving in these regions."

HITT, based in Palmetto, Florida, operates a privately owned fleet of 24,000 litre food-grade tank containers. In addition to claiming the largest fleet of Aseptic and temperature controlled tanks in the world, HITT has also invested in a large fleet of tank chassis for road transport within the US and abroad. HITT was founded in 2002 and has offices in Palmetto, and Irvine, CA. In Palmetto the company also operates a JPA-approved food grade tank wash and private tank/chassis depot.

Aqua Gulf Transport is the largest logistics operator to Puerto Rico. As an NVOCC, services include logistics contract management, refrigerated and dry FCL/LCL transport, freight consolidation and deconsolidation, freight forwarding and Customs house brokerage.

Metrans takes over Krems

HHLA subsidiary Metrans has acquired the company which operates the trimodal container terminal in the Austrian port of Krems on the Danube. The company was taken over from Mierka Donauhafen Krems GmbH & Co KG. The terminal will now provide a direct link between the German seaports and the economic region of Lower Austria.

"The new site at Krems allows us to expand our Metrans network with a terminal that is strategically well-placed in the centre of Lower Austria. It offers excellent conditions for extending Austrian traffic to and from the European seaports we serve," explained Jiri Samek, managing director of Metrans. To start with, three pairs of trains a week will link Krems with Hamburg and Bremerhaven. Later on, the frequency should be increased to five pairs of trains.

The trimodal container terminal in the Danube port of Krems is linked via train, roads and inland waterways. The site, with an area of 30,000 sqm and four 680m long sidings, fulfils all the criteria for a range of services in maritime container logistics. To this end, Metrans is using its hub-and-shuttle system to focus on its own terminals, wagons and locomotives as well as complete customer service dealing with rail container transport.

For Hubert Mierka, managing partner of the long-established Mierka Donauhafen Krems, Metrans is an ideal partner for the further development of

the Danube port. "Together with Metrans, we want to build on our position as a multimodal freight station offering tailor-made logistics by strengthening maritime logistics here. Metrans' broad portfolio of services and customer neutrality match our business model perfectly."

The terminal is already being used by deepsea shipping companies and forwarding agencies. Metrans provides a range of container services, including a depot for empty containers, storage and repair.

Metrans now links the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria as well as southern and eastern Germany with Germany's seaports and the Slovenian port of Koper on the Adriatic by means of rail services and hubs. More than 70 shuttle trains run back and forth between Prague and Hamburg alone each week. Metrans owns and operates seven inland terminals. Of these, the facilities in Prague (Czech Republic) and Dunajská Streda (Slovakia) act as hubs which pool large volumes of freight before transporting them onwards throughout the region. The five other Metrans terminals are end terminals in Zlín, Plzen and Ostrava (all Czech Republic), Košice (Slovakia) and now Krems in Austria, too. The Krems traffic will also be linked with the German seaports via the new hub terminal in Ceská Trebová (Eastern Bohemia/Czech Republic), which Metrans will bring into operation next year.

Girard's seal of approval

For the past 30 years, the industry standard for gaskets was simply a flat PTFE ring designed for 3ins pipe caps and swivel nut connections. PTFE (commonly known as Teflon) is popular for its superior chemical resistance, but it lacks elastomeric properties and is often hard to seal resulting in breakage. Knowing that customers wanted a stronger, more flexible gasket to protect their pressure relief vents without it costing a fortune, Girard Equipment created the Orange DuraSeal.


The Orange DuraSeal gaskets

The Orange DuraSeal gaskets are said to offer superior protection that lasts up to 20 times longer than a standard PTFE gasket. Made from an exclusive material specially formulated from PTFE base plastics, the gaskets can withstand extreme environmental conditions and will not char, harden, or melt. Even with prolonged use the Orange DuraSeal will not lose any of its physical or mechanical properties.

Timothy Girard, president of Girard Equipment, stated: "Girard Equipment is so confident about the benefits and quality of the 'Orange DuraSeal' we are even offering a free replacement in the event one can actually be cut through from normal use."

Girard Equipment is also celebrating its 60th birthday this year and the group's locations are expanding, including the newest one in the Netherlands.

With many thousands of valves and components now operating from the eurozone in the off-shore, IBC, tank trailer and tank container sectors, the opening of Girard Equipment's newest location has arrived at just the right time, the company said.

Girard NL has been specially designed to support existing clients and also provide real time response to all contacts in Europe. In order to cater properly to the European market, Girard NL is staffed by Cor Koning, Anita Aslan, and Romano Brackx. Cor Koning has been a member of the Girard team for quite some time and is the head of management for the region. Inside sales representation will be handled by Anita Aslan and all warehouse activities will be monitored by Romano Brackx. Girard NL will provide several key functions for clients including: quotations, order processing and tracking, warehouse services, testing & repair, and a local contact.


Girard NL has been specially designed to support existing clients and also provide real time response to all contacts in Europe

The gain in Spain

Despite the severe recession in Spain logistics services provider Van den Bosch Transporten sees growth opportunities and potential benefits in the Spanish market.

In an article on the company's website, Paul van de Vorle, manager business development, said: "Although the domestic Spanish transport companies held the market before, a stronger shift in favour of intermodal transport is taking place, also as a consequence of the economic crisis. So, our organisation's modal shift policy is providing Spain with intermodal solutions in bulk transport."

While Spain is consuming less bulk product than in the past, the country remains rich in raw materials for the export market. Van den Bosch is active in the market for dry bulk such as minerals and liquids, such as oils, juices and wine. These products are still being exported in large quantities, for instance, to Northern Europe.

Controlled temperature transport of temperature sensitive products is one of the core activities of Van den Bosch. Cooled fruit concentrates are transported at 0-5 degsC. Also heated transports are possible, such as the transport of oils at 40-50 degsC.

There are plenty of possibilities therefore to change road cargo flows into intermodal cargo movements. Besides the right balance between incoming and outgoing loads, a reliable partner is crucial. For Spain, Van den Bosch works in close co-operation Transfennica, among others. This operator sails between Zeebrugge (Belgium) and Bilbao (Spain) with a lead time of only 38 hours. This means that this intermodal solution hardly requires additional lead time compared to that of traditional road transport. Because of different regulations, 28 tonnes of product may be transported by ship as opposed to 25 tonnes of product via road.

Apart from the advantages already mentioned, intermodal transport is also greener by nature, cutting CO2 emissions by as much as 50 percent, depending on the destination. Transfennica offers hook up possibilities for the containers in both terminals and on board, so that the products keep their required temperature.

Den Hartogh baffled

Recently, the Singamas Shanghai factory produced a series of MDI/TDI tank containers for Den Hartogh Liquid Logistics.

Special in the design of the 24,000 litre containers was the construction of baffles to avoid product surging during transport. The tanks, which meet the ullage restrictions under ADR/IMDG, have also been equipped with glycol-heating systems for temperature management of the product during transport. As an optional service, positioning and temperature management of the containers can be monitored through Den Hartogh's satellite controlled systems.

Den Hartogh Liquid Logistics already operates one of the largest fleets of road tankers and tank containers in Europe for the transport of MDI and TDI (isocyanates).

In the meantime, the team of Den Hartogh Logistics at the two Netherlands offices in Rozenburg and Oss, is relocating. From 1 January 2013, Den Hartogh Logistics will be located in a new office in the Willingestraat, Waalhaven, Port of Rotterdam.

This brand new and ultra-modern location meets the requirements of tomorrow in terms of a sustainable, but also an inspiring and flexible working environment. The team that is currently still divided among the sites in Rozenburg and Oss will join forces in the new location.

The new office and the chosen flexible layout form an important part of the company's modern, contemporary work culture.

ITCO meeting hears plans for the future

A total of 155 delegates participated at the ITCO General Meeting held in Hamburg on 22-23 October 2012, with a wide range of technical, market and operational issues being discussed during the Conference Sessions.

The Meeting commenced on the evening of Monday 22 October, with a Welcome Reception on-board a Cruise Boat, organised and sponsored by Port of Hamburg Marketing, with delegates having the opportunity to view the port from the water. The Cocktail Reception on board was sponsored by ITCO member Germanischer Lloyd.

On the following day, the Conference consisted of plenary sessions in the morning, followed by break-out sessions in the afternoon. It concluded with a final plenary session, with reports on the break-out sessions.

At the end of the Conference, there were two special sessions, held in parallel. The ITCO Regulatory Affairs Forum met to discuss its current and future activities; while, in a separate room, the draw was held for stand positions at next year's Tank Container Village at Transport Logistic, in Munich.

Opening the plenary sessions, ITCO secretary Patrick Hicks told delegates that the membership of the organisation stood at 123, compared with 116 at the beginning of 2012. During the year six members had left, while 13 new members had joined since January.

Among the activities planned for 2013, preparation is underway for a Tank Container Market Survey. ITCO is undertaking the survey to establish the global tank container fleet, with a view to promoting the tank market and its growth to industry organisations, investors and regulatory authorities. Content is being researched, with the aim of publishing early in 2013.

As the next ITCO Tank Container Village will take place at the Transport Logistic exhibition in Munich on 4-7 June 2013, it has been decided not to stage a European meeting of the organisation during the year. However, the 2013 General Meeting will take place, and for the first time in North America. Houston, Texas has been chosen as the venue with the dates set at 4-5 November 2013.

During the Conference morning session, there were two keynote presentations. In the first, Dr Jürgen Sorgenfrei, director consulting services, Global Trade & Transportation Practice at IHS Global, gave a presentation summarising the views of IHS economists on the outlook for the world economy and impact on transport and shipping.

Towards a 'Grexit'?

Dr Sorgenfrei said IHS believes the overall outlook for the world economy is that of a sustained, but at the same time weak and uneven, recovery. Recession has taken hold in much of Europe, and the Eurozone is likely to continue to struggle with weak growth and sovereign debt problems. Market reforms remain key to a permanent solution for the Eurozone.

The USA is likely to see sluggish growth, and will probably be spared the fiscal meltdown that some have predicted. Emerging markets still offer the best growth prospects, although many of these are also slowing. Asia remains the growth leader, while Latin America and Africa will also do relatively well by historical standards.

Despite a slowdown in the growth rates seen over the previous decade, Dr Sorgenfrei did not expect China to experience a hard landing. Rather he believed China's protracted slowdown reflects cyclical and structural forces.


The goal of FLOW4gate is to reduce average throughput time for a truck in and out of a chempark

A draw was held for stand positions in the ITCO Village at Transport Logistic.

Specifically looking at the Eurozone, IHS is assuming that Greece will only continue in the euro until mid-2013, when it will have to exit the single currency. The consultancy expects this exit to trigger important and necessary steps towards a closer financial and fiscal union in the Eurozone. If it doesn't do so, then the Eurozone as a whole will likely break apart and threaten a global financial crisis. The 'austerity and bail-outs' recipe is failing and only ensures a permanent depression on the Eurozone periphery. Therefore the euro is expected to weaken further in global currency markets.

As for the implications for transport and shipping, Dr Sorgenfrei pointed out that transport remains a derivative business. And, as global trade is the key driver for shipping, an uneven recovery in global markets will lead to uneven trends in shipping demand.

The huge number of container vessels with capacities of 10,000+ TEU will increase the cascading effect of larger vessels into various markets and will, at least until the end of 2013, present the industry with serious problems of profitability due to low freight rates. Overall, he predicted 2013 could see approximately 6 percent growth in global container trade.

Gate-in, gate-out

In the second presentation, Roger Boungou, head of the IT Department at Chemion, and Hans Maier-Dech, managing director, Star/Trac Supply Chain Solutions, gave a presentation on their jointly-developed *flow4GATE* concept to improve asset utilisation in chemical industry parks (chemparks), and discussed whether this could serve as a role model for the tank container industry.

Star/Trac originally developed the FLOW solution framework to control and manage transport flows from and to chemical sites. Out of this has grown the GATE project which has at its base the question of how to deal with growing transport volumes over the next 10-15 years. GATE is now being implemented to control and manage traffic to and from Chemion sites. Currently the three chempark sites serviced by Chemion involve more than 500,000 road-bound shipments a year, and this is projected to rise significantly in coming years. So the project was tasked with looking at the process of slot-booking, authorisation and subsequent entry into the chempark, weighing and loading bay control, and finally exit from the chempark.

The essential idea is to gather the data collected from these separate moves and use that database to optimise the entire process. This includes gathering biometric data on drivers to authorise entry into the chempark. A further objective is to equip every tank and dry freight container in the project with an RFID tag and this data will support the entire database.

Thus each transport move to the site is pre-advised with the details of the driver and the container he is carrying. This way the chempark can identify in advance the container due to arrive and the driver can verify his authority to enter the park with, say, a smart card carrying his biometric data. The ultimate goal of the project is reduce the average throughput time for a truck in and out of the chempark by up to one hour.

However, the additional data collected should also increase security in the parks, and it could help optimise loading processes as well. Transport costs should also come down as every hour the truck spends in the chempark is an expense. For chempark customers, the speakers said such a modern infrastructure should enable them to concentrate on producing product and rather than on its logistics.

To get the most from the concept it will entail a number of stakeholders joining the project once it moves beyond its initial phases. Integrated information flows in co-operation with all parties involved will be key.

From the start the developers opted for an open platform to avoid redundant proprietary technology or data for hindering take-up. Technically, the concept is based on a central platform, accessed by users via internet 'cloud' computing.

For tank container sector, the speakers believed such an open approach to exchange information with third parties could be a role model for the industry. All users could benefit from greater transparency, better asset utilisation, and track & trace technology. In addition, it would enable users to capitalise on the growing infrastructure supporting auto-identification.

Singamas sells tank subsidiary

Singamas Container is disposing of its entire stake in Foshan Shunde Singamas Tank Container (SSTC) for a total of Rmb172 million to Guangdong Fuwa Machinery Holding.

The asset disposal is part of a twin transaction announced in October, in which Singamas and its wholly-owned subsidiary Singamas Terminals (China) Limited agreed to dispose of all of Singamas Container's direct and indirect 59 percent equity in Foshan Shunde Leliu Wharf & Container Co, Ltd (SLWC) for a total of Rmb145 million to Foshan Shunde Chuangjian Investment. SLWC operates a container terminal in Shenzhen.

Based on SSTC's latest audited accounts the company reported a net profit of both before and after taxation and extraordinary items of RMB21.4 million and RMB18.1 million, respectively for the year ended 31 December 2011. SSTC also had audited net assets of RMB171.4 million at 31 December 2011.

A Hong Kong Exchange release from Singamas stated that so far as the company (ie, Singamas) was aware, both Fuwa Machinery and Chuangjian are companies incorporated in the People's Republic of China and engaged in investment holding. Fuwa Machinery is currently a substantial shareholder in SLWC. Fuwa Machinery's principal shareholder (90 percent) is Wu Zhi Qiang, a director of SLWC, with 10 percent held by Ms Wu Shu Min. These two shareholders also have similar sized stakes in Chuangjian.

Singamas's directors believe the transactions will allow the group to streamline its operations and at the same time generate cash flow "to strengthen further its financial position, competitiveness and overall efficiency".

Singamas's remaining major tank container production facility is Shanghai Pacific International Container Co, Ltd. Founded in May 1989 as the group's first dry freight container factory in the PRC, the facility was upgraded to manufacture standard tank containers of 17,500-26,000 litres. Singamas Container Industry Co Ltd, located in Yixing, also near Shanghai, produces specialised containers including side-doors, bulkers, open tops, platforms, bitutainers, bitumen tanks, and diesel tanks.

Singamas will continue to manufacture tanks at Shanghai Pacific International Container

Best employer

Chartered insurance brokers Pound Gates has won an award for being the best employer in the eastern region of the UK, as well as achieving both the ISO 14001 and 9001 accreditations.

Pound Gates was acknowledged at the Best Employers Eastern Region Awards as the Best Overall Business with 50 employees or less and also received the Award for Employee Values.

The 2012 awards announced in October are based on an on-line staff survey exploring a company's culture and values. The confidential survey attracted over 5,000 participants.

Director Rob Thacker said: "We are extremely pleased to have been recognised. The awards are testament to how much as a company we value our staff, as it is only through their dedication and commitment that we can deliver our superior client experience." After months of hard work and rigorous assessment Pound Gates has also achieved ISO 14001 accreditation. This certifies its commitment to environmental management and controlling those aspects which have a significant impact on the environment.

Pound Gates has also worked economic and green concepts into its supply chain, choosing and working with partners and suppliers to monitor their environmental compliance.

Environmental officer Juliet Hood commented: "As well as reducing our usage of consumables, such as paper and electricity, we avoid compromising our client service which sometimes requires both national and international travel by selecting low emission vehicles and asking our staff to cycle, walk or make appropriate use of public transport where possible."

In September, Pound Gates renewed its ISO 9001 accreditation. This certifies commitment to quality management as well as recognising a drive to continuous improvement. Pound Gates has held this accreditation for 20 years.

Owner and managing director Kevin Collins said Pound Gates puts client experience at the heart of everything the firm does. "One of the ways in which we do this is through the investment in our staff. I am extremely proud we have been acknowledged as a good employer. Taking responsibility for our environmental impact has always been high on our agenda and an important part of being a responsible business within our community. So the ISO accreditation sits comfortably alongside the charity fundraising and volunteering our staff undertake as part of our wider corporate socially responsible approach."

Mobile website

Eurotainer has unveiled a dedicated website for mobile devices. The website has been optimised for smartphones and tablets, the leasing company said, such than when clients are travelling, they can easily have access to the Eurotainer website with all key information on products and locations, and, as clients, all specific data related to tanks on lease.

The company added that mobile devices will surpass personal computers as the most common web access device worldwide

www.eurotainer.com

Stepping on the gas

Demand for gases – either liquefied or pressurised – is on the rise and is driving demand for specialised tank containers. Typical uses of these gases range from filling aerosol spray cans to cigarette lighters.

Supply chains can be complicated as consuming industries often work 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. However, gas storage is often limited on industrial sites and the storage tanks themselves are usually small. So the effective supply chain requires just-in-time delivery of different grades of gas, in turn needing acute planning and visibility in order to find the best solutions for customers.

In addition, the growth in supply of liquefied natural gas (LNG) has boosted the demand for special transport equipment. So a secure network of suitable containers is critically important to gas consumers.

Consequently some of the leading tank container operators have made significant investments in new gas tank equipment in the past year. In the summer Hoyer placed an order to buy 200 ultramodern gas tank containers. The €8 million investment will take the Hamburg logistics provider's fleet of gas tanks to 700 units by the middle of 2013, consolidating Hoyer's position as one of the world's leading service providers in this highly sophisticated market.

The new 20ft containers feature a very low tare weight of less than eight tonnes, maximising the available payload capacity and so markedly increasing the efficiency of gas transport operations. Some 150 of the tanks are designed for transporting gases liquefied under pressure (such as the refrigerant R-134a, butene, ammonia or propane), whereas 50 will be used for gases liquefied at low temperatures (such as nitrogen, argon, oxygen or nitrous oxide).

Hoyer said the newly built containers are needed especially to support the growing overseas transport operations at the group's sites in the Middle East, Russia and China, a business that has developed strongly this year. By investing in this fleet expansion Hoyer says its customers will profit from the fact that the group is able to offer both gas transport services and equipment, all from a single source.

Netherlands-based Den Hartogh is taking delivery of 75 new gas tanks. The mix of equipment is balanced between tanks for compressed liquefied gases and cryogenic gases, including new CO_2 tanks. The development of Den Hartogh's gas container business in the first half year of 2012 was very strong compared with previous years. In fact, the company reached growth figures of over 50 percent.

So the decision was taken to invest in a large fleet of 20ft zinc-coated tanks for R-gases ranging from 22-34 bar. Den Hartogh also expanded its fleet of 30ft 42,000 litre tanks for aerosols and DME and reached a fleet of 80 units of this type.

The cryogenic 20ft ISO tanks are suitable for worldwide transport, and most operate in the global argon business. The CO_2 fleet was also strengthened with new tanks, adding to the existing fleet of CO_2 trailers and swap bodies. The new CO_2 units are partly equipped with pump and flow, and Den Hartogh said the demand for this type of equipment has been so high that they were put into service straight from the manufacturer.

In Russia, Spetstransgarant (STG), part of the Rail Garant Group, has increased is gas tank container fleet by around 300 units in the past year. The expansion followed forecasts for increased production volumes of propane-butane and butadiene in Russia. Therefore STG adjusted its plans to purchase the gas tanks so as to increase its fleet.

In the first half of 2012, the volume of traffic carried by STG increased by 20 percent compared with the corresponding period last year, reaching 164,000 tons. Shipments of petroleum goods increased by 20 percent, but also liquefied petroleum gases grew by 10 percent.

And the largest tank container manufacturer is also responding to meet demand for these specialised containers. In December last year CIMC Enric and its tank container factory in Nantong released a series of T50 tank containers for high-purity ammonia. The units feature different heating devices and mirror finish to satisfy the stringent requirements of gas storage and transport.

The manufacturer reports that the tank's performance has helped it to win various customers, including major global gas suppliers such as Linde, Air Liquide and Iwatani. With the development of the electronics industry and the sustained growth of gas consumption, CIMC Enric plans to persist in researching and developing new T50/T75 gas tank containers for the industry.

A quick word with....

Tim Girard, President, Girard Equipment, Inc

Girard has a history dating back to 1952, what in your opinion were the most significant points in the company's progress over the period?

The early 1970s was a time of big change for the liquid transportation industry. There were new laws enacted by the US Department of Environmental Protection to prevent what many believed was an emerging environmental crisis. One of the main initiatives was to prevent pollution of our water supplies. At that time, the biggest contributor to the water pollution was a growing number of 55 gallon drums being discarded throughout the country; lawmakers wanted to put a stop to that quickly. On the other hand, liquids were also being transported by rail tank cars; however, it often took a long time between suppliers of chemicals and delivery points adding additional burdens. The chemical road tanker was created to fill this niche. The chemical road tanker was an efficient way of transporting chemicals and it could be cleaned and reused many times. The road tanker needed a way of adjusting internal pressures and we were there with our first venting product for this application. As this market grew, so did our sales for the first pressure relief vents. From there we never looked back, we currently have over 30 unique designs for pressure relief vents as well as vacuum breakers. The passing of the Clean Air and Water Act was a very significant point in our history.

Could you briefly outline the most significant changes in manufacturing technology that have helped enhance Girard's product line?

The introduction of highly sophisticated CNC machinery, capable of machining our valve components to exact tolerances with consistency, was a direct enhancement to our Girard product line. We will continue to invest in the most accurate manufacturing technologies and this is a testament to our dedication in product superiority. After all, our name and reputation has become an industry standard in North America and are certainly proud of that.

Across your range of products, which are you most proud of as a company and why?

As a company, Girard Equipment is most proud of our DOT 407 vent for road tankers. It is a simple design yet it is highly efficient. Better still, it is inexpensive to maintain and extremely durable. The DOT 407 vent also has user-friendly features to allow for expeditious cleaning and when they are in need of repair they can be reset to factory settings within minutes. This design has been widely used for over 20 years; still it's always a good feeling to hear from our customers how much they appreciate the overall value and functionality of any of our products…we are very proud indeed.

Girard saw the growing potential of the tank container as a transport mode early. Did this require any substantial changes in production or technology to adapt equipment to the TC fleet?

No… fortunately for us, we are able apply the same technology to the emerging tank container market as we use in our well-established North American road tanker market. Because we have made such a heavy investment in the latest technologies of machinery; we have kept on the cutting edge of the TC fleets and we are able to offer a superior product at an affordable price.

Competition in the component sector is intense. How does Girard maintain loyalty among its customers?

Girard's history spans over 60 years serving this market; our name has become synonymous with the word 'quality' and our customers consider our products to be standard equipment on most road tanker fleets in North America. Girard Equipment understands the objectives of our customers to keep road tankers in service and to minimise downtime. Looking out for the best interests of our consumers while providing service and quality they expect has gained Girard Equipment a loyal following and it is something we work consistently at nurturing.

Since you taking over the reins at Girard, what would you consider as your biggest achievement at the company?

The expansion of our presence into markets not previously served such as the rail tank, tank container, waste management, and food grade markets. This has given Girard Equipment substantial strength through diversity. With this diversity we have the strength to resist downturns in the overall chemical distribution market.

Where do you see Girard in the 5 years' time?

We will have a far greater global presence with well-established markets in Europe and Asia. Additionally, we plan to offer a more diversified product range to meet the growing expectations of the global markets while embracing all the lessons that are to be learned in the process. Girard Equipment is a company rooted in tradition and has an investment in innovation; we are looking forward to the next five years and well beyond.

InterBulk refinances

InterBulk has completed a successful bank refinancing of the group's debt with a new four year debt package with Bank of Scotland, the group's current bankers.

The new loan structure comprises a Term A loan of £19.7 million, of which £10.2 million is repayable over four years to September 2016, with the balance to be repaid in one instalment on 30 September 2016; and a Term B loan of £47 million repayable in one instalment on 30 September 2016. There is also an overdraft and ancillary facility of £10 million which expires on 30 September 2016.

InterBulk says the package is a significant improvement on the group's previous facility which included £21 million of expensive mezzanine debt which has now been removed. The initial reduction in the blended average bank margin is around 1.4 percent. Overall, the board expects there to be an annual interest saving of around £1.5 million, commencing in the year ending 30 September 2013.

InterBulk expects to announce its preliminary results for the year ended 30 September 2012 in mid-December. However, in a pre-close trading update on 8 October, a statement said the group's revenue for the financial year is expected to be slightly below market expectations.

Meanwhile, InterBulk has opened a new office in Tarragona (about 100km from Barcelona), Spain. The Tarragona office is strategically located near to its customers to be able to serve the dry bulk and food-grade bulk market locally.

@tco plaque

Qingdao Ocean & Great Asia Logistics Co Ltd (GACOSCO) is the first depot successfully audited by @tco in Shandong Province, North China. To mark the occasion a commemorative plaque was awarded to Lu Xiaojun, deputy general manager of GACOSO by Qian Yan (deputy general manager at Sinochem and a member of the @tco Board Technical Committee.

Pictured l-r: Zhang Yuemin; Zhao Jian, depot manager; Gu Huayuan, technical director depot; Qian Yan Deputy, GM Sinochem & @tco Technical Committee member; Lu Xiaojan Deputy GM GACOSCO; Zhang Shuke, sales manager Sinochem Qingdao office.

A rum business

A joint venture between Scottish tank specialist Isocon and Jamaican-owned JLB International Shipping has seen the establishment of cleaning and repair facility in Kingston, Jamaica, the first of its kind locally.

However, the significance of the new facility goes further than just being the first in the region. It is hoped to provide much-needed services, based on global standards, for food grade tanks that could boost Caribbean rum exports.

Glasgow-based Isocon and JLB Shipping have invested more than US$250,000 in the venture, located at Newport West in Kingston Freezone. It will give access to all ISO tank container operators in food grade markets throughout the Caribbean, Central and South America to position equipment strategically for cleaning, repairs, testing, certification and storage, thereby reducing the cost of freight transport to reach their markets.

Speaking at the official launching ceremony, Jamaica's Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, Hon. Anthony Hylton, lauded the backers for their vision and their investment in the country.

(From L-R) Director of ISOCON-JLB International, Michael Kane; President of JAMPRO, Sancia Bennett Templer; JAMPRO Chairman, Milton Samuda; Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce, Anthony Hylton; Minister of Agriculture, Roger Clarke; Director of ISOCON-JLB International, Beverly Johnson; and British High Commissioner to Jamaica, Howard Drake, at the official opening of ISOCON-JLB International's operation site at New Port East in Kingston Free Zone

He said ISOCON-JLB chose Jamaica for three critical business reasons: its strategic location as a transhipment hub; its Freezone Operations, and ease of access to the port of Kingston; and the island's primary rum export market.

"In making this investment in Jamaica, ISOCON-JLB is filling a need in the global food supply chain, and has laid a foundation for rapid business expansion. The presence of this entity in Jamaica will attract ISO-tank container operators in the food grade markets throughout the Caribbean, Central and South America," he said.

Furthermore, he believed the start-up to be "music to the ears of our rum distillers and producers," as they are a major part of the supply chain out of the Caribbean that supplies 85 percent of rum exports to the world. "ISOCON-JLB will bring added operational efficiencies to our thriving rum and spirits export business, especially as it relates to quicker access to market," the Minister stated.

According to Beverly Johnson, managing director of JLB Shipping, the operation could save importers and exporters both time and money.

"We saw the need to establish an ISO tank cleaning, repairing and testing facility in the port of Kingston as there was no professional cleaning (service) in Jamaica, or for that matter in the Caribbean, so there was a need," she said.

"Exporters of rum, flavourings, juices and other similar commodities are currently terribly inconvenienced as they have to wait for cleaned tanks from places like Rotterdam and Houston. This has serious implications for freight costs," she added.

"We expect that with the cleaning facilities now at port of Kingston,

importers will see a reduction in the cost of freight for moving ISO tanks to be filled with rum, flavourings or any other liquid that's moved in these types of tanks," the JLB Shipping head said.

From conceptualisation to operation the Isocon/JLB project has taken approximately 18 months to complete. The company has been recruiting staff through the Human Employment and Resource Training/National Training Agency (HEART/NTA) in Jamaica and they will be given additional training at Isocon's headquarters in Glasgow.

Isocon Engineering has over 35 years of experience in the cleaning, repair and refurbishment of tank containers. More significantly is its long experience woith food grade tanks, being an approved service depot to all the major Scotch whisky distillers.

"Our cleaning stations have been designed and adapted over the years to complement the personnel using them, as we have found through 35 years of experience mechanical means cannot clean an ISO tank to a Scotch whisky standard," Isocon says on its website. "The knowledge and experience Isocon have gained in this field is invaluable in achieving the standard expected from the Scotch whisky distillers. This very high standard is a minimum requirement for Isocon and can only be maintained by the processes and work ethic Isocon have honed over the years."

Continued on page 1

tank containers can be stored temporarily for clients. Strict conditions ensure safe storage.

A repair workshop for chassis was also constructed directly adjacent to the new storage facility. The previous chassis workshop on the existing property has been converted into a second container repair workshop, increasing the site's repair capabilities by approximately 30 percent. At least 10 new positions have been generated at the Worms site, which already has 150 employees. The expansion of business resulting from the storage facility will, for the first time, allow apprentices to be employed beginning in 2013.

The company has 65 Euro-5 compliant tractor units to transport the tank containers as well as over 420 tank container chassis available for hire in various versions. The company's dangerous goods storage facility has an area of 15,000 sqm. Like the facility and the company as a whole; it is certified to DIN ISO 9001 and approved under the German Federal Emissions Prevention Act.

The company, founded in 1991, offers services from transport, storage, cleaning and repair to the 'fusion' of products in tank containers and chassis rental. In addition to the simultaneous cleaning of up to eight containers, two additional cleaning tracks are available for tank and silo vehicles - minimising non-productive downtime.

Enrico Finelli, managing director of Peter Hempt GmbH, said of the new facility: "We are very proud that, even during these economically difficult times, we are so busy that we are able to expand under our own power. The additional storage area will meet the requirements of our growing client base, the demands of which are constantly growing. Our new storage facility is an investment for the future."

Peter Hempt's specialised cleaning facilities are able to clean up to 98 percent of all tank containers with product remnants which may be transported by road.

High pressure, low volume

South Eastern Tanker Services (SETS) has installed additional customised cleaning management systems which deploy high water pressure but use low water volumes. The high water pressure, in combination with the dryer, ensures short cleaning times, therefore reducing driver waiting.

This Gröninger Cleaning Systems equipment gives all cleaning bays an individual centrifugal pump system that allows them to run independently. These pumps operate 24/7 and are especially efficient when used with containers carrying food deposits.

The fully automated programming ensures that human error is reduced and the company said this gives customers a safe, reliable and accurate cleaning service. The new system also uses a very precise, and environment-friendly, detergent dosing technique which makes it safer for both staff and customers.

The system is monitored remotely and SETS can make program changes as well as troubleshoot issues to maximise efficiency.

Both sides of the river for Van Loon

At the new location Van Loon focuses on lessor, industry-owned and some special tanks

Antwerp-based Group Van Loon is expanding both geographically and across its range of services.

Van Loon has been offering services to the tank container industry from its service centre based on the right bank of the Scheldt since 1995. This site is now dedicated largely to operators, ie, trucking, cleaning, heating, repair- and depot services.

In May this year the company moved some activities to a brand new location on the left bank. This operation, named ATSL, is now mainly for tank container leasing companies and chemical/industrial companies owning a tank fleet. In addition, another company in the group – GETS – is based at this site, serving the gas- and specials market.

CEO Gunther Van Loon said of the recent developments that tank container services need space. "In 2007-2008, the tank container business was booming in Europe. The number of cleanings performed daily, followed by the number of repair and trucking orders increased almost month-by-month." Notwithstanding the company's 63,000 sqm existing yard, the group saw that the limits concerning tank turnaround times would soon be reached. Also the limited space and high workload increased site logistics costs. It was then decided that more space would be necessary to increase capacity and follow demand for the next decade. As no more space was available at the current location, the choice of the left bank (where most port and industrial expansion is taking place) seemed a logical one.

"In fact, the 2008-2009 crisis made this even more clear, since the number of tanks in the depot rapidly increased to a terrifying 4,000, when it was actually designed for maximum of a 2,500 units," Van Loon added. Seeing the economic climate during the crisis years, the plans to expand were put in practice in 2011 with the construction of the new depot and workshops.

At the new location, the company focuses on tank container leasing companies, industry (mainly chemical) tank fleet owners and the gas and cryogenic tank market. "We had built up experience in these specific services during the second half of the first decade of this century, and felt the time had come to take them to the next level" commented Van Loon. "This view on expanding our activities, both in depth and width, is also driven by the knowledge that the market place is in search of expertise and a guarantee that tank fleets are serviced in the most sustainable and safest way possible."

For that reason, two new workshops and almost 20,000 sqm of stacking yard have been built, and about the same surface area is already there for further development. The facilities have been equipped with the most modern techniques and were designed for specific goals. Operational managers overlook the activities from their office with a 360 degs view. According to Van loon, "GETS has dedicated repair halls for cryogenic tanks and for lined tanks, thus being able to offer the highest quality available today. Furthermore we plan to invest in a second gas scrubber installation and a gas burner to be able to treat a wider range of products in 2013."

At the moment the left bank location employs 25 people. The goal, however, is to increase volume by 8 percent to 10 percent each year.

Faster turnaround

Moving activities with a normal turnaround time to the left bank also enables the group to focus further on its 'high heartbeat' activities at the right bank location. Van Loon said: "Providing services to tank container operators today becomes more and more a commodity business, meaning higher volumes at lower margins and as-low-as-possible turnaround times, keeping the quality at a high level, and for that you need enough manoeuvring and repair space."

The maximum capacity of cleaning and repair at the right bank with today's set up is about 200 units a day. With the foreseen market development, this should be enough to cover market demand for the next five to 10 years in the Antwerp region. The cleaning division (ATC) has already invested in 'best available technique' water treatment and is ready to cope with increasing volumes and the highest effluent standards to be ahead of the competition.

One stop shop

Being one of the first companies globally that provided the famous 'one stop shop' for tank container services 17 years ago, the company now tries to reinvent the concept in a rapidly changing market, by also setting up a 'one stop shop customer service department'. This means that rather than having to send several emails for one tank to different operational people, Group Van Loon offers one desk to which all orders can be sent. For customers using more than one service of the group, the big advantage is that this customer service not only follows up on the execution of the order but also on the timing between the different steps in the process: heating, offloading a tank, cleaning, repair or test and reloading.

"We even book time slots at loading places and terminals, to optimise the process," added Van Loon. "Certain customers ask us to do their complete truck planning, thus outsourcing their non-core business. By also monitoring the complete cleaning and maintenance process we are able to lower the total cost of tank container operations further. Using the concept also means dramatically reducing the number of problems occurring outside of regular office hours, which adds to the operating comfort of our customers."

Sustainability and safety

Van Loon offers 360 degs safety rails for working at height in all its workshops in order to meet EU regulations. As an example the transport division (TVL) forbids its drivers to get on top of tanks in order to mount safety rails. Alternatively it offers to mount these safety rails in a safe environment at its depot (ATR). Van Loon claimed: "We know this is more expensive than having drivers doing it, but we believe also it can compromise safety if you have drivers putting the rail on tank containers in all kinds of conditions. This is not a popular measure seen from the customer's side, but we want these important safety issues to prevail over the commercial aspects and believe it is an industry duty to pass this message on to the chemical industry."

Only recently, Group Van Loon subscribed to the Flanders Institute for Logistics 'Lean and Green' programme aiming to reduce its relative CO_2 consumption by 20 percent in five years' time, an ambitious goal. The idea is to show that the logistics industry needs so badly to keep the economy going and growing does not necessarily mean a big environmental impact. Certainly not with tank containers that already show a relatively low carbon footprint compared to transporting liquids in barrels.

"THE NEXT GENERATION FLEXITANK"

E-Flex Easy Flexitank, The Industry Leader in Technology

After another year of expansion, Liquatrans emerges as the industry leader in technology, thanks to its innovative flexitank, E-Flex Easy Flexitank with no bulkheads. At a time when technology in the industry was considered to be building better bulkheads, Liquatrans has been able to change the game and come up with E-Flex, eliminating the need for bulkheads.

As in other top flexitank brands in the industry E-Flex has passed the AAR and 2G COA tests and is manufactured in ISO 9001 and ISO 22000 (HACCP) environment. The E-Flex provides many advantages over the conventional flexitanks with bulkheads;

• Easy fitting in 3 minutes

The fitting procedure literally takes 3 minutes with E-Flex. It is limited to placing the E-Flex into the container, unrolling and tying its belts at 4 points.

There is neither the set up of a bulkhead system or the need to use carton paper inside the container.

• Easier logistics without bulkheads

It is much easier to transport the E-Flex as there is no bulkheads involved. There is no procedures such as collecting bulkheads or shipping them back for cost saving. Recycling is also made easier with just two components PE and PP which are the materials of the E-Flex.

• Cost advantage with the elimination of bulkheads

E-Flex is the result of a distinctive design and advanced technology. The design allows E-Flex to work without the need for bulkheads and thus lowers the unit price. The price is certainly not at the level of low quality and no support flexitanks but at much competitive levels with its established peers in the market.

• 4,000 litre tolerance in capacity

Freight forwarders and shippers who have different types of liquids enjoy the benefit of keeping less inventory of E-Flex compared to conventional flexitanks. Traditionally they need to stock 24,000, 22,000, 20,000, 18,000 and 16,000 litre capacity versions for their various clients / products. However there are only 2 capacity versions of E-Flex that accommodate all needs. 24,000 litre version is good for as low as 20,000 lt and 20,000 litre version is good for as low as 16,000 lt.

• 40% less carbon footprint

A conventional flexitank and an E-Flex are about the same size and weight. What makes the difference is the bulkhead. The weight of the bulkheads is even more than the flexitank itself. The manufacturing process, positioning to loading location and transportation within the loaded container produces a lot of additional carbon footprint. The bulkheads also create a problem with recycling or disposal which is nonexistent with E-Flex.

Most of the multinational companies have environmental targets as part of their social awareness. Carbon footprint is an important aspect for them. The fact that E-Flex has 40% less carbon footprint compared to conventional flexitanks has been a point of preference for them.

• Stable journey for wine

Wine makers have seen another advantage with E-Flex. The idea behind E-Flex is that the movement of the liquid inside is minimized. Therefore the hydro dynamic energy seen in

conventional flexitanks due to movement of the liquid does not exist. This in turn results in a more stable transportation for the wine inside. The stable transportation provides a higher quality wine at destination compared to a shaken alternative.

• 2 times faster heating process

Fast heating feature of E-Flex has proven to be a big advantage for some chemical and food companies. Due to its unique design, the E-Flex can be heated 2 times faster than conventional flexitanks. A pipe that is inserted into the E-Flex between the PE and PP layers ensures that the liquid cargo is heated much faster and makes the discharge much easier at destination.

Liquatrans currently has a global network of distributors and agents. They provide technical capabilities and product availability in key markets. The company is still evaluating candidates to expand its network. Liquatrans is a privately owned global company. The company's manufacturing site is located in Istanbul, Turkey.

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CorrPak raises the bar... out of sight!

Dry bulk liner supplier CorrPakBPS has introduced a 20ft and 40ft Barless Woven Container liner that offers a flexible bulkhead support on the inside of the container by baffles and on the outside of the container by straps.

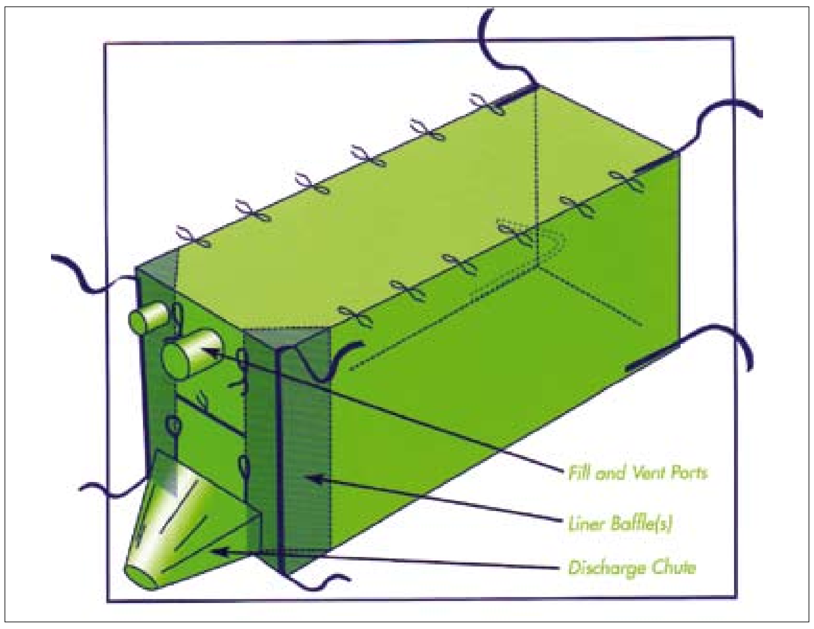
This flexible bulkhead strapping system bears the maximum burden of the lading, and is designed to eliminate the need for costly steel bars, corrugated bulkheads, or wooden bracing.

The liner is tied to all sides with the straps provided on the liner. Materials can be manually filled, conveyed, or pneumatically inserted through the opening in the end of the liner. Once reaching their destination, the materials can be discharged through various made-to-order port configurations or can simply be cut open.

CorrPack says the benefits of the new liner include lower total cost than a comparable 20ft of 40ft woven sewn or PE film liner when the cost of steel bars and corrugated bulkheads are added. The company also claims it is easier to install and remove, saving associated labour costs, and can replace non-bulk packages, 25kg PP and bulk bags.

The barless woven container liner is ideal for food products such as sugar, coffee, and malt, as well as agricultural seed and produce, said CorrPack.

"We don't do business like the rest of the industry," stated president and CEO Andy Mintz. "We adapt. We move. We never settle. Our products give our customers a distinct edge in their respective fields. Even though we have over three decades of packaging experience, our greatest assets are still a handshake and our word."



Fluent rebranding for FGN

Fluent Logistics LLC, the US arm of international flexitank transport firm FGN Global Logistics, is rebranding its US operations as FGN Global Logistics, Inc.

In an effort to align its brand worldwide, the Charleston, South Carolina, based company will now go by the name that had previously been used by its operations outside the US.

Rob Parrish, president of FGN Global Logistics, explained the rebranding: "During our three years in business, we have built a strong international presence under the FGN mark. Given the integrated nature of global business, it only makes sense to align all of our holdings under one brand."

Parrish added that the name change will have little impact on the on-going operations of the company. "We remain a US owned and operated integrated flexitank service company. The great customer service and operational excellence that we provide our customers today will not change in any way."

As part of the new brand strategy, the company will begin an intensive marketing effort under Kevin Brady, the company's marketing manager. "Since our founding in 2009, we have focused primarily on developing operational capacity," Brady noted. "Now with a single brand worldwide, we will begin allocating resources to a new and aggressive global marketing effort. We expect our programme will bring a greater awareness of our company to the bulk liquid transport market."

FGN Global Logistics will continue to focus on providing its integrated flexitank and bulk liquid shipping process to major multinational corporations in the specialty chemical, agricultural, oils & lubricants, and oleochemical sectors.

Earlier this year, FGN Global Logistics announced that Columbus Logística Internacional, a flexitank transport company in Brazil, had joined its network of partners. Columbus will represent FGN in Brazil, as well as be a key partner in the formation of FGN Global Logistics, Latin America, to be headquartered in Montevideo, Uruguay.

Columbus is the largest provider of flexitank services in Brazil with deep market penetration in the glycerine sector. With offices in Santos and Novo Hamburgo, the company boasts customers such as Gavilon, Archer Daniels Midland, and Petrobras. From its Brazil, Columbus exports flexitank loaded containers worldwide.

Trans Ocean invests in recycling

Trans Ocean has made a significant investment in a new shredding and recycling plant. The investment underlines the company's on-going commitment to reducing the environmental impact of its operations.

The new flexitank shredding and recycling facility, located in Bristol, UK, has the capacity to recycle approximately 10,000 flexitanks a year. This means that Trans Ocean can now offer a full end-to-end solution – from manufacturing, to disposal and recycling – for a range of flexitank customers across Europe.

Trans Ocean says its single membrane, 100 percent virgin polyethylene flexitanks are fully recyclable. After use, the bags are shredded, washed, bailed and sent to recyclers who use the materials in the manufacture of new products. In addition, Trans Ocean also has a policy to recover, refurbish and reuse steel bulkheads.

"The initiative demonstrates Trans Ocean's commitment to the environment, a commitment that has also seen the company engage in United Nations Global Compact initiative, which encourages businesses worldwide to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies within an established and globally recognised framework," said Trans Ocean.

Bulk-in-box suits Russian ambitions

Bulk liquid cargoes are pumped into flexitanks by GCS at an off-dock terminal, having arrived in Novorossiysk in rail tank cars

Global Container Service Group (GCS), based in Novorossiysk, Russia, has announced its intention to expand further into transporting bulk cargoes using ISO containers. GCS is already involved in the loading, unloading and transport of agribulks in standard dry freight and liquids in flexitanks.

The business is conducted through partnerships with international manufacturers, producers and logistics providers with GCS taking care of the landside transport in Russia.

GCS belongs to one of Russia's largest transport holding companies, Delo, which also owns several terminal assets in the port of Novorossiysk, including the NUTEP container terminal. Currently, GCS comprises seven companies in various fields of container shipping such as agency, logistics and terminal operations. Ruscon, its container transport company, has its own truck fleet and rail carriage capability.

In the near future, the group plans to expand its existing companies and add new ones in order to match the growing demand for professional transport services in Russia, the CIS and further afield. A strategic target of GCS is to triple the volume of revenue and double its container throughput over the next five years.

Since 2007, GCS has been investing into the construction of specialised silo facilities for the containerisation of export grains. The annual traffic produced by this facility, which is still a rare concept in Russia, was almost 4,800 TEU in 2011 with commodities being shipped to destinations in southeast Asia, the India subcontinent and eastern Mediterranean.

GCS is convinced that there is great potential for the containerisation of grains in Russia given that the country is one of the world largest grain exporters.

Besides foodstuffs in bulk, GCS offers wide containerisation opportunities for fertiliser exporters. Leading Russian producers of nitroammophos, ammonium nitrate and carbamide ship more than 2,000 TEU a year via the GCS off-dock terminals. Since 2011, the company has also provided stuffing of containers, notably with sulphur, a waste product from oil refining that is being exported in ever greater volumes from Russia to China and southeast Asia.

Another important investment that has been undertaken by GCS in recent years has been the development of a terminal complex for the loading of bulk liquids into flexitanks. The main items handled are motor oils and polymers, exported from Russia to the Far East and eastern Mediterranean. In co-operation with flexitank operators, GCS offers containerisation and transportation for high grade and base oil and petrochemical products. Volumes are now running at about 1,500 TEU a year.

Bulk liquid cargoes are pumped into flexitanks by GCS at an off-dock terminal, having arrived in Novorossiysk in rail tank cars. The group says flexitanks provide an excellent way of using standard containers that might otherwise be shipped out of Novorossiysk as empties.

Andrey Naraevsky, GCS's director of liner and business development, said his company is ready to invest further into facilities such as bulk storage areas, conveyors and pumping and bagging plants. "We will be capable of handling a variety of bulk commodities moving through various Russian ports including St Petersburg and Novorossiysk," he commented.

The potential demand for the containerisation of bulk exports in Russia is enormous, he believes. "Approximately 70 percent of Russian non-oil & gas exports consist of dry and liquid bulk products, such as ores, coal, fertilisers, petrochemicals, etc. We believe there to be a huge growth opportunity in the containerisation of some of these bulk traffics to the benefit of shippers, terminals and shipping lines," he added.

"It will also be possible to switch some cargoes currently moved in bags and drums into containerised bulk, saving substantially on the cost of labour and packaging."

In the first half of 2012, Russian container exports surged by almost 17.5 percent, due in part to the transfer of certain traffic flows into containers fitted with flexitanks or simple liners. Ruscon already operates several inland terminals in Novorossiysk and Moscow.

Naraevsky says GCS has been looking closely at the European scene where many large cargo flows move in ISO containers: "If it makes sense in Europe, it must make even more sense in Russia. The structure of Russian foreign trade, the distances between production locations and ports, and the condition of inland infrastructure call for more containerisation. And of course we have to cope with rail wagon congestion in Russia and the severe winter conditions at some gateways, when containers can be the only option for the expedient shipment of freight."

The potential demand for containerisation of bulk exports in Russia is enormous, GCS believes

Schenck masters bulk bag discharge

The Schenck Process Sac Master Bulk Bag discharge system can be installed as an integrated part of a feeding and weighing system to provide greater levels of accuracy compared with conventional systems, the company says.

The use of weighing load cells in combination with the Sac Master can ensure that large volumes of material can be discharged direct from an IBC with accuracies of +/- 0.5 percent. Volumetric and gravimetric feeding is also possible if a Schenck Process MechaTron feeder is integrated. The complete system can also be controlled and monitored using the Disocont and Disomat technology.

The SacMaster has a modular design that allows it to be used anywhere for a variety of process requirements. The SacMaster empties even the most difficult bulk solids from bulk bags of all types and sizes: from free-flowing plastic granules to poorly flowing titanium dioxide or calcium carbonate.

It is fitted with a PosiFlow discharge aid that has adaptive paddle movement to ensure optimal product discharge. The functions and features of the PosiFlow can be varied for use with different products and set to fit any size of bulk bag. The continuously adjustable telescoping rack also allows the height of both the bulk bags and the feeders to be adjusted.

To provide greater flexibility partially emptied bulk bags can remain in the discharge station until further processing is required. An optional iris valve closes the receptacle until processing has continued and the special docking station prevents dust from escaping into surrounding areas.

The modular design of Schenck Process SacMaster enables it to be used with a large number of materials and process areas and is easily incorporated into factory layouts for new build or refurbishment projects.

• For liquid bulks, Schenck Process has launched a dynamic rail weighbridge. The weighing of liquids transported in tank wagons is a particularly challenging task for measuring and weighing technology, the company said. These substances are in almost constant motion, so precisely gauging their weight requires special techniques and methods.

Multirail LiquidWeight, Schenck Process's weighbridge specifically for the legal-for-trade weighing of liquids transported by rail

Multirail LiquidWeight is Schenck Process's solution, a weighbridge specifically for the legal-for-trade weighing of liquids transported by rail.

Using Multirail LiquidWeight, the company says it is now possible to obtain a precise, verifiable (as per OIML R106-1) reading of the weight of tank wagons and even of entire trains. Depending on a customer's specific requirements, the weighbridge system can generate figures with an OIML accuracy class of 0.2 or 0.5 for wagons with a weight of up to 150 tonnes. Multirail LiquidWeight has been specially designed with a concrete weighing sleeper that is fitted with high-precision sensors which transmit all forces and moments and which provide an ultra-accurate reading of the vertical force components.

A special feature is how the system is integrated into the track without the cutting of rails or use of foundations. This eliminates interference from unwanted wagon motion while they pass over the weighbridge. The system can be calibrated to suit wagon speeds of up to 10km/h as well as allowing trains to travel at the full speed permitted for a particular line if they are not to be weighed. Germany's Federal Railway Authority (Eisenbahn-Bundesamt, EBA) has approved the use of the weighing sleeper.

Weighing in combination with the Sac Master can ensure that large volumes of material can be discharged direct from an IBC with accuracies of +/- 0.5%

NBE weighs up the odds

NTEP-certified weigh systems are now integral elements of the design and manufacture of National Bulk Equipment, Inc (NBE) bulk bag filling equipment.

As an original design component, NTEP-certified weigh systems eliminate the variable weight outcomes and resulting material waste or re-filling that may occur with bolt-on load cell or third-party NTEP scale systems. NTEP-certified weigh systems also aid in supporting weigh accuracy validation in regulated processes and practices, such as cGMP. The precision of these weigh systems measures material weights to an accuracy of +/- 0.01 percent, up to a total filled bag weight of 4,500lbs.

NBE 3-A, USDA, FDA and BISSC-compliant bulk bag filling systems are engineered, fabricated, and constructed to speed inspections, simplify integration, and ensure qualification for start-up into food processing and packaging operations. The sanitary bulk bag filler systems also support process practice protocols where 3-A Accepted Practices or other cGMPs are necessary.

They include features such as 32 Ra surface finishes to simplify cleaning; tool-less, demountable assemblies to speed inspection; 3-A compliant components to aid in sanitary standards conformance; HEPA air filtration for sanitary bag inflation; and a structural framework leak test system to facilitate clean-in-place (CIP) procedures.

Nutritional benefits for Devenish

Closely following on from a highly successful project earlier in the year, Chronos BTH has secured a second order from Devenish Nutrition for a high accuracy automatic packing system for its production facility in Belfast, Northern Ireland. This second packing line will be a mirror image of the line previously supplied.

Devenish Nutrition is a leading agri-technology company that is dedicated to the research, development and manufacturing of quality premixes, pre-starters, starters and concentrates together with speciality products for the intensive livestock sector. It provides a range of products across a range of feed industry sectors and tailored nutritional services to a diverse range of customers.

The new single head packing systems will upgrade the production facility's current manual packing system. Using Chronos BTH's innovative bottom-up filling technology the new packing system will provide a hygienic filling solution and enhanced filling accuracies for the high value supplements.

Notable features on the OML-1030BF bagging system will include: a special servo controlled dosing tube for enhanced accuracy; top air de-aeration of the filled bags for optimum filled bag utilisation; and an integral sewing machine/crape tape applicator for reliable bag sealing.

To help meet Devenish Nutrition's quality control procedures each packing system will include an automatic product sampler and an integral label printer/applicator located in the empty bag magazine to ensure each bag is correctly identified and the label consistently applied in the same position.

"We have worked very closely with Chronos BTH engineers while selecting this particular type of packing system," commented Dermot O'Brien, of Devenish Nutrition. "The high filling accuracies, coupled with the proven and reliable operating design of the filling system were all key factors in deciding to place the order with Chronos BTH."

Chronos BTH OML-130 BF single spout bagging system prior to despatch from the European manufacturing facility

Low-level access points to safety improvement

Accessing silo tankers via the top hatch on the roof, which is necessary in order to check for residual product, is an activity fraught with danger and a highly regulated process, according to Dave Rowlands, technical director at UK logistics firm Wincanton.

"The height of a silo tanker is about four metres, meaning traditional access from ground level via a ladder and catwalk carries a significant risk of falling in wet, windy and icy conditions," he said. "There is a lot of risk all round, which is why the activity is so highly regulated and policed by Health & Safety regulations."

For these reasons Wincanton worked with tank trailer manufacturer Feldbinder to come up with a brand new design for construction vehicles that allows safe entry to silo tankers via low-level access points.

The 'side manway' innovation is claimed to offer optimum safety management, increased payload and reduced environmental impact. Four vehicles featuring the new design entry points are now being trialled and, if successful, have the potential to become the industry standard, the two companies say.

The solution provides side access to a silo tanker, combining the benefits of both tipping and silo tanks by reducing the potential dangers while also offering a higher payload of around 5 percent compared to tipping tanks.

"This new design means an operator can enter the silo tanker via the side access point. Although this is still classed as entry into a confined space, it has significant reduced risk potential due to it being near ground level access because it is easier for operatives to raise an alarm or call a colleague," said Rowlands.

Shaun Hurst, sales manager at Feldbinder UK Ltd, added: "The development of the new low level side access manway enables Wincanton to use silo tankers in operations traditionally requiring tipping tankers. It provides a practical and safe method of cleaning out between products. Benefits include improved payload, operational efficiency and safety over the tipping tankers previously used."

As well as improving safety, the new design brings other benefits, said Chris Kingshott, Wincanton's managing director for manufacturing. "The design provides the flexibility to carry out a full cleaning regime between loads which will ultimately improve vehicle utilisation and have a substantial environmental benefit. At Wincanton we are always looking to add value to our operations and the new silo tankers, with their increased payload capability, underline our commitment to sustainability which, in turn, helps our customers to reduce their own carbon fooprints."

The collaborators hope the solution, although still in trial phase, will give Wincanton the flexibility to move silo tankers between differing products by ensuring a full cleaning regime can be carried out. It could also have a significant environmental benefit by offering increased payload capacity over tipping tankers.

In addition, the facility for extensive visual inspection of the floor and walls of the tank without the need to enter it is an important safety benefit, as is enabling internal sweep-down of the tank from outside of the vessel. It should also allow easy removal of residual product from the tank.

Dave Rowlands continued: "The early feedback we have had from drivers has been very positive, with reports that the side access is extremely easy to use. This innovation, which has already been extensively reviewed and tested for compliance, is unique in this sector and has the potential to be a game-changer, though we do recognise that only through operational evaluation will the full extent of this innovation be proven."

Entering the silo tanker via the side access point is still classed as entry into a confined space, but it has significant reduced risk potential due to it being near ground level

Flexicon's latest block-buster

Materials prone to solidifying can render pneumatically-actuated flow promotion accessories integral to FIBC dischargers inefficient or even completely ineffective.

This is particularly the case with hygroscopic chemicals, certain spice blends and heat-sensitive products.

As an answer to this problem Flexicon has developed the Block-Buster bulk bag conditioner designed to loosen material that has solidified during storage or shipment, enabling unloaders to discharge more easily and fully through bag spouts.

The conditioner incorporates a cantilevered I-beam with motorised hoist and trolley allowing the loading and unloading of bulk bags without the use of a forklift. After lowering a bag into the conditioner frame, two hydraulic rams fitted with contoured plates press opposing sides of the bulk bag to loosen the material. The Flexicon design also enables a bag to be raised and lowered using the hoist and rotated manually for conditioning at any height on all sides.

An optional hydraulically-actuated, variable-height turntable is available for automated in-frame bag rotation and conditioning bags at varying heights. The number and pressure of hydraulic ram actuations, the height of the turntable and the number of 90 degs rotations are user-programmable.

To ensure operator safety the conditioner is fully enclosed on all four sides and includes full-height doors that are interlocked to disallow operation of the system when the doors are open.

The conditioner is available as a stand-alone unit or integrated into a dedicated bulk handling system incorporating mechanical and pneumatic conveying systems, bulk bag fillers, bag dump stations, drum/box/container dumpers, weigh batching and blending systems to create plant-wide process with automated controls.

Flexicon's Block-Buster bulk bag conditioner

Time to get serious about dust

Combustible dust is a scourge in the chemical industry across the USA. Accidents continue to occur, "an insidious hazard that is so preventable". And these explosions are particularly tragic for workers, usually causing horrible burn injuries.

So says Dr Rafael Moure-Eraso, chairman of the US Chemical Safety Board (CSB). Addressing a nationwide meeting of the International Code Council (ICC), Dr Moure-Eraso nonetheless saluted progress on key safety issues and encouraged further code action on combustible dust hazards.

The CSB is currently working with ICC on such hazards, he said, adding: "I know you want to stop these as much as we do."

In 2010, the Hoeganaes powdered metals plant in Gallatin, Tennessee had not just one, not just two, but three combustible dust flash fires. They killed a total of five workers and injured three others.

"Despite evidence released by the CSB and information that Hoeganaes had in its possession even before the first accident in January 2011, the company did not institute adequate dust control or housekeeping measures after the first and second accidents," said Dr Moure-Eraso. "Tennessee OSHA and the City of Gallatin TN, are monitoring the adequacy of the dust controls instituted by the company after the third explosion."

In November of 2011, the CSB heard testimony from Bruce Johnson of ICC at its Hoeganaes investigation public meeting in Gallatin, along with other panellists. This input, said the CSB chairman, was "invaluable".

"Our final report was released in January 2012. We issued several recommendations - to the company of course, to OSHA, to Tennessee OSHA, to the Metal Powders Association and to the city of Gallatin and its fire department – where code enforcement was problematic. The state of Tennessee follows the IFC, and the company's lack of adherence to rigorous dust control standards was the primary cause of the incidents due to large dust accumulations throughout the facility."

CSB is following progress towards adopting a recommendation is issued to ICC regarding combustible dust producing operations.

"We will be working further with ICC in the next few months to assure that this recommendation gets proposed for ICC action. And we are hopeful of its adoption by ICC in 2013. This action will set an important baseline standard across the country, so that both ICC and NFPA jurisdictions are taking strong measures to control these deadly incidents.

"Changes in the fire codes brought about by ICC reverberate throughout industry, and throughout the states and local jurisdictions. Such a change on dust has the potential for saving many lives in the jurisdictions that would adopt it and enforce it."

Dr Moure-Eraso summarised his frustration on the issue of combustible dust and why he looked forward to the ICC's action. First, CSB issued a Combustible Dust Hazard Study in 2006, identifying 281 dust fires and explosions between 1980 and 2005, involving 119 fatalities and 718 injuries. Some 20 percent of dust fires and explosions were fuelled by metal dusts.

The CSB recommended OSHA promulgate a General Industry Combustible Dust Regulation after its 2006 Combustible Dust Study. In 2009 the CSB recommended that OSHA move forward expeditiously with a standard following the CSB's investigation into the devastating 2008 sugar dust explosion and fire at Imperial Sugar that killed 14 workers.

In 2009, OSHA issued advanced notice of rulemaking, held various stakeholder meetings and initiated a dust National Emphasis Program (NEP). Yet to date, no final rule has been published.

"We know you are aware of our safety videos on this subject," he said. "There is Combustible Dust, An Insidious Hazard that includes animations and reporting on several explosions including West Pharmaceutical, CTA Acoustics, and Hayes Lemmerz. There is a video on the Imperial Sugar tragedy, and a video on the Hoeganaes flash fires. It is all the more imperative that we work together – the ICC and CSB – to prevent these dust accidents."

In 2010, the Hoeganaes powdered metals plant in Gallatin, TN had not one, but three combustible dust flash fires

Custom discharge

Material Transfer & Storage Inc has launched a new bulk bag/drum discharger with bag break station.

Material Master is a custom-designed unit featuring dual hoists with motorised trolleys and monorail system. The unit features a bag break station with drum docking port to allow addition of materials. It also has a heavy-duty Flo-Master 'breaker bar' bulk bag massaging system to promote product discharge.

A powerful Flo-Lock-actuated discharge spout closure system quickly halts material flow for partial bag discharge, allowing bag to be re-tied and removed. A Sure-Seal pneumatic spout clamping system provides dust-tight material discharge. The rear of the Seal-Master bag spout access chamber and integral bag dump station features dust take-off ports for connection to dust filtration system.

A quick word with....

Michael Mapes, President, Flexible Products & Services, Greif Inc

How did you come to work with GREIF?
Prior to joining Greif, I was a consultant with McKinsey & Company where I had the privilege of working with Greif to help architect and implement the Greif Business System. Through this experience, I had an inside view of the company and was extremely impressed with its people, culture, and vision. I ultimately joined Greif because I believed in the senior leaders of the company, in the path to create a market leader, and in the opportunities to make a difference.

To date, what's your biggest accomplishment there?
Accomplishing something great in business requires the efforts of an entire team, not any individual. I am most proud of leading the team that has created the global leader in flexible industrial packaging, which started from just an idea on paper. Despite a challenging European economy, we've made tremendous progress in our first two years since acquiring four of the leading FIBC companies. And through our integration and transformation efforts, we are well on our way to creating one world class business.

What were the main reasons for Greif wanting to enter the FIBC market?
Greif is the global leader in industrial packaging with a 135 year history of growing its product portfolio to meet its customers' packaging needs. Our decision to enter the FIBC market followed a comprehensive strategic review highlighting the attractiveness of the product in complementing and strengthening our rigid packaging offering. In fact, nine out of Greif's top 10 rigid customers buy FIBCs. By combining the strengths of the world's best FIBC suppliers with the resources of Greif, we can become an even greater productivity partner for our customers well into the future.

What is important when manufacturing an FIBC? What determines a good product from a poor product?
Manufacturing an FIBC is complicated – much more complex than most people imagine. It begins with producing high quality fabric using the right formula of high quality raw materials combined with great machinery and technical experience. Converting fabric into finished bags requires a combination of skilled and seasoned operators with the right tools, processes, and capabilities in place. This is particularly important given the highly manual nature of the process. If a company cuts corners on any of this – for example, using inferior resin, not enough UV stabiliser, inexperienced workers, or inadequate quality methods – the big bags won't perform as expected. That's when you have a leaking FIBC, or worse yet, a catastrophic safety incident. At Greif, we know what's necessary to manufacture a good bag, and that's what we do. In fact, we encourage all of our customers to visit our manufacturing sites to observe first-hand our commitment to quality.

What does GREIF offer to its customers in order to achieve loyalty in this extremely competitive market?
You're exactly right. It is a highly competitive market. The only way that Greif will consistently achieve a loyal customer base is by providing superior value. Fortunately, from the four acquisitions, we have a tremendous base of talented employees, market leading manufacturing assets, technical capabilities, and customer service centres. And we're making investments to ensure we can deliver superior value for years to come. We're implementing the Greif Business System — a set of common tools, processes, and capabilities—to optimise performance and to ensure sustainability. We're investing in our manufacturing footprint, most recently with our state-of-the-art factory in Saudi Arabia that is now producing fabric. And we're investing in innovation, which has resulted in more new patents this year than the past three years combined. We are doing all this while working with our customers to determine how we can deliver on their needs both today and in the future.

Sustainability and a company's environmental foot print are becoming ever more important. What impact does the manufacture of FIBCs have on the environment and what is GREIFs policy on this?
Sustainability is one of Greif's main priorities. We are fully committed to minimising our impact on the environment, and we've established and published specific targets for reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. We're currently conducting a life-cycle assessment of FIBCs so that we and our customers can make better decisions. In addition, our acquisitions in 2010 also brought Rebu, the premier and most respected FIBC reconditioner, to the Greif portfolio. Through Rebu, we can clean – in an extremely safe and responsible manner – FIBCs for reuse. And we believe that we're just scratching the surface of FIBC reconditioning; we want to expand this business in the coming years.

Keeping track

Hoyer has started furnishing its fleet of more than 20,000 IBCs with RFID equipment. So far around half of the containers have been equipped with appropriate transponders.

"This makes us the first IBC leasing company to offer clients this innovative technology," explains Marlen Blechschmidt, project and tender manager for IBC business.

RFID makes it possible to identify and locate an IBC remotely and automatically collect, store and transmit digital data, for example about the location, content and condition of the container.

"This technology not only brings enormous benefits for the management of our own IBC fleet, it also enables our clients to integrate IBC status reports into their own IT processes," Blechschmidt says. "We want to minimise interfaces with our clients, which optimises processes. RFID technology is perfect for doing this." Accurate inventory control and faster information transfer are additional advantages that considerably simplify IBC planning.

Hoyer has been preparing for the introduction of RFID since 2010. Eleven IBC depots in the group's European network are already equipped with portable, hand-held readers and docking stations for transmission of data into the Hoyer IT system.

Hoyer's IBC fleet comprises mainly standardised types, with volume of 500 or 1,000 litres. Its IBCs can be provided with special coatings or with heating, and are approved for dangerous goods.

New unit for Schütz Malaysia

As Schütz continues to invest in its production sites, one of the latest developments has been the installation of a new three-layer continuous extrusion blow-moulding unit at its production plant in Malaysia.

The three-layer extrusion unit turns out IBCs with not just the two usual layers of high-density polyethylene (HDPE) but also a third, ultra-thin, outer layer, making the use of alternative functional materials possible.

Since September, the Malaysian plant has been able to produce not only the already established standard models but also IBCs with either a conductive or an antistatic outer layer, such as the MX-EX antistatic, which is suitable for use in ex-zones. Schütz says this innovation opens up new fields of application for use in the fast-growing south-east Asian market.

The plant in Malaysia was established in 2006 and occupies a site 60,000 sqm in area, approximately 45 minutes' drive from the centre of Kuala Lumpur. The plant already provides work for more than 70 employees.

Like all the company's 38 subsidiaries, the Malaysia plant participates in the Schütz Ticket Service for collection and reconditioning of used containers. The plant in Nilai is also supported by sales organisations in Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore.

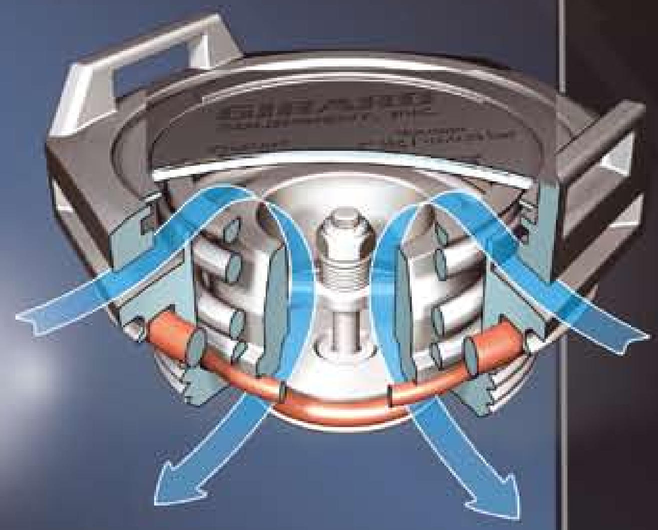
GIRARD

A single GS10005 sMart Vent™ protects intermediate bulk containers (IBCs) against excessive pressure and vacuum. Threading into a standard 2″ port, the design features a cast stainless guard to protect the rain cover against impact damage. Engineered for low maintenance and easy cleaning, this vent offers superior protection for metal IBCs.

SMART VENT™

Pressure Venting
sMart Vent™
relieves tank pressures
exceeding 5 psi

Manual Venting
sMart Vent™
manually relieves pressure by
pushing down on the cover



Vacuum Venting
sMart Vent™
relieves tank vacuums
exceeding 2″ Hg

Girard Equipment, Inc.

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EUROPE ■ CHINA ■ USA

Sustainability is the key to the future for Mauser

Mauser Group is looking confidently towards the near future. At the company's 22nd International Know-How Conference for licensees and technology partners held recently in Munich, Mauser discussed recent successes and upcoming trends in industrial packaging while presenting its latest Sustainability Report. According to CEO Hans-Peter Schaefer, supporting customers on a global basis with sustainable and innovative packaging solutions remains the company's stated aim.

At this year's conference Mauser, as well as its partners and licensees from around the world, took the opportunity to exchange ideas and discuss upcoming trends. Since its beginning in the early 1970s, the bi-annual Know-How Conference has developed into an international expert exchange forum on the latest developments in packaging design, raw materials, standardisation, legislation and life-cycle management.

Schaefer said: "The past 12 months have again been successful for Mauser. Our results underline the success of our business strategy, which is to manage the entire life-cycle of industrial packaging solutions. Our customers are faced with volatile economic circumstances and need to rely on efficient solutions. They appreciate the possibility to combine ecological with economic advantages."

Recently, the group introduced a full, light-weight range of UN-approved plastic drums for the European market and several new equipment solutions in order to optimise packaging according to customers' needs.

In presenting its third annual Sustainability Report, Mauser openly communicated its 2011 sustainability achievements and latest steps in the company's strategy. Among the most recent initiatives Mauser has cemented its 'total recollect' strategy by expanding its steel drum collection capability. With its subsidiary National Container Group (NCG), Mauser operates a worldwide network of reconditioning plants and has increased the number of reconditioning locations from 21 to 28 during the past 18 months.

"Cost savings still are a critical driver for our customers when considering sustainable packaging solutions," said Klaus-Peter Schmidt, head of global product development and sustainability management. "But we see that the environmental impact aspects are increasingly becoming solid arguments as well. With our Eco-Cycle concept, we offer a full-cycle service for packaging solutions – always applied in close co-operation with our customers and partners."

Eco-Cycle is based on five pillars: 'Renew', 'Reduce', 'Recollect', 'Reuse', and 'Recycle', and comprises the entire supply chain from production to recollection services to recycling of the products.

• Mauser has sold its US steel drum reconditioning operations to Industrial Container Services, Inc (ICS) of Montebello, California. In connection with the transaction the two companies entered into an affiliation agreement whereby the parties will jointly market container collection and reconditioning services.

To date, Mauser had operated three steel drum reconditioning facilities (Pittsburgh, Providence (RI), and Houston) and one distribution warehouse (Richmond, Va) under the trade name of American Container Net. Hans-Peter Schaefer said the transaction would allow Mauser to serve its North American customers better by providing collection and reconditioning of steel drums at all of ICS's 19 facilities across the USA.

Previous to this move Mauser opened a new steel drum plant in Singapore. Built in just 18 months, the site enables Mauser to triple its steel drum production in Singapore and is in line with the group's ambition to expand in the Asia-Pacific region.

At the site Mauser will be able to produce plain drums, inside-coated drums and open-top drums. It has approximately 10,000 sqm designed to replace Mauser's existing plant in Benoi Road, which has been manufacturing uncoated drums since 2006.

Mauser says its results underline the success of its strategy of managing the entire life-cycle of industrial packaging solutions

FDL expands

FDL Group of Haydock, UK, has acquired Richard Wood Packaging Limited, a long-established manufacturer of wooden packaging systems, heavy-duty corrugated cardboard and packaging products.

The acquisition represents yet another step in FDL's strategy of growing its total packaging range. The integration of Richard Wood fits perfectly into the FDL portfolio in terms of customer profile, markets, services and products, the group said in a statement.

In addition, FDL Group has launched a more strongly branded, accessible and user-friendly website in order to provide a unified focus for the entire group of companies, Fibre Drums Limited, FDL Packaging Limited, and Cases for Industry Limited.

The key benefit of the new site (www.fdlgroup.co.uk) for FDL lies in implementing a distinctive common identity to unify the three divisions of the company whose identities had previously been separate and divided. The new website, by contrast, employs a common graphic style with colour coding – green for Fibre Drums, red for FDL Packaging, and blue for Cases for Industry – to differentiate the three companies beneath the overall FDL Packaging Group umbrella.

Following significant growth in recent years, FDL Packaging has diversified from its core business of environmentally-friendly fibre drums to incorporate metal and plastic drums, pails, kegs, bottles, containers, cartons and IBCs, along with Cases for Industry, a range of high quality wooden packing cases, pallets and glass stillages.

The new website is designed to communicate this breadth and diversity while also emphasising the close working relationship and service the three companies can offer to FDL customers.

Safe filling for battery fluid

Everyone is familiar with filling systems, eg, from the food industry for bottling beverages or bulk goods such as for filling coffee or flour. However, how do you design the filling process for corrosive battery fluid?

A customer approached SMB International GmbH with this challenge. The company fills battery fluid for the production of large batteries utilised by electric-hybrid vehicles. A filling system for stainless steel containers is required, which functions semi-automatically as monitoring is required during various stages of the production process. Particular emphasis is placed on the conveyor technology, which must be realised in an extremely stable design. In close co-operation with the company, the SMB engineers also developed the programmable logic controller (PLC) for the filling machine.

"The weight of the individual containers including the product is approximately two tons. Therefore, stable steel construction, strong transport elements such as rollers and chains, as well as an appropriately dimensioned drive are necessary. Nevertheless, the energy consumption should be as low as possible," said Dipl-Ing Jens Hachmann, technical director at SMB. "That is why the technicians also appropriately designed the respective drives."

The system consists of four filling stations, as well as 40 container storage stations. Forklifts place all containers at the allocated position on the roller feed, which supplies these to a nitrogen flushing station. Using the nitrogen, the air located in the containers is pressed out in order to reduce the oxygen content to a lower percentage. The connection of the nitrogen and exhaust lines is realised by means of dry coupling. This prevents re-penetration of air.

Flushed containers are transported by the conveyor in pairs to the filling stations. Here, a scanner first reads the identification code of each IBC and subsequently these are allocated to the respective scale. It determines the tare weight of the container and saves this information in a data set. Subsequently, the product lines, as well as the exhaust lines are connected by means of dry coupling. A further tare weight is measured and then allocated to the data set. After the tare setting, the actual filling is executed automatically.

As a result, a corresponding product valve is automatically actuated, which allows both coarse dosing, as well as fine dosing for a precise calibrated filling. During filling, the displaced nitrogen is expelled through an exhaust line using a so-called gas displacement process.

After conclusion of the filling process, an employee manually disengages the dry couplings of the filling hoses, as well as the exhaust hoses. In the course, the final weight is recorded in the data set once with coupled hoses and once with uncoupled hoses. After the operator keys in the completion of the container, the conveyor belt transports the container one position further where the product label with the necessary tare, net and gross information is printed and the operator affixes it accordingly.

Using dry couplings on the hoses ensures that no one is exposed to the product and that no gases are emitted into the operator's surrounding, which makes working with the system absolutely safe.

After the operator has affixed the labels to the finished IBC, he again keys in the confirmation of completion of the containers and forwards these to the forklift acceptance station. The filling data is also saved in the customer's data acquisition system in addition to the label printing. For this purpose, the SMB technicians have programmed the necessary software interface and put it into operation. The controls, as well as the product data that is printed on the label are made available through this interface.

The system is operated by two people. Each is responsible for two filling stations. The operation is executed on a batch basis, ie, the employee places 10 containers on the conveyor with a forklift and subsequently, fills these. When the containers are full, he places them on a provided transport wagon, which brings the containers to the respective storage locations. To increase efficiency, a second employee may operate the forklift while the operator attends the filling system and executes the necessary manual steps.

"The capacity of the system including the drying time is sufficient for the filling of 12 containers per hour, whereby the product flow from the customer's feed pump determines the system's performance. Both the chain conveyor, as well as the filling unit are made of galvanized steel due to hygiene reasons and also provide for the necessary simple cleaning of these," explained Hachmann.

SABIC to launch high performing HPDE

Working in co-operation with Mauser SABIC has developed a grade of HDPE intended to meet the demands of large containers used in healthcare applications. SABIC HDPE PCG4906 specifications may be applicable for such products as jerry cans, open-head and tight-head drums, and IBCs, as well as for blow moulded bottles.

The relevant European and American pharmacopeia requirements are met by SABIC HDPE PCG4906. Furthermore, it has the physical and mechanical properties required by customers for the production of containers with volumes up to 1,000 litres.

The first drums produced by Mauser in the new grade meet requirements based on UN recommendations covering transport of dangerous goods. Procedures involve stacking, drop tests at -18degC, and hydraulic internal pressure tests.

The co-operation between the two companies started three years ago when they first joined forces to develop a new generation of HDPE for L-ring drums which set new standards in processing performance and system cost reduction.

Klaus Peter Schmidt, head of global product development at Mauser, commented: "We are confident that SABIC HDPE PCG4906 will meet an important need in the healthcare market. With our new multilayer L-Ring drum produced from this new SABIC grade we are not only targeting healthcare but also other industries with high demands in regard to packaging material cleanliness, regulatory conformity and last but not least long term supply security. We are looking forward to expanding our business in this area."

"Working with Mauser, we have been able to develop a grade that has the right balance of density, melt flow, impact strength and environmental stress crack resistance [ESCR]," added Ton Sevriens, business development manager HDPE SABIC region Europe. "Mauser shared with us its substantial knowledge in the production of large containers, steering us in the right direction so that we could fine-tune our own material production process accordingly."

HDPE PCG4906 has a melt flow rate of 6 g/10 min (190degC, 21.6kg), a notched Izod impact strength of 17 kJ/m2 at -30degC, and an ESCR of 30 MPa (strain hardening).

Sevriens added: "Several grades already exist in the market for industrial applications, but this is the only one specially dedicated to pharma applications. We expect this development to establish SABIC as the key supplier for big container resins for the pharma market."

"With the new grade, SABIC is expanding its portfolio of healthcare thermoplastics to cover all types of packaging used in the sector," said Hery Randrianantoandro, business development manager healthcare for SABIC's Europe region. "Mauser was very receptive to the idea of collaborating on the project, it shares our vision for developing the blown container market."

The rigid part of the drum's sealing cap is also made of the new SABIC® HDPE PCG4906. The sealing ring moreover is produced with SABIC's LDPE PCG02, which offers flexibility during seal assembling in combination with a high level of purity. SABIC already has healthcare grades of HDPE designed for production of smaller blow moulded and injection moulded containers. These grades, which carry the PCG classification, offer good processing behaviour and stability, as well as a good stiffness/ESCR balance.

SABIC is confident HDPE PCG4906 will meet an important need in the healthcare market

Dentressangle drums up new Orange contract

Following a competitive tender, UK chemicals distributor Orange Chemicals has renewed its contract with Norbert Dentressangle for a further three years.

Founded in 1976, Hampshire-based Orange Chemicals supplies a wide range of mainly petrochemical-based organic chemicals to major UK manufacturers. Formerly based at Norbert Dentressangle's Dagenham tank storage facility, under the new contract, the operation has transferred to Dentressangle's dedicated COMAH certified warehouse and drumming plant at Acton Grange near Warrington.

Norbert Dentressangle receives up to 12 tankers a month and is responsible for the discharge of mainly solvents and glycols into 1,000 litre IBCs and 210 litre drums. The company is also responsible for the sampling and testing of product to ensure that high quality standards are maintained.

John Millett, managing director of Orange Chemicals, said: "We recognised that Norbert Dentressangle's Acton Grange facility offered the right level of expertise and infrastructure, and will act as an excellent platform for future growth in our solvents and glycols business."

Norbert Dentressangle offers a flexible drumming service from its Acton Grange site. The company's investment in specialist equipment enables the efficient discharge and drumming of many hazardous and non-hazardous liquids in a clean environment under fume extraction conditions, conforming to the highest standards of health and safety and process control.

The France-based logistics group is one of Europe's leading providers of chemicals and hazardous goods warehousing and transport, with a network of shared-user COMAH (and SEVESO II in mainland Europe) sites, providing solutions which flex to meet changes in demand and delivery profile.

In the UK, the company provides more than 80,000 pallet spaces across six, strategically located COMAH warehouses and operates a dedicated ADR distribution network, along with storage and transport for bulk powders and liquids. Added value services include drumming, blending, mixing, sampling, packing, recycling and safe waste disposal and IBC management.

Norbert Dentressangle is responsible for the discharge of solvents and glycols into 1,000 litre IBCs and 210 litre drums

Boxon Group acquires Jumbotainer

Boxon GmbH and Jumbotainer Verpackungs GmbH are joining forces by means of Boxon Group acquiring Jumbotainer, based in Syke, Germany.

Jumbotainer will become "a cornerstone" in the Boxon bulk division, focusing on the German market. Other parts of the business area serve customers in the Nordic countries as well as international key accounts in Europe and in China through its office in Shanghai.

Jörg Wydra, managing director of Jumbotainer, commented: "The merger of our two companies will no doubt create the most interesting alternative on the market for big bags in Germany. We will continue to serve our customers with the highest level of service and knowledge for the full benefit of our customers."

Managing director of Boxon GmbH, and head of Boxon Bulk Oliver Grüters added: "By taking this step we increase our offer and market coverage in Germany with increased possibility to serve international key accounts as well. However, our focus will remain on our customers and their needs no matter the size of the customer."

The operations of Jumbotainer will remain in Syke, and will be the centre of sales in the German market under the leadership of Jörg Wydra and current management team. Boxon GmbH operations will remain in Willich, Düsseldorf, with focus on sales to international key accounts as well as serving as the head office for Boxon Bulk under Oliver Grüters.

FIBC imports at 3-year high

After a deep slump in 2009, FIBC imports to the EU climbed to a three year high in 2011. Compared to 2010, the value of imports grew by 27 percent to a total of €339.2 million in 2011 (€267.5 million in 2010).

The number of imported big bags has however still not completely caught up on the results of 2008 (€358.8 million), but 2011 is already the second year of recovery.

Turkey consolidated its leadership as FIBC exporter to the EU with a market share of around 40 percent in 2011. India remained in second place with some 35 percent. Meanwhile, China's EU export share slipped from 13 percent to 11 percent. These three main exporting countries combined account for around 85 percent of the total import value to the EU27 zone. As in 2010, Bangladesh remained in fourth place. Serbia overtook Thailand and is now the fifth largest exporter of FIBCs to the EU.

No pallet needed

Spanish FIBC producer Condepols-Derprosa has launched a 'Nopallet' big bag for Europe.

The bag needs no pallet, thanks to its specially designed base and is aimed at the current needs for transport, packing and storage in European companies, which now place more emphasis than ever on performance in processes.

Each unit of the Nopallet is claimed to result in an average saving of some €4, as it dispenses with the costs associated with using pallets. It can also aid productivity as fewer resources are needed to carry out the same functions. In addition, as it dispenses with pallets it can make better use of space in warehouses and increase payloads during transport.

Condepols claims studies have concluded that in the case of a 6m long truck the useful load may increase by 750kg when the Nopallet is stacked on two levels, aided by the stability of the product.

Other advantages are the strength of the fabric (240g/sqm), its internal bag which guarantees protection and tightness and its ecological nature, buy not using wood.

Condepols' R&D department has also developed a special coating which gives polypropylene fabrics anti-bacterial properties. The fabric gives its big bags an effective hygiene barrier against environmental pathogens, preventing contamination of stored products.

Condepols said the innovation has been tested by independent laboratories, with "excellent results". The material prevents micro-organisms from multiplying, and is claimed to eliminate 99.9 percent of them.

Finally Condepols has developed a new special big bag for liquid materials. The Aquabag, is 100 percent reusable, and due to its special shape can be stacked at different heights remaining stable without using any rigid material. It is designed for all types of liquid, viscous fluids and fluidised solids.

Each unit of the Nopallet is claimed to result in an average saving of some €4

Don't put limits on PE performance

In the US, the Plastic Drum Institute (PDI) and the Rigid Intermediate Bulk Container Association (RIBCA) have asked the US Department of Transportation (DOT) Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) not to adopt a proposed rule that would impose limits on the performance characteristics of polyethylene resins used to manufacture new plastic drums.

PHMSA made its proposal on 24 May 2012 as part of a larger rulemaking dealing with numerous petitions filed by various industry groups during the past few years.

The controversy stems from a series of DOT notices issued to plastic drum makers in which the agency took the position that small variations in resin specifications, or simply a change in resin supplier, constitute a change in packaging design type. DOT requires all differing packaging design types to be tested initially and annually thereafter by the packaging producer or its agent.

PDI and RIBCA members repeatedly challenged the DOT position and eventually asked the agency to adopt a rule establishing a range of acceptable variations in purchased resin. They also asked DOT to acknowledge that any change in the source of resin falling within such ranges does not constitute a different design.

DOT opted for "half a loaf" in its rulemaking proposal, much to the dismay of PDI and RIBCA. The agency wants to incorporate by reference the ASTM range of specifications but refuses to back off from its view that resin produced by different companies constitutes a change in design type.

"The Proposed Rule does not offer the relief…requested or serve any useful purpose," said the two groups in comments filed with PHMSA. PDI and RIBCA maintain that the record of plastic drums is safe and, therefore, the agency "…has no basis to conclude that the [proposed] Resin Specification Limitation would either enhance or maintain safety." In fact, the two groups noted, "PHMSA cites not a single design-related failure of any plastic drum or IBC in transit."

PDI and RIBCA hope PHMSA will agree that its proposal does not resolve the issue and, in fact, actually complicates the matter. They have, therefore, asked the agency not to incorporate the ASTM standard in the hazardous material regulations.

A complete sample of 1A2 drums had been previously prepared by the RIPA delegation and shipped to the facility. A generic closure instruction was also prepared and delivered. All identifying marks on the drums (eg, company name) were removed and/or obliterated).

After touring the facility, the delegation observed the sample drums previously delivered. They asked about how samples are received, handled, and stored. The following tests (on one drum each) were observed: leakproofness, hydrostatic, and drop. Interestingly, the leakproofness test was conducted using the soap-over-seams method. LOGSA no longer uses the immersion method. Tobyhanna staff believes that pressure created by immersion could affect results, at least as may occur with their particular bath design. Standard commercial soap solutions are used across all samples to lend consistency. The test indicated no leaks.

The hydrostatic pressure test was ramped up at a rate of about 1kPa/sec. For the duration of sustained pressure at 100 kPa, no leaks were detected.

LOGSA drills a hole in the head of the drum and affixes a small, metal conduit resembling a tyre inflation valve. PHMSA is interested in how this method of pressurising would compare in terms of results with the method of pressurising through a conduit in the 2ins plug. This latter method has been observed in the field by DOT. A comparative analysis may be a future co-operative project.

The drop test showed some leakage from between the ring and top of the open-head drum. RIPA later expressed concern that prior to the test the filled drum had been placed on its head on the ground while the harness was attached. This likely affected gasket compression and/or other features of the packaging.

DOT notices took the position that small variations in resin specifications, or simply a change in resin supplier, constitute a change in packaging design type

Rishi retains rating

Rishi FIBC has retained its 'Superior' grade rating in the AIB Audit for the year 2012. According to Joseph Francis, executive director & CEO, Rishi FIBC is the only company to have AIB Superior rating since its inception. "This clearly proves our vision to the market leader in the food industry by 2015," he commented.

Rishi has a 200,000 sq ft fully air conditioned facility form raw material stage to finished goods godown (fully integrated) which is certified by ISO 9001:2008, ISO 22000:2005 British Retail Consortium with 'A' grade and American Institute of Bakers with 'Superior' grade for making food and pharma grade bags in Vadodara (North West) and a specially dedicated container liner facility in Mysore, near Bangalore (South India) which is also certified ISO 22000:2005.

The company currently produces about 5 million bags and is aiming to become the market leader in the food grade segment by 2015. Almost 97 percent of products are being exported to some 49 countries around the world.

Currently Rishi supplies its products to food industry giants like Cadbury, Nestle, Kraft, British Sugar, Kellog's, an expanding business segment for the company.

Antwerp ideal for Sumitomo

Sumitomo Chemical Europe has chosen the port of Antwerp for distributing its polyethylene and polypropylene pellets in Europe. It aims to optimise the supply chain by collaborating with leading European shipping companies and Schmidt Belgium, the fully owned subsidiary of Schmidt Spedition, based in Heilbronn, Germany.

Previously Sumitomo Chemicals unloaded its cargoes from Saudi Arabia in Rotterdam and handled them in other logistics hubs. Now, both activities are concentrated in Antwerp. In the container carrier's terminal the boxes are immediately placed in the allocated area where they are handled by Schmidt Belgium, a dry bulk logistics specialist. This company moves the containers to its own adjoining terminal and transfers the contents to 30 ft containers or silos before sending them to the end customer.

Schmidt has already invested €3 million in a terminal on quay 550 used exclusively for Sumitomo Chemical Europe, for which it has hired 15 people. The investment was made to meet the requirements of Sumitomo Chemical. By collaborating with the container carriers and Schmidt says its handling is now quicker and more efficient, thus also lowering supply chain costs.

Meanwhile Antwerp has seen significant investments in its chemical cluster. The oil storage company Antwerp Terminal & Processing Company (ATPC) has completely refurbished its mooring and reception facility in the fourth harbour dock.

Antwerp port and the Flemish Region are investing substantial amounts in the port that should have a positive impact on liquid bulk transport

Ships of up to 160,000 tonnes will soon be able to dock here.

The renovation of the mooring facility represents an investment of around €1 million. As such it forms part of a large-scale investment plan drawn up by VTTI, the parent company of ATPC. Since the acquisition at the beginning of 2010 the company has already invested €105 million in modernising the site.

ATPC has more than 720,000 cbm of storage capacity, with space for an additional 550,000 cbm. The company also has one of the largest bitumen production plants in Europe, with a capacity of 1.2 million tonnes a year.

Antwerp Port Authority and the Flemish Region for their part are investing a substantial amount in deepening the Fourth Harbour dock. This far-reaching project forms part of the port authority's long-term vision for offering a high standard of facilities in the port area on the right bank. The investments will have a positive impact on liquid bulk transport for among others ATPC.

Elsewhere in Antwerp, Kuwait Petroleum International is investing €63 million in modernisation of its lubricants division Q8Oils. The construction work is due for completion by 2014.

More than 600 types of lubricant are produced in the Antwerp plant, destined for among others the energy, environment, manufacturing and automotive sectors. Part of the modernisation will involve installing 'pigged lines' to automate further the mixing process. The filling process will also be made more efficient, and there will be additional storage space.

"This investment will help us to achieve our ambitions for growth. The innovations will make it possible to produce all types of oil-based lubricants in Antwerp," explained Q8Oils general manager Pierpaolo Furno.

The modernisation of the plant forms part of the company's on-going project for investment in Blue Gate Antwerp, the 'green' successor to Investment Zone Petroleum South. "There are various reasons why we opted for Antwerp," said Hussain E Esmaiel, chairman of Kuwait Petroleum International. "The port offers very good sea access, enabling large volumes to be brought in efficiently. There are also very good road connections with France and Germany, the two largest economies in Europe. So the location is perfect."

Finally, Chinese commodities group Sinopec has become an active party in the port of Antwerp. Sinopec and Mercuria Energy Trading have agreed on a 50 percent participation in the storage activities of Mercuria, the fifth largest independent energy commodities trader in the world. The storage assets comprise, among others, Vesta Terminal Antwerp.

Through its subsidiary Sinomart, Sinopec – part of China Petroleum & Chemical Corporation – acquires 50 percent of Vesta Terminals. The transaction involves the terminals in Antwerp, Flushing and Talinn, with an overall storage capacity of some 1.6 million cbm (crude oil, refined products and biofuels), of which half of this capacity is situated in Antwerp.

Mercuria and Sinopec will manage the terminals together. In a first stage they plan to consolidate and increase the existing terminals, in future they may envisage expansion towards other markets such as China and other parts of Asia.

Lanxess entrusts Talke with new logistics site

Chemicals group Lanxess has commissioned Talke for the planning, construction and operation of a logistics facility for its polyamide 6 plant in Antwerp. The new factory in the Belgian port has been designed for an annual output of around 90,000 tonnes and is a central component in the hi-tech production of Lanxess plastics.

The Leverkusen-based chemicals group chose Talke Group to design and build the facilities. In addition, the Talke will run the logistics side of the business for a five-year period from the start-up of production.

The proposal is for a logistics facility with a pneumatic conveyor system, six silos and an adjoining warehouse with packaging facilities for FIBCs and 25kg bags. Annual production is initially planned to reach approximately 90,000 tonnes of polyamide 6.

Talke will run the logistics side of the business for a five-year period

The construction project is to be carried out by Talke's Logistic Solutions division. The operational side will be managed by Talke Belgium, which will be managing not only the works-based operations, such as packaging, storage, dispatch and plant maintenance, but also the transport of containers to and from the seaport as well as necessary Customs clearance.

Lanxess and Talke enjoy a well-established, long-term partnership. "We are delighted that we have been entrusted by Lanxess with the construction and operation of its new logistics facility," said Christoph Grunert, director logistics Europe at Talke. "From our perspective, this contract backs up our strategy of providing support and assistance to our customers that extends beyond our classic portfolio of chemical logistics services."

The spectrum of services provided by the Talke Group covers all aspects of chemical logistics. "The combined expertise of our specialists in consulting, value-added services, storage and transport means that we can take into account all the key factors right from the start of any new project," explained Alfred Talke, group managing director at Talke. "This makes us more than just a haulage operator for our customers; we are also a full partner in the planning and execution of complex projects."

The logistics facility to be built for Lanxess is the second such commission of its kind for which Talke has successfully tendered this year. In July, the group was contracted to design and build a new polymer logistics facility for a Slovakian petrochemical company.

Titanium service from Greiwing

White pigment specialist Sachtleben has entered into a logistics partnership with Greiwing Logistics GmbH. In the agreement the logistics provider and specialist silo operator will handle logistics for the German production of titanium dioxide by Sachtleben. As part of its growth strategy Greiwing is also expanding its storage and handling facilities at the inland port of Duisburg, on the Rhine river.

Sachtleben, a leader in the manufacture of white pigments and speciality additives based on titanium dioxide, zinc sulphide and barium sulphate, operates three manufacturing facilities for the production of white pigment: one in Pori, Finland, one in Duisburg, and the other in Krefeld.

"The Greiwing facility in Duisburg Logport is perfect, almost within sight of our two German plants," said Patrick Ley, director transport and freight management Sachtleben Chemie GmbH.

Logistics for titanium dioxide is a sensitive undertaking. It is subject to complex storage and hygiene requirements, as it is found in many everyday products. For example, titanium dioxide E171 is in toothpaste. Other derivatives exist in white plastic window profiles, laminated papers in paints and coatings, and synthetic fibres or cosmetics. In its pure state titanium dioxide meets the requirements of the chemical and food chemical industry. However, even the smallest impurities have a large impact.

"The quality requirements of Sachtleben fit perfectly together with our standards in the performance of complex value-added services. A partnership is therefore only logical," said Greiwing CEO Klaus Beckonert. Greiwing will transport product to Sachtleben customers and clean the vehicles in its own recently modernised and expanded treatment plant in Duisburg Logport.

Greiwing CEO Klaus Beckonert

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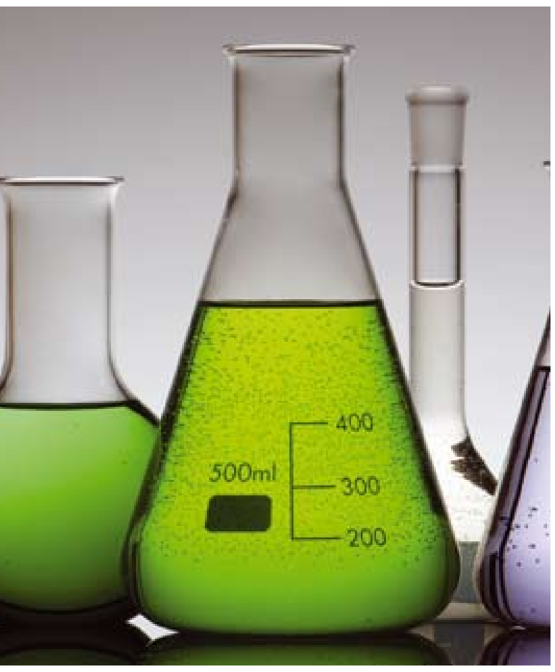

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Take Africa more seriously

After the so-called BRICS forecasters predict Africa will be the world's next economic phenomenon. Already China has bought up, or has licensed vast swathes of Sub-Saharan Africa extracting minerals and growing food that it cannot easily do at home.

In terms of logistics, Africa is one of the most exciting investment opportunities anywhere in the world. Its untapped natural resources are vast, and foreign direct investment has poured in as Africans' purchasing power grows. However, in a new report by consultancy Transport Intelligence (Ti) – Sub-Saharan Logistics 2012 – investors and logistics companies will have to adopt a more positive approach if they wish to exploit the region's opportunities.

Ti's business development director Mike Nordmann, a veteran of the African logistics market, commented: "Many international logistics providers have either ignored Africa or served it at arm's length through partners or agents. However, this approach is increasingly difficult to sustain, as global clients need logistics providers willing and able to develop supply chains across the continent."

Ti's latest report identifies key reasons why Sub-Saharan Africa has attracted so much attention. Many countries in the region, such as Nigeria, are characterised by an increasingly rich middle-class. This has boosted sales of consumer goods, most of which are imported from China, Europe and North America. Global manufacturers are increasingly taking the market seriously and enhancing, or building, their marketing and distribution channels.


Infrastructure in many parts of Africa remains a challenge

South Africa, the most developed country in the region, has large and growing manufacturing sectors – such as pharmaceutical, chemical and automotive. This provides opportunities for inbound logistics services.

The perishables sector is of major importance to countries in East Africa, especially Kenya and South Africa. A large proportion of fruit and vegetable exports are air freighted to developed markets, primarily in Europe.

As far as the high tech industry is concerned, governments in many countries have plans for new 'technology cities', aiming to create a 'silicon savannah'. Multinational companies are also investing on a larger scale. All the while, the mobile phone boom will continue.

The exploitation of natural resources will continue to characterise economic growth in Africa over the next few decades. This will provide a range of opportunities for logistics providers including transporting mined commodities by road or rail, handling commodities at port terminals, supplying spare parts and delivering heavy and out-of-gauge mine equipment and machinery to name just a few.

The oil & gas industry in Sub-Saharan Africa is concentrated in just a few countries. The region's largest oil industries are found in Nigeria and Angola, while the largest gas sector can also be found in Nigeria. Consequently, the logistics market, both project and spare parts, is likely to grow.

Of course, the challenges to doing business in the region are still high. South Africa offers a more mature and developed corporate environment which is not replicated in many other countries. Weak transport infrastructure (road, rail, air and sea), lack of quality service providers, a disparate population, security issues and corruption combine to make doing business highly problematic.

*Sub-Saharan Africa Logistics 2012 is available online from £1,095 for a single user license.

www.transportintelligence.com

LNG powers Vos fleet

Vos Logistics has further greened its transport fleet by taking delivery of five new trucks that run on LNG. In the final quarter of the year the company is adding another six LNG trucks to its fleet, bringing the total number of Mercedes-Benz Econic LNG trucks to 14.

LNG trucks can also be driven on LBG (liquefied biogas) and have a range of about 1,200 km. They are therefore a sustainable alternative for use in national distribution such as deliveries to urban retailers. Vos Logistics will use the LNG trucks for national distribution in the Netherlands, Belgium and western Germany. Vos has identified this segment as a strong growth market.

Natural gas is the cleanest fossil fuel. LNG emits fewer harmful substances such as NOx, SOx, particulates and greenhouse gases. In comparison with diesel, Euro 5 trucks emit 30 percent less CO2 and as much as 85 percent fewer particulates. By using LNG trucks, Vos Logistics says it can operate in full compliance with its customers' sustainability policies.

For Frank Verhoeven, CEO of Vos Logistics, driving on LNG is one of the alternatives available to further reduce the emission of CO2. "In the first half of the year, we cut our CO2 emissions by a further 3 percent, thanks in part to the use of LNG trucks. More importantly, our customers are expecting us to deliver sustainability. A good example is floor covering manufacturer Desso. It has adopted the cradle-to-cradle principle, in which products are made from materials that are safe for human use and can be biologically and technically re-used at the end of their lives. At the same time, it uses production processes that guarantee sustainable energy consumption, water savings and eco-effectiveness. The company also works closely with suppliers who respect the same principles. Desso has therefore decided to use LNG trucks to distribute its products because they strengthen its sustainability policy."

CH Robinson targets chemicals

US-based logistics major CH Robinson Worldwide has formed a new division called ChemSolutions which will provide logistics services to chemical manufacturing and distribution customers globally.

ChemSolutions is capable of providing chemical bulk shipping, safety and sustainability, freight forwarding, Customs brokerage, vendor and supplier compliance, global trade management, and multi-modal transportation to chemical shippers.

In order to serve the chemical market, ChemSolutions has earned RC14001 certification, which combines Responsible Care and ISO 14001 certifications into a single process based on an international standard that is accepted by chemical manufacturers worldwide.

"Chemical logistics is a perfect fit for us as CH Robinson has a long history in speciality logistics ranging from time sensitive products, produce, high value shipments and project business," said Taylor Nicks, manager of ChemSolutions. "Because of the inherent risks in transporting chemicals it is imperative that chemical manufactures align themselves with logistics providers that have industry expertise in handling chemicals and programmes in place."

ChemSolutions says it is committed to following stringent Responsible Care and ISO 14001 standards and to using proprietary technology to ensure that its contract carriers meet customer and industry requirements. To fulfil this obligation, each CH Robinson employee that works in the ChemSolutions completes a certification training programme before they are able to handle chemical shipments.

Safer tankers

Clugston Distribution Services is investing £130,000 in two new Spitzer Eurovac bulk powder tankers: a food grade 60 cbm tipping silo which incorporates the latest in tipping chassis technology and safety systems; and a 56 cbm 4 pot non-tipping tanker. Both vehicles have been branded in Clugston's new livery and will work from the EB Bradshaw and Sons site in Driffield, UK.

Working closely with Spitzer Eurovrac, the non-tipping tanker was specifically developed with the flour industry in mind, to overcome the problem of flour holding up inside the tank, while the discharge system was designed for ease of cleaning. A secondary benefit is that Clugston has a number of customers whose discharge points have a camber, which means use of a traditional tipping trailer is dangerous and the non-tipping tanker provides for much safer discharge. One of these customers, a major bread producer in the northern England, specifically requested a non-tipping flour tanker because of the on-site camber.

The non-tipping tanker discharges air from both the tractor and customers air connections, which is filtrated to 5 micron and directed through a controllable air operated valve system and not the butterfly & ball valve system used on most solutions currently in use. The driver has a work station, out of harm's way, at the side on the tanker, in sight of the discharge line, but not in the danger zone at the rear of the tanker. This coupled with the double air operated tank top access system, makes the tanker easier and safer for all concerned.

David Heath, general manager Clugston Distribution Services, said: "At the start of the design process we wanted a safer, more cost effective, and operator friendly tanker for the distribution of flour. We are now the first distribution company in the UK to be operating this type of tanker."

First German terminal for InlandLinks

Stuttgarter Container Terminal (SCT) in the German Land of Baden-Württemberg is the first hinterland terminal in the country to receive the quality mark InlandLinks.

The terminal is connected with the port of Rotterdam by regular barge and rail services. In 2011, STC handled just over 82,000 TEU and 39,000 TEU in the first six months of 2012. Some 70 percent of the volume is train-related and 30 percent is transported by barge.

Inland Links is the quality mark of, and platform for, container terminals in the hinterland, based on objective and comparable criteria. It is an initiative of the Port of Rotterdam Authority and VITO (Dutch Inland Container Terminal Organisation). This enables all participants in the logistics chain to identify their general and specific advantages, and is also expected to contribute to a rise in intermodal transport of containers that is set to triple in the next 25 years. Ninety percent of the Dutch hinterland terminals participate in InlandLink. Now, the concept is being introduced in Germany and Belgium.

Port of Rotterdam forecasts that of the total of 30 million TEU to be handled in 2035, approximately 2 million are expected to be shipped in and out using smaller vessels from and to European ports. Some 18 million TEU will travel to and from the hinterland via intermodal transport. "For this flow, InlandLinks should give an insight into better and more sustainable connections," the port said.

Champions of Europe

A family-run logistics company based in Ireland has been awarded the title of European Transport Company of the Year 2012. Reynolds Logistics was selected from a shortlist of six companies from other parts of Europe in a ceremony held in Dublin.

The award recognises the achievements of the finest road transport operations throughout Europe. The aim of the contest is to give an award to an operator whose management skills, customer dedication and all-round professionalism can be considered as an example to follow for the whole European freight transport industry.

Reynolds Logistics was the only Irish company to be shortlisted as a finalist. The others finalists were: Snel Logistic Group (Belgium); Matra Transport (Czech Republic); Maszonski (Poland); Transportes Pascoal (Portugal); and Com Divers Auto (Romania).

Reynolds Logistics is a family business established over 80 years ago with a history in the logistics of liquid products from hydrocarbon fuels, lubricants and their derivatives, chemicals and bitumen.

Now with the family in their third generation CEO Andrew Reynolds is shaping the company to continue its growth into new markets with safety, innovation and customer satisfaction as the key drivers. The company has two main operating bases in Dublin, Ireland, and Ellesmere Port, UK, with several other bases to ensure a network of operations throughout Ireland, the UK and continental Europe. Reynolds employs 260 people and has an annual turnover of €35 million.

The announcement of the award came as Reynolds secured a €50 million plus contract with Topaz Energy. "It's the biggest logistics contract won by an Irish company in many years and proves that we can compete with some of the top names in the business and additional trucks, tankers and staff will be taken-on as a result," stated Reynolds.

Reynolds Logistics CEO Andrew Reynolds

Southern cone cornerstone

Brenntag has signed a preliminary agreement to acquire Delanta Group, a speciality chemical distributor in Latin America with operations in Argentina, Uruguay and Chile.

Delanta is active in the distribution of chemicals such as paints & coatings, ceramics, construction and food chemicals. William Fidler, member of the Management Board of Brenntag and CEO of Brenntag North America and Brenntag Latin America, said of the agreement: "This acquisition is a cornerstone for our growth strategy in the Southern Cone. It enables us to strengthen our position in ACES as a core business unit of Brenntag Latin America and it improves our access to the construction industry in the region. Furthermore it significantly increases our market coverage in Argentina as the third largest economy in Latin America." In the financial year 2011 the Delanta Group generated total sales of US$24.3 million.

For the third quarter of this year Brenntag posted gross profit up at €493.2 million. Operating EBITDA of €167.8 million was slightly above that of Q3 2011, while profit after tax advanced by 19.3 percent to €79.6 million.

Expectation for the full year are operating EBITDA of €705-725 million compared with €660.9 million in 2011.

Clean sweep for Simon

For a further year Simon Storage has won an array of honours in the UK Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Annual Safety Awards. All five terminals operated by Simon in the UK have once again been recognised by RoSPA for their "exemplary personal and process safety performance".

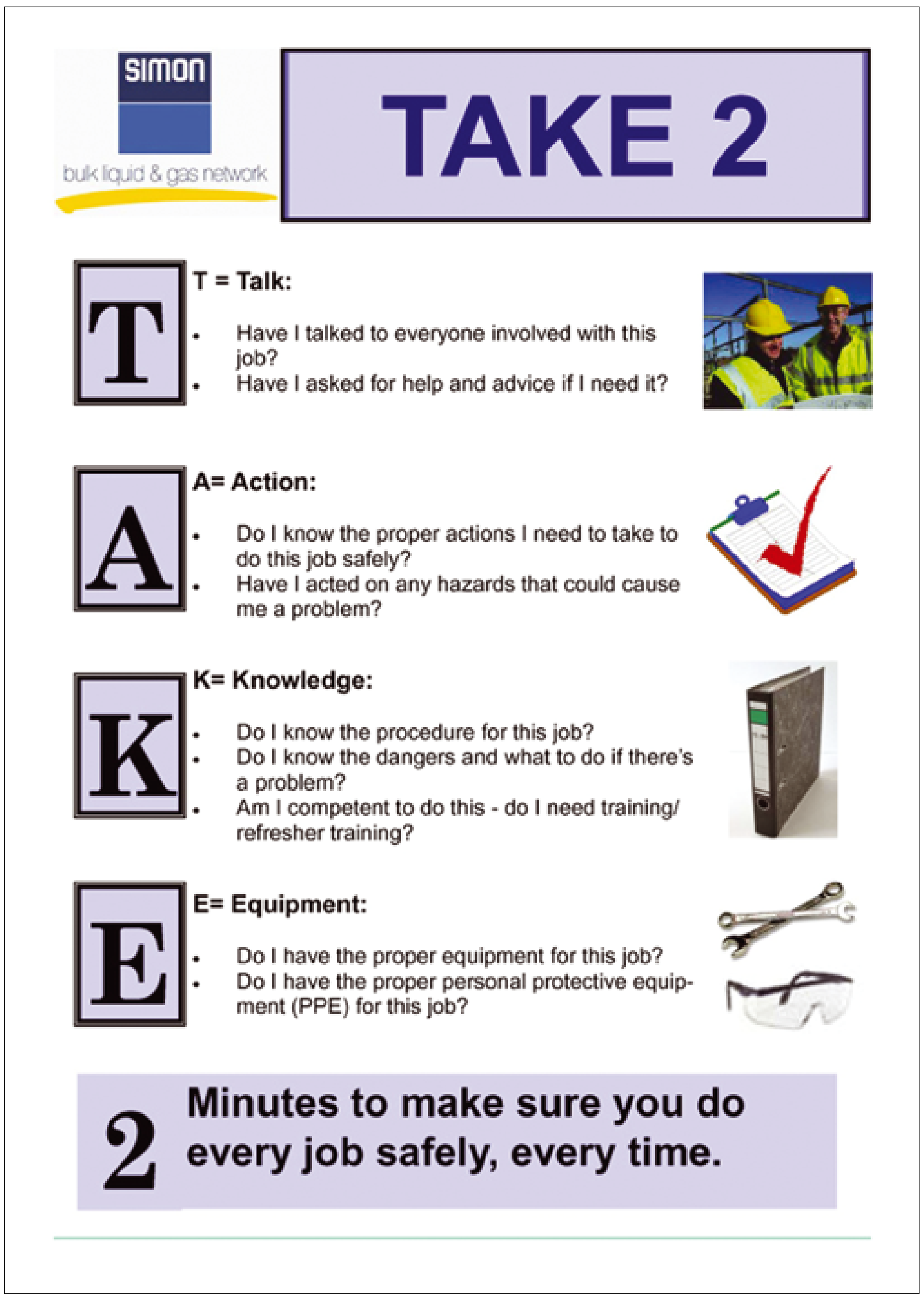
Simon's Seal Sands, Immingham East and West Terminals each won an Order of Distinction, presented after no less than 15 consecutive Gold Awards, while both Simon Riverside and Tyne Terminals received President's Awards after having won at least 10 consecutive Gold Awards.

These latest RoSPA Awards reflects Simon's internal safety initiatives, such as its TAKE 2 mini-risk assessment programme and annual Process Safety Improvement Plan. Simon is also a participant in the Chemical Business Association's Responsible Care programme, and keeps abreast of the latest industry-wide safety developments through on-going active engagement with industry associations and regulatory bodies.

The company's recent Annual Safety Conference was attended by senior managers, safety professionals and safety representatives from Simon's sites across the UK, Ireland and Germany. The conference provided an opportunity to review safety performance as well as to discuss ideas and actions for further improvements over the coming year. Topics covered at the conference included contractor safety, tank top surveys, and competence and training for staff at all levels.

Launched in August 2008, Simon's TAKE 2 safety drive, with the slogan "Take 2 minutes to make sure you do every job safely, every time", continues to effect improvements in safety performance across the company's bulk liquid and gas network. New TAKE 2 promotions focusing on different topics are introduced on a regular basis and supported by posters, presentations and videos. Campaigns launched so far in 2012 include "TAKE 2 before Work at Height" and "TAKE 2 with Contractors". The latter highlights the potentially hazardous work that contractors undertake for Simon and the role everyone in the company has to play in making sure that contractor work is completed safely.

In the first half of 2012 Simon's SHE (Safety Health and Environment) Team, working with operational and safety staff at each site, carried out roof-top surveys at the company's terminals in the UK, Ireland and Germany. Simon's Group SHE Officer, Alan Dixon, says taking a bird's eye view proved invaluable to the operations teams in raising awareness of the need to maintain excellent housekeeping on tank tops.



Simon's TAKE 2 safety drive continues to drive improvements in safety performance

Sinopec to build in Indonesia

China's Sinopec has started building southeast Asia's largest oil storage terminal at the Batam free trade zone in Indonesia, in an US$850 million investment aimed at boosting petroleum trading.

Sinopec Kantons Holdings, a unit of the Sinopec Group, will hold a stake of 95 percent in the PT West Point Terminal project covering the construction of storage for up to 16 million barrels of crude and refined fuels, the company told the Hong Kong Exchange in a filing.

This would be Sinopec's first facility of such a size near Singapore, Asia's oil trading hub, where the Chinese refiner has established its presence over the past 15 years, trading refined products with a team of 50.

About 360ha of land in Batam's Free Trade Zone has been set aside, with a refinery and petrochemical project being considered in the second phase of development.

PetroChina, Asia's largest producer of oil and gas, has a 35 percent stake in the 14 million barrel Universal Oil Terminal on Singapore's Jurong Island.

Rotterdam/Gothenburg in LNG alliance

Both Rotterdam and Gothenburg (pictured) are located within the Sulphur Emission Control Areas (SECA) in northern Europe. Photo: Port of Gothenburg

Port of Rotterdam and Port of Gothenburg have entered a new alliance. The aim is to speed up the establishment of liquefied natural gas as a maritime fuel.

A memorandum of understanding will be signed between Rotterdam and Gothenburg. Both ports are located within the Sulphur Emission Control Areas (SECA) in northern Europe where stricter rules governing sulphur in maritime fuel are due to be introduced in 2015. The aim is to have infrastructure for LNG bunkering available once the sulphur regulations come into effect.

"We see LNG as an important opportunity for the maritime industry to comply with the sulphur directive in 2015. The use of LNG as a fuel fits in our policy to become the most sustainable port. We consider the Port of Gothenburg as a strong partner in the Scandinavian market for this issue," said Ronald Paul, COO, Rotterdam Port Authority

"We are extremely pleased that the largest port in Europe has joined forces with us in this important issue. Working together, we will have a very strong offering to the market," added Magnus Kårestedt, Port of Gothenburg chief executive.

LNG offers substantial environmental benefits. Sulphur and particle emissions would be reduced to almost zero, nitrogen oxide emissions by 85-90 percent and net greenhouse gases by 15-20 percent.

To achieve the LNG target at both ports by 2015, rapid development is required in a number of areas. The necessary infrastructure at the ports needs to be constructed and rules will need to be drafted for handling LNG. It is also vital that the two ports promote awareness of LNG as a maritime fuel.

Oiltanking acquires Helios terminal

Oiltanking is to acquire a 100 percent shareholding in Helios Terminal Corporation Pte Ltd and its holding company Chemoil Storage Limited subject to regulatory approvals.

Located on Jurong Island, Singapore, the terminal of Helios has a total capacity of 503,000 cbm. Commissioned in 2008 it is a fuel oil storage and blending facility. The terminal is equipped with a finger jetty with six berths that can handle up to two Suezmax-size vessels simultaneously. Oiltanking already operates two terminals in Singapore with a combined storage capacity of more than 1.7 million cbm.

The acquisition could strengthen Oiltanking's market position for petroleum products in Singapore and Southeast Asia.

Crude services at Buckeye Albany

Buckeye Partners, LP has announced that it has reached a multi-year agreement with a subsidiary of Irving Oil Limited to provide crude oil services at its terminal located in Albany, New York, including off-loading unit-trains, storage, and throughput.

The 1.8 million barrel storage facility located within the Port of Albany along the Hudson River is expected to begin handling crude oil on in November 2012. Buckeye plans to make modifications to the Albany terminal that, once completed, will allow the terminal to handle both crude oil and ethanol unit-trains with a total capacity in excess of 135,000 bpd.

"Rail transport has become a critical component of the logistics chain as domestic crude oil production has increased significantly," said Clark C Smith, Buckeye's president and CEO. "The addition of crude oil services at our Albany terminal is part of our strategy to increase and improve the utilisation of our existing assets. We are excited to continue developing these kinds of opportunities with a strategic partner such as Irving Oil."

Khalifa well on the way

Abu Dhabi Terminals (ADT) has completed transitioning 30 percent of its container business from the old city centre port of Mina Zayed to the new Khalifa Port Container Terminal since operations began on 1 September.

Of the 25,763TEUs that have been offloaded at Khalifa to date, 19,889 units or 77 percent, were offloaded after 1 September. Year to date, the total number of TEU handled by Mina Zayed and Khalifa combined was 550,902. Khalifa is equipped to handle an initial capacity of 2.5 million TEU a year.

Martijn Van de Linde, CEO of ADT, commented: "We had initially anticipated completion of the transitioning process by the end of Q1 2013, but now we are projecting completion in January 2013. This has been made possible by Khalifa Port's ability to deliver more efficient, cost-effective, and better levels of services since day one of operations, which is a clear demonstration of the container terminal delivering its value proposition."

Khalifa Port is Abu Dhabi's new logistics hub with the capacity to accommodate Mina Zayed's traffic, as well as the cargo that will be generated by Khalifa Industrial Zone Abu Dhabi (Kizad). With the capacity to handle 15 million TEU and 35 million tons of general cargo annually, Khalifa Port aims to be one of the world's largest ports by 2030.

Funding secured

Odfjell Holdings (US) Inc has secured financing for the expansion of its US tank terminals. Odfjell can also obtain increases in the principal amount under this facility of up to an additional US$100 million.

Odfjell Holding (US) is the owner of Odfjell Terminals (Houston) Inc and the brownfield project Odfjell Terminals (Charleston) LLC. The funds are available through a five-year reducing revolving credit facility and the proceeds are to be used to finance the expansion projects for Houston and Charleston, general corporate purposes in the respective companies, and to refinance an existing US$54 million indebtedness at Odfjell Terminals (Houston) Inc.

The construction at the Charleston terminal has now started and the project is on track to deliver 80,000 cbm of new tank capacity in 2013. Odfjell is exploring new expansion opportunities throughout North America driven by the latest chemical expansions.

New look for Mersey

Peel Ports today has appointed international property and infrastructure group Lend Lease as principal contractor for Liverpool2, the UK port group's new £300 million deepwater container terminal at Port of Liverpool.

The terminal is due to open in 2015. Located on the River Mersey, it will avoid vessel size restrictions of the current container terminal, which is located within a closed dock system accessed by locks.

Lend Lease will drive the overall programme, support operations, and will collaborate with Peel Ports' team in establishing site facilities and rules, managing the quay wall contractor, electricity supply and designs for ancillary works.

Peel Ports Mersey managing director Gary Hodgson said: "The naming of the principal contractor is a vitally important move in the construction of Liverpool2, and we are confident that Lend Lease, with an impressive track record on major construction projects across the globe, is the right company for the job."

The new terminal will accommodate two vessels of up to 13,500TEU at a time. Forecast usage by importers and exporters will remove over 150 million miles of transport from the UK's motorway and rail freight networks. Liverpool2 is the key project in the Mersey Ports Master Plan, a 20 year project for future developments at Port of Liverpool and the Manchester Ship Canal. Liverpool2 will connect via barge to a number of 'port-centric' logistics hubs along the Manchester Ship Canal.

The construction programme comprises a new 854m quay wall, in-filling of the newly created land-mass, dredging of a new 16.5m deep berthing pocket adjacent to the quay wall, the installation of quay cranes and modern rail mounted gantry cranes (CRMGs) and associated infrastructure.

Liverpool2 will accommodate two vessels of up to 13,500TEU at a time

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Vopak's strategic position

Vopak has seen its new strategic storage terminal in the Netherlands inaugurated.

The terminal, located in the port of Eemshaven, part of the Eemsmond municipality stores strategic oil reserves for the Netherlands and other EU member states. It is a joint venture between Vopak and NIBC European Infrastructure Fund (NEIF) in which both companies are 50 percent shareholders.

Vopak will operate the new terminal which has an initial storage capacity of 660,000 cbm, comprising 11 tanks with a storage capacity of 60,000 cbm each, and a jetty for sea-going vessels. This capacity has been rented out for a long-term period and the terminal can be expanded to a total of up to 2.76 million cbm in the future. The terminal has been designed and will be operated in compliance with European and Dutch environmental standards.

On the financial front Vopak successfully completed a US$1 billion US private placement notes programme. The issue consists of a senior tranche of approximately US$900 million and a subordinated tranche of approximately US$100 million. The senior programme consists of various tranches with maturities ranging from 10.5-14.5 years and an average annual interest rate of 3.94 percent. The subordinated programme has a maturity of seven years and an average annual interest rate of 4.99 percent. The majority of the notes are denominated in US dollars.

The proceeds will be made available towards the end of this year and will be used to repay outstanding debt and for other general corporate purposes. It will also help align the maturity profile of the outstanding debt with Vopak's long-term growth strategy and provide flexibility under the current €1.2 billion revolving credit facility (RCF).