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Tank production up 10%, reckons @tco

Nearly 37,000 tank containers were built last year according to estimates by Reginald Lee, president of the Asian Tank Container organisation (@tco Asia).

Lee has updated records on the number of tank containers manufactured worldwide in 2013 with help supplied by various manufacturers.

He reckons that in 2013 production in China reached 29,000 units (2012: 24,500); in South Africa the figure was 6,000 (2012: 5,900); in Europe, 1,250 (2012: 1,200); and the Rest of the World, 500, unchanged from the previous year.

If these estimates are accurate global production would have been in the order of 36,750, up from the previous year's figure of 32,100. Therefore his estimate of the current world fleet rounded up to the nearest 1,000 is between 376,000 and 416,000.

Some total loss of tanks occurs, but this mainly happens when a ship sinks, as very few total losses are caused by accidents on land. The scrapping of tanks – which is mainly done by leasing companies – appears to have slowed down, and Lee cannot find evidence of many tanks being scrapped by the tank container operators, mostly they have continued with their re-manufacturing programmes for older units thereby extending their life for 10 or so years.

So Lee has once more estimated that 1,000 tanks were scrapped during the year and subtracted that from the total fleet size.

There is also a question of how many old tanks are sold each year for static storage or used for in-plant distribution by chemical companies. However, it is virtually impossible to obtain this information precisely so such tanks are included in the count of the total fleet size.

He noted that of the 10 percent rise in tank container production, mainly from Chinese manufacturers, many of these tanks will be going to companies in Asia. China is now using more and more tank containers for domestic distribution so he tried to obtain information on the number of tanks currently being used in that market.

After cross checking with end-users, operators and leasing companies the best estimate he has been able to obtain is that 15,000-20,000 (nearly 5 percent of the world total fleet) are being operated domestically in China. Most of these are being used as road tankers, in the same way they are used in Europe. However, an increasing number of tank containers are now being carried on the Chinese railway network, as many as 4-5,000 with the number growing each year.

Custom-built by Suretank

Ireland-based Suretank, which specialises in DNV 2.7-1 certified cargo carrying units to the offshore oil and gas industry, has engineered and installed a range of highly customised tanks for Halliburton's on-board modular stimulation plant in Kakinada, India.

Three different types of customised tanks were manufactured at Suretank's three manufacturing plants in China, Thailand and Ireland, drawing on the engineering expertise at each facility to ensure the units were ready for commissioning on board the Halliburton modular stimulation plant which is now offshore and fully operational.

The tanks include a lined acid transport tank for transporting full strength hydrochloric acid, custom designed dual compartment lined mixing tanks and large brine and gel mixing tanks which had specific requirements for attaching laboratories to their top decks.

Greg Bailey, Suretank's sales manager for Asia Pacific, said: "This was a very specialised and logistically challenging project. The customer had very specific requirements for all three types of tanks and so we drew on the expertise that we have globally across our manufacturing sites to deliver exactly what they needed. The end result was a huge success and demonstrates our ability to deliver a high quality service from anywhere in the world."

Steve Page, asset manager for Asia Pacific at Halliburton added: "Suretank are known within the industry for their engineering expertise and quality standards and so we turned to them to use their experience of delivering on this type of project. Dealing with one supplier for all the tanks simplified the process and because all of their products are manufactured to DNV 2.7-1 standards there were no issues around where they were produced. We're looking forward to working with Suretank on similar projects in the future."

Suretank is the world's largest manufacturer of cargo-carrying units for the offshore oil and gas industry and all of its products are produced to DNV 2.7-1 certification as standard.

Suretank built three different types of customised tank for Halliburton

A fragile recovery for EU chemicals

The outlook for EU chemicals is positive, but fragile

Latest Cefic figures shows that EU chemicals production in October 2013 expanded by 1.8 percent compared to the prior year period.

The October reading confirmed the recovery trend followed by the EU chemical sector that began in the second quarter of 2013. Although EU chemicals production during the first 10 months of last year still remained 6.9 percent lower than the pre-crisis, full-year peak level reached in 2007.

The net trade surplus stood at €37.9 billion during September 2013 – a €863 million improvement on the same period in 2012. Chemical prices in the EU for October were 3 percent lower than in October 2012. January-to-September 2013 sales were 3.7 percent below the first nine months of 2012.

The EU chemicals confidence indicator (CCI) improved in November 2013 compared to October 2013. Capacity utilisation in the industry increased from 78.1 percent in the second quarter of 2013 to 79.3 percent in the third.

Production was dragged down by petrochemicals. Output in this sector dropped by 4.9 percent in October compared with October 2012. The steep drop in petrochemicals was partially offset by strong growth in polymers, up 7.1 percent year on year. Output of speciality chemicals expanded by 2.7 percent and consumer chemicals grew by 1.4 percent. Basic inorganics registered 0.2 percent growth during the same period.

Cefic said the recovery in the EU chemical industry remains fragile since pulling out of recession in the second quarter of last year. Producer prices in October fell 3 percent compared to the same month the previous year, while producer prices for the first 10 months were 0.6 per cent lower than the comparable period in 2012. Producer prices for EU chemicals during the first 10 months remained 12 percent higher than the pre-crisis, full-year peak level reached in 2008.

The net trade surplus, at a record level of €37.9 billion during the first nine months of the year, was led by a €11.9 billion positive trade balance with non-EU countries in Europe, which includes Russia – €0.6 billion more than in January-September 2012. A €5.6 billion surplus with Asia – excluding Japan and China – occurred during the same period, marking a €1.6 billion increase compared with the same period in 2012. The EU net chemicals trade surplus with China decreased slightly from €0.92 billion in January-September 2012 to €0.76 billion in January-September 2013, while the United States narrowed significantly its chemicals trade deficit with the European Union by €1.7 billion to €5.1 billion.

Current overall order books for the coming months contributed to the positive change. Production expectations for the months ahead registered a downturn in November, however, compared to October 2013. The confidence reading for the sector in November was above the long-term average, measured from 2005 to 2012, for the third consecutive month.

The UK's Chemical Business Association's Supply Chain Trends Survey also revealed increasing levels of current sales and increasing confidence about levels of future sales. The survey shows that current sales margins are being squeezed, but that this pressure is likely to ease over the next three months.

"The CBA survey reflects an industry sector emerging from recession. Current sales are improving and member companies are forecasting this will continue. Sales margins, however, remain under severe pressure though this is expected to ease over the next three months. For the second survey running, CBA members report that employment levels are on the increase," said Steven Cartlidge, CBA chairman.

In the November 2013 survey, a positive balance of +24.5 percent (July 2013, +23 percent) of CBA member companies reported stronger order books than they had three months previously. A positive balance of +23 percent (July 2013, +14 percent) of respondents reported higher sales, and the three-month sales forecast improved significantly with +25 percent of respondents expecting higher sales (July 2013, +5 percent).

Current margins are under severe pressure but are expected to ease over the next three months. The November 2013 survey revealed a negative balance -25 percent of respondents had experienced reduced sales margins over the past three months. The corresponding figure for July 2013 was -5 percent. CBA companies expect this pressure to ease, with a lower negative balance of -9 percent of respondents (July 2013, -24 percent) indicating they expected to achieve lower sales margins during the following three months.

More CBA member companies forecast increased employment levels over the next three months with a positive balance of +33 percent of respondents indicating rising levels of employment – an increase on the figure for July 2013 of +19 percent.

Palm oil slips

Global exports of palm oil may decline this growing season for the first time in 16 years as makers of biofuel and cooking oil substitute sunflower and soybean oil. Bloomberg reported that palm oil exports are expected to total 43.75 million tonnes in the 2013-14 season which began 1 October, down 1.1 percent from a year earlier.

Shipments from the world's largest producer Indonesia look likely to fall 0.8 percent to 21 million tons, while exports from Malaysia, the second largest producer, will fall 2.2 percent to 18.1 million tonnes.

Prices climbed 10 since October on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives amid declining stockpiles in Malaysia and Indonesia and prospects for slower production growth. Global palm oil output will increase 4.8 percent to 58.5 million tons in the 2013-14 season, compared with a 6.6 percent increase the previous year. Production of soybean oil will rise 5.5 percent from a year earlier to a record 44.2 million tonnes. World output of sunflower oil will rise as much as 9.7 percent to 8.5 million tonnes, while rapeseed oil output will increase 2 percent to a record 25.4 million tons.

In the meantime Wilmar International, one of the world's largest suppliers of palm oil, has pledged to source the commodity more sustainably. The Singapore-listed agri-business, which has been criticised for its production methods, said it would ensure that both Wilmar's own plantations and companies from which the company sources will only provide products that are free from links to deforestation.

Wilmar supplies palm oil to food manufacturers including Unilever, which has made its own public commitment on the way it sourced the ingredient which must be from traceable and certified sources by 2020.

Saudi petchem facing greater competition

Rising competition and the threat of higher costs at home could see Saudi Arabia's petrochemicals industry come under increased pressure.

A report issued by National Commercial Bank (NCB) said that while Saudi petrochemicals producers benefited from lower costs thanks to subsidised feedstock, some of this advantage could be eroded as shale gas reserves come on-line in the US and elsewhere. With international natural gas prices likely to come down, local producers could find their comparative advantage challenged and profit margins reduced, the report said.

However, these impending challenges have so far failed to slow the progress of new projects being rolled out across the Kingdom.

In the shorter term, the slowing global economy is also set to squeeze earnings, as will increased petrochemical production capacity in Asia and elsewhere in the Middle East. Oman has announced it will develop a US$3.6 billion polyethylene and polypropylene plant, which will raise the Sultanate's petrochemicals production capacity to 1.4 million tonnes a year. While nowhere near the output of some of Saudi Arabia's leading producers, the Omani move is indicative of a rise in regional competition.

Some of this forecast pressure was reflected in the recent financial results of a number of the Kingdom's leading petrochemicals firms. In July last year, Saudi Arabia Basic Industries Corporation (SABIC) announced its second quarter net profits of $1.6bn that, although up by 12 percent, were below market expectations. SABIC, the world's largest petrochemicals group in terms of market value, saw Q2 sales fall 3.2 percent year-on-year to $12 billion, a result it said was due to lower demand in key markets in Europe and China, with sales of some main line products such as petrochemicals, metals and fertilisers, down. The corporation said its improved profits were due in part to lower costs.

Another company with lower-than-expected results was Saudi Kayan, an affiliate of SABIC, which posted losses of $63.5 million for the second quarter. Although an improvement on the same period of 2012, when the company booked losses of $87.5 million, the result for the Jubail Industrial City-based firm was still worse than analyst predictions.

Pressure on industry players is likely to come from a different direction as well, with calls for the Saudi government to lift its base rate for gas, a move that would raise costs for petrochemical companies but which would act as an incentive for gas producers to boost production and develop new reserves. The official rate for gas paid by the state is set at $0.75 per million Btu, among the lowest in the world. By comparison, 1 million Btu costs close to $4 in the US and up to $12 in Japan, though these rates could fall, especially in the US, as shale gas deposits are developed commercially.

While Saudi Arabia has considerable gas reserves, most of those being exploited are linked to oil fields. These supplies may not be sufficient in the long term to both feed the expanding petrochemicals industry and meet growing domestic demand, which is projected to climb sharply with electricity usage rising by 8 percent a year. Saudi Arabia uses oil to fire most of its power stations, though this drains off reserves that could otherwise be used for export. Riyadh would like to use more of its gas for power generation, but this would further limit supplies to the petrochemicals industry.

There have been calls to increase the domestic gas price to stimulate further exploration and development of new fields, but the NCB report predicted that any hike would be held off until later this year.

As long as Saudi Arabia's petrochemicals sector can maintain its competitive pricing edge, it will continue to be one of the driving forces of the economy. However, it is expected that earnings margins will be tightened in the medium term, as more rivals enter the market and cheaper feedstock becomes more widely available.

SABIC saw Q2 sales fall 3.2 percent year-on-year

Dual fuel the road to success

In December, BOC and Stobart Group welcomed Jon Horsley lead technologist, low carbon vehicles, from the UK's innovation agency the Technology Strategy Board to Eddie Stobart's new liquefied natural gas (LNG) refuelling station near Warrington, Cheshire.

BOC is the UK's largest supplier of compressed and liquefied gases, while Stobart is one of the UK's largest and best-known logistics operators. As part of a £23 million programme co-ordinated by the Technology Strategy Board, and designed to encourage road haulage operators to switch to low-carbon commercial vehicles, the dedicated LNG refuelling station in Appleton Thorn is now on-stream. The funding provided by the Technology Strategy Board was matched by an investment from Eddie Stobart, enabling it to operate a fleet of 20 new dual fuel Volvo tractor units from the site. Other LNG fleet operators may also access the station installed by BOC.

Visiting the new refuelling station for the first time, Jon Horsley commented: "The Technology Strategy Board is committed to supporting the introduction of low-carbon vehicles to the logistics industry, which employs over two million people and is crucial to the UK economy. I am delighted that the Board has been able to help support BOC and Stobart launch this new LNG facility."

The refuelling station forms part of a project to track both the usage of LNG and the reduction in CO2 emissions and employs 'zero loss' refuelling technology, developed by BOC, which is part of the Linde Group. This uses cryogenic cooling to 'temperature-condition' the fuel just prior to dispensing, which prevents leaks.

Mark Lowe LNG business manager for BOC, said: "BOC's partnership with Stobart in this project is proof of our long-term commitment to play an active part in the transition to low-carbon transport. I would like to thank the Technology Strategy Board for its assistance in making this happen."

Dual fuel allows natural gas to be used in conjunction with diesel, reducing the total consumption of diesel and cutting CO2 emissions. LNG typically accounts for up to 60 percent of total fuel consumption for a dual-fuel vehicle.

Diesel produces around 2.6kg of CO2 for every litre burned, whereas LNG when used with diesel in a dual fuel vehicle typically reduces CO2 emissions between 10 and 14 percent.

Phil Spittle Eddie Stobart general manager for fleet compliance, added: "The Technology Strategy Board grant, matched by our own investment, has helped drive forward our commitment to sustainable distribution. The transition from diesel to BOC's dual fuel technology has been extremely smooth and has allowed us to help stimulate innovation in the logistics sector. The use of dual fuel vehicles is an exciting development and will support the increasing need for Eddie Stobart and its customers to reduce their carbon footprint."

The refuelling station forms part of a project to track both the usage of LNG and the reduction in CO2 emissions

Expanding Haanpaa

Finnish logistics operator Haanpaa is expanding intermodal activities between mainland Europe and the Baltic Sea Region. As a result of the expansion Haanpaa is investing in a new modern tank container fleet of different sizes and functionality with some manufactured in China and others in South Africa.

"The market reception for our intermodal service has been better than expected," said Daniel Hauffe, general manager of Haanpaa's international business unit, "and our service to combine intermodal with road transport as back-up has worked excellently."

The Finnish group has offices in the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Estonia, and Russia. Haanpaa is also looking for sales managers with experience of chemical transport in Germany, Poland, Russia and Lithuania.

"This is, of course, a nice situation for us but my colleagues have worked very hard to achieve this during the past four years that we have been active in the intermodal market," added Hauffe. "Therefore we have now taken the next step in our growth plan and are investing in our own tank container fleet. Our plan is to own the majority of our fleet as we do in our road tanker division. This is a strength we believe in, but we will also continue to rent part of our container fleet to stay flexible in order to balance our peaks and needs," he continued.

"Our customers will benefit from the fact that we can offer state of the art tank containers with the newest possible technology on the market, such as light material, super isolation, active heating system, 'track and trace' functionality and so on. We offer one-compartment and multi-compartment tank containers from 5cbm to 35cbm with baffle plates in stainless steel or rubberised if needed. Haanpaa expects to benefit from its modern fleet since we are a new player on the intermodal market. We buy what we need and offer what our customers are asking for."

Haanpaa now wants to own the majority of its tank fleet while keeping some rental units for greater flexibility

Stolt dips

Stolt Tank Containers reported fourth-quarter operating revenue of US$131.2 million, down slightly from $132.1 million in the third quarter. While shipments slipped to 28,941 from 29,047 in the third quarter, utilisation was up to 73.7 percent from 72.9 percent in the prior quarter.

Revenue per shipment slipped lower in the fourth quarter due to a continued increase in the proportion of intra-regional versus deep-sea shipments. In addition, market conditions remained competitive in the quarter, keeping rates down. The total number of tanks in STC's fleet increased slightly to 31,393 from 31,224 in the prior quarter.

Fourth-quarter operating profit stood at $19.8 million, up from $17.1 million in the prior quarter. Results reflected lower operating expenses due to a number of factors, including the decrease in total shipments, lower transport costs, fewer tank repositionings and lower repair expenses.

"We expect our earnings from Stolt Tank Containers to grow in line with our fleet expansion, and we continue to invest in systems, our global network of depots and our people to support our market position," commented Stolt Group CEO Niels G Stolt-Nielsen.

Quala into Canada

US cleaning depot operator Quala is moving into Canada having bought ProKleen. ProKleen is said to be Canada's "only full-service commercial food grade tank wash facility", as well as specialising in chemical tanker and tank container services.

"The purchase of ProKleen is a strong strategic move for us at this time as we continue to expand our North American footprint," said Mike Bauer, CEO Quala. "Acquiring ProKleen with a strong reputation and solid customer base is consistent with our growth strategy. As we expand, we want to maximise our service offerings to existing customers by strategically moving into new markets with new and enhanced services."

The Canadian company has two locations, in Oakville and Concord, both in the province of Ontario. ProKleen's sustainable initiatives, such as grey water usage, digestion tanks, replacement of toxic cleaners with more environmentally-safe defoamers and acids, and using flocculent clay blends and filters to reduce and clean the effluent going into the waste stream, will enhance Quala's commitment to environmental stewardship, the US company added.

Privately-owned Quala now operates in almost 60 locations in 26 states and Canada. The company, headquartered in Tampa, Florida, says it is North America's largest independent provider of tank trailer cleaning, and ISO container depot services as well as being a provider of IBC cleaning, testing and reconditioning services.

Life's a gas

Transporting liquefied natural gas (LNG) is growing worldwide and tank container operators and lessors are investing in new equipment to meet demand.

Most recently Hoyer took delivery of new 40ft containers for LNG. The Hamburg-based logistics operator says the new containers are ideal for this type of transport and offer enhanced safety and economy.

The newest 40ft and longer tanks are distinguished by the fact that not only the inner tank is made completely from stainless steel, but also the outer tank, parts of the frame and the pipe connections as well. Even though these are good preconditions for the safe transport of LNG, risk management studies about the transport of dangerous goods are being conducted on a regular basis.

Capacity of the tanks is at least 46 cbm and they can be outfitted with a special pumping system and a measuring section. While the pump achieves a faster unloading because of its higher exit pressure, the measuring section allows precise measurements of the content.

In 2012 Hoyer massively expanded its global gas logistics business and by the middle of 2013 had increased its fleet to about 1,000 units of 20ft, 30ft and 40ft tank containers. "Demand for gas containers for the transport of LNG is rising," said Jürgen Schlötelburg, director gas equipment pool and development. "The reasons for this are the changed extraction and delivery structures of natural gas, among other things."

Particularly in North America and Asia there are large natural gas deposits which are currently being developed. Gas that's been extracted is liquefied at minus 161 degsC and then transported to its destination. The transport of LNG in a tank container is flexible and complements the more common use of pipelines.

Hoyer's new containers allow the company to expand its portfolio and position itself for future market developments.

In addition, Gascon Eurotainer received its first 40ft LNG tanks. The units were built in South Africa and will be leased to a client in Australia. Adding to its current fleet of cryogenic tanks these units have a capacity of 46,000 litres, are manufactured with stainless steel inner and outer vessels that allow for a holding time of loaded LNG of 100 days.

Eurotainer reports a growing global demand for 40ft cryogenic tanks as the market for LNG is expanding and intermodal transport of the gas becomes more economically competitive.

Peacock attracts Dow

Peacock Container and Dow Benelux have signed a long-term tank container lease contract for more than 500 tanks for use at Dow's site in Terneuzen, Netherlands.

The contract is the result of a strategic analysis of the specific needs of Dow's tank container usage during the coming years. It will provide Dow with the required flexibility and comply with the latest in tank safety and operating standards. Over the next few months Peacock will start exchanging and modifying the existing tank fleet that Dow has on lease.

This exchange programme will partly be met by Peacock ordering 350 new containers built by Shanghai-based Singamas.

Dow's history in Benelux started in 1955, in Rotterdam, with the opening of a business office. Today, the Terneuzen facility is the heart of the chemical giant's Benelux operations. In fact, with 18 plants and approximately 1,700 employees Dow Terneuzen is the second largest production location of the entire Dow Chemical Company.

Peacock, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Rotterdam-based Fluvia Holding, has a current tank container fleet of some 2,000 varying in capacity from 14,000 to 35,000 litres.

Bitumen on the rails

Swiss bulk transporter Giezendanner Transport has taken delivery of a further 15 bitumen tank containers in readiness for the 2014 bitumen season. The company already has a fleet of 25 such tanks.

Giezender says that working with closely with clients it has successfully converted a significant amount of bitumen shipments from road to intermodal rail transport and demand has proved "very positive", which is why the tank fleet has been enlarged:

In addition Giezendanner's office in Cologne, Germany, has acquired an additional five Mercedes-Benz 'Loader' trucks to ensure sufficient trucking capacity. From summer 2014, the Giezendanner fleet will consist entirely of latest generation (EURO 5/6) trucks which, along with the conversion of bitumen transport to rail, will save some 2,000 tonnes of CO2 a year.

TWS stirs the mix

Although the chemical industry is still the main field in which they are deployed, the number of tank containers used in the food sector has risen significantly in recent years.

Transporting viscous food products can be challenging, especially when these need to be kept within a specified temperature range. This is the case particularly with certain mass products and goods such as chocolate and fruit juice, but also holds for several medical products.

The aim is to keep the products fluid, but also to ensure they have the right temperature for further processing. Tank container rental specialist TWS developed an agitator in close collaboration with engineers to meet this challenge. TWS special tank containers have been fitted with two agitators, with the motor and drive mechanism situated in the manlids.

The agitators resemble a large mixer, and by moving the heated product around they ensure, on the one hand, that a constant temperature is maintained while at the same time preventing too much sedimentation of other products. The temperature is controlled by internal temperature sensors.

The mixing technology allows high-viscosity food products to be stirred inside the tank. No air is drawn in, making the process particularly gentle and effective. All parts can be cleaned thoroughly and hygienically before they are used again. This is essential for containers operating in a highly sensitive sector of the food industry.

TWS says using tank containers increases productivity and allows new, more efficient procedures to be achieved. The fixed, inbuilt agitators with various different functions can be controlled by GPS, while an all-round heater and good insulation allow products to be transported and stored without any difficulties.

All the tank containers comply with on-top safety standards. They are fitted with hinged ladders that can be folded away during transport, as well as full walkways and two collapsible handrails.

The tank containers are approved according to UN T6/L4AN, have a volume of 24 cbm, are fitted with a glycol-electric heating system with a control panel at the outlet side, an outlet box and air pipe. The air pipe can be monitored from a separate box. In addition, the tank has NW 500 manhole lid fitted with pressure relief valves, and two NW300 cleaning domes.

In developing these special containers, TWS was able to draw on years of close collaboration with the manufacturers, with the result being tailor-made, individual solutions.

The agitators move the heated product around to ensure a constant temperature is maintained

Suttons Americas

Suttons Group has appointed Greg O'Shea as regional director, Americas after spending the past 20 years in the logistics industry in Australia and the Far East.

Most recently, he held the position of general manager supply chain with Tradelink Australia. Prior to that, he was vice-president supply chain, with Big C Supercentre in Thailand.

O'Shea commented: "I'm very pleased to be joining such a thriving and dynamic organisation as Suttons Group. I have relocated to the USA, after 10 years in Asia, to take up this role – a move which I think speaks volumes about the scale of opportunity the position entails and the value I believe I can bring to the business in advancing its ambitious expansion strategy."

O'Shea will help strengthen the group's American operation. As regional director, Americas, he takes full responsibility for the US business and will be based out of its New Jersey office.

Greg O'Shea

A quick word with...

Jim Silver, Silver/CIMS

Jim Silver, President, Silver/CIMS

What exactly is Silver/CIMS?
Silver/CIMS is a third party, independent inspection company dedicated to the safe transport of hazardous cargoes in UN and IMO portable tanks. We have 'Approval Agency' and 'Delegation of Authority' status from the Competent Authority based upon our expertise in the portable tank hazmat field. Our primary function is to witness the 2½ and 5 year periodic tests of the portable tanks to verify their continued fitness for service throughout their useful life.

How Silver/CIMS come into being?
My background in marine engineering and training as a Classification Society Surveyor enabled me to service and comprehend the heavily regulated field of hazardous materials transportation, specific to the IMO and UN portable tank market. I originally founded, Silver inspection Services Inc., while undertaking graduate studies and inspecting tanks between MBA classes. I recognised early on that the key to market penetration was a global presence and accurate, timely reporting. A partnership was developed between Container Inspection and Marine Surveys (CIMS) in Antwerp and Silver in order to extend our global coverage and service quality.

Do you see opportunities arising from the growing use of tank containers across North and South America?
There are market entry barriers in Brazil and inflationary threats that will limit the need for international portable tanks due to their domestic regulatory burdens. Our growth will follow the marketplace in areas that follow the current investment in chemical plant conversion and the production cost advantages from the shift of chemical derivatives from heavy oil to shale gas. The Middle East will grow accordingly as will North America. A simple expansion formula for us to follow will continue to be establishing new service locations 'based upon customer request'.

Do you have partnership agreements with other inspection services in other parts of the world?
Yes, we have staff and permanent personnel with specific portable tank expertise stationed throughout thirty countries covering over 100 repair facilities. All our staff and permanent personnel follow the identical training, quality control and reporting methods in accordance with EN 17020 to ensure our customers continue to receive accurate, timely reports regardless of the service location.

Is it fair to say that a large part of your responsibilities is conveying developments in regulatory and technical matters in North America to tank owners/operators in other regions via the relevant ITCO and @TCO Committees?
My work for ITCO and @TCO are purely voluntary but also a necessity as the regulatory burden on the portable tanks is constantly changing, in some cases, needlessly. The proposed regulatory issues require ongoing monitoring and knowledge based influence. Our industry needs to stay involved in IMO, UN, RID, ADR, Canadian Standards and DOT regulatory issues, particularly in the developmental stage where we can have more influence prior to a proposal becoming mandatory.

What competitive advantages do you believe Silver/CIMS brings to the market?
Silver/CIMS has been the market leader in IT systems development. We are the only UN/IMO portable tank inspection company using handheld devices in the field for real-time reporting. The handhelds improve report accuracy and eliminate reporting delays allowing tank owners and operators to improve tank utilization rates. We also offer our customers some unique software programs, gratis, that allow them to reduce in office man-hours for tank test approval authorisation.

What are the principal operational and/or technical challenges in your business?
Technologically, we continuously update our hardware and software to take advantage of the IT developments but this typically requires a re-write of software programs due to OS language incompatibility.
Operationally speaking, the regulatory training for updates in regulations, surveyor monitoring and auditing are an ongoing necessity but carry a financial cost that will not translate into additional sales revenue.
Fortunately, these costs help us meet our goal of the continued safe use of UN and IMO portable tanks throughout the world. Based on UN/IMO tank safe shipping history, I believe UN and IMO portable tanks are clearly the safest method to transport hazmat shipments in bulk.

Chemical Express fights back

Notwithstanding the effects of the economic crisis, especially in Italy where the signs of economic recovery have been few and far between, Chemical Express was able to obtain good results, thanks to significantly business in a number of European countries. Orders were 10 percent up on 2012.

Chemical Express was renamed last year as a result of an internal reorganisation of the former Chimical Express. The company attributed its growth to two principal factors, first, winning new customers in Europe thanks to "tailor-made logistic solutions and our willingness to meet their requests". Second, a 'quality team' was created comprising quality manager, operative and customer service managers with the aim to enquire into customers' grievances and improve those aspects. Thanks to the activity of that team Chemical Express says "customer satisfaction levels were excellent".

"Obviously customers appreciated a lot our on-time services, new updated information system and most of all, our flexibility. The goal to have satisfied and loyal customers has been attained."

Another important goal reached was that intermodal and combined transport surpassed pure road transports during 2013. In 2012 intermodal transport represented 47.11 percent of total orders, but during 2013 this percentage increased to 51.26 percent.

Covering all bases

Over the past few years specialist insurance provider Pound Gates has noticed that there is no straightforward, bespoke insurance solution for companies that lease or operate tank containers, or for freight forwarders involved with the movement of goods in tank containers.

Although many of Pound Gates' leasing clients look to support their lessees with insurance solutions, this becomes an extra cost of sale, administrative burden and, if something goes wrong outside of their control, the claim ends up being recorded and settled under the lessor's own claims experience.

In response Pound Gates is using its two decades and more of experience in the tank container sector by creating an exclusive product via the Lloyd's of London insurance market. The insurance solution provides an extensive wording, at "extremely cost-effective rates", to protect tank container lessees, operators and freight forwarders for all damage or loss to tanks, cargo and third party liability that flow from the use of the tanks or the cargo carried.

Cover often needs to be arranged at short notice to meet leasing company requirements. However, the Pound Gates 'TankPlus' product has been designed with this in mind, allowing for the immediate issue of paperwork to comply with leasing company needs and those of the cargo owner. The in-house underwriting, administration and claims service is claimed to make insurance simple and easy to use. Pound Gates says its paperwork is accepted around the world because it is recognised as a global insurance expert and Lloyd's of London continues to hold a Standard & Poor's A+ rating – key facts providing certainty to all parties.

The product is designed to be flexible so that any one, or more, of the main policy sections can be purchased. These include: Property Damage – physical loss or damage to tank container(s); Liabilities to cargo owners – legal and contractual liability including consequential loss, general average, transport equipment and other cargo; Liabilities to third parties – legal and contractual liability including property damage, injury, errors & omissions, pollution, seepage and contamination.

Pound Gates director Rob Thacker added that the insurer's approach allows for the changing geography of the global tank container sector.

Houston calling...

ITCO held its general meeting at the Four Seasons Hotel in Houston, Texas in November 2013, the first time that the meeting has been held in North America.

The event was deemed a success with more than 170 delegates including many participants that had never attended previous meetings and some to whom ITCO itself was new.

Formal presentations included that of Heike Clausen, the organisation's president and CEO of VOTG Tanktainer, on the current ITCO corporate responsibility (CR) project.

She noted that there is much research demonstrating that CR can drive the reputation of a company, creating trust, credibility, and support. This in turn helps to attract young professionals and makes it easier for customers to do business with the entity.

CR is also a differentiating factor in competition, and can save costs by driving down waste and energy usage. In turn businesses can become more innovative as they find new ways of looking at business processes.

The ITCO project will attempt to define what CR means for the tank container industry and for individual companies. She pointed out that the tank container's reputation for safe and efficient intermodal transport, and the high quality of materials and service deployed, mean that there is already a good basis for CR.

"But we have to broaden the CR scope, learn from best practice examples and join combine efforts," she said.

A CR survey is now underway in which it is hoped to achieve an overview of CR activities in the tank container industry, and in particular ITCO members. From this overview the intention is to highlight a number of realistic and important CR aspects that can be evaluated and communicated in a clear and consistent way to the wider business world.

Break-out

During the day delegates participated in five cross-divisional break-out sessions, focusing on specific issues relating to ITCO and the tank container industry.

One group on Technical and Regulatory Issues was moderated by Colin Rubery, Jim Silver and Bob Richards. The work group discussed the draft of Version 2 of the Code of Practice: Guiding Principles Depot Client Management.

It was agreed to amend the draft on a number of points, such as a glossary of terms, expanding the section on environmental issues relevant to cleaning, as well the section on cleaning certificates.

Another group looked at tank containers and PR. The moderator was by Neil Madden, managing editor of Bulk Distributor, who gave a brief presentation on how individual companies could raise their profile in the media, largely by getting to understand how the trade media in particular functions, and what editors and journalists require in order to publish news stories or feature-articles.

The discussion then moved on to raising the profile of the sector as a whole. It was suggested that the tank container in general has a strong story to tell (in terms of its safety and efficiency) in meeting the demands of the bulk supply chain. But this message needs to be made more public.

Although the "immediate" trade press are well acquainted with the tank container and its advantages, it was suggested that greater promotional effort could be directed at some of the vertical market press, eg, chemical industry publications, process industry and food logistics publications.

Some discussion revolved around whether the tank container industry should do more to highlight its safety record vis-à-vis other transport technologies, in particular flexitanks. An alternative opinion was that the interests of the tank industry might not be best served by appearing to denigrate other transport equipment. Rather a more productive route could be to accentuate the positives of the tank container in terms of safety and environmental performance, and let this story stand for itself.

SHEQ

Health and safety, quality assurance, and environment issues were discussed in group chaired by Cor Mol (Den Hartogh).

The group looked at corporate governance and a zero incidents and accidents policy. The key points were that training and education are keys to reducing incidents and accidents. As part of corporate governance, training and education policies and systems are a must. Also, education and awareness programmes are, in particular considered to be vital for a mentality change towards SHEQ and the full execution of that policy in a company's corporate governance programme.

An important tool for changing mentality is the 'tool box' model, hence bringing employees together to discuss items from their company's corporate governance. Another item mentioned was the so-called 'Gemba' model. This Japanese management model is based on management involvement on the spot (Gemba translated as "place where it happens") in order to take the lead and show commitment towards corporate governance and SHEQ matters. In other words running corporate governance just from behind a desk will not work.

In group E Barry Fiske (Girard Equipment) led a look into in What the industry will look like in 25 years' time. It was thought that tank sharing will in future be driven by a cloud environment, where technological change will make this possible. In addition, depots will have automatic estimation and cleaning processes and advanced technology will be used to track tanks.

Meanwhile, demographic change – particularly in Saudi Arabia, China, India, Russia, Africa – will drive local producers and the growth of regional operators. And, ITCO has to be the 'driver of change' politically, environmentally and regulatory - in these emerging and growing regions.

The 2014 ITCO General Meeting will be in Vienna, Austria on 20-21 October 2014.

RAM helps VOTG grow

In 1999, when VOTG first started using Real Asset Management's (RAM) tank operating software, the company had over 2,000 tanks and was a small to medium sized player in the industry.

VOTG Tanktainer, originally founded in 1997 was a joint venture between VTG and Royal Vopak. It became a 100 percent subsidiary of VTG Ag in 2007 and is today, one of the largest tank operators with over 7,000 units in its fleet and eight offices worldwide.

It has six European and two overseas offices, along with a global network of partners and agents to cover Europe, North America, Asia-Pacific and Africa. The fleet is constantly adapted and comprises standard, swap, electrical, gas and compartment tanks.

RAM's Monitor4000 solution has been an integral part of VOTG's development over the past 14 years. It has enabled the company to grow substantially and improve its business processes. Monitor4000 is a specialist tank container software system that has continually been enhanced to meet the needs of the tank industry.

VOTG produces transport plans within Monitor4000 using pre-calculated costs and routes

VOTG produces transport plans within Monitor4000, using pre-calculated costs and routes. It translates quotations into orders and generates sales invoices automatically using stored contract terms and costs. Additionally, it manages maintenance & repair, demurrage and fleet control within the system, saving time and effort and without the need to check and validate procedures manually. "The major benefit of RAM's system to VOTG is the fact that it is continually evolving," explained Tayfun Oezcan, VOTG's IT manager.

Improvements to the planning process will come with an upgrade to RAM's latest planboard/equipment allocation tool. This will further reduce data entry time and provide a single data source for identifying tank availability and current utilisation.

"There are many improvements that integrated planning and allocation bring to VOTG," declared Oezcan. "Overall better informed planning decisions ensure that equipment is optimised at all times and the potential for idle units is reduced."

RAM is working with VOTG on projects to improve the EDI input into Monitor4000 so as to ensure that data is in 'real time' and that the status of the tanks is always current. Faster and automated updating of this information via depot messaging will increase the efficiency of the business even further.

"VOTG has a good partnership with RAM," confirmed Oezcan. "There is steady on-going development of both the Monitor4000 operating software and the Rental4000 leasing software. We are confident of RAM's commitment to the products and can see that a recent boost of employees to the RAM team and its launch of additional modules to improve the range of functionality are helping its customers to make more savings and improve their competitive edge. The focus on EDI capabilities is of key importance to VOTG and we look forward to further enhancements in 2014."

Feed chain

VOTG is now authorised to transport feedstuffs. The GMP+ B4 certification ensures full compliance with the associated requirements.

"The transport of feedstuffs has been growing continuously over recent years," commented Heike Clausen, managing director of VOTG. "To this end, stringent demands have been placed on transport containers in terms of cleanliness to ensure that products do not suffer any damage. The certification shows that we fulfil these requirements to the fullest extent and that we are also able to respond to ever-increasing customer demands in matters of product cleanliness. We have set up a tank container fleet specifically for this purpose and adapted our quality and transport documentation."

Although the focus of the business will remain on transporting chemical and petroleum products, the certification allows VOTG to reduce its dependence on individual product groups.

The GMP+ Feed Certification Scheme is issued by the independent organisation GMP+ International. The system serves the global certification of feed businesses and is intended to guarantee the cleanliness of feedstuffs and reassure consumers that the feed products are responsibly handled along the entire production chain. The GMP+ B4 standard refers to the transport of feedstuffs. The GMP+ certificate is location-based and monitored annually by the certification body and by unannounced audits on samples by GMP International. The system, which was established in Mutterstadt, is also transferable to other VOTG locations.

Seaco comes under Bohai Leasing

As of Friday 27 December 2013, Seaco's corporate position with the HNA group of companies has been adjusted so that it now sits within the equipment leasing division of Bohai Leasing Co, a company listed on the Shenzhen stock exchange.

All parties says they are pleased with the transaction and believe the synergies of being within Bohai but remaining under HNA will add value both to Bohai's shareholders and Seaco.

Bohai Leasing Co is involved in various aspects of equipment leasing, and as such Seaco is described as "an excellent fit". The division basically covers all areas of leasing, with five specialised areas of aircraft, ships, containers, infrastructure, and high-end machinery.

Seaco says it is 100 percent business as usual and there are no changes from an operating perspective or its residence in Barbados. Seaco remains one of the world's largest container leasing companies with a fleet of around 1 million TEU, including standard dry freight containers, reefers, tanks, swapbodies, flatracks, open tops and the two pallet-wide SeaCell container.

The head office for Seaco SRL is in Barbados with significant subsidiary offices in Singapore, London, Hamburg and Miami. Subsidiary sales agencies offices are located in Shanghai, Rio de Janeiro, Seoul, Hong Kong, Mumbai, Moscow, Hainan, San Francisco, Livorno and Paris.

China on the right track

The 2013 general meeting of the Asian Tank Container Organisation (@tco Asia) took place on 20 November 2013 at the Eaton Hotel, Shanghai, China

@tco Asia president Reginald Lee welcomed members and guests before introducing a number of invited speakers. An Na, operations manager for China Railways Tielong Container Logistics in Beijing, gave an overview of how tank containers are being transported on China Rail by her company and some of the challenges operators face.

Introducing An Na, Lee said the future success of tank containers in China will depend on China Rail giving free access to allow the carriage of hazardous chemicals on the rail network. "This is the way most tank containers are transported today in Europe, by rail in place of road tankers when the distance to be travelled is 500 km or greater," he commented.

"This will not happen immediately but we hope that as the China Rail authorities become more comfortable with ISO tank containers and recognise just how safe they are, they will allow greater access. One of the major problems will still be that lack of rail hubs which are capable of lifting tanks plus also the lack of suitable flatbed wagons for carrying containers with twistlock fittings. It may take some time and we will need to be patient, but this is a first step in the right direction."

An Na pointed out that rail tank cars still dominate bulk liquid movements in China. The tank container is a late starter in China but is now rapidly growing. China Railway Corporation statistics show that the country now has nearly 600 terminals that can handle tank container business, she stated. However, these facilities generally do not have the capacity to handle dangerous goods and accompanying tank cleaning and maintenance equipment is lacking particularly in western regions, away from the main coastal development areas.

Transport demand for bulk liquid produce is increasing, though, which offers opportunities for tank containers on China Railway. As the country develops, products such as liquid food and chemicals are increasingly in demand and require logistics solutions. She stated that the average growth rate of liquid food demand is running at more than 20 percent a year, with liquid chemicals growing at 10 percent.

By the end of 2013, China Railway Tielong Intermodal was expected to have grown its fleet of special containers to more than 30,000, she continued, of which tank containers number more than 10,000, the largest fleet of its kind in China.

In this position the company well-placed to educate the market about the safe operation of tank containers and their operational advantages to customers.

From quantity to quality

The second speaker was Professor Dr Song Bing Liang, of Shanghai Maritime University. Professor Song and some of his students carried out the original market study on tank containers in 2008. "This study was the catalyst for forming @tco Asia at the end of 2010," said Lee.

Professor Song's presentation was titled "Transitional Economy and Tank Container Markets." He explained how China is shifting from a quantity driven to a quality driven business culture and that China is putting more weight on high value chemical production, which should favour tank container-sizes shipments.

He pointed out that China now accounts for one-third of the global chemical market, with foreign companies accounting for nearly 30 percent of China's chemical sector. Moreover, as China's growth shifts toward a more consumption-driven economic model, its chemical industry will likely grow quickly but also increase its production of value-added chemicals.

China's share of the global chemical sector rose to 27 percent in 2012 from around 15 percent five years previously. This growth has come at the cost of imbalances, such as self-sufficiency or even overcapacity in a number of intermediary products, such as methanol, polyvinylchloride (PVC), and normal grades of synthetic rubbers. Meanwhile, China still imports large amount of value-added chemicals, such as specialty resins and rubbers, engineering plastics and various fine chemicals.

In the next five to 10 years, the focus of the chemical industry will gradually shift from quantity-driven to quality-driven growth. The 12th Five-Year Plan, announced in 2011, is continuing the government's push to upgrade the economy away from export-driven growth that relies heavily on traditional industries and its labour-cost advantages.

This offers a unique opportunity for the chemicals sector to trade up, increasing demand for higher-grade products, he believed. However, getting products to customers remains a big challenge. The immature chemicals distribution sector is crowded with many trading companies providing logistics and access in a highly fragmented market. Some professional distribution companies providing more value-added services, such as inventory management, technical support, and repacking exist but are limited in scale.

Therefore, distribution will remain a key challenge and competition will not be limited to large state-owned monopolies, but will increasingly include privately owned, and intensely competitive, niche players.

Currently road accidents of involving tanker trailers are frequent and often results in spillages and other hazards. However, accidents involving tank containers are much rarer, so a shift from tank trailers to tank containers should be encouraged to enhance safety, he concluded.

Learning from Europe

Paul Gooch, founder and managing director of consultancy The Logical Group based in Switzerland and formerly director of logistics for Dow Chemicals in Europe, shared his experience and offered some advice on how Asia can learn from Europe.

He described the history of tank container usage and growing acceptance in European logistics and how that experience culminated in the European Responsible Care programme.

Following the annual meeting Graham Wood @tco Asia technical director and Reginald Lee, president, made a presentation to China Railways Tielong Container Logistics at that company's offices in Beijing on the safe handling of tank containers on the railways

Responsible Care has now developed into a global initiative and events such as the MoU signed last year between the Chemical Distribution Institute (CDI) and China Petroleum and Chemical Industry Federation are likely to accelerate the adoption of global standards in China.

However, like the previous speakers Gooch added that the wider use of tank containers for distribution within China was still being held back by a lack of reputable cleaning and repair depots.

@tco Asia had made significant progress in the past three years to implement its depot audit scheme across the Asia region and Gooch said it was crucially important that the industry maintains this momentum to raise standards across the sector and then maintain them at a high level.

Flaws with flexis?

Graham Wood @tco Asia's technical director outlined potential problems with the use of flexitanks for some liquid products. He stated that transporting liquids in flexitanks is a factor in the modern logistics and for some products this may be appropriate. However, he believed there are still factors which cause concern.

First, the quality of flexitanks is highly variable and the quality range extends from good to "very poor". There are also no regulatory standards, he continued, albeit the Container Owners Association efforts in terms of the Code of Practice and forthcoming PAS standard, developments which he described as welcome.

However, he said "it cannot be denied that the incidence of leakage from flexitanks far exceeds that of tank containers". Yet, despite this "some people are attempting to have 'bags' approved for some classes of hazardous cargoes," he commented. "I believe this should be resisted by all in the tank container industry (and) I would urge all concerned to contact their government representatives to advise them against (such) proposals at the upcoming UN Meetings."

Other concerns he cited the lack of a requirement to indicate on a dry container that it is filled with 'fluid in a bag'. "This is very dangerous as the surge affect can seriously affect the handling of the truck transporting it," he commented. "The surge effect can cause problems even when the driver is aware he is carrying liquid. Fortunately, tank containers are very robust and seldom leak after this type of incident. With a bag-in-box the driver is not always aware that he is carrying liquid and it is possible that the bag would leak after an accident of this type."

Demand surge for RTN

RTN Group saw a surge in demand for last year. In particular, orders for new rigid AD tankers and petroleum semi-trailers were exceptionally strong due to a combination of factors, such as Euro 6, company tax incentives and a relatively cautious replacement programme in previous years.

In anticipation of this demand for products, production has been maximised by substantial investment throughout 2013. New factory manufacturing units were installed with advanced welding and fabrication technology. Techniques, such as lean manufacturing have also been introduced to improve quality and production.

One division, Road Tankers Northern, is a multiple winner of the FPS Tank Builder of the Year. Now, in collaboration with a UK university, the company has produced a new advanced design aluminium rigid road tanker that is under evaluation by a leading fuel oil distributor.

RTN Group comprises encompasses Road Tankers Northern, Lakeland Tankers, RTN Vallely, RTN Clayton, Tank Testing UK, and Central Tankers. Managing director Frank Newell commented: "The purchase of a new tanker is only one part of what the group has to offer. We have always strived to become what I would describe as a one-stop shop. For instance, we can offer service and repair of tankers at service centres located throughout the UK and Northern Ireland, and a huge inventory of spares keeps downtime to a minimum.

"Our UKAS accredited company, Tank Testing UK, can test tankers at our service centres, or if required, with our mobile tank testing vans at the customer's premises. Insurance work, livery changes, etc, can all be accommodated in our modern approved paint and body shops, and while the tanker is off the road or the client requires more distribution capacity, we can offer short and long term rigid tanker and semi-trailer hire at very competitive rates. We even have our own VOSA approved MOT, ADR test lane."

www.rtnltd.co.uk

Poland's top Belgian!

Stokota has recently obtained the prestigious Bepolux award from Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs Didier Reynders. As a result Stokota, headquartered in Lokeren, Belgium, says it can call itself - for one year - the 'best Belgian company in Poland'.

In its motivation the jury took into consideration the specialisation of Stokota's products involving significant technological innovation, transfer of know-how to Poland and contribution to the modernisation of Polish industry. It was also important for the jury that the company invested in a region characterised by a still unrealised development potential and relatively high unemployment, well outside the main cities and regions with already substantial economic and industrial development.

It was noticed that with its contribution to Polish exports Stokota contributed to the international image of Polish industry. The employment of a larger number of higher-educated local Polish staff, and the impact of Stokota on social progress in a region with high development needs, was an additional argument for the decision of the jury.

Stokota has been active in Poland since 1996 currently with two production sites. The company is automating production so that the delivery time will be shorter as well as raising quality which it says is already "excellent".

The manufacture also sees the award as recognition of its strategy and vision. Soon Stokota will announce innovations that will make the company stronger for the next decade, it stated.

www.stokota.com

Sayers onto site 3

The past couple of years have seen the introduction of general purpose tankers, hazardous and non-hazardous waste tankers to Sayers Road Tankers' range.

The firm, now based in Northallerton, North Yorkshire, UK, was established in 1992 by owner Cliff Sayer. By 1998 the company had moved into a new purpose-built five bay workshop on the Leeming Bar Industrial Estate.

In 2003 the company added a new four bay workshop and office facility adjacent to the site, which increased space to add new-build vehicles to the already well-established hire and repair facility.

In 2007 the company continued to expand and completed an extension programme to site 2 adding six more bays to the existing four giving a total of 850 sqm of workshop facility. Currently under construction is site 3 which will house a purpose-built service and parking area for the firm's expanding hire fleet, serving industries including food, milk, acid, general chemical and waste.

This along with the water, food and milk tankers means Sayers can offer a wide range of services to the liquid tanker market including buying and selling of all types of second hand rigid tankers and articulated trailers, the company says.

www.sayerstankers.co.uk

Crossland sees upturn

UK's manufacturer Crossland Tankers says the recent expansion of its Northern Ireland site providing an additional 30,000 sq ft of production capacity has been operating at full capacity since its completion.

During 2013 Crossland saw turnover rise by more than 10 percent with increased activity across the product range, indicating an up-turn in UK industry in general.

"We have a strong order book for the future thanks to support from our regular customers and new relationships that are continually being forged," said Bryn Ives, business development manager. "We continue to develop new products to add to our range and have phased expansion plans for the future."

Crossland says the company prides itself on delivering a bespoke product to customers' specification and on time. The company produces rigid and trailer tankers for the all types of bulk liquids. The current product range includes ADR chemical, heavy fuel oil, bitumen, foodstuffs, milk, potable water, vacuum, waste, jet/vac combination/recycler and fire service tankers.

Tankers are manufactured to comply fully with ADR and PED regulations, and ISO accredited quality management standards. Now tankers are supplied with European Whole Vehicle Type Approval, registered, ex-works.

www.crosslandtankers.com


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Tanker tracking for ND

Norbert Dentressangle is investing in an advanced Isotrak vehicle tracking and driving style management system for its UK tanker distribution operations.

The company says the system will help ensure its reputation for safe deliveries.

The investment will drive and support Norbert Dentressangle's in-house health and safety, and performance improvement programmes, which are essential for vehicles transporting high consequence dangerous goods. The tracking system is already in use with other 'ND' businesses in the UK and has proved highly beneficial.

The company will use vehicle tracking and live vehicle diagnostics to track and manage its entire fleet, which carries liquid chemicals, bulk gas, packed cylinder and dry bulk powders.

With 120 vehicles already using the system at Norbert Dentressangle Tankers operated on behalf of a major customer, the new rollout will extend the total number of vehicles monitored to 260, operating from 31 different sites across the UK and delivering products for a range of multinational companies.

"The ability to track our fleet accurately and manage safe driving styles is a key reason for investing in the advanced solution. The system is based on standard Isotrak vehicle tracking with the contactless CANBus module; this will show us how vehicles are being driven so that we can monitor such things as harsh braking and acceleration. The driving style management functionality will be adapted to suit our needs and the automated reporting and its output will be tailored too," said Danny Woodiwiss, general manager for fuel and chemical operations at Norbert Dentressangle Tankers.

"As part of our Safe Driving Programme, all of our drivers receive an annual on-road assessment by a qualified driver trainer. The tracking system will support the programme, helping to pinpoint specific coaching needs to maximise performance of our drivers and fleet. We'll have accurate data that we can use to develop and prescribe training to suit each driver."

The company runs a specialist tanker fleet for distributing fuel, solid and liquid chemicals, gases, plastics and foodstuffs and has more than 35-years' experience of working with the world's largest chemical companies.

www.norbert-dentressangle.co.uk

LNG-diesel combo for Mattheeuws

Investing in a greener future Belgian tanker haulier Eric Mattheeuws Transport has ordered 25 Volvo FM LNG-diesel trucks. The vehicles are powered with LNG in combination with diesel and emit 15 percent less CO2 compared with a conventional diesel engine.

In fact at 25 vehicles, Volvo says this is largest order so far for such environmentally-friendly vehicles in Belgium. Owner of the company Eric Mattheeuws said: "With this order, we are resolutely setting a course for the future. These vehicles are efficient, have low fuel consumption and are better for the environment."

Completion of the order followed a trial period between Volvo and Mattheeuws. A first vehicle was delivered in spring 2013 from Sweden to Belgium so that the haulier could test under real operating conditions. The initial results were encouraging, and after further trials the full order for 25 units was placed followed in the autumn. All the vehicles are equipped with a 460hp, 13L engine, Globetrotter cab, an I-Shift automatic transmission and a 'Fuel Economy' package. Some tractors will be dedicated to tank transport, and others for tipper truck and bulk materials trucks.

To keep the vehicles supplied with LNG Romac Fuels NV, which is also owned by the Mattheeuws family, is to build, a service station in conjunction with energy trader Fluxys. This will be incorporated into the group's own truckstop site at Veurne. Apart from supplying Mattheeuws's own vehicles, other trucks will also be able to refuel with LNG.

Various studies have shown that the reliability of LNG-diesel technology. Road capacities are identical to those of a conventional diesel vehicle. Driving on the gas takes place fully automatically without driver intervention, and when the gas supply is exhausted, the system automatically switches to diesel, with the driver being informed by a warning light on the control panel.

www.mattheeuws.com

Williams looks forward

WTS (Williams Tanker Services) says 2013 was a great year for the Leeds, UK-based tanker manufacturer. The firm developed its technical team and completed numerous large scale bespoke projects for major international customers.

There was a return to strong unit sales after the dip of the recession and, combined with its diversification of engineering projects, Williams is looking forward to a successful 2014.

Growth has exceeded targets due to a strong and responsive business plan led by the senior management team. This has included staffing as the company expanded its mobile coverage for testing and support around the UK and also overseas.

Williams is now in its third decade of involvement with the road tanker industry. It started out providing electrical and small engineering work but today is a major UK tank and trailer supplier for brand names such as CIMC BURG, LAG, OMEPS, Roper and new franchise partner RTI.

WTS products are supported within the UK by WTS and throughout Europe by the CIMC BURG Group, OMEPS and RTI service network.

www.williamsts.com

Talke picks up a Hammer

The chemicals logistics expert takes over Luxembourg Hammer Logistik A.G.

TALKE adds about 50 silo transport units to its capacity

Talke Group has taken over Luxembourg-based Hammer Logistik AG. The acquisition has expanded the Talke's European dry bulk network to a total of 1,200 silo vehicles and containers.

The vehicle fleet, infrastructure and administrative functions in Luxemburg will remain there and will be integrated into Talke as a stand-alone location. "We are very pleased to take on board such an experienced team. The new location in Luxemburg helps us strengthen our presence in the European market as a provider of dry bulk transport services and as one of the leading logistics service providers for the chemical industry," group managing director Alfred Talke explained.

"Building additional European capacity is our response to our customers' increasing internationalisation, which is reflected in the fact that the two largest users of our Luxembourg silo fleet are already customers of the group."

Hammer Logistik was previously a subsidiary of Europaverkehre Hammer & Co GmbH, of Aachen, Germany, whose operations are not affected by the acquisition.

www.talke.com

Honeywell on the buses

Honeywell Enraf has been selected by Transport for London to provide its Fusion4 technology to allow biofuels used in London buses to be blended directly at London bus depots, rather than the previous method of mixing with standard diesel at refineries in Scotland and transported to the capital. The solution is currently being piloted at the Barking bus depot.

The new blending capability will reduce the number of fuel delivery vehicles needed to supply biodiesel to London buses. Road vehicles are estimated to account for about 80 percent of transport-related CO2 emissions in London, and with more than 2 billion passenger journeys a year, London's bus network is one of the busiest in the world.

"Using Honeywell's fuel blending technology, Transport for London will not only see a reduction in fuel delivery costs, but will be able to vary, as needed, the precise mix of biodiesel for its buses," said Richard Thompson, general manager, Honeywell Enraf. "This mix is important because it allows the bus operator to maximise the amount of greenhouse gases saved without compromising performance."

The Barking depot took delivery in September of Honeywell Enraf's Fusion4 Microblender system; a pre-assembled, skid-mounted system for blending including a storage tank that will be delivered to the site ready to use. With the Fusion4 blending controller, operators at the depot can easily ensure an accurate mix through intuitive icon driven menus and running screens.

Fusion4 MicroBlender claimed benefits include: rapid start-up, zero downtime firmware upgrades, multiple languages, calibration wizard, diagnostics dashboard, and flexible interfacing.

Silo compressors for dry bulk

For more than 60 years GHH Rand has manufactured rotary screw compressors for road haulage businesses engaged in dry bulk discharge. As a specialist in oil-free compressors, GHH Rand has unveiled a new generation of direct driven compressor solutions.

The compact design of the CS580 Light and CS750 Light compressors allows for flexibility of installation on most European tractor units (including Euro 6) used in the silo industry for transporting of dry bulk products. "The clever driveline design configuration reduces the drive shaft angle," says Simon Eardley, product portfolio manager tanker solutions. "Hence fast, efficient and well-engineered installations can be achieved. In addition its light weight reduces the impact of Euro 6 related weight additions."

The newly-developed SILU oil-free screw compressor within the CS580/CS750 Light offers significant customer benefits, the company claims. These include a compact, self-contained airend, a new technology discharge silencer and an optimised rotor profile offering low frequency, low noise operation with corrosion-free rotors (which are food industry compliant). The CS580 has been developed for dense phase conveying of dry bulk powders and the CS750 for medium to lean phase like granules. GHH Rand also has available, specifically for the dry bulk food transport market, a Silol FG food grade lubricant which meets the NSF H1 compliance regulation.

www.ghhrand.com

Emerson launches 12V fork

Emerson's Rosemount 2120 12V dc vibrating fork level switch is ideally suited to automated level monitoring and overspill protection of tanks in remote locations

Emerson Process Management's has launched a 12V dc DPDT relay version of its Rosemount 2120 vibrating fork level switch for automated level monitoring and overspill protection of tanks or vessels in remote locations. The new switch is the first low power switch to provide a built-in relay output - eliminating the need for a separate switching relay.

The 12V switch is ideally suited to installations where there is no access to normal 24V power supplies and the only power available is from batteries or solar charged systems. The switch has all the features of the standard versions, including built-in instrument health/self-checking diagnostics, but is uniquely designed for use in 12V low power circuits.

To improve safety and efficiency, there is an increasing need for automated level monitoring technology to provide overspill protection on tanks and vessels. These installations are often in remote locations where there is no access to normal power supplies. Installing power cabling is often difficult and costly so batteries and solar power provide a convenient and cost effective alternative.

Based on vibrating short fork technology, the 12V 2120 is suitable for virtually all liquid applications and is unaffected by flow, turbulence, bubbles, foam, vibration, or product variations. The unique `Fast Drip' fork design provides quicker and more reliable detection, especially in high density liquids. Electronic self-checking and condition monitoring with Heartbeat LED, gives status and health information on the fork and sensor.

Analysing biodiesel blend

Wilks' new InfraCal 2 Analyzer for biodiesel in diesel measurements offers additional features to the already established InfraCal Biodiesel Blend Analyzer.

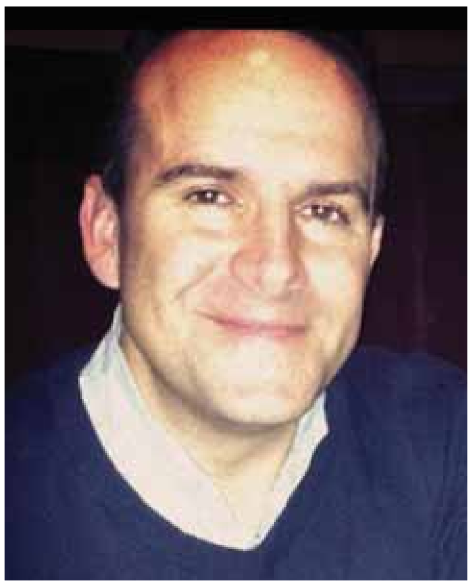
These features include better repeatability, multiple calibrations, unlimited data storage, optional internal battery pack, touch screen display, and password protection for instrument settings.

The InfraCal 2 incorporates new electronics providing a better signal to noise ratio that improves the stability and repeatability. The calibration scheme makes it easier to get an accurate zero which contributes to more repeatable readings. The analyser's multiple calibration capability enables users to have calibrations for numerous types of diesel fuel, making measurements even more accurate on different feedstocks.

The InfraCal 2 Analyzer provides a virtually unlimited amount of internal data storage. For users testing fuels at different locations or at a remote loading rack, data can periodically be transferred serially or via a flash drive. The internal battery pack will last up to 12 hours bringing portability to a new level and eliminating the need to ship samples to a laboratory and wait for results.

The touch screen of the InfraCal 2 allows for features such as password protected calibrations and instrument settings, as well as tagging each measurement with analyst, location and date/time information.

www.wilksir.com



A quick word with...

Darren Sabino, EMCO Wheaton

Darren Sabino, General Manager of Americas, EMCO Wheaton

How did Emco Wheaton become the company it is today?
Emco Wheaton is a brand that has been around for over 100 years. Its reputation in many markets has been staked on the quality and reliability of the products that it has developed – core technologies such as the D2000 swivel, Dry-Break couplings and the Posi/Lock Fueling system. Adding brands such as TODO has only served to reinforce the value customers can expect from our products and services. We have been extremely fortunate to have an outstanding network of partners – manufacturer's reps, agents and distributors in over 110 countries worldwide who are loyal to the brand. Emco Wheaton also works very hard to recruit employees that are interested and engaged in our story and the products we manufacture.

Emco Wheaton specialises in a number of market segments. Could you briefly explain the most significant?
That has varied over time but our commitment to providing solutions for loading and unloading the latest most important "new" fluids – from ethanol in the last decade to urea and shale-related gas and crude oil in current times. That said, the organisation built its knowledge base on the back of the petro-chemical distribution network globally.

Which geographic areas do you operate in?
Emco Wheaton is truly a global brand with factories in Margate, UK; Kirchhain, Germany; Houston, Texas and Oakville, Ontario, Canada; and sales and trading offices in many other countries including France and China. The Emco Wheaton Canada business that focuses on spill free fluid transfer and fuelling has responsibility for the Americas as a whole. Our sales people often remind us that if you are wearing a shirt with the Emco Wheaton name, you can easily walk into virtually any petroleum or petrochemical facility in the world on the strength of the brand alone.

Can you outline the most significant changes in fluid transfer technology in recent years?
There has been recognition by end users that the use of breakaway and dry disconnect technology not only improves safety in their plants but through their myriad of ancillary benefits, generate an economic payback for the owners of the equipment. In essence, clients today do not work to failure mode; they want reliable products that are serviced by the supplier on a regular basis thus negating risk to the operator, the environment and the clients' assets.

Can you also outline the most significant changes in your customers' market segments, eg, regulation-driven, sectoral dynamics, etc?
Undoubtedly, safety for the operator, the plant and the environment has been driven by legislation as well as by individual awareness. There is a payback on a zero incident safety record, for the client's brand and for their reputation in their market. Another change we have seen in our markets is the involvement of EPCs in midstream projects – driving specifications on loading and unloading systems. This has significantly raised the non-product requirements of orders – more hold points, testing, inspection and documentation. This development has also led to more interest in and demand for spill-free technology. The demand for Dry-Break couplings for all fluids has risen and with our Emco Wheaton and TODO brands, we are there to respond to that challenge.

What are the main advantages of your products?
Emco Wheaton and TODO-Matic both incorporate Dry-Break technology. There has always been a focus within these companies on having the lowest possible loss of fluid on disconnect. Not all dry disconnect products are made equally and many allow for a surprising amount of liquid to be trapped and released at disconnect. This is obviously the exact opposite of what operators expect. Between the Emco Wheaton and TODO brands, we are also able to offer a wide range of sizes, materials and pressure ratings so that we can supply solutions for an incredibly wide range of fluids.

What is the company's main focus in terms of research and development?
We are focused on developing products that solve our customers' greatest challenges. In this regard, we are always looking to expand our range of Dry-Break and breakaway technologies and to supply complete solutions for loading and unloading fluids safely. Operator safety is at the top of our list in all products we design and manufacture. In the coming months, you will see us launch a number of new products that are both class leading in terms of leakage and flow, but also provide ease of service "built-in".

How do you see Emco Wheaton moving forward in the next few years?
I think it is safe to say that our intention is to continue to drive innovation in our market segments. We need the insight and feedback that we get from speaking directly to the people that rely on our products to do their jobs. It is at this level that we get the information needed to push forward our innovation agenda. The worst thing any company can do is to develop new products in a box. Putting the staff in place to be able to collect that customer feedback and convert it into value-added solutions is how Emco Wheaton will continue to separate itself from the pack.

Poland for Perolo

Perolo has opened a new office in Poland's capital Warsaw.
The French company is looking to expand its international distribution and says the new office reflects the company's commitment to the market in Central Europe. The Polish office will also be in charge of neighbouring countries.

"Thanks to its geographic position, Poland is at the crossroads of several major communication routes in Europe," said a Perolo statement. "Being a link between east and west, it is today a location that will help our existing after sales service and distribution."

Perolo has witnessed the growth potential of Eastern Europe and decided to open the new office in Poland reflecting that it has emerged as a regional economic leader.

Single business unit

Fluid handling solutions specialist OPW is consolidating OPW Fueling Components EMEA and KPS into a single business unit. The Dover Group company says this will help better serve customers in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. The newly combined company will be called OPW EMEA and will represent all retail fuelling, tank gauges, KPS, and Fibrelite product lines. OPW EMEA will be headquartered in Kungsör, Sweden at the KPS facility.

"The newly combined company will have significantly enhanced sales coverage, technical support, and manufacturing capabilities to offer higher levels of service to our customers in these regions," stated David Crouse, president of OPW. Lars Selling has been named managing director of the new OPW EMEA. Until the OPW acquisition of KPS in October 2013, he was the CEO of KPS.

Natural weathering testing

The availability of direct sun for around 10 hours a day makes Silvassa a perfect test site

Indian FIBC manufacturer Emmbi Industries Limited has gone a step further in the UV testing of its products. Emmbi has come up with a state-of-the-art natural testing site located at its Silvassa Plant.

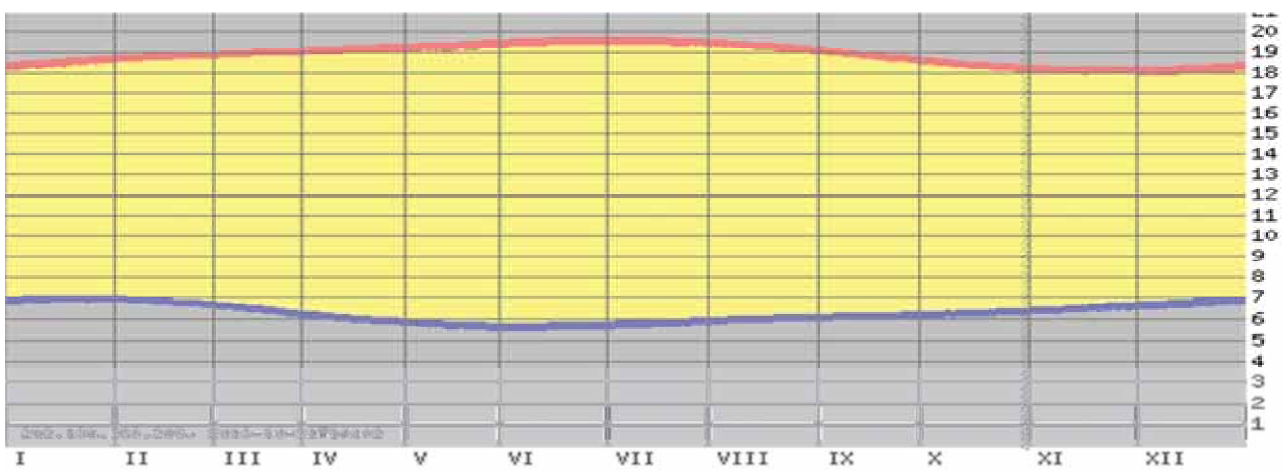
Conventionally, most FIBC producers depend on accelerated UV testing in various testing chambers. These chambers use xenon ark lamps, of which the most commonly used are UV A 340 or 351 and UV B 313 lamps. These generate the UV light at typical irradiance ranging up to 0.49W/sqm/nm with the wavelength ranging between 310nm and 340nm.

However, this artificial generation can only replicate part of the natural solar UV spectrum; it is not as exact as natural sunlight. An important aspect is the performance of the test object while under the stress of everyday use as the testing chambers have no ability to accommodate filled FIBCs.

Temperature and Precipitation

Variable	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Temperature, IN °C	23	33	35	38	40	38	35	30	28	34	28	25
Wind speed, m/s	2.80	3.20	3.26	3.90	4.33	4.50	4.45	4.12	3.02	2.45	2.67	2.23
Precipitation, mm	0	0	0	5	15	355	900	600	350	45	10	0
Wet days, d	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	8.8	17.7	16.6	8.5	1.8	1.1	0.2

Sunlight Availability Data at Emmbi Test Site



Night (No Sunlight) Early Morning (No Direct Sunlight) Day (Bright Sunlight) Evening (No Direct Sunlight)

Testing with filled product

Emmbi has observed that the performance of a UV stabiliser also depends on the type material for which the FIBC is being used. Even vapour in the vicinity of the filled FIBC determines the performance of the product. The company has plans to create vapour testing chambers in the near future.

It is not possible to monitor these types of situation with the accelerated weathering equipment. Rather Emmbi has created a space for six FIBCs which is used for testing various types of material. Tests in progress are being conducted on chemical fertiliser, calcium carbonate, recycled polyethylene, bentonite, sand and common salt. These six materials represent different chemical structures and chemical polarities, as well as being some of the most commonly filled materials in FIBCs.

The availability of direct sun for around 10 hours a day makes Silvassa a perfect test site in the northern hemisphere. Located in the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, in northwest India, this part of the world enjoys maximum luminous intensity of visible light throughout the year. With dense forest in the surrounding area there are almost 90 days of direct precipitation at the site, and in addition, the Arabian Sea coast is just 30km away.

Colour fastness test

Most of the colour pigments also react able to the heat and direct exposure to the sunlight. With the help of the natural testing site Emmbi is also studying the behaviour of different polymers.

Sunlight availability

The graphic shows data on sunlight availability at the new Emmbi test site.

Solar energy and surface meteorology

From the table it can also be observed that there are substantially high temperatures across the year and also that precipitation spreads across more than five months. This provides abundant opportunities to test samples against the weather.

Emmbi will be testing the samples on a monthly basis. The results will be analysed at regular intervals and the company will be glad to answer queries from prospective customers.

A choice of key solutions

Turkish FIBC manufacturer Isbir has increased capacity giving it one of the largest production facilities anywhere under one roof, the company says.

Of particular interest is the extended capability to produce FIBCs outside standard specifications. CEO and general manager Metin Gultepe says that the state-of-the art production facilities are capable of manufacturing 15 million units a year for key solutions.

Following recent investments and €35 million capital increase, Isbir has opened special purpose manufacturing centres for more sophisticated 'big bag' needs, and is extending its product portfolio with FIBCs made in an internationally accredited clean-room production facility.

The architecture and infrastructure of the clean room has been set according to ISO standards, and approved by independent auditors, to fulfil the requirements of ISO 14644 and ISO 8. Here, FIBCs are manufactured for the high purity needs of the pharmaceutical, food, chemical and engineering plastic industries, which require the highest attention to hygiene. Production conditions require compliance to higher standards than the internationally-accepted GMP regulations.

Isbir's production facility, with covered area of 180,000 sqm, fulfils the requirements of ISO 22000 and AIB. Together with the clean room, customer food safety requirements are provided.

It has been stated by company officials that, besides standard FIBC models used all over the world, the product portfolio extends to flame retardant fabric, aluminium and conductive aluminium liner production, Gambo production, TYPE-D permanent antistatic and units liquids.

Company officials also point out that an option of just 12 days production eliminates the need to keep stocks for many customers and so helps them to keep down costs. In addition to this, Isbir has agreements with a number of warehouses across the Europe for storage, which enables delivery within 24 hours.

Point of no return

After several years of design and testing, the Milford Qubit UN IBC received its accreditation certificate in December 2013.

Claimed by the manufacturer as a 'game changer' for hazardous liquid logistics, the Milford folding IBC has a number of benefits over traditional one trip units.

With the use of an approved internal liner to hold the contents, once the IBC has been emptied the liner can simply be disposed of. This option removes the added expense of cleaning, and also the need to transport the IBC to a cleaning plant, lowering the carbon footprint.

Due to the Qubit UN's ability to fold, once emptied it can simply be folded and stacked in preparation for the return journey. In the equivalent space that two rigid units would occupy on a truck, the Qubit UN can be stacked six high, providing return transport benefits and reduced storage space.

The Qubit UN has also been designed with a true 1,200 x 1,000 mm footprint so is compatible with most materials handling equipment.

Milford points out that the movement of hazardous liquids has traditionally been an expensive operation. Moving product over long distances in many cases makes the return of the IBC either too costly or involves complex washing making it economically unviable to return them when they have only completed a single trip.

Over many years the hazardous goods industry has been looking at alternatives to traditional one trip units. Either rigid returnable units, usually made from expensive metals, or, where the quantity of product shipped warrants it, using tankers. But both of these solutions have additional weight to consider.

With the Qubit UN, however, once the IBC has been emptied the liner can simply be disposed of. This option removes the added expense of both cleaning and transporting the IBC to a cleaning plant, resulting in a reduced carbon footprint.

RFID-driven batching

A fully-integrated bulk material handling system from National Bulk Equipment (NBE), uses RFID-driven process communications to automate simultaneous batching of multiple and varied chemical mixtures.

This batching can be performed during a single processing operation. The process begins when an empty tote container is introduced to the system. RFID recognises the container and communicates to the system the specific batch recipe assigned to that unit. The primary ingredient is dispensed from one of four surge hoppers through a horizontal screw conveyor into the tote.

As the first tote advances to its next batching location, a second enters the system and is recognised by RFID for processing. Each tote advances to one, or both, of two, subsequent batching stations where any one, or a combination of four secondary ingredients can be added based on the RFID recognition of the tote.

Each secondary ingredient batching station consists of four bulk bag unloaders, each with integrated material conditioning to ensure consistent material supply is sent to a station-specific gravimetric feeder that provides accurate and repeatable secondary ingredient supply into the tote.

NBE claims the system can increase batching throughput by 80 percent and also eliminate potentially harmful repetitive motions by operators.

Talke increases Zwijndrecht filling capacity

The first Schütz production plant in Indonesia is under construction on a 7,000 sqm site

The Talke Group has put an additional filling plant for hazardous goods into operation at its site in Zwijndrecht. The facility can be used to fill around 80,000 tons of liquid chemicals each year, meaning the company has in fact tripled its capacity at the Belgian site.

"Having invested €1.6 million, we are now able to offer our clients in the region far greater filling capacity for dangerous goods, even at short notice," explained group managing director Alfred Talke.

The first order, for the filling of more than 32,000 tons of liquid chemicals into drums and IBCs each year, was secured back-end of November – before the facility had even gone into operation. "In both the Netherlands and Belgium we are seeing increasing demand from chemicals companies seeking filling capacities for hazardous goods. The new facility provides us with just what we need for this," Talke continued.

When it comes to safety, the plant sets new standards, the company maintains. The new drumming line has a semi-closed filling station with continuous extraction allowing operators to work in the open even when filling toxic chemicals instead of wearing personal protection. Another advantage is the programming of 256 filling programmes in the system which supports product-specific, safe handling of the filling plant.

The platform also has a telescopic conveyor for unloading the drums, reducing the need for using forklifts. A buffer section is used for interim storage of the drums and further transport to the fully automatic drumming line. This machine can open, fill, reseal and label up to 100 steel or plastic drums per hour. What's more, IBCs or other containers can be filled simultaneously out of the same bulk tank. The Feige 84 Turbo system gets top marks too for its short changeover time and PLC control technology.

Expanding in Oz

Schütz Australia provides the continent and neighbouring New Zealand with the production and reconditioning of the Germany-headquartered groups IBCs, F1 plastic drums and drums for the agricultural chemical industry with a volume of 110 litres.

The addition to the Schütz plant in Melbourne of a neighbouring plot of land purchased last September complete with buildings has opened up new possibilities for the company down under.

A modern administration building now serves as the new seat of the finance, administration, SHEQ, sales and purchasing departments. It is from here that all orders will now be centrally processed by the customer care department and the activities of two other sites, in Fremantle and Brisbane, will be co-ordinated.

The extra land with its existing buildings offers new space for production and storage of IBCs and drums. Indeed, a new production line for the reconditioning of IBCs has already gone into operation there.

Given its total area of some 8 million sq km and population density of three inhabitants per sq km, the fifth continent poses a great logistical challenge. To meet this Schütz has more than 80 haulage companies delivering and collecting its products in every region of the country. That way, the company says it can ensure shorter transport routes, lower costs and reduced carbon emissions.

Late last year Schütz opened its own production plant in Indonesia in addition to its existing sales operation there. Schütz has been operating in Indonesia since 2005, until now with its own sales organisation in Jakarta, which is overseen by Schütz Malaysia. Now, 50 km east of the capital, the first Schütz production plant in Indonesia is under construction on a 7,000 sqm site. On its completion, the plant will occupy 3,500 sqm and commence operations with the production of IBCs.

Chemical crackers

Europe isn't finished yet

For an industry characterised by heavy capital investment and dominated by the economics of geography, the chemical industry is proving to be somewhat volatile. In the space of just a few years the prospects for both demand and supply have changed several times.

This uncertainty appears set to continue. However, a new report from consultants Transport Intelligence says that for the chemical logistics sector this uncertainty may be an opportunity.

Just a couple of years ago it appeared that the states of the Middle East – particularly Saudi Arabia but also the UAE, Qatar and Kuwait – were developing a decisive advantage in chemical production. Cheap natural gas facilitated access to cheap and efficient ethane feedstock giving Middle-Eastern producers a competitive advantage over European and North American based production. Middle-Eastern state-owned chemical operations invested heavily in new up-stream bulk petrochemical production capacity.

This was ideally placed for export both to the growing markets of China and the established markets of Europe and North America and the implications of this development for logistics provision was substantial.

European 'land-based' logistics service providers began to open new bulk storage, transport and terminal operations in the Middle East. In addition the already dynamic tank container market began to adapt to a new source of product. The implication was that surpluses from the Middle East would be shipped both east and west.

Yet, the report maintains that this scenario has not yet been fully realised. Europe still runs a substantial surplus and despite the appetite of China, much of the Middle East suffers from over-capacity. Part of the reason for this is the flatness in demand from Europe; however, another element is the emergence of shale gas production in the US. While current production from shale gas is modest, its ability to supply existing US production with cheap feedstock and to trigger the building of new production capacity in the US is real.

The implication for logistics providers may well be that the US, and possibly Canada, becomes a significant exporter of chemical product to global markets including China. This would imply a large change in the nature of logistics provision in North America.

For example, the product supply chain could be faced with a choice between an intermodal route from the mid-west or even Virginia to the west coast (the inverse of the movement of box containers) or the more traditional maritime routes out of east coast and Gulf of Mexico ports. In addition it would suggest that the infrastructure serving markets within the US may well need to develop further.

Another complication is the potential of shale gas to change the economics in other production locations. Parts of Europe and China are likely to have their own shale gas resources and this may well offer similar benefits to chemical production in these economies. In the time-scale of investment in large chemical projects this could inject substantial uncertainty.

In the meantime what is certainly the case is that China has become an extraordinarily large market. It has a growing production capability within the country, but this is not enough to meet its own demand. Consequently, it has become a major importer of both up-stream and downstream chemical products.

This has triggered growth in demand for maritime logistics resources, in particular, with tank containers being a particularly good example, but bulk storage and chemical tankers being other cases of sectors that have benefitted from greater trade between regions.

The report provides logistics market sizing estimates by region as well as forecasts, allowing readers to identify regions with differing growth prospects.

It examines significant trends which are affecting investment in the industry and the performance of companies that have developed the most successful operations.

The study includes profiles of some of the largest chemical manufacturers and distributors examining how they organise their supply chains and their relationship with their logistics service providers.

Details of the report - Global Chemical Logistics 2013 - and how to obtain it can be found at **www.transportintelligence.com/market-reports**

Tank container operators began to adapt to new sources of product in the Middle East

Is Europe ready for the monster train?

Super-long freight trains are relatively common on continental landmasses. For example, in America BNSF tested a container train three years ago that was 3.5 miles (5.5km) long. Similar lengths can be found in Australia and even some parts of Africa.

Europe's freight trains remain titchy by comparison. EU and national regulations generally impose a maximum length of just 750m, and in practice most container trains, for example, are around 650m in length; all this in one of the world's largest consumer markets where lack of space dictates using every bit of land most effectively.

Trials have been run in Germany and the Netherlands for trains of 1,000m. Now France's state-owned giant Fret SNCF has tested Europe's longest-ever freight train.

Measuring almost 1,500m in length, the trial consisted of joining two 750m long trains over a 240km stretch between a marshalling yard at Sibelin, near Lyon and the southern city of Nîmes.

The 'double' train was carrying swap bodies on behalf of Frankfurt-based intermodal carrier Kombiverkehr between Spain and Germany.

"The technical prowess which lengthening trains represents, will, in time, allow rail companies to capture traffic without applying for extra train slots," Fret SNCF said. "The double trains will also enable operators to achieve important productivity gains for all types of traffic."

The test took place within the framework of the European Union's Marathon research and development programme, and was designed to validate the technical feasibility of the double train ahead of a possible commercial launch in 2016.

"In taking this innovative approach, we are looking to strengthen the competitiveness of rail freight and render it more attractive to French and European shippers," added Fret SNCF's director Sylvie Charles.

Technically, the project is based on a remote control system which makes it possible to link the head locomotive manned by a driver with the (driverless) locomotive situated in the middle of the train. A double train can transport up to 70 wagons.

"We are working with RFF (France's rail network manager) to put these double trains into service on major European freight corridors in the next two years," said Charles.

Busy Brenntag opens up opportunities

It's been a very busy time of late for global chemical distribution specialist Brenntag.

The Brenntag Europe division and Lucobit are expanding their co-operation in the polymer business. An extension of the current co-operation with Lucobit for the distribution of polymers into the wire and cable industry in France has been signed, and it now covers France, Spain and Poland.

The portfolio covers high-quality specialty polymers based on flexible polyolefins. The flexible polymers with the brand names Lucofin and Lucobit have a broad range of applications like wire and cable, compounding, extrusion coating and blown cast films.

Brenntag has opened a new specialised rubber service facility in Orbassano (Turin), Italy. In an international expanding rubber industry, the new site should enable Brenntag to service customers not only throughout Europe but on a global level. The site covers an area of 12,000 sqm with a warehouse, laboratory, new office and blending and packaging installations.

Karsten Beckmann, CEO Brenntag Europe, Middle East and Africa, said: "The new site is one further step in our specialties strategy. This investment demonstrates once more Brenntag's strong industry dedication in the rubber market. This will be further fuelled by the establishment of a pan-European business unit rubber in the first quarter of this year."

The equipment allows Brenntag to cover the whole process for the treatment of raw materials in the rubber industry: from handling rubber liquid and solid additives, to chemical analysis in the laboratory and storing up to almost 4,000 pallets in different rooms depending on the storage conditions required by the materials. Special features of the new operations are pre-packs, weighed and filled to customer requirements and all ingredients for a certain formulation, and then combined into a bag-in-bag. The customer can directly process this bag-in-bag without having to unpack it. The plastic bags disperse over the course of the mixing, making the production process for the customers more efficient and safer.

Another activity that has seen a significant increase in terms of capacity is the production of 'dry liquids', such as liquid additives absorbed on inert carriers to provide better and safer handling.

In Taiwan the company has opened a new service and application centre in Shenkeng, close to its existing office in Taipei. The new facility includes application laboratories for food & beverage and personal care. In addition, it offers space for storage and handling of products as well as a fragrance library and small offices.

"The service and application centre offers us the possibility to do testing, mixing and blending as well as storing and repackaging of different ingredients. Furthermore, this new investment shows our commitment to the region and the aim to develop the business and services for our customers and suppliers further," commented Flemming Soederquist, managing director Brenntag Taiwan.

The facility is the newest addition to a network of application laboratories in Asia Pacific. Last year, a new food & beverage laboratory in Melbourne, Australia was completed.

In December, the group signed today an agreement to acquire a part of the operational business of Kemira Water Denmark A/S. Under the agreement Brenntag takes over the distribution of caustic soda, sulphuric and hydrochloric acids, solvents and packed coagulants that were previously directly distributed by Kemira and will operate the business from its existing facilities in Vejle, Kalundborg, Høsten and a new location in Copenhagen Harbour.

Frank Wegener, president of Kemira's Municipal & Industrial division said the divestment is in line with Kemira's more focused strategy. "The divested business is not a focus area of Municipal & Industrial and the transaction will have a positive impact on the EBIT margin. With Brenntag as our partner, Denmark will remain an important market for our water treatment solutions," he said.

In 2012 the acquired business generated total sales of approximately €15 million and the parties have agreed not to disclose further financial information.

US growth for VTG

VTG has expanded its US wagon fleet, adding some 350 jumbo covered hoppers for dried distillers' grains (DDG), acquired by its US subsidiary VTG Rail. The wagons have an average age of six years.

"This acquisition is an important step on the way to rejuvenating and diversifying our US fleet," explained Dr Heiko Fischer, CEO of VTG. "Furthermore, with this purchase, we are gaining an important new customer that requires the wagons for product distribution both in and beyond the U.S.".

VTG entered the North American market in 2008 with the acquisition of Texas Railcar Leasing Company and its fleet of 1,000 wagons. In the two years that followed, the company doubled the number of wagons with further acquisitions. In 2011, VTG Rail once again doubled the size of its fleet by adding another 2,400 wagons with its acquisition of the fleet owned by SC Rail Leasing America. VTG Rail now operates in the North American market with a fleet of more than 4,000 wagons.

EPCA 2013 – supply chain movers

EPCA 2013 included a half-day session devoted to Global Leadership and Chemical Supply Chains.

Raf Bemelmans, chairman of the EPCA Supply Chain Programme Committee, and director supply chain, polymers Europe, at SABIC, introduced EPCA's newly published report, Sustainable Chemical Supply and Logistics Chains – The Path Forward.

He noted that ours is a world of complexity, uncertainty, and disruptions, where we face events and developments we are unable to influence. "However," he continued, "there are some things that we can influence, and one of them is the supply chain in our industry and our companies. The intelligence on how that works is depicted in this report. It does not contain issues. It contains solutions: over 30 case studies of shared knowledge on how to make your supply chain better."

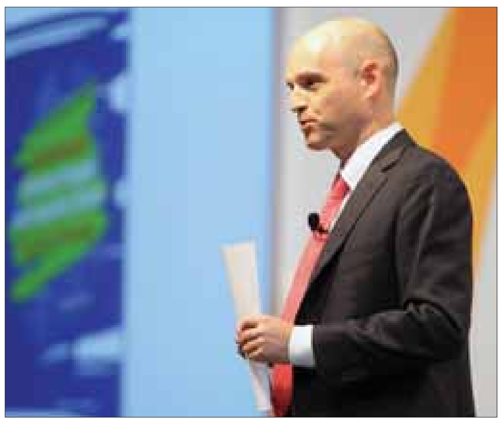
Bemelmans explained that the report is the culmination of widespread discussions and intensive workshops focusing on resilience, robustness, technology, and co-operation.

Over two years, more than 50 people from producers, logistics service providers, consultants, academia, and from EPCA and CEFIC, had participated in three parallel working groups to identify solutions.

With shale gas and advantaged feedstock outside Europe, the supply chain is becoming more global, more complex, with more transition points, Bemelmans said. "It must also become cheaper and more sustainable. In the face of these challenges, one-size-fits-all strategies no longer provide the right approach, so alternatives are required." For this reason, Bemelmans said the new report provides a theoretical framework to explain how things work, and offers 30 case studies – mostly with named companies – to use as guides and ideas for improvement.

Many of the case studies are about 'collaboration'. "But this report doesn't just talk about collaboration, it demonstrates collaboration." Respecting competition law, he said pro-competitive collaboration is now being recognised by the European Commission as a means of working together for the benefit of customers, for enhanced sustainability, and improved profitability.

"There are times when you can share data - vertically, with service providers, and also horizontally with competitors. You may do this primarily for reasons of efficiency or profitability. But it is likely that you will also achieve benefits for people and planet. Do not forget Responsible Care, it's how our industry is collaborating and contributing to the enhancement of Europe's sustainability. It's about people, planet and profit."



Raf Bemelmans – EPCA's new supply chain report "does not contain issues, it contains solutions"

SWOT

Paul Lord, research director with consultancy Gartner discussed chemical industry supply chain strengths and opportunities and routes to achieving supply chain excellence.

He saw four primary areas of opportunity for chemicals: demand management; supply chain manufacturing integration; product life cycle and complexity management; and in governance, technical enablement and performance management.

Key to demand management is understanding how customers define value, and then using those insights to align supply networks and product portfolios, thereby moving into a market-driven rather than a sales-driven approach, Lord added. There is a similar challenge and opportunity in integrating supply chain with manufacturing. In most companies, supply chain and manufacturing are separate organisations, with attendant disconnects between their operating plans. These occur because supply chain tends to operate on ERP systems, and look at information in a different way to manufacturing, and also because they may be incentivised and measured differently. Therefore some alignment and integration is required to bring supply chain and manufacturing together into an integrated supply network that delivers the right demand response.

The third area of opportunity is related to complexity in the product life cycle portfolio. This is where some of the leading companies in consumer electronics and consumer products excel. They have very short product life-cycles, a lot of turnover in their product lines.

"So each of these three examples I've discussed so far illustrate the need for the supply chain leader to become an educator, influencer and a collaborator with these other functions in his own company, which helps to achieve that optimal balance," Lord added.

"Finally, the goal for the supply chain is to translate a demand signal into a sustainable, profitable, and resilient supply response," he said. This becomes a complex layering of decision processes that involves some new approaches in terms of governance, technical enablement, and performance management of business processes.

Gartner's Supply Chain Top 25 is nearing its 10th anniversary. It still does not contain any chemical groups, but Lord pointed out that there are in fact several companies – such as Procter & Gamble, Johnson & Johnson, and 3M – that have significant chemicals operations, and that the chemical industry is a strategic supplier to almost all those ranked in the top 25, which includes hi-tech, automotive, apparel and packaging industries.

So for that reason, the Gartner Top 25 offers chemicals marketing insight and intelligence into how customers are operating, which is a good starting point from which to think about serving them better and collaborating more with customers.

Lord added it "is also worth noting that for the first time four chemical companies achieved the top 50 ranking, and two in are the top 30.

Chemical companies are rising up the list, and may soon break into the top 25. But I suggest that there is still much to be learned by looking at supply chain excellence through the lens of those in the top 25."

Moving up the chain

Following these two presentations a panel debate discussed various issues, including the state of the European chemical industry.

Moderator for the event Nadine Dereza asked whether sufficient resources are being put into supply chain management, or is it still a 'poor relation' in many businesses.

Sergio Barbarino, research fellow R&D supply chain innovation, Procter & Gamble said: "It's changing. In my company, the vice president in charge of supply chain operations is now sitting in the global leadership council – that means the board. In many companies, people are realising the need to give supply chain the same status as manufacturing," he said. "For example, today in P&G we are spending more on supply chain than on manufacturing, and we have a research & innovation centre."

Peter Holicki, global vice president operations ethylene envelope, and vice president operations Europe, Middle East, Africa, for Dow Europe, also cited an example of how supply chain and logistics was moving up the corporate rankings.

"I think there are many of us who take the right long-range decisions," he said. "My own company is currently building a very large integrated manufacturing complex with Saudi Aramco in the Kingdom. It will be the biggest integrated site the industry has ever built in one go. We have a major investment ongoing on the US Gulf Coast, which will make us self-sufficient in building blocks, and will mean that our company will have to tackle logistics on a global scale, because from those huge global platforms we will be supplying customers around the globe. We have just opened a global logistics technology centre in Belfast to move our supply chain even more from a regional focus to a global focus to capture opportunities like those two investments."

Paul Lord - the goal for the supply chain is to translate a demand signal into a sustainable, profitable, and resilient supply response

Talke certificate for clearer CO2 calculations

As one of the largest companies in the Cologne area of Germany Alfred Talke Logistic Services has been certified under the DIN EN 16258 standard by auditor TÜV Rheinland. The standard, which was introduced in 2013, allows companies to calculate carbon emissions related to their transport services according to an EU-wide standard.

"Documenting carbon emissions per transport will become mandatory in the EU over the next few years," said group managing director Alfred Talke. "France is a pioneer in this field. Since October 2013, the CO2 emissions related to a single transport have to be documented. We expect more countries to follow suit over the medium term, so we have decided to introduce the European standard, which applies across industries, as an additional measure."

Prof Dr Jürgen Brauckmann, a member of TÜV Rheinland Berlin Brandenburg Pfalz's board of directors, also appreciates the transparency that the new standard offers. "The large number of different methods to calculate transport-related CO2 emissions lead to customers feeling confused rather than informed. With the EU standard, which provides a structure and level of certainty for carbon emission calculations, companies can publish comparable figures."

The handover of DIN EN 16258 certificate. (l-r) Talke managing director Alfred Talke and Armin Talke jr with Prof Jürgen Brauckmann, board member of TÜV Rheinland Berlin Brandenburg Pfalz

Ever since its foundation in 1947, Talke says it has been committed to running its business sustainably. The logistics service provider for the chemical and petrochemical industries makes efficient use of resources, takes measures to reduce waste and makes sure it reaches its own environment protection goals. For instance, the family-run business has assessed its carbon footprint applying the European Chemical Transport Association's (ECTA) standard regularly since 2009 – evidencing that it has reduced its fleet's average CO2 emissions by 9.5 percent between 2010 and 2011.

The company is also a member of the Responsible Care programme. It was one of the first logistics providers to join the initiative in 2009. In 2013, Talke co-operated with special chemicals manufacturer Lanxess in a long-term study to establish the savings potential of 'green' tyres with reduced rolling resistance.

RBC finds more space in Botlek

Port of Rotterdam Authority and RBC Holding signed an agreement on 11 December 2013 to construct a jetty and expand the latter's existing site by 5,000 sqm. The jetty will have a mobile crane capable of handling full containers up to 45 tonnes.

RBC Holdings is a sister company of Cetem Containers and tank container specialist RMI Global Logistic Services.

Construction of the jetty will start in 2014 and, like the site expansion, is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2015.

Cetem/RBS/RMI is located to the north of the cross road to the sand jetty. The depot has had a jetty with light crane for empty containers for a few years now. The new jetty will site between the existing one and the sand jetty. (Photo by Aeroview)

A substantial part of the terminal will be designed for the storage and handling of containers with hazardous substances. The extension of the environmental permit required for this is expected to be granted by the end of 2014.

The development of a jetty to handle full containers and full tank containers plus the expansion of the site will allow RBC to reduce drastically the transport of hazardous substances by road in favour of shipping traffic through the one-stop shop concept. This is in line with the general modal shift policy of port of Rotterdam. Part of that entails opening up the depots for empty containers to inland shipping as well.

The terminal, with a total size of more than 100,000 sqm, offers ample opportunities for the storage and handling of empty and loaded containers and tank containers, and is located on the Oude Maasweg-Westgeulstraat in the Botlek area. This area also has a strong concentration of chemical production and storage companies.

RBC wants to optimise the terminal at a later stage to connect to the port's rail network. This will create a trimodal terminal for transport by water, rail and road.

Den Hartogh trials driver fatigue system

If the driver shows signs of fatigue, or is distracted for more than a few seconds an alarm goes off in the cabin

In its continuous drive for increasing road safety, Den Hartogh Logistics has been testing a recently introduced driver state sensor (DSS) system. The DSS is an automated fatigue monitoring systems to ensure driver alertness and is being put in place to cut the risk of road accidents.

Direct Hans den Hartogh said the test fits well with the company's Safety Awareness programme. "In driver training we explain and discuss the risk of fatigue and distraction and ways to prevent these risks," he said. "The trial we have now set up is intended for testing the DSS system as well as getting maximum learning on the actual influence of fatigue and distraction on our drivers during their work."

Den Hartogh is operating two trucks during the trial. One truck is operating as a dedicated vehicle in gas logistics. It runs double-shift (day and night-shifts). The other truck is operating on a single-shift basis in the logistics of bulk liquid chemicals throughout Europe.

The DSS monitors the face of the driver through a camera. If the driver shows signs of fatigue, or is distracted for more than a few seconds while driving, an alarm goes off in the cabin and a vibrating unit in the driver's seat will start. At the same moment an alert goes off from the truck to the operations team at the Den Hartogh office.

Den Hartogh is working together in the trial with a selected group of coach and truck companies. The trial started in December 2013 and will run until August 2014. During this period the trial partners will have several meetings to discuss their experiences.

Kirry Mukherji – new MD of Log4Chem

Heads up for Log4Chem

Log4Chem's partners have been brought on board Kirry Mukherji as the company's new managing director. He will be responsible for further developing the joint venture formed between logistic companies Bertschi, De Rijke and Hoyer.

Under Mukherji, Log4Chem is looking to establish itself further in its core markets of Europe, Africa and Middle East as an independent logistics service provider for the chemical industry. A British national, Mukherji commented: "I look forward to this new challenge. Heading an asset-light company which combines the strengths of industry leaders is especially appealing to me."

The 47 year-old has long experience working for several European logistics companies. Among others, he was in charge of Damco's European business activities as its chief commercial officer. Mukherji was also a member of the supply chain committee of the European Petrochemical Association (EPCA)

Still a long way to go

Bulk liquid logistics in Russia has not experienced the same dynamics as the rest of Europe. Despite the country being one of the world's major suppliers of crude oil & gas, as well having a large petrochemical industry, poorly developed infrastructure and a lack of modern transport equipment, particularly tank containers, have held Russia back from fulfilling its potential.

Notwithstanding, tank container have found a growing market. The first tanks carried on Russian rail were in 2000-2001, and by road transport in 2002. Today, the Russian market has good potential for development. It has enjoyed constant growth and observers reckon the country's market for specialist rolling stock is one of the fastest growing in the world.

State support for the development of small and medium-sized businesses is increasing as demand grows for smaller consignments. Consequently this is encouraging demand for tank container transport at the expense of rail tank cars.

This is proving a lucrative market for leasing companies, which also increases options for end-customers, as the leading tank container manufacturers are based outside Russia. In addition, prices for leased and new equipment have remained relatively stable compared with rail tank transport.

On the other hand the rail and road tanker markets in Russia retain pole position for many markets. Gas tankers are widely used to transport liquefied gases like ammonia, chlorine, oxygen, acetone, phenol, a wide range of liquefied hydrocarbons, sulphuric and nitric acids.

At the same time other factors still favour the use of road tankers for some dangerous cargoes, such as LNG. Terminal infrastructure is relatively well-developed for products like this.

By contrast, Russia seems to be poorly acquainted with IBCs. This kind of packaging remains a convenient and cost-effective method for transporting many chemical products, particularly as it requires less sophisticated filling and handling equipment.

Such smaller containers are generally available only for medium and low hazard classes of food produced in Russia, even though most of the containers supplied to the country satisfy regulatory requirements for transporting high hazard substances. In addition, the major part of the IBC market in Russia seems to be used containers.

The low tare weight and reduced need to find return cargoes would seem to offer IBCs a particular advantage in the Russian market where distances between consignee and recipient can be huge. In particular, base oils would seem to be a promising sector for IBCs. They are attractive for manufacturers and wholesalers selling base oils to small and medium-sized customers that do not have their own bulk handling infrastructure. In the EU, about 12 percent of lubricant shipments are in IBCs. Yet, in Russia they account for less than 1 percent.

Rail tanks still dominate shipments of many bulk liquid products

RokoNord sees potential

For 12 years now tank depot RokoNord has been providing a complete tank container repair service, including welding works, periodic certification and sale of spare parts.

And as the Russian market for tank containers grows RokoNord sees high potential for development in this sector.

Every day more than 50 employees work at the depot, located near Port of St Petersburg, with the watch-words of service, quality and loyalty. "Our clients know RokoNord as a reliable partner on whom they can always trust," said a company spokesman.

As a member of ITCO RokoNord offers the whole range of terminal and warehouse services for all types of containers, but still the main focus is on tank containers and hazardous cargoes. As this kind of cargo requires special knowledge and attention, the depot is fully equipped with modern techniques and has "all necessary licenses to work with such specific type of cargo".

Lately, especially to improve the professional skills of its employees, RokoNord has designed a study variant on tank containers and arranged seminars for newcomers and representatives from leading shipping companies.

Acid test for Spectransgarant

Late last year, logistics operator Spectransgarant tested tank containers for transporting hydrochloric acid.

STG (part of the Rail Garant Group) acquired a trial batch of six tanks for carrying the acid, the main particularity of which is the rubberised inner surface of the boiler. A special coating protects the TC boiler from corrosion during transport of aggressive chemicals, like hydrochloric acid. Trial runs were launched on the Sverdlovsk railway at the beginning of December.

The planned monthly transport volume is 150 tons. Besides hydrochloric acid, the rubberised tanks are also suitable for transporting other volatile chemicals such as sodium hypochlorite and hydrofluoric acid.

"We plan to start using an additional 10 tank containers for transporting hydrochloric acid this year. Based on our test results, we have decided to increase our current tank container fleet," explained Maria Surina, STG managing director.

Gazprom Neft agreed to buy an oil transhipment terminal in Novorossiysk

Trading up

As a major oil producer it is no surprising to find significant developments in the country's oil storage and trading sectors.

Recently, JSC Gazprom Neft's board approved the purchase of 100 percent of Novorosnefteservice LLC and Novorossiysk Oil Transshipment Terminal LLC (NOTT) by Gazprom Neft's subsidiary Gazpromneft Marine Bunker.

Novorosnefteservice, together with NOTT, form a combined complex handling light and dark oil products for export and for the bunkering market. Novorosnefteservice owns and operates an inland terminal located 11km from NOTT, which itself owns and operates a marine facility and the Customs control zone. The transhipment capacity of the facilities is more than 500,000 tons of oil a year. The complex has been in operation since 2013. During the first nine months of 2013 62,000 tons of petroleum products were handled.

Meanwhile, Morgan Stanley has sold the majority of its global physical oil trading operations to Russian company Rosneft.

The deal includes more than 100 traders and shipping schedulers in London, New York and Singapore, over US$1 billion worth of oil, and the bank's 49 percent stake in tanker company Heidmar. The terms of the deal were not disclosed. Morgan Stanley said it was not expected to have a significant impact on its financial results.

The purchase will not include Morgan Stanley's oil storage, pipeline and terminal firm, TransMontaigne Inc, which may help avoid significant scrutiny of the deal in Washington.

Morgan Stanley plans to submit the sale for review by the US Committee on Foreign Investment (CFIUS), an inter-agency executive branch panel that examines foreign investment for potential threats to national security, a source familiar with the matter said.

The sale is also subject to regulatory approvals in the United States, the European Union and certain other jurisdictions, the bank said in a statement. A statement also said it is targeting the second half of next year to complete the deal.

Coal comfort for Dunkirk

Total throughput in 2013 was 43.6 million tonnes, down 8.5 percent compared with the previous year. However, the port stressed the record impact of containers which showed a total increase of 12 percent over 2012.

In fact the difference over the year was mainly due to the consequences of the shutdown of the E.oN power plant at Kingsnorth, UK, which affected coal traffic, as well as the impact of the temporary presence of a fourth ship at Dunkirk in early 2012 on the DFDS cross-Channel line.

Analyse the traffic excluding these two factors, activity showed a rise of 2 percent on a comparable basis.

Containers totalled 292,000 TEU to the end of December 2013, an increase of 12 percent. Full containers were up 13 percent to 165,000 TEU. Conventional cargoes (steel, tubes, bagged sugar, heavy lifts) were stable at 900,000 tonnes.

In bulk liquids, refined products showed a decrease of 7 percent with a volume of 5.2 million tonnes. Other bulk liquids were down 29 percent at 900,000 tonnes.

The main reason for the drop was the shutdown of a plant run by biodiesel producer Diester Industrie in the Dunkirk area which affected traffic in the port by more than 250,000 tonnes. Bulk liquids were down 11 percent overall at 6.1 million tonnes.

The year saw the completion of a new oil pipeline between the Rubis terminal in the Eastern Port, on Pier 5, and which is now connected with the national pipeline grid (TRAPIL network) in the Central Port, near the Glencore plant. This new link, which necessitated directional drilling below many industrial and port sites, will enlarge the hinterland served by the Dunkirk in petroleum products, particularly towards Eastern France.

A significant development during 2013 was the unveiling of plans for DLI Sud (Dunkerque Logistique International Sud) in the Western Port area, a logistics hub capable of handling large volumes of hazardous materials.

Eiffage Group is behind the project which will cover an area of 75ha (including 20ha of natural space). The infrastructure will comprise 96,000 sqm of covered warehouses with storage of tank containers in automated units, the first of its kind in France. The multimodal project will also include 18km of railway lines and the expected logistics volumes will ultimately be 850,000 palettes and the equivalent of 100,000 containers, five trains a week and 500 HGVs a day.

Grain export traffic benefitted from the healthy state of the French export market, posting encouraging figures from the start of the 2013-2014 campaign. The 2013 volume was 1.55 million tonnes, a rise of 47 percent over the previous year, with nearly 1.1 million tonnes in the second half of 2013 alone.

Smaller bulk solids dropped 12 percent to 2.7 million tonnes. Although export traffic was up 14 percent thanks to the good loading figures for ferro-alloys as well as slag.

Overall, bulk solids showed a fall of 11 percent to 21.6 million tonnes. But the port said that without the impact of losing the Kingsnorth traffic activity would have been up 5 percent.

Containers handled at Dunkirk rose by 12 percent in 2013

Simon goes beyond the NORM

Simon Storage has unveiled new waste storage and handling capabilities at its Immingham (UK) terminal complex on the south bank of the River Humber.

In summer 2013, the company was granted an Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR) Part A permit for handling hazardous and non-hazardous bulk liquid wastes. However, Immingham now also holds the necessary Radioactive Substance Regulations (RSR) permits to handle NORM products, Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material, typically originating from the North Sea.

Simon Storage has a long history of handling bulk liquid wastes under permit at its East Coast terminals at Seal Sands on Teesside and at Velva Liquids on Tyneside. Now that Immingham is also licensed to store and handle NORM products, Simon's strategically located facilities can offer companies a comprehensive range of storage solutions and disposal routes for hazardous wastes.

These include NORM contaminated liquid wastes from offshore oil and gas installations, including NORM waste streams emerging from the North Sea decommissioning programme, to chemical wastes and recovered product from a wide range of industrial processes and activities, including such products as mono ethylene glycol as well as drilling fluids.

The permission regime for storing hazardous bulk liquid wastes is stringent and, under the EPR Part A permit, process wastes must be stored in tanks with impermeable bunding and managed under strict stock management systems and reporting regimes. Outfall consents are also subject to regular monitoring and reporting to ensure compliance within consented limits.

Another prerequisite is competent staff training, both to meet permitting requirements and also to uphold Simon's commitment to personal and process safety. Simon now has WAMITAB (formerly the Waste Management Industry Training & Advisory Board) qualified staff located at each of Simon's East Coast terminals, and where NORM products are located staff also hold an approved Radiation Protection Supervisor's (RPS) qualification.

In addition to permission for the receipt, storage and redelivery of hazardous and non-hazardous bulk liquid wastes, Simon Storage has also been permitted to carry out water separation activities and the recovery of the separated hazardous and non-hazardous waste. In 2010 Simon Storage invested in new water treatment facilities, and will now be permitted to use this plant for the disposal of the separated waste water. The above activities cover a wide range of permitted EWC (European Waste Catalogue) codes.

The company's ongoing investment in specialist facilities and qualified teams reflects growing demand for competitive and innovative waste management solutions from the domestic and wider European market. Paul Oseland, commercial director, commented: "Simon is taking a proactive approach to fast-developing environmental and commercial trends in the waste storage and recycling sector. With the capacity, approvals and expertise to store many types of liquid waste streams as well as recovered product, our East Coast terminals are among the leading waste handling facilities in the UK."

Bunkering up

Port of Frederikshavn and Nordic Marine Oil are to build a 20,000 cbm tank farm at the to provide marine diesel. The project is scheduled to be completed in the second half of 2014 in preparation for new rules on sulphur emissions in European Emission Control Areas (ECAs).

Port CEO Mikkel Sørensen Seedorff was quoted in Danish media as saying that the environment is a major focus area for Frederikshavn, and this is consistent with its strategy to attract a major supplier of marine diesel to set up shop in the port. The market for marine diesel is expected to rise sharply in connection with the new and tighter rules on sulphur emissions, which come into effect from 1 January 2015.

Nordic Marine Oil, a subsidiary of Malik Supply, supplies fuel in Skagen, Hirtshals, Hanstholm, Thyborøn, Hvide Sande, Esbjerg, and Gedser.

"Frederikshavn Harbour is well-located geographically and will be the focal point for supplies of petroleum products to vessels in and outside the harbour," said Nordic Marine Oil CEO Steen Møller. "At the same time Frederikshavn [has an] optimal location as a transit warehouse for our storage facilities along the Danish west coast."

Nigel Draffin, chairman of the International Bunker Industry Association (IBIA), said recently that demand for distillate fuel will rise when new ECA regulations take effect in 2015, but supply is not likely to become a serious problem until new global rules go into force in 2020.

LNG in Amsterdam

Just before Christmas 2013 inland navigation vessels were given the possibility to bunker LNG in the Port of Amsterdam.

Greenstream was the first ship to moor alongside the Amerikahaven quay to bunker with LNG. Built by Peters Shipyards, Greenstream is operated by InterStream Barging and has been chartered by Shell which also supplied the fuel.

Port of Amsterdam has designed the 'Groene kade' (Green Quay) in Amerikahaven to enable safe bunkering from a tanker truck into an inland navigation vessel or small ocean-going vessel. The port said LNG is a clean fuel which is a promising alternative to marine fuel.

Two Dutch ships currently run entirely on LNG, Greenstream and Greenrhine, and one ship - Argonon - uses dual fuel technology (LNG and diesel mixed). More ships are under construction. Using LNG as a fuel provides major environmental benefits; vessels emit up to 25 percent less CO2, up to 80 percent less NOx, up to 100 percent less SO2 and also 100 percent less soot and fine particles than current inland navigation vessels.

"Port of Amsterdam is doing everything possible to encourage the use of cleaner fuels, including LNG. As an energy port, we're pleased to contribute to greening marine fuels," says Koen Overtoom, Port of Amsterdam's COO. "We're currently developing plans with our partners to convert green gas into the even cleaner bio-LNG, so that we can reduce CO2 emissions even further."

Port of Amsterdam is Western Europe's fourth largest port and plays a large role in the transhipment and processing of energy products. The North Sea Canal Area annually tranships approximately 100 million tonnes of goods, with Amsterdam accounting for approximately 80 million tonnes of this amount.

KM, Imperial team up for Edmonton

Kinder Morgan Energy Partners and Imperial Oil are forming a 50-50 joint venture to build a crude oil rail-loading facility in Strathcona County, Alberta, called the Edmonton Rail Terminal.

The facility will be built on heavy industrial-zoned land approximately half a kilometre southwest of Kinder Morgan's Edmonton storage terminal, on land adjacent to Imperial's Strathcona Refinery. The Edmonton Rail Terminal is currently being designed as a crude oil loading facility capable of loading one to three unit trains a day totalling 100,000 bpd at start-up, with the potential to expand to approximately 210,000 bpd, and ultimately to 250,000 bpd.

The terminal will be connected via pipeline to Kinder Morgan's tank facility and will be capable of sourcing all crude streams handled by Kinder Morgan (KMI) for delivery by rail to North American markets and refineries. The rail facility will be constructed and operated by Kinder Morgan and will connect to both Canadian National and Canadian Pacific mainlines.

"This facility underlines the importance of our expanding Edmonton terminal hub and adds to our growing crude by rail terminal network," said Bill Henderson, vice-president for Kinder Morgan Canada Terminals. "The facility will be built with state-of-the-art technology and will incorporate extensive safety and environmental protection features, and will be manned with trained personnel around the clock."

The Edmonton Rail Terminal will provide much needed near-term delivery capacity for Canadian producers and a strategic bridge to Trans Mountain's major pipeline expansion, currently projected to be in-service in late 2017.

"The Edmonton Rail Terminal will play an important role in improving access to markets for oil sands production," added Rich Kruger, chairman, president and chief executive of Imperial Oil. "The terminal will deliver additional infrastructure and options required for our distribution network and help maintain the value of Canadian crude. Accessing new and existing markets is critical for our continued growth and responsible development of Canada's oil sands. The additional transport capacity will be used for current and future production from the Kearl Oil Sands project, including the expansion phase, which will come on stream in late 2015."

Imperial Oil will be the base load customer and has subscribed for the start-up capacity through a long-term contract. The partners are now actively marketing possible expansion capacity to potential third-party customers. Investment by the joint venture partners will total approximately US$170 million. In addition, Kinder Morgan will invest approximately $100 million in pipeline connections and two new staging tanks to be constructed within the KMI Edmonton facility. Construction is now underway and completion is scheduled for December 2014.

Imperial Oil is one of Canada's largest corporations. It is a major producer of crude oil and natural gas, Canada's largest petroleum refiner, a key petrochemical producer and a leading marketer with coast-to-coast supply and service station networks.

KMP currently owns an interest in or operates approximately 54,000 miles of pipelines and 180 terminals.

Imperial Oil is Canada's largest petroleum refiner

Liquids drive Antwerp

Port of Antwerp posted final throughput for 2013 of 190.8 million tonnes, an increase of 3.6 percent compared with 2012. The main driving force behind the growth was liquid bulk, with container volumes being slightly down as a result of the continuing recession.

The volume of liquid bulk rose over the past 12 months by 31.4 percent to almost 60 million tonnes. Imports and exports of oil derivatives were well up, by 34.8 percent, ending at 43 million tonnes. The amount of chemicals and crude oil handled also rose sharply. The volume of crude oil expanded by a massive 83.4 percent to 4.7 million tonnes, while chemicals were 9.7 percent, finishing at 11.2 million tonnes.

Dry bulk on the other hand fell by 24.8 percent to 14 million tonnes, mainly due to a reduction in coal volumes (down 62 percent to 2 million tonnes).

Container volumes showed a small contraction, both in tonnes and in the number of containers. Some 8.5 million TEU were handled, down slightly by 0.7 percent.

Belgium is the most important European Union distribution hub for chemicals from the Middle East, according to a report published at the end of 2013 by the Gulf PetroChemical Association (GPCA).

Belgium's share of GPCA exports to Europe has more than doubled since 2002. Total exports of chemical products from GPCA countries rose from US$7 billion dollars in 2002 to $52.7 billion in 2012.

Asia is by far the largest market. Europe is in second place with $8.4 billion dollars or 15.9 percent of total exports by Gulf states in 2012. In terms of volume this represents 7.8 million tonnes, an increase of 280 percent since 2002. Turkey and Belgium between them account for half of these exports to Europe, with 26 percent and 24 percent, respectively.

Veg oil terminal

A new terminal for vegetable oil transhipment has been opened by LLC Risoil South at the commercial port of Pivdenny.

Storage volume at the terminal is 52,000 tonnes and the rated transhipment capacity is 600,000 tpa.

According to Risoil South the railway facilities can handle 25 rail tanks a day. Shipment of oil to sea ships is carried at 22 berths with capacity reaching 600 tonnes an hour.

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Savage provides crude transport to Williston and Uinta

Savage is expanding service at its terminals located in Uinta Basin and in Williston Basin to include crude transport via truck.

With Savage's capability for crude by rail transloading, the addition of truck transport allows Savage to offer oil & gas companies a complete logistics solution "from the well-head to refinery", the company says.

The Savage rail-served terminals in Trenton, ND, Price and Salt Lake City, UT, provide crude bound for key refinery markets access to rail transport. Trucks will fill the gap of getting the crude from the well site to these transload terminals. The Savage terminal in Price is the first facility in the area to offer crude by rail origination on Union Pacific Railroad. The Salt Lake City terminal provides access to the Bingham & Garfield shortline. In Trenton a terminal offers direct access to the BNSF mainline.

"We strive to offer our customers seamless logistics services," said Kirk Aubry, president and COO for Savage. "Oil producers in the Uinta Basin and the Bakken need a better way to get crude to market. Savage has the infrastructure, equipment and expertise to work with our customers to solve this problem."

The Utah terminals provide truck dispatch and transport, rail car switching, railcar spotting, transloading and car storage related to crude handling. Today, in the Uinta Basin, Savage is equipped to truck over 50,000 barrels and transload over 70,000 barrels of crude each week. Current railcar loading is on a manifest basis with 25 car loading spots and storage for 120-plus railcars. Savage has the ability to develop unit train capacity and tank storage should customers require it.

Services are available 24 hours per day, seven days a week, with flexible scheduling available. Savage has also renamed its coal terminal to 'Savage Energy Terminal' in Price. "This change reflects Savage's commitment to serve the energy needs of its customers in Utah," said a company statement.

The terminal in Trenton provides truck dispatch and transport, unit train loading, single car transloading, and car storage. Today, in the Williston Basin, Savage has the capacity to truck over 10,000 bpd, and will add an additional 10,000 bpd capacity by February. The terminal can transload over 100,000 barrels of crude each day onto unit trains, with track capacity to hold up to two unit trains at the facility simultaneously, and has storage capacity of over 50 rail cars for crude-by-rail shippers. Savage currently has six crude receiving truck bays and 290,000 barrels of tankage with expansions underway that will increase the capacity of tank storage, truck receiving and outbound unit train loading.

In September 2013, Savage added oil field services to Trenton, including oil country tubular goods (OCTG) storage, transloading, trucking, threading, inspection and clean and drift services.

The new services are a direct result of Savage's acquisition of Ft Worth Pipe in July last year.

CRONOS TANKS

GLOBAL COVERAGE FROM YOUR LOCAL CRONOS OFFICE

TYPICAL SPECIFICATIONS

ISO TANK CONTAINER // SINGLE COMPARTMENT INSULATED AND STEAM-HEATED STAINLESS STEEL TANK CONTAINERS

CAPACITY	TARE WEIGHT	MAX GROSS WEIGHT
26,000 ltr	3,760 kg	36,000 kg
25,000 ltr	3,710 kg	36,000 kg
24,000 ltr	3,640 kg	36,000 kg

GENERAL SPECIFICATIONS

WORKING PRESSURE: 4.0 Bar
DESIGN TEMP: - 40˚c to 130˚c

APPROVALS

UIC, CSC, TIR, IM101, UK-DOT, RID/ADR, AAR600, FRA, TC, UN PORTABLE TANK, IMDG, US-DOT, L4BN

STANDARD FITTINGS

MANLID: 500 mm (20˝) diameter, 8 point fixing

AIR LINE: 1.5˝ with stainless steel ball valve and 1.5˝ BSP cap

RELIEF VALVE: 2.5˝ SRV set at 4.4 Bar – provision to fit a second

TOP OUTLET: Provisions for 3˝ butterfly valve and syphon tube

BOTTOM DISCHARGE: 3 point stainless steel closure

STEAM-HEATING: 10 m^2 effective surface area external steam tubes

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