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Flexitanks
Tank Cleaning & Repair
Industrial Packaging

Tianjin still reverberating through dangerous goods industry

The fallout from August's catastrophe at Tiajnin Port continues to be digested by international logistics specialists.

As *Bulk Distributor* went to press, no official conclusions had been drawn as to the cause of the explosions at Ruihai International Logistics Limited which claimed the lives of more than 170 people, over 100 of them firefighters.

Two massive explosions occurred 12 August in Ruihai International Logistics' warehouse, which stores and transports chemicals. Founded in 2011, Ruihai specializes in moving hazardous cargo.

Although the cause of the blasts continues to be investigated, what emerged in the aftermath is that Ruihai was storing hazardous chemicals without proper permissions and was not in compliance with China's safety regulations.

The quantities of material found were far in excess of the allowed levels and stored perilously close to residential accommodation in the area.

Chinese work safety rules require such storage facilities to be at least 1,000m away from residences, public buildings and highways. However, according to the media reports, an online map search shows the Ruihai warehouse was within 500m of both an expressway and a 100,000 sqm apartment complex.

The warehouse contained calcium carbide, potassium nitrate, ammonium nitrate, sodium cyanide, toluene diisocyanate (TDI) and some other hazardous chemicals, potentially including CNG and butanone.

The facility contained about 700 tons of sodium cyanide, 70 times the allowed amount. At eight of 29 testing sites inspected within the blast zone, the amount of sodium cyanide stored was found at levels up to 28 times those considered safe, according to the chief engineer of the Tianjin Environmental Bureau.

As of August 2014, according to the Ruihai's Chinese website, the facility employed around 70 people. Annual cargo throughput was put at 1 million tons, with annual revenues of at least 30 million yuan (US$4.7 million).

Continued on p2

Trifleet launches excellence guarantee

Trifleet Leasing is introducing an 'Excellence Guarantee'. The guarantee ensures the readiness of the company's tank containers, as well as full compliance with technical specifications and repair standards.

The lessor says this is the first time that a tank container lessor has offered this kind of service guarantee to customers. The Excellence Guarantee will provide additional assurance about the company's operational reliability.

It covers both the on-time delivery and zero reject targets. With on time delivery, Trifleet guarantees that all newly-leased tank containers are available at the agreed date, time and location. With zero reject, the company guarantees that tank containers meet the requested technical specifications and the agreed repair criteria. In the case that a tank container does not comply with one or both of the targets, customers will receive a bonus of 30 free rental days per tank.

"We want our clients to benefit even more from our 25 years of experience and our continuous efforts to keep our fleet in excellent condition. This is why we are now offering a Trifleet Excellence Guarantee," explained managing director Philip van Rooijen. "Our clients can rely on us. This guarantee ensures the worry-free pick-up of newly-leased tanks at our highly competitive lease rates."

TRIFLEET
GUARANTEED
TANK CONTAINERS
LEASING EXCELLENCE

Tianjin aftermath

Continued from p1

In addition to two dangerous goods warehouses, the facility also hosted an area of 1,000 sqm hard standing for dry freight and tank containers.

The company's website also showed an inspection carried out by the local police department "to give guidance and advice" almost one year to the day before the disaster. This was accompanied by a demonstration of emergency procedures at the site (see p2) as part of the company's public image of adhering to modern safety procedures.

While industry waits for an official report into the explosions, attention is also focusing on the corporate governance of the company and its relationship with local officials.

An article on the website of the China's official news agency Xinhua published on 20 August revealed that the son of a former police official and a former state company executive are the major shareholders of the company in what appears to be an opaque corporate structure.

The article stated that these and other connections "are thought to have facilitated their business by helping them obtain various fire safety, land, environmental and safety certifications".

Meanwhile, insurers have been speculating on the financial consequences, with figures running into billions of dollars.

As many as 18,000 containers and their contents are thought to have been destroyed as the explosions hit nearby container depots and storage areas. Singamas Container Holdings reported that two depots, operated by its wholly-owned subsidiary Singamas Logistics (Tianjin) Co, sustained damage. One of its storage sites is located around 800m from the incident site. Another external depot is also close to the blast area.

The automotive industry alone could face a bill of $300 million. Tianjin is the major port of northern China for vehicle import and export.

In August 2014, almost a year to the day before the disaster, Ruihai International Logistics demonstrated its 'safety awareness' during an inspection by local police

The Kerry-ITS depot in Tianjin escaped major impact from the blasts

Kerry-ITS unscathed

International tank depot operator Kerry-ITS began operating its facility in Tianjin port in February 2014. Fortunately, the site escaped major impact.

In a statement to *Bulk Distributor* via the company's Singapore head office, Sun Zhi Ya, depot manager of Kerry-ITS Terminal (Tianjin), said one employee sustained minor injuries as his apartment is located just 2km from the explosion site. "Other than that, we are fortunate and glad that our operations have been commencing as usual," the statement said.

However, from the day immediately following the explosions there was significant impact for the depot's customers. Import and export operations had to be halted immediately after the accident, and as operations at a competitor depot, Tianjin Everlast Tank Containers Service, were temporarily suspended by the government for "rectification purposes", most of that depot's customers came to Kerry-ITS for assistance. Hence, the Kerry-ITS facility actually saw an increase of business.

The statement continued that the government has reinforced its audit and strict control over tank container transport and storage of dangerous and hazardous chemical cargoes.

"After the explosion, our depot has also reinforced our precautionary measures, such as notifying customers to ensure tight sealing of tank containers before arrive at the depot, and rejecting any tank with, for example, a loose manhole or with pungent odour," it read.

"We have also reduces the storage of flammable products in the depot, and try to purchase in small quantities, just enough for usage. In addition, we also control our LPG tanks are used within 48 hours to minimise storage, and have completed a major briefing to reinforce safety training for all employees."

Output flat for EU chemicals

European chemical output grew just 0.2 percent during the first half of 2015 compared to the same period of 2014, according to the latest Cefic Chemicals Trends Report, while producer prices fell 4.8 percent, year-on-year.

Sales were down 4.2 percent during the first five months of 2015. Latest monthly data showed output growth of 1.1 percent in June 2015 compared with June 2014, while EU chemicals prices plunged 2.9 percent. Confidence in chemicals increased somewhat in the second quarter of 2015, while the EU net trade surplus narrowed to €18.1 billion during the first five months, down by €370 million compared to the same period one year ago.

Cefic director general Hubert Mandery, said of the figures: "While the public focus is very much on China, we see the biggest change in chemicals business related to Russia. Our exports to Russia are down by 17 percent, while imports increased by 8 percent. For now Cefic maintains its EU chemical production growth forecast for 2015."

Polymers output continued to slide in June, down a significant 3 percent compared with June 2014. Petrochemicals fell slightly by 0.9 percent during the same period. The drop was partially offset by 5.3 percent growth in output of basic inorganics. Specialty chemicals generated significant output growth (4.7 percent). Consumer chemicals grew by 0.2 percent in June.

Overall, EU chemicals output crept ahead – just 1.1 percent in June year-on-year – and for the first six months was up just 0.2 percent compared to same period of 2014. After recovering somewhat in the first quarter of 2015, output decreased in the second quarter by 0.7 percent compared to the previous quarter of the same year.

Petrochemicals prices declined by 8.6 percent in June 2015 compared to the same month. Plastics prices increased by 0.4 percent in June 2015 compared to same month one year ago. Consumer chemicals prices recorded a modest increase of 0.2 percent during the same month. All in all, producer prices in the EU chemicals sector declined 2.9 percent in June (year-on-year). Last but not least, chemicals prices were down 4.8 percent during the first half compared with the same period in the prior year.

The EU net trade surplus narrowed to €18.1 billion during the first five months of 2015, down by €370 million. The net positive trade balance through June with non-EU countries – a group including Russia, Turkey and Switzerland – was €3.3 billion, €1.6 billion lower than in the first five months of 2014. Underlying this figure was a sharp fall in net exports to Russia, an important EU chemicals trading partner. Net exports plunged significantly year-on-year, as exports to Russia fell 16.6 percent, or €648 million, and imports jumped 8.0 percent, or €259 million. The EU chemicals trade surplus with Asia – excluding Japan and China – increased by €201 million to €3.27.The EU's net chemicals trade surplus with China contracted by €708 million. And the EU widened its chemicals trade surplus with the United States by €1.11 billion to €3.63 billion in January-May.

The EU chemical industry confidence indicator (CCI) rose slightly in the second quarter of 2015. Production expectations for the months ahead decreased somewhat and stock levels continued to fall. However, the assessments of order book levels registered a minor improvement during the same quarter. The confidence of producers remains above the long-term average.

Dr Abdulwahab Al-Sadoun, Secretary General, GPCA

A quick word with...

Dr Abdulwahab Al-Sadoun, Secretary General, GPCA

How is the chemical and petrochemicals industry coping with the slumping oil price? In particular, how has it affected the supply chain and logistics?

The petrochemical industry in the GCC continued its growth trajectory unabated and production rose by 4.5 percent in 2014, making the GCC the second-highest growth region in the world. However, the slumping oil prices have had a direct negative impact on petrochemicals prices in global markets, which declined on average by 25 percent to 35 percent between 2014 and 2015, and thus the profits of the GCC players have declined by a similar ratio.

The health of the global economy since the decline in oil prices also contributed to weak petrochemicals prices and created a difficult near-term outlook for the global petrochemicals and chemicals sector. Given that the GCC producers are not price-setters, it means they will have to embark on a cost-cutting campaign. This obviously puts pressure on the supply chains in the GCC and reinforces the need to optimise the value chain.

Looking ahead, the long term scenario is more positive. The industry is forecasted to grow at 6 percent per annum over the next five years, with the region producing over 190 million tons of petrochemicals annually by 2020. The drive into higher value products, such as speciality and performance chemicals, is gaining momentum and is expected to act as a catalyst for an even stronger growth of the GCC petrochemical industry in the years to come.

How has the rise of fracking in the US affected the chemical and petrochemical industry?

The fracking frenzy in the US and the subsequent lower US gas prices have been a boon to the US chemical industry, making the competitive landscape for the producers in the GCC tougher. Because of the export oriented nature of the industry in the GCC, petrochemical producers from the region have to excel throughout the entire value chain not to lose ground in important export markets.

You have spoken in the past about the need to finance the development of hard and soft supply chain infrastructure in the region. What plans are in place to improve hard infrastructure? For example, are there any plans to increase the number of tank cleaning and repair stations?

If you look around the petrochemical hubs in the GCC, it is clear that the hard infrastructure is in the process of a transformational change. Railway developments are taking centre stage in this change and very much act as a catalyst notably in Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Oman, where a rail network will connect the petrochemical facilities with the port of Sohar.

At the same time, we see that new industrial parks, such as the Saudi Plastics Park currently being built around the Sadara facilities in Jubail, in Saudi Arabia, are forging a more integrated trade network. An increase in the number of tank cleaning and repair stations obviously forms part of that more integrated network.

Can you also highlight some improvements in soft infrastructure such as training, education and customer service?

Investment in soft infrastructure is as important as the investment in hard infrastructure. That's why we always make a point of inviting students to our conferences. To highlight the importance of education in our drive towards supply chain excellence, we have just launched the GPCA Supply Chain Excellence Awards. The awards ceremony will take place during the 8th GPCA Supply Chain Conference on 3 May. We have dedicated a special category to academic institutions who have contributed to advancing the supply chain function in the region and are also introducing a special category for students.

Can you give our readers an update on the GPCA's implementation of the Responsible Care programme and the Sustainability Quality Assessment Scheme? How is the GPCA helping to build up the relevant industry framework?

In 2014, GPCA launched SQAS, the Gulf Sustainability & Quality Assessment System, as an extension of our Responsible Care program. SQAS, first implemented in Europe, is a system to evaluate the quality, safety, security and environmental performance of Logistics Service Providers in a uniform manner by single standardised assessments carried out by independent assessors using a standard questionnaire.

Since its launch, GPCA member companies are increasingly mandating Gulf SQAS in their future logistics contracts. Several logistics companies have led the industry by taking their first SQAS Transport Services assessment, the first out of four modules. We will be launching the second module on warehousing shortly and have organised six outreach campaigns across the region to date, raising awareness about the programme.

What are the most common mistakes that you see logistics service providers making in the region and how can they rectify them?

I've noticed that some of the logistics service providers that enter the GCC market overlook how their established business model needs to adapt to this market. Instead of relying on an imported expat workforce, for long term success training local talent is much more beneficial.

A GCC customs union could make a huge difference to the supply chain in the region. How close is this to becoming a reality?

As an industry association, we are doing our part in highlighting the importance to our government stakeholders and we have made progress. It is hard to say though when and if a GCC customs union will become a reality. In the meanwhile, customs and clearance reforms are absolutely key because of the limited domestic market sizes of the GCC countries. Easing access to our products destined for export markets will help enhance the competitiveness of the region.

The 10th Annual GPCA Forum is coming up in November. What do you think will be the highlights of that event?

The 10th GPCA Forum will be held on 17th to 19th November and will be particularly important as the event will be celebrating its 10th anniversary – marking a major milestone. H.E Eng. Suhail Al Mazrouei, the UAE Minister of Energy, will be delivering the inaugural address at the conference, which falls under the theme of "Building on Achievements: Enabling Continued Success in the Changing Chemical Landscape".

In addition, the conference will feature a masterclass facilitated by Chemical Industry Roundtables under the title "Leading the chemical industry in volatile teams" where delegates will hear from industry experts on real live accounts of what it takes to steer and inspire their businesses in our fast-moving technological, economic and social times.

The conference contains a line-up of highly influential individuals including H.E Abdullatif Al-Othman, Governor & Chairman of the Board of Directors, Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SAGIA) who will deliver this year's opening address. Other notable industry leaders that have confirmed participation include Rashed Saud Al Shamsi, Chairman GPCA and Petrochemicals Director, ADNOC; Yousef Al-Benyan, Vice Chairman, GPCA and Acting Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, SABIC; Nizar. M. Al-Adsani, Deputy Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and Neil Chapman, President, ExxonMobil Chemical.

Operating quality hits Hupac

During the first half of 2015 Swiss combined transport operator Hupac experienced a 1.3 percent decrease in transport movements. Strikes, construction work, accidents, and technical failures impacted the operating quality of the railway network, the group said.

Hupac carried a total of 335,295 road consignments in unaccompanied combined transport. The negative development was caused by a number of strikes in Germany, France, Belgium, and Italy, and traffic disruptions due to construction work and accidents. In transalpine transports through Switzerland Hupac suffered a loss in volume of 2.7 percent compared to the prior year period. A rail line in Austria had to be discontinued, which resulted in a 20.1 percent decrease in movements.

Once again Hupac achieved a 5.4 percent growth rate in non-transalpine transports, strengthening its position in markets in eastern, south-eastern and south-western Europe. Transport within Europe, such as the new connection between Cologne and Malmö, also contributed to this result.

Hupac expects the moderate demand for transport to continue for the rest of this year. The elements of uncertainty include declining fuel prices, which is favouring road shipments. In addition, Swiss providers of rail freight services are burdened by the continued strong Swiss currency compared with the euro.

But a major area of concern was the unsatisfactory operating quality of the railway network, which has dropped to a new low this year as a result of various factors. "If the railway system fails to counteract this trend, we will cut ourselves off from the market," said managing director Bernhard Kunz. Hupac compensated the delays, at least in part, by taking organisational measures.

But the group maintained that the desired 95 percent punctuality rate requires structural changes, such as equal treatment of freight and passenger transport and the introduction of a compensation system with a noticeable steering effect. "Trains operating on time have a positive impact on the productivity of the resources that are used, such as personnel, engines, rail wagons, and terminals," explained Kunz. "On-time trains make happy clients. And they save money to the benefit of the entire railway system."

Hupac wants equal treatment of freight and passenger transport

A&R to develop plastic resins facility

A&R Logistics has signed a collaboration agreement with Union Pacific to co-develop an export supply chain solution for the US plastic resins industry.

The project will be aimed at establishing a transport and plastics packaging facility near UP's Dallas Intermodal Terminal to handle the expected increase in export plastic resins.

Commenting on the agreement, CEO Mark R Holden, stated: "Approximately US$50 billion is expected to be invested in the US over the next 10 years by the plastics industry to expand production. Thanks to growth in domestic shale gas production, the US plastics industry is benefiting from feedstock derived largely from natural gas. As a result, the export of plastic resins is expected to surge over the next decade. Net exports are expected to more than triple, growing from $6.5 billion in 2014 to $21.5 billion by 2030."

Holden added: "A&R looks to develop a state of the art packaging facility and transport related product to provide what we believe will be the most flexible and efficient supply chain for the export of plastic resins in the US."

Brenntag expands in Turkey

Brenntag is buying Parkoteks Kimya San, of Turkey. The Istanbul-based distribution company offers a wide range of specialty chemicals products with particular focus on the personal care industry.

Established in 1989, Parkoteks benefits from long-term and exclusive partnerships with international leading specialty chemicals manufacturers, providing a wide range of ingredients to customers, Brenntag said.

"Parkoteks is a significant addition to Brenntag's strategy in Turkey and a valuable extension to our existing personal care product portfolio," said Karsten Beckmann, member of the board of management of Brenntag Group. "With Brenntag Turkey offering customised solutions and specialty chemicals, we provide a powerful combination with an outstanding distributional strength also in the personal care sector. Parkoteks has a technically qualified and skilled sales team and provides in-house application laboratory with specially trained technicians."

Matthias Compes, president Brenntag CEE Central, added: "We established operations in Turkey over 10 years ago, and the country continues to be an attractive market for the chemical distribution business. With our portfolio of specialty chemicals, the acquisition of Parkoteks allows us to bring additional know-how and support to our customers in the personal care industry, while seeing an increasing demand of value-added products in various markets in Turkey."

The acquired company generated total sales of approximately €14.3 million in the financial year 2014.

Van den Bosch expands in Africa and Middle East

Van den Bosch Transporten is expanding further into Africa and the Middle East.

In recent years the Dutch bulk transport company has established a strong position in the African market. But in September, the logistics services provider opened a new branch in Dubai and early next year will start a tank cleaning service in Ghana.

Moreover the fleet is being extended with 500 new 20FT tank containers.

"The expansions are the result of a growing demand for deepsea transport", said CEO Peter van den Bosch. "We are finding that more European companies are focusing on growth markets such as Africa and the Middle East. That has made the demand for deepsea bulk transport rise rapidly.

"Our entire company has changed", Van den Bosch emphasised. "The number of containers has grown over the past few years from a few hundred to well over 4,000. Some 90 percent of our activities are concerned with international transport and we use terminals all over the world. We now plan to further develop our deepsea activities with a focus on Africa and the Middle East."

The company believes in the potential of Africa and wants to develop this growth market. "A few years ago we set up the first transport flows from Europe to Africa together with our business relations and we are now taking care of container transports between both continents on a large scale," says Van den Bosch. "Last year, also the first flows in Africa itself were set up and we built a large partner network."

Hence the motivation to develop a tank cleaning station in Tema, Ghana, in early 2016. "Volumes between Europe and Africa are growing because we are able to convince our customers to ship liquids in ISO tanks instead of in small quantities," the CEO continued. "That has advantages in terms of handling, heating and savings in packaging costs. With our own tank cleaning station there, it is easier to link existing transport flows and we help local companies to switch over to bulk transport."

And just as in Africa, the firm sees growing possibilities in the Middle East. "From this new branch we want to develop both markets. Dubai lies at the crossroads of three continents and is the ideal location for us to develop our global transport activities with a focus on Europe, the Middle East and Africa," Van den Bosch concluded.

www.vandenbosch.com

Chassis investment for Chemical Express

Italian chemical transport firm Chemical Express says it is following its commitment to ensure safety in bulk liquid chemicals transport.

After joining Responsible Care association during 2012 and getting ISO 14001 certification, another important step was recently completed with the purchase of new lightweight tank container chassis.

The 25 chassis produced by Van Hool are 3 axle lightweight 20ft units with tare weight of 3,050kg. As a result, Chemical Express can increase payload for customers if required. The chassis feature an ergonomic open backside, low step and comfortable access to hose carries (up to 6 tonnes) and incorporate a safe step to container, including retractable bar.

In this way, the company says it is safer for operators or drivers to climb on the chassis for all loading and unloading thanks to the anti-slip surface, low steps and special retractable handling.

They also have an easily demountable spill box and step, such that in case of small product spillage during loading or unloading, maintenance and cleaning can be quickly carried out, avoiding product leaking risk.

Giuseppe Avallone, Chemical Express CEO, declared: "Our duty is to do everything in our power to guarantee and to maximise safety measures for operators, customers and the environment, and using these new chassis, our goal now seems a little closer."

www.chemicalexpress.it

Swinging door for extra safety

Suretank has supplied a new design of DNV 2.7-1 cargo basket for Netherlands-based Odfjell Well Services.

The safety enhanced cargo baskets, engineered at Suretank Netherlands, have had the standard top beam removed and a swinging end door installed. These clever design features make it easy for operators to gain entry to the basket and have access to the various tools. The process of loading and unloading the basket is also simplified and made safer.

Leon Sol, technical sales engineer at Odfjell Well Services, explained that normally offshore cargo baskets do not have a swinging end door. "This results in additional risks for personnel with the potential to cause injuries by climbing in and out of the baskets," he said. "The easy entrance by means of the protected swinging end door reduces risks and prevents injuries."

Bart Schenk, general manager at Suretank Netherlands, added that the company worked closely with Odfjell to upgrade the standard basket design. A 3D model was produced in the pre-engineering phase outlining the specific health and safety requirements and features. **www.suretank.com**

Huntsman contract for Den Hartogh

Huntsman Pigments and Additives and Den Hartogh Liquid Logistics have signed a 20 year contract for the lease of 61 tank containers custom-built for transporting tetrachloride.

Following a competitive tender process, pigments and additives division of Hunstman Corporation appointed Den Hartogh to provide the tanks required to meet new regulatory specifications for tanks moving tetrachloride.

The specifications were agreed after visits to Huntsman's site at Greatham, UK, and tank builder Van Hool, in Belgium.

The commitment shown during the project phase by the Den Hartogh and Van Hool teams to meet the high level specifications of the dedicated tanks led Huntsman to appoint Den Hartogh with the long term contract.

Den Hartogh has a long working relationship with Huntsman businesses and is considered a preferred logistic service provider the global chemical company.

For the maintenance of the tanks, Den Hartogh will work with Isotank Ltd in Hartlepool, UK, which many years of experience of maintaining Huntsman's current fleet.

The tanks will be delivered in time to meet the new regulations that come into force on 1 January 2017.

www.denhartogh.com

Den Hartogh has a long working relationship with Huntsman

RSA-Talke breaks ground on new Dubai centre

The chemical logistics joint venture RSA-Talke has broken ground for a new integrated chemicals facility that will have tank containers as its central element.

The multi-service site will be the first integrated chemical logistics facility in Dubai. It is designed to handle liquid chemicals and will have a capacity of 1,800 TEU and is located in Jebel Ali Free Zone, close to Dubai World Central where the company already operates two specialised warehouses for hazardous and non-hazardous chemical and petrochemical products.

The full-service facility specialises in the storage and handling of liquid chemicals in tank containers. It is designed for both non-hazardous products and dangerous goods classes 3, 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9 and complies with the highest safety, environmental protection and quality standards.

In addition, RSA-Talke offers filling and re-filling of products into IBCs or drums. The range of services also includes cleaning, inspection and approval of ISO tanks.

The facility will also require additional warehouses, bringing RSA-Talke's total capacity for the storage of packed non-hazardous and hazardous chemical products to around 39,000 pallet spaces. The construction of this ISO tank facility completes the company's portfolio of chemicals logistics in the region.

Crowley adds more LNG tanks

In response to high customer demand, Crowley Maritime Corp has acquired 16 additional tanks for its Carib Energy group which will be used to supply, transport and distribute US- sourced liquefied natural gas (LNG) to customers in Puerto Rico, the Caribbean and Central America.

The 40 ft tanks, which each hold 10,700 gallons of LNG, now feature technological improvements that increase the offload rate, allowing for faster fuel transfers to customers.

"Adding ISO tanks to our equipment fleet for our established business not only allows us to meet heightened customer demand, but also to continue delivering an uninterrupted supply of LNG to these regions," explained Crowley vice president Greg Buffington.

"And the improved offloading performance reduces the amount of time required to transfer the fuel from tank to the storage unit, adding to overall efficiency. It is our pleasure to play a pivotal role in supplying a cost-effective, safe, reliable and environmentally friendly natural gas fuel to customers."

Transporting the LNG from US-based liquefaction facilities to storage units is managed by Crowley's domestic logistics team, which co-ordinates road transport to the company's Florida terminals in Jacksonville and Port Everglades. Once at the terminal, the containers are loaded onto company-owned vessels and transported to customers' locations. At the port of entry Crowley's on-site logistics team delivers the LNG to facilities where it is regasified into pipeline natural gas for boiler consumption.

In 2014, Carib Energy was granted a 20 year, small-scale US Department of Energy (DOE) export license for the supply of LNG into Non-Free Trade Agreement (NTFA) countries in the Caribbean, Central and South America. The licensing permits Crowley to export a volume equivalent to 14.6 billion cubic feet a year (bcf/yr) or 0.04 bcf per day (bcf/d) via the 10,700 gallon tanks to these regions.

In 2014, Crowley announced the signing of a multi-year contract with Coca-Cola Bottlers of Puerto Rico to supply containerised LNG to two of the manufacturer's plants in Cayey and Cidra, Puerto Rico. A major pharmaceutical company also contracted with Crowley for its LNG and the company continues to discuss its LNG solution with other potential industrial customers.

www.crowley.com

VTG's happy first half

VTG reported significantly increased revenue in its tank container logistics in the first half of 2015 to €82.2 million, €8 million above the same period of 2014.

EBITDA increased to €6.6 million compared with the €5.5 million in H1 last year. At 49.2 percent, the EBITDA margin on gross income was also above the previous year's 46.1 percent equivalent. VTG attributed the positive development to three factors: transport volumes in Europe and overseas rose and the appreciation of the US dollar against the euro also had a positive impact on the result, as did a one-off contribution from the sale of a non-consolidated holding company.

Revenue in the rail logistics division rose slightly from €157.2 million to €157.7 million compared with the previous year and new orders were able to compensate for the downturns in certain regions and sectors. EBITDA also rose significantly to reach €1.2 million (previous year: EUR 0.1 million). EBITDA margin on gross income amounted to 8.9 percent against 0.7 percent last year.

The Hamburg-based group said the results clearly demonstrate that the restructuring measures which were introduced to the division at the beginning of this year are beginning to take effect, but the upward trend still has to be maintained.

www.vtg.de

Composite swaps have arrived

The key advantages of the Tankwell concept are weight reduction of over 40 percent and greatly improved thermal performance

Tankwell, a Composite Production Technology brand (CPT), has developed a composite swap body type tank container.

Using patented manufacturing processes the stainless steel vessel has been replaced with a one piece filament wound fibre reinforced vessel.

The product has been under development for a number of years, fine tuning the choice of materials and methods of manufacture. In January 2015, the prototype passed all statutory tests to obtain ADR/RID approval and offers test pressures up to 4 bar.

The key advantages of the concept are a weight reduction of over 40 percent and greatly improved thermal performance when compared to the equivalent stainless steel type. The tare weight allows the payload of a 31,000 litre unit to increase to over 36,000kg, where permitted.

Launching customers are putting the first production units through their paces after close consultation with their clients to establish a consensus on the use of the new product.

It is expected that further benefits in the use of the new product will be realised as use becomes more widespread.

The frame, made of conventionally used materials, was developed with Flax Field Europe in the Netherlands, which has a wealth of experience in the tank container industry. Stainless steel valves and traditional materials have been adopted for ease of maintenance and availability of spare parts.

The choice of the resin allows a wide range of products to be transported and is supported by the expertise and experience of the global producer.

The Tankwell sales and marketing will handled by Flax Field Europe located on the premier tank service facility in Europoort with the additional benefits of having a full service facility at their disposal.

www.tankwell.nl

CARU beefs up specialised leasing

Dutch company CARU Containers and TCG (Transportation Capital Group) have formed a new container leasing company that will operate worldwide under the name CARU Specialized Leasing Pte Ltd (CSL).

CSL will focus on a range of special containers, including ISO tank containers, powder tanks, bulkers, half heights, CPCs and other dry freight specials.

The CSL management team will be led by Frank Vaughan, Tim May, Rick Reid and David Sprod, who average over 25 years of international container leasing experience, including specialised container leasing

The company will focus on leasing 'non-commoditised' containers and providing the product expertise and high service levels required by the operators of specialised equipment.

"The new venture will rely on the combination of skills, experience and financial backing of CARU Containers, TCG and the management team to expand rapidly its global platform and capabilities," said a CARU spokesperson.

CARU is one of the world's largest container traders with over 20 years of experience in container leasing and trading, maintaining offices throughout Europe, the US and Asia.

TCG has over 20 years of experience in the container industry and manages significant container investment portfolios. The TCG principals have worked with the management of CARU Specialized Leasing for over 20 years.

The spokesperson added that all the parties provide the company with a strong capital base to fund future growth.

www.carucontainers.com

TWS tanks are used to transport a variety of liquid foodstuffs including dairy products, beer, fruit and vegetable juice

TWS tanks help put food on the table

In recent decades, tank containers have become firmly established as a means of transporting liquid products. 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.

TWS focuses on purpose-built constructions and niche markets, investing in its expansion and especially in high-quality containers. At the moment, its entire fleet consists of some 6,000 units, most of them for transporting liquid food products. The tank rental company's containers are used to transport liquid foodstuffs such as dairy products, beer, fruit and vegetable juice, chocolate, wine, oils, flavouring and additives, as well as liquid yeast.

Different products make different demands on the equipment used to transport and store them, depending on their quality and consistency. To ensure that products remain pourable for further processing, for example, they need to be kept at a certain temperature while being carried from the production site to the processing plant.

Strict legal regulations must be observed when handling food products. The must be transported using appropriate equipment under conditions of spotless hygiene, and they must arrive at their destination in perfect condition. Economic considerations need to be seen in relation to modern special-purpose equipment and call for maximum flexibility.

Agitators have been developed in close collaboration with engineers, and these have been installed in a number of special containers. TWS tanks are fitted with two agitators. A range of improvements have been implemented in the design of the latest generation units, which are now available. The controls, for example, are more clearly laid out and easier to operate, and cleaning has been facilitated by a number of structural modifications. All parts are cleaned thoroughly and hygienically before being used again. This is essential for containers operating in the highly sensitive food industry sector.

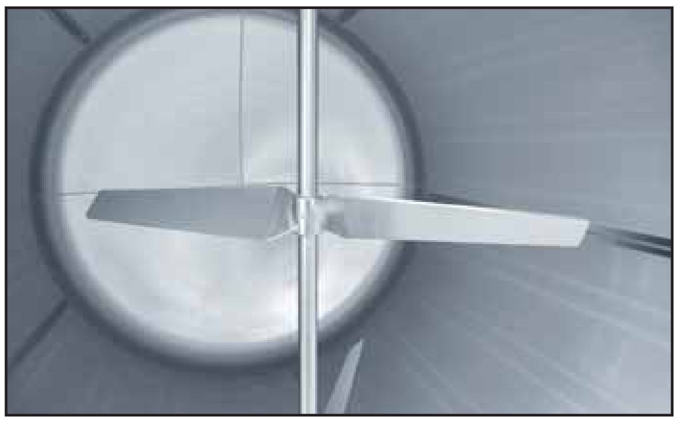
Maintaining viscosity

The mixing technology allows high-viscosity food products, such as chocolate, curd cheese or yoghurt, to be stirred inside the tank container. 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 excessive sedimentation. No air is drawn in, making the process particularly gentle and effective. The temperature is controlled by internal temperature sensors.

The fixed, inbuilt agitators with various different functions, an all-round heater and the very good insulation allow such products to be transported and also stored without any difficulties.

Reliable quality and safety

All the company's tank containers comply with the highest safety and quality standards, are approved for various markets throughout the world and comply with applicable laws and regulations.
www.tws-gmbh.de


Agitators have been developed and installed in a number of special containers

Hoover adds acid tanks

Hoover Container Solutions has added acid tanks for transport and storage of corrosive liquids and chemicals to its offshore product range.

The tanks are constructed using carbon steel for the vessel, piping, valves, instruments and welds to withstand offshore service, with corrosion-resistant carbon steel used to construct the external frame of the tank. Linings for the interior are selected based on the materials being stored to ensure maximum corrosion protection.

Each of the transportable horizontal and vertical acid tanks are designed and manufactured to meet IMDG UN Portable Tank Type T14, DNV 2.71, EN12079, ADR/RID, CFR 49 standards and with frames designed to meet DNV 271 standards. Additionally, the acid tanks are equipped with a relief valve and rupture disc as safety features.

"Hoover is committed to manufacturing and providing our customers the highest quality products and services available on the market," said Donald Young, chairman and CEO, Hoover Container Solutions. "The addition of acid tote tanks will strengthen our comprehensive offshore product line by offering our customers a reliable and efficient solution for the transport of chemicals such as those used in oil & gas processes, waste materials and aviation fuel."

The offshore acid tank is available for short or long term rental or for purchase.

Meanwhile, Hoover has opened a new service facility in Brazil.

The wash line facility allows Hoover to provide cleaning services while handling all IBCs, ISO tanks and offshore equipment destined for oil and gas platforms, mining sites, islands and supply bases in the region.

The wash line facility is equipped with experienced staff that are licensed to clean a wide variety of hazardous and non-hazardous materials. It hosts a full range of tank cleaning services including: easy clean (steam or flush), moderate clean (caustic or detergent), difficult clean (boosted caustic or pre-solve), exterior clean with internal process or exterior clean only.

The high power wash system generates 1,500 psi of pressure used for the washing and rinsing of fluid storage or transport containers. A closed-loop system, designed to recycle wash water, allows for minimal waste water disposal. Steam is used to accelerate the cleaning process and improve the power of the detergent. During the final stage of cleaning processes, the wash system uses a fresh water rinse that has been pumped through cartridge filters to cleanse containers thoroughly.

The Brazil facility is capable of washing four 5,000 litre containers or four 1,500 litre units at once with a total cleansing time of 32 and 20 minutes, respectively, per complete cycle, ie, interior, exterior and drying.

"The addition of this service facility allows us to clean a wide variety of products efficiently and safely while minimising costly downtime," said Arash Hassanian, VP of global sales and marketing for Hoover.
www.hooversolutions.com

Cladding up

Crane Composites is steadily winning new customers for its FRP tank cladding panels

Crane Composites, Inc is a leading manufacturer of fibreglass reinforced plastic (FRP) panels widely used throughout the building products, recreational vehicle, and transport industries.

Headquartered in Channahon, Illinois, USA, the firm has over 60 years of experience and is a recognised global leader in FRP applications. It is the leading manufacturer of Kemlite, ArmorTuf, Glasbord, Innovative Finishes, Filon, and Noble.

Crane Composites says it combines understanding of customer needs with expertise in materials, process, and technology to deliver quality solutions that replace traditional metals and woods. FRP is a composite material made from fibreglass reinforcement in a plastic (polymer) matrix. The end result is a panel that is durable, cleanable, easy to install, mould free, lightweight, moisture resistant, corrosion resistant, and flexible with a high strength-to-weight ratio.

Tank cladding

Crane Composites has applied this expertise to the insulated tank container market garnered through the introduction of ArmorTuf-NXT with gel-coat (AXSG), a high-impact resistant composite panel made with fibreglass reinforcement and specially formulated polyester resin. The product is engineered for maximum strength with the same benefits of ArmorTuf by using Crane Composites' NexForce Technology. AXSG is made with a gel-coat surface that is scratch and abrasion resistant with important weathering characteristics.

"Tank containerisation has gained significant market share in the transport of commodities independent of those transported via large ships," explains Rodolfo Martinez, vice president, international sales. "These products were previously transported in drums, pallet sized liquid or bulk containers. The tank container fleet has grown from its modest beginnings in 1967 to a global fleet of 400,000 units in service today. The growth pattern of the fleet has been double digit in recent years as more and more shippers discover the efficiency and security of shipping their products in them."

Tank containers are generally clean bore tanks with exterior rings covered with fibreglass wool insulation to maintain product temperature. The insulation is held in place by panels of cladding material wrapped around the tank. The cladding is the outermost skin, covering the insulation and the inner tank shell.

"Originally the cladding material was stainless steel or aluminium," Martinez continues. "The high level of damage in intermodal service led to the adoption of FRP/GRP tank cladding, which is lighter in weight and will not dent as easily as metal cladding does. To date, about 90 percent of the market uses an FRP/GRP cladding. But until recently, with the introduction of AXSG, the FRP/GRP cladding materials were general purpose products with limited strength and puncture resistance."

At the time of AXSG's introduction, Crane Composites was addressing a need by end users for a product with lower maintenance and repair costs and better physical attributes, such as higher strength, lighter weight and greater puncture resistance.

"The competitive FRP solutions in the market were superior to stainless steel/aluminium cladding solutions in terms of dent and corrosion resistance, but the FRP cladding was still susceptible to scratches and punctures to the extent that customers were repairing the cladding of each tank at least once a year," comments Sonny Sun, the company's regional sales manager, China.

The company believes that not only does the cladding serve the purpose of protecting the insulation, in more ways than one it is the face of the brand. With high incidence of damage from transporting each tank, company names on the tanks can become undiscernible.

The appearance of the tank exterior conveys a powerful message. A unit covered with numerous repair patches detracts from the company's brand. In comparison, Crane Composites maintains AXSG tank cladding has performed much better in field operation.

"One particular operator that uses both AXSG and general FRP notes that in a year's time-frame, AXSG only needed 10 percent of the repairs that the tank with general FRP cladding needed," adds Sun. "The same sentiments were noted by a leasing company which holds that its tanks with AXSG cladding have seen no damage during their first year in operation, which has improved the company's brand and led to them having more market share this year."

The Crane way

"Crane Composites has a rich history of engineering FRP products to meet a wide variety of applications, and was able to provide the tank container industry with a product that has superior

strength, puncture resistance and UV exposure performance," Martinez. "AXSG has seen significant success since its introduction in 2012, and is now specified by several of the industry's largest tank operators. Its attributes are proving to lower the total cost of ownership for operators by decreasing damage, lowering repair and downtime costs while also contributing to the tank tare weight."

In 2013, the company's international team committed to driving this initiative forward. Through market segmentation and targeted marketing efforts, Crane Composites began to gain traction with key players. By early 2014, the customer portfolio comprised two of the largest tank manufacturers, Welfit Oddy, in South Africa, and CIMC, in China, as well as tank repair companies Boasso and Brenner, both based in the United States.

In May 2014, Crane Composites' struck a deal with Hamburg-based Hoyer, the second largest tank operator in the world, to use AXSG cladding in its new tank builds and for its refurbishment programme.

"We worked tirelessly with both our customer and our R&D centre to achieve the comparative testing results necessary to back up AXSG," explains Andy Standen, European business director for Crane. "It took almost 12 months of constant work and patience to bring the Hoyer business to fruition. During this period we visited and regularly communicated with Welfit Oddy. We supplied samples, testing data and brochures which were diligently prepared by our internal marketing team. We worked through the strategic selling process, identifying our strengths, 'red flags', buying influences, and target market data.

"We also identified the buying influences including the technical ones. In this case, the technical director at Welfit Oddy was convinced that our material was the product to meet not only its needs but also that of its customers. The tank manufacturer introduced Hoyer to Crane AXSG cladding using examples along with brochures and comparative testing data. Hoyer met with Welfit Oddy in South Africa to discuss and place the order for cladding for its new tank builds, and as a result of this meeting we were asked by Hoyer to present the material at its offices in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, It was following this presentation and discussion that we were finally awarded the business."

'Crane believes that not only does the cladding protect the insulation, in more ways than one it is the face of the tank brand'

Strategy

"The Hoyer deal brought great excitement to the international team and has acted as a springboard to many other opportunities within this market," Standen continues. "We continue to expand our knowledge of the Hoyer company and get to know its employees at various levels within the business. I am convinced this relationship will continue to provide a great opportunity to open doors with other tank operators and OEMs."

"The global transport market for liquids is a niche in search of a better cladding solution versus aluminium cladding, growing on average 3 percent a year," says Martinez. "Using our business system, especially our sales excellence methodology and our NPD process, the international team listened to our customers and created a differentiated value proposition to address their unmet needs. Through teamwork and a passion to succeed, the team was able to solve our customers' problems and begin to establish Crane Composites as a cladding market leader bringing new and repeat customers."

Future of AXSG

Crane Composites has a target market share of over 50 percent. With 39,000 new tanks built every year, Martinez says it has taken significant strides to reaching and exceeding its target.

"As our AXSG tank cladding continues to prove itself in the market with our existing and new customers, we have confidence that this positive word of mouth by big players in the market will continue to result in increased market share in the future," he continues. "This is a journey and we are just getting started. I expect our revenue to continue growing and to continue to help our customers be more successful by reducing their total maintenance and repair costs, in clear alignment with our 2020 Vision."

www.cranecomposites.com

Group Van Loon, 4PLer in tank containers, grows and expands

Group Van Loon, specialised in fourth-party tank containers logistics, has signed a joint venture with coating specialist Hüni+CO from Friedrichshafen (Germany). This means that Van Loon is now also an expert in applying coatings to tanks, in addition to the group's specialisations in transport, repairs, cleaning and refurbishing.

Family business Transport Van Loon (TVL), founded in 1954, has, over the years, seen the company divide into four divisions: Antwerp Tank Repair (ATR), Antwerp Tank Cleaning (ATC), Antwerp Tank Special Logistics (ATSL) and the new unit Gas Equipment Testing Services (GETS). Van Loon is located in two strategic locations on the left and right bank in the Port of Antwerp.

Business Development Manager Iwan De Block says: "We take over as many tasks from our customers as possible. On their behalf, used tanks or new tank containers of virtually all IMO categories are fully checked and cleaned by our chemical cleaning unit or scrubber installation on the left bank. If necessary, we submit a damage estimate and carry out all repairs accordingly. We also do all possible modifications, e.g. turn 30ft tanks into 20 ft tanks, whether or not homologated for ADR loads. Electrical tanks can be equipped with steam tubes, so that they can also be heated (hot water or steam)."

The refurbishing of tank containers involves them being completely stripped before being blasted and sprayed according to the customer's requirements. Provided with new insulation and cladding, the tank containers are as good as new. This treatment can also be extended to include box containers, crane components and construction equipment, for example. Iwan De Block: "By partnering with Hüni+CO, we also apply coatings to tank containers for the transport of corrosive or toxic products. And here in Antwerp, we also have the expertise and equipment to carry out repairs to coatings."

Even small pressure tanks and pressure vessels

Group Van Loon is currently conducting a pilot project to handle smaller tanks. The tanks in question are small, 800- to 8000-litre pressure tanks and vessels in stainless steel. Following evaluation, we will add them to the company's range. (NV)

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Safeload can take the pressure

The new Fort Vale Safeload high-pressure API coupler

Fort Vale is launching a new high-pressure version of its Safeload API coupler to complement the existing range. It is aimed at applications that demand up to 16 bar internal pressure on the rack and 10 bar when coupled.

The UK-based company says the Safeload was the first, and remains the only, coupler on the market with extended 'wrap around' latches that follow the profile of the API adaptor, covering over 50 percent of the circumference. This feature ensures maximum safety and security of connection, drastically reducing any risk of product leakage. Compared with conventional narrow triggers, the increased surface area contact significantly reduces wear to both the latches and the adaptor, which prolongs the serviceable life of both units.

To withstand the high-pressure application, the existing model has been extensively re-engineered. The spindle, crank and poppet have been redesigned and now offer greater inherent strength and reduced turbulence, which enhances flow characteristics. In addition, the new coupler has a smaller 'active pressure area' and a dual seal system, which reduces the effect of product displacement, making it easier to close the coupler against a retained line pressure.

The high-pressure coupler also incorporates a new safety feature, the interlock latch, which is designed to eliminate accidental actuation of the coupler in case of lateral impact, thereby preventing the risk of product spillage. The interlock latch will be a key element of all the current range of semi-automatic and manual couplers by 2016.

In line with BS EN12266-1 and EN12266-2, Fort Vale has subjected the new high-pressure coupler to extensive testing in its own purpose-built research, development & testing facility at its UK headquarters. To replicate the endurance testing previously carried out on the standard semi-automatic Safeload, the high-pressure coupler is currently undergoing 250,000 cycles whereby it is pressurised with fluid to 16 bar in the disconnected position, depressurised, connected to the adaptor and opened, pressurised with fluid to 10 bar, closed, depressurised and de-coupled.

To give some idea of the scope of this test, 175,000 cycles constitutes approximately five years of service at four operations per hour, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, representing a 'busy' terminal. At regular intervals, the coupler was removed and disassembled to monitor any wear. Fort Vale is delighted to report that no significant wear is evident on critical components. Furthermore, the amount of liquid loss on disconnection has been measured and, over 100 cycles, is 74 percent less than the regulation permitted 5cc, which is based on just three consecutive disconnects.

During the cycle testing programme, a 10 minute pneumatic test at 16 bar was conducted to look for any leakage, for example from the sealing areas or castings, since any micro-porosity may not be apparent with only a liquid test. No pressure-drop or leakage was evident. Also a 10 minute low-pressure pneumatic test at 0.2 bar was carried out to ensure that the seals did not leak in a non-pressure-energised scenario. Again, no leakage was detected.

"Customers consistently praise the long-term reliability of the Safeload coupler," said Euan Fisher, business development manager for petroleum transfer products. "One of our European clients has 150 Fort Vale couplers in service and has had zero maintenance issues after seven years of constant heavy use.

"As an organisation, we are constantly seeking to develop new products that meet the needs of our existing and future oil terminal customers. Because the new Safeload high-pressure API coupler inherits the same reliability and usability that our existing couplers offer, Fort Vale is confident to offer its unrivalled three year warranty across the entire range of couplers," Fisher added.

Fort Vale has revealed that it is planning to augment its range of products for petroleum handling, further details of which will be announced in the autumn.

50 years running

Mouvex is celebrating its 50th anniversary of manufacturing A Series Eccentric Disc Pumps in 2015.

Since 1965, A Series pumps have been manufactured, assembled and shipped from the PSG facility in Auxerre, France. Over the past 50 years, A Series pumps, of which thousands are operating worldwide, have been known for their reliability, durability and cost effectiveness, and have earned a reputation as sound pumping technology for some of the harshest applications in the world.

"We are extremely proud to be celebrating 50 years," said Paul Cardon, industry product manager for Mouvex. "Mouvex eccentric disc pump technology has a long-standing tradition in the pump world, going back over 100 years, and the A Series is one of our key product lines. For 50 years, A Series pumps have proven their reliability and performance in a variety of tough applications. We will continue to expand the capabilities of the A Series pump line, allowing them to serve more markets and a wider range of industrial applications."

To help celebrate the milestone, Mouvex is launching a new marketing campaign featuring its line of A Series pumps. The campaign – which rolled out in September – includes a new anniversary logo, advertising programme and sales tools. The new advertising campaign has been designed to express the company's long-standing tradition.

Mouvex A Series pumps are positive displacement pumps that use eccentric disc technology, which enables self-priming and run-dry capabilities while maintaining a constant flow rate regardless of changes in viscosity and pressure. These pumps also maintain their initial performance over time and are ATEX-certified for use in potentially dangerous environments with the ability to run-dry for up to six minutes. Available in seven different sizes – AZ, AD, A6, A12, A18, A31 and A55 – the pumps have maximum speeds to 600rpm, can handle temperatures up to 150degC (302degF), as well as suction and discharge ports from 1.5ins through 4ins in size. A Series pumps are offered with a variety of connection types and options, including the availability of Mouvex or standardised mechanical seals, which helps expedite installations regardless of location.

www.mouvex.com

Mouvex A Series pumps are positive displacement pumps that use eccentric disc technology

Midland products to meet DOT new tank car regulations

Midland Manufacturing plans to launch three new products – two pressure relief valves (PRVs), the High-FlowX and the Smart-Flow, and a detachable handle for bottom outlet valves, Tanktite. Midland says these three new products will help users meet DOT and Transport Canada rules for rail tank cars in North America.

The first phase of the 'Enhanced Tank Car Standards and Operational Controls for High-Hazard Flammable Trains' starts on 1 October 2015, and for the past several months, the components manufacturer has worked with shippers and rail tank builders to design products that meet and surpass current standards.

Part of Midland's development process includes the incorporation of flow simulations and in-lab testing to refine target valve performance characteristics.

"Within our product development process we're working to stay focused on and in sync with our customers and various stakeholders," said Bill Galbreath, Midland product manager. "In the current environment, it's a challenge to define fittings requirements that can meet the new specifications, but we're driving the Midland organisation to do just that and to turn those specifications into products faster than we ever have. We use the latest tools and science to accelerate our projects from concept to launch. The result is that we will be ready to offer products like Smart-Flow and like Tanktite to our customers at a critical time in their changeover to DOT-117 railcar designs."

The High-FlowX has been created for customers that want an external PRV that is capable of handling flow rates of 30,000 SCFM and that is suitable for corrosive commodities. For customers that desire an optimised flow, Midland recommends the Smart-Flow with a flow rate of 12,000 SCFM.

Midland is now taking inquires on Smart-Flow, High-FlowX and Tanktite. Product specifications are currently available for review and the company is finalising plans for the production launch.

www.opwglobal.com/midland/dot-117-solutions

Rotary position sensors

Curtiss-Wright Corporation has launched a new family of non-contact, rotary position sensors from the legacy brand of Penny & Giles.

With a low-profile sensor body design and a small footprint, these fully-encapsulated, IP69K-rated sensors are claimed to offer good performance against water, dust, shock, vibration, and temperature.

The NRH271 and NRH272 sensors are ideal for use by OEMs of on- and off-highway vehicles that are destined for use in "challenging" environments, and as a cost-effective solution for medium volume applications where a wide range of options or degree of customisation might be required.

The NRH271 is a 3-wire, single output variant with a supply current rating of less than 12.5mA, while the NRH272 is a 6-wire, dual-redundant output variant with a supply current rating of less than 25mA. The dual-die sensor has two separately powered input supply and output channels for full electrical redundancy.

All variants are contained in a 9.5mm housing and use wear-free Hall-effect sensing technology to provide a long mechanical life. The electrical output spans of both models can be set to correspond to rotations of 20deg to 360deg in 1deg increments. Two power supply options are available (5V and 9-30V). Factory-programmable electronics can be set to one of two analogue voltage output ranges (0.5-4.5V or 0.2-4.8V) or one of three PWM frequencies.

Go Girard for maximum flow

Long established as a major designer of relief valves for the liquid transport industry, Girard Equipment, through the engineering team at its Vero Beach, Florida manufacturing facility, have had stringent third party laboratory testing on flame guards conducted with some surprising results.

While other flame guards available on the market were reducing flow rates by as much as 50 percent, the Girard EverFlow Flamescreen Guard reduced flow by less than 1 percent.

Evacuation of a tank during flame engulfment is a serious matter and the EverFlow Flamescreen offers little or no impediment to gas flow, Girard says.

There is a current emphasis on the maximum achievable flow rates from relief valves, so flow rates should not be restricted by the use of a poorly designed flame guard. Flame Guard/Arrestors are designed to prevent gases from evacuating a tank through the relief valve during overpressure from igniting.

The Girard Everflow Flamescreens are available for the full range of IM pressure vents/PRVs.

www.girardequip.com

NG launches steel static earthing reels

Newson Gale is responding to the need for a convenient means of assuring necessary earthing in processing applications and environments at risk from uncontrolled static discharge.

It has launched a new range of ATEX and FM approved rugged closed housing spring rewind stainless steel earthing reels designed for use in processes that involve not only dangerous explosive, flammable or combustible atmospheres, but also require exceptional corrosion resistance or the need to avoid contamination of the process environment.

The reels join the range of Newson Gale's Cen-Stat static earthing reels and assemblies, all designed to provide a convenient means of stowing grounding cables and clamps when not in use.

For flexibility and durability, the cables are composed of 2.3mm multi-strand stainless steel with Cab-Lite 'Hi-Viz' coating. Additional features include a bracket for stowing static earthing clamps when not in use and an optional stainless steel swivel base enabling the reel to swing to the left or right to deliver the cable exactly where it is needed.

Standard cable lengths are 6.1m, 9.1m or 15.2m. Reels can also be ordered as complete tested assemblies including stainless steel & ATEX/FM approved X45 and X90 static earthing clamps to enable compliance with international static control guidelines and standards including IEC 60079-32 and NFPA 77.

www.newson-gale.com

Right temperature for Hoyer & IMT

A small tech company based in Breda, The Netherlands, has developed a complete new digital thermometer in co-operation with Hamburg-based bulk logistics firm Hoyer.

Intermodal Telematics (IMT) develops hardware and software for online monitoring of tank containers and rail wagons.

Hoyer's main motivation to conduct research and development into a new gauge was based on its on-line fleet monitoring strategy and what it saw as the inaccurate reading of existing gauges. The new gauge never needs to be recalibrated, has a 10-year battery life and logs all content temperatures for over three years.

Above all it transmits the temperature reading every minute via radio frequency to the optional online monitoring unit.

At IMT, everything is created in-house with its own hardware and software team, and on customer demand it also creates tailor-made solutions, as was with Hoyer, a customer of IMT for over two years. The Breda company developed a complete new digital thermometer with all the latest technology built-in.

IMT says existing gauges claim an accuracy of 1degsC. that is after being calibrated ex-factory. But recalibration is needed every year in order to stay accurate. Tests showed that non-calibrated units are already misreading temperatures by 3-4 degsC after just a few years of usage.

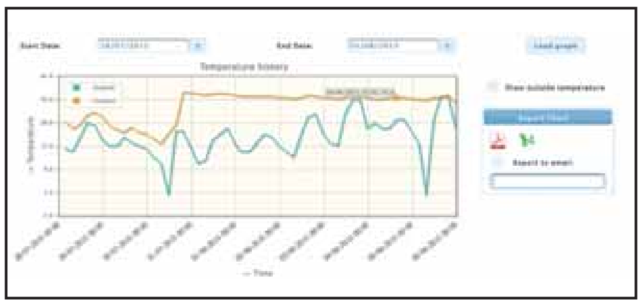
By using its own developed direct sensor conversion technology, IMT says no components are needed in between the reading of the PT1000 probe and the processor. As a result, the reading is 0.3degsC accurate and never needs to be recalibrated.

The digital gauges are fixed on tank containers using rivets and silicone. In order to keep the cost of replacing batteries down, all the components were carefully chosen based on their low energy drain, giving the unit a battery life of at least 10 years.

Knowing what happened with the content temperature during a specific timeframe is a valuable tool in tracking temperature sensitive cargoes. So IMT integrated a 3Mbit memory into the unit. This means that every measured temperature is logged for three years and can be read out at any given time using an infrared tool. In this way, it is possible to have a clear view of every temperature measured during loading, transport, heating or unloading.

The new gauge also has a built-in RF transceiver, which transmits the content temperature every minute. If a tank container is also installed with a communication and location terminal from IMT, the content temperature is captured and sent to the server. So the user not only sees the exact location of the tank, but also a temperature record anywhere in the world.

Surprisingly, the unit is not significantly more expensive than a normal temperature gauge, IMT says, as it was able to build it at for about the same price.



The gauge transmits the temperature reading every minute

Bulldog goes mini

Having launched a range of tracking units for the transport industry just a year ago, Switzerland-based Hunter Global Tracking has introduced a further model.

The cable-free Bulldog Mini is a compact GPS + Cell-ID tracker giving up to 1,000 events. The primary batteries are changeable by the user or rechargeable through induction. The Bulldog Mini can track objects for 2-3 years at one position a day or for several months in case of multiple positions. It can also monitor temperatures.

Housed in a reinforced waterproof (IP68) box measuring 11cm x 7cm x 2cm, the Bulldog Mini only 105g without the battery. It can be attached to a mobile asset with magnets, screws, Velcro or even cable-ties. Effectively, it is the little brother of the Bulldog, says the company, only three times smaller but similarly cable-free.

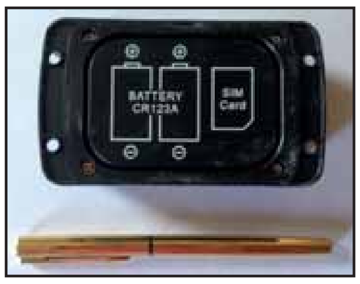
Its small size helps prevent theft, Hunter adds, as it can also easily be hidden. It is designed for tracking and monitoring ISO containers, IBCs, ULDs, pallets, crates, boxes and a host of other mobile assets such as trucks, vans, trailers, and swap-bodies.

Customers can ascertain the exact whereabouts of their assets with past history in tables and maps and a dashboard giving the status of the different parameters chosen as well as geo-fencing options. They can also remotely set their own parameters from any internet access point and see the results on a smart phone, such as frequency of geo-localisation, usual tracking data and geo-fencing functions, as well as the results of sensor and interface readings, and event alerts.

The Bulldog Mini costs €199. If the telecoms and management platform are added the cost comes €264 for 24 months' use (including World SIM card, 2MB data per month, use of platform, etc). So Hunter points out that the services of tracker would cost per day: €0.25 over five years, and €0.63 over two years.

All HGT's hardware and the software plus telecoms platform are designed and made in Europe, and guaranteed and supported by Hunter Global Tracking Ltd, which is incorporated in Switzerland.

www.hunterglobaltracking.com



Getting to grips with digitalisation

Higher productivity is achievable through integrated telematics and business intelligence, argues Savvy Telematics

Demands on freight wagon operations and maintenance are many and high. For operators, and to some extent for shippers, monitoring transport progress, using intermodal systems, complying with safety and maintenance regulations, and ensuring wagons are reliable and available go hand in hand with high personnel costs.

If control and implementation are insufficient, productivity cab fall, aggravating cost pressures. The only recourse is to increase the economic efficiency of individual processes along the process chain. In view of sinking margins in rail transport and competition from the road, action is obviously required but, for the same reasons, the scope of that action is limited. Intelligent, multivendor and highly integrated telematic systems solve this dilemma.

Optimisation potentials

By now, it is common knowledge that unknowns cannot be optimised. To improve the efficiency of transport and related processes, all of the components of the process chain – including their current status – and the structure of the overall process have to be known in detail. Telematic solutions not only create the necessary transparency with respect to components. Acquiring, transmitting and using digital information enables the optimisation of a broad range of processes while also providing insights into the way the entire transport process actually works so that it is possible to control it.

The first priority is tracking & tracing. Information about transport progress or exact location in international single wagonload traffic is often not up to date or at least questionable. Telematics provides all of the relevant information accurately and in real-time. If a shipment does not meet its quota or a wagon stays at a stop too long, the freight forwarder will know immediately and can take measures, thereby reducing circulation times considerably. A complete and accurate overview of the wagons also makes it possible to re-dispatch wagons more efficiently after a shipment is completed. By recording mileage per wagon, telematic solutions support – in addition to helping comply with legal requirements – efficient fleet management. Individual wagons can be deployed and dispatched for inspection according to usage. Using inspection plans based on actual wagon mileage and location increases wagon availability.

Since wagon status not only depends on quantitative mileage but also on payloads and infrastructure quality, Savvy Telematic Systems offers a combination package with loading sensors and shock detectors. These record the type and intensity of vibrations that can lead to rolling stock and shipment damage. Based on this information, operators can make an exact assessment of maintenance requirements and locate damage areas more accurately – instead of having to take equipment apart – thereby avoiding longer repairs. In subsequent steps, the acquired data can be aggregated to generate valid and comprehensive transport statistics which in turn form the basis for consistent and unambiguous reporting with visualised indicators based on actual data instead of on guesswork and interpretations.

To use telematic solutions efficiently, however, three things are needed: modularity, integration and system autonomy

Telematics does not have to solve every problem or optimise every process but merely the problems and processes relevant to the user. If, for example, temperature-controlled transports are not part of the core business, then sophisticated refrigerated wagon management is not necessary. It only makes sense to invest in the kind of modular systems that can be perfectly adapted and easily scaled to individual requirements.

By digitalising business processes and the automation and/or acceleration resulting from it, telematics can open up great optimisation opportunities. This requires a large number of interfaces to other business IT systems. What use is the most current positioning data if it cannot be used in the dispatch application? How can informative reports be generated if the telematic data cannot be enhanced with the ERP master data? The telematic solution can therefore only develop its full potential in combination with high-performance integration into the application landscape. To avoid any possible cost-traps caused by integration, the system has to have intelligent software and interface architecture.

The lack of a permanent power supply was one of the biggest obstacles to using telematic systems in rail freight. Savvy's battery technology enables more than 10 years of autonomous use, in other words, a life span that extends well beyond maximum inspection intervals. Power supply autonomy has to go hand in hand with multivendor capabilities. It is only when telematics systems can interact with any type of third party technology - from means of transport to sensors to company software - that rail freight has all the possible optimisation potentials at its disposal coupled with a high level of investment security.

From data to insights

The exciting thing about digitalisation is the prospect of using data in an interlinked, automated and unlimited form thereby breaking outdated business processes open so they meet 21st century requirements. By using cloud technologies and sophisticated business intelligence applications based on cutting edge data science concepts, data is transformed into information and then business-relevant insights. Instead of engaging in tedious data bank inquiries like the kind we have seen in data warehouse models, required operational or strategic process analyses tailored to individual inquiries can be obtained in just a few clicks. Assuming, a valid data basis, predictive analytic models can be used to make business development predictions superior to those based on long-standing branch experience.

By recording mileage per wagon telematics support efficient fleet management

Benefits for intermodal

These advantages can also be put to use in other fields of application. Container logistics, for example, is closely connected to rail freight transport. Optimal use in rail freight transport depends on a number of external factors. Preparing and loading goods in combined transport is one of these factors. High productivity can only be achieved if the goods are ready at the loading point and dispatched correctly.

Via GPS and GLONASS, freight and tank containers can be actively tracked and traced in real-time. The acquired positioning data not only helps transport companies manage their processes. In a supply chain that extends from the manufacturer to the transport company to the customer, all players benefit from this data. One example: current transport and delivery status is also transparent for the customer. By obtaining more precise information about delivery dates as well as delays or breakdowns, companies can manage their production processes accordingly and adjust material flows in coordination with manufacturers and transport companies in a timely manner.

More sensory data acquisition, intelligent business logic, even better insights into container life cycles and increasing automation lead to better process and service quality. This way, bills of lading or quality proofs can be generated automatically, container loading inspections and the corresponding documentation are facilitated or, in the case of yard management, capacity use is improved and it is easier to comply with regulations that apply to storing hazardous goods in one location. A simple but cost-saving example: incoming stock is automatically acquired and validated in a stock list so a "first in – first out" principle can be applied consistently and on the spot.

www.savvy-telematics.com

Silk Road beckons for CIMC smart containers

CIMC and Globe Tracker are getting ready for the commercial exploitation of smart technology following the announcement of their strategic partnership last year.

The partnership is between China's CIMC Internet of Mobile Things International Operation and Service (CIMC IOMT), a subsidiary of the CIMC Intelligent Technology Company, which in turn is a subsidiary of China International Marine Container Company (CIMC), and Danish supply chain technology company Globe Tracker International.

The first move is a plan to produce smart containers for three of CIMC's container manufacturing divisions, Yangzhou Tonglee Special Container, Qingdao CIMC Special Reefer and Nantong CIMC Transportation and Storage.

"The goal is to have all CIMC divisions supplying the container shipping, trucking, railway and logistics industries with global tracking, monitoring and remote asset management services and equipment," according to Dr Shouqin Zhou of CIMC. He added that the project's immediate target is China's One Belt One Road, sometimes called Silk Road, a government strategy to increase connectivity between China and regions like Eurasia and East Africa.

The first move will be to produce smart containers for three of CIMC's container manufacturing divisions

The smart products will be on all types of container, but will also include trucks, truck trailers, rail cars, as well as inland and marine wireless terminal infrastructure and other products that benefit from tracking, monitoring and remote asset management. In the collaboration with Globe Tracker, CIMC IOMT will launch advanced hardware technology and a systems platform under the CIMC brand.

"We are pleased to take the next big step in the relationship between our companies," said Globe Tracker CEO Jim Davis. "We will begin to ramp up our volumes to meet CIMC's demand and the proliferation of the technology on the Silk Road."

www.cimcssc.com
www.globetracker.com

'Tenfold' productivity increase for Bertschi UK

For chemical logistics company, Bertschi UK Ltd, handling over 15,000 containers each year involves endless paperwork and leaves no room for mistakes.

In an effort to streamline the company's system and better monitor overall fleet compliance it turned to web-based compliance management firm r2c Online for help.

A subsidiary of Switzerland-based Bertschi AG, the Middlesbrough, branch provides bulk transport solutions to businesses throughout the UK and Ireland. With a fleet of over 74 vehicles all serviced in-house, compliance and reliability is crucial to ensuring that operations run smoothly.

Looking to boost efficiency, productivity and compliance, Paul Smithyman, transport planning manager for Bertschi UK, recognised the need for tightened fleet control and subsequently approached r2c Online. Smithyman explained: "We were predominantly looking to simplify our system and cut out paperwork. We wanted to ensure that jobs are completed on time and not duplicated, while hopefully increasing productivity."

Smithyman continued: "r2c Online is such a valuable tool for us. Not only is it easy to use, but it's cost effective and simple. Our team picked it up straight away and already productivity has increased tenfold."

Bertschi has been using the system for six months and already reports significant improvements within its fleet control. "Since we started using r2c Online we have considerably less paperwork; it has been easier to track faults, control repair costs and monitor the progress of work on vehicles," added Smithyman.

Founded in 2003, r2c Online owns and operates the what it says is the world's first interactive platform for managing commercial vehicle fleet compliance and maintenance. The cloud-based service connects vehicle operators, fleet managers and leasing companies with dealers, workshops and manufacturers, enabling secure sharing of vital vehicle performance and service information, and an efficient means for scheduling, authorising and invoicing jobs.

Nick Walls, managing director, commented: "r2c Online was created to give fleets like Bertschi UK a cost effective and robust solution to improve the efficiency and reliability of their compliance management. We are delighted to welcome Bertschi on-board, joining a significant number of fleets now accessing the significant benefits which our system provides."

www.r2conline.com

Bertschi UK turned to r2C Online to streamline the company's system and better monitor overall fleet compliance

Hermann Adrigan, sales director at Starlinger & Co

A quick word with...

Hermann Adrigan, sales director at Starlinger & Co

Could you provide us with a short overview of Starlinger and its areas of operation?
Starlinger has been in the mechanical engineering industry since 1835 and has been supplying sack production machinery and turnkey plants worldwide for over 45 years. Our machine portfolio includes extrusion lines for a wide range of special tapes and monofilament yarns, circular looms that cover almost all fabric types from leno fabric to heavy duty fabric for FIBCs, extrusion coating lines, printing lines, semi- and fully-automated conversion lines – everything that is needed to produce woven packaging from plastic tapes.

Starlinger is also a global player in plastics recycling and refining. We supply machinery for the recovery of various types of thermoplastic waste and for food-grade recycling of PET beverage bottles, as well as technology for IV increase and decontamination of post-consumer recycled food grade PET and HDPE flakes and pellets.

***Bulk Distributor* covered your launch of an FIBC made of PET tape fabric at Interpack 2015. What advantages does this type of bag offer and how has it been received in the market?**
Compared to existing FIBCs made of polypropylene tape fabric, PET FIBCs have superior dimensional stability because of their higher rigidity, excellent creep resistance, and low thermal shrinkage. This means they maintain shape and circumference even during long storage periods and in hot conditions. Also, their excellent surface resistibility avoids damage through abrasion, which is an issue during transportation, especially on the road. The use of PET FIBCs could help to avoid breakage and product loss due to damaged FIBCs, and increase the lifecycle and the rate of re-usage of multi-use FIBCs. It minimises not only the breakage rate, but also helps to reduce packaging costs as well as the carbon footprint of an FIBC.

As with all things new, the PET FIBCs are generating great interest in the market, and we are presently conducting tests with customers for various possible applications. The main assets of PET FIBCs are the specific advantages they have compared to FIBCs made of polypropylene. For example, they are perfect for storing and transporting polymers and powders with high flowability, such as expandable polystyrene beads or polymer chips with slip additives. In this and other areas PET FIBCs will replace PP FIBCs because of their special material characteristics. PET FIBCs are also a cost-cutting alternative to expensive packaging such as cardboard octabins.

We are seeing strong growth in terms of FIBC production equipment in China, India, South America and Russia

What other innovations has Starlinger introduced recently for FIBCs/big bags?
We have recently introduced the heavy-duty circular loom RX 8.0 and will launch another new loom for FIBC fabric – the FX 10.0 – at this year's ITMA in Milan. Both looms produce high-quality fabric, have low maintenance and spare part requirements and are cost-efficient. The new reed design allows us to produce oil-free fabric, which is crucial for further process steps such as printing and laminating. With the FX loom series we have achieved an additional quality and productivity increase of 25 to 30 percent and could reduce the production costs per square metre of fabric significantly.

Generally speaking, the trend is going towards lower fabric weight while maintaining the fabric strength and stability as this helps to save raw material costs. However, some industry and country regulations specify the fabric weight for certain applications so that the producers are bound to obey them.

'There is endless discussion about the sustainability and environmental impact of plastics'

What are the main growth areas for the company at the moment?
Currently, we are seeing strong growth in terms of FIBC production equipment in China, India, South America and Russia. In general, Southeast Asia, Latin America, the USA and many of the CIS countries are strongly growing markets for Starlinger at the moment. The advantages of woven fabric for end-consumer packaging such as pet food sacks or packaging for ready-mix and other building materials are more and more recognised.

How competitive do you consider the market you operate in?
Our sector is a very competitive one. Especially for a turnkey equipment provider like Starlinger it is a continuous challenge to stay ahead in all areas of woven packaging production technology. There is a clear trend towards high-quality packaging producers on the one hand, and suppliers to the commodity industry on the other. Starlinger pursues a two-model strategy so that we can provide to both: industry leaders in high-end packaging opt for our latest technology developments, while commodity packaging producers benefit from the continuously high efficiency and fast ROI of our machines.

How do you try to build customer loyalty?
The success of Starlinger is based on good customer relations – they have been our focus since the early days. Our customers are our partners. We want to develop and grow together, and we want to be successful together. We have many customers who bought their first Starlinger line over 35 years ago.

Are there any upcoming changes to regulations that you would like to see to benefit the packaging industry?
An objective consideration and fair judgement of plastics is one of my biggest concerns. There is endless discussion about the sustainability and environmental impact of plastics, but given the recyclability of plastic, and a considerate use of it, it is very often the most sustainable and least impactful solution compared with other materials.

How do you relax in your spare time?
I think in this fast-living and challenging business world it is necessary to use the spare time to recharge and draw new energy. For me, the best thing is to feel the peace of nature and be with my family and friends. What I especially enjoy is to create things – be it new sales strategies, packaging concepts, or a wood cabin in the forest. Maybe that's why I like my job so much – it gives me plenty of room to create.

Copal helps Nestlé bag the coffee

The world's largest food company Nestlé and Copal Development have signed a contract for a solution for the automatic unloading and palletising of jute bags filled with coffee beans. The complete bags handling line was developed in co-operation with Symach and Wemo-Techniek.

The developers claim the system is a "unique" and innovative solution for a known worldwide problem: heavy physical work when unloading and palletising bags out of containers. It is operated by just one employee, ensuring process optimisation, reduces operational costs and increases productivity, they claim.

It unloads jute bags from containers, detects humidity, takes samples of the content and automatically palletises the bags with a high stacking quality. Next to that, rejected bags, say, due to humidity or damage, are automatically separated from the line. A number of lines will be operational for Nestlé in the second half of this year.

The partnership also allows Nestlé to achieve its goals in the field of sustainability. With its mission 'Good Food, Good Life', Nestlé aims to reduce the burden of heavy physical labour for employees. In addition, the automation of the sampling and disapproval of rejected bags improve quality assurance.

Headquartered in the Netherlands, Copal Development develops and manufactures a range of container stripping and palletising systems. Loose loaded boxes can be automatically palletised or directed for storage and interface with warehouse management systems.

Also mixed container loads and products other than carton boxes can be processed with Copal systems. When palletising, numerous stacking patterns can be selected and various sorts of pallet sizes can be used.

www.copal-development.com

The bag line reduces heavy physical work when unloading and palletising bags out of containers

The Copal C2 bags handling line

Flexicon opens Barcelona office

Flexicon has opened a new office in Barcelona to provide factory-direct engineering services and technical sales support to customers throughout Spain.

"The Barcelona location, coupled with our new Spanish language website, will fuel Flexicon's rapid growth in the region by providing dedicated Spanish-language staff with full access to corporate resources," explains Keith Bourton, managing director of Flexicon Europe Ltd.

The Barcelona office is headed by Victor Zamora Gomez, regional sales manager. He holds a degree in electronic engineering from Universitat Politecnica de Catalunya, and previously served as project manager for a bulk solids consultancy where he managed mechanical and electrical aspects of small to large bulk handling projects.

At Flexicon, he will be responsible for building relationships with plant managers, engineers and other decision-makers in facilities that handle bulk solid materials across the food, pharmaceutical, mineral and general chemical industries.

"The Barcelona office will have full access to Flexicon's engineering resources, including details on more than 20,000 installations of bulk handling equipment worldwide," added Bourton.

Flexicon (Europe) is based in Kent, UK, and is a fully-owned subsidiary of Flexicon Corporation of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, USA. In addition to the Kent manufacturing location, Flexicon Corporation owns and operates manufacturing facilities in Brisbane, Australia and Port Elizabeth, South Africa, and maintains factory-direct sales offices in Santiago, Chile and Singapore.

The website for the company's Spain operation is **www.flexicon.es**

Flexicon's bulk handling equipment includes bulk bag fillers and dischargers, pneumatic conveying systems, and flexible screw conveyors

Spiroflow's conveying systems technology was on display at PPMA

Spiroflow on display at PPMA

Spiroflow used the PPMA Show to demonstrate its latest flexible conveying systems.

Taking centre stage was a multiple flexible screw conveyor demonstration set-up, complete with sack tip station, product agitators and loss-in-weight feeders, demonstrating their versatility in terms of feed rate, throughput range, consistency and accuracy of output, angle of elevation and quick release features.

Spiroflow's technical team was on hand to demonstrate the advantages of the vacuum conveyor, which is able to negotiate lengthy and tortuous routes and hygienically transfer materials.

The bulk bag discharger Model T2 was also on show, with options including loss-in-weight product feed, patented massage systems to promote flow from bags, hygienic spout sealing device, integral hoist and other devices to ensure controlled and dust-free emptying of 1-2 tonne bags.

The Lancashire, UK business has already won two awards in 2015, recently adding the Food Processing magazine accolade to the SHAPA Company of the Year Award.

Spiroflow's marketing manager, Ben Ayrton, said: "We were delighted to demonstrate fully working examples of our totally hygienic conveying systems at PPMA. Whether equipment is required for efficiently conveying food ingredients, such as flour, cereals and coffee granules, or accurately controlling the flow of materials for the chemical and mineral sectors, Spiroflow can reassure customers that the wide range of dust-tight systems that it can supply provide optimum performance and offer value for money."

www.spiroflow.com

Pallet-free performance

A critical issue facing manufacturers of powders and bulk solid materials globally is the need for a safe, reliable and efficient packaging and transport system.

"It's important in the handling of powders and bulk solids that waste is minimised and the highest level of product safety of goods being transported is maintained," says Ken Mouritzen, director of South African pallet-free bulk bag manufacturer Tellap.

"Packaging must protect product purity. There are many issues associated with heavy wooden pallets - including packaging damage and contamination from splinters, nails and mould - that are forcing industry to look at packaging alternatives.

"Wooden pallets are a problem," he continues. "Purchase, storage, exchange and disposal of wooden pallets are obvious costs, but other issues, like ISPM 15 compliance, damage and product contamination, also increase expenses. These costs, along with transport charges and frenetic global competition, have impacted significantly on companies' profit margins."

Tellap developed its patented lightweight recyclable pallet-free bulk bag in response to demand for an alternative to the conventional heavy wooden pallet and its inherent problems. Described as cost-effective, safe efficient and recyclable, the Tellap product comprises a customisable polypropylene bulk bag with two lightweight robust plastic sleeves. These high strength sleeves are integrated into the base of the bag to become the pallet, allowing a forklift to raise the bag from the base. No external pallet is needed.

Safety has been an important focus in the development of Tellap. The integrated sleeves, which act like outriggers on a canoe, increase stability during storage and transport, making the workplace safer for workers. As a result safe stable stacking three high, where legislation allows, use limited space and reduces warehouse costs.

The Tellap bag design is also tailored to meet the needs of each customer, the product, filling, conveying and discharge equipment, as well as the mode of transport.

Carefully selected global manufacturers are rigorously tested to ensure they comply with mandatory industry regulations such that every bag supplied meets stringent international standards.

Independent certification by TEN-E Packaging Services, a global specialist in packaging component testing, ensures every customer receives a consistent high quality product, optimised for their specific packaging needs.

The pallet free bag is manufactured from 100 percent recyclable polypropylene, requiring no timber, no heat treatment and has no disposal problems. Sustainability, cost reduction and safety are key reasons organisations now use this packaging system.

www.tellapbags.com

The Tellap bulk bag weighs only 5kg against up to 35kg for a conventional wooden pallet. High strength sleeves are integrated into the base of the bag to replace the pallet, allowing a standard forklift truck to raise the bag from the base

To be able to calculate potential transport savings when replacing pallets with the Tellap system, the company has included an online calculator on its website **http://tellapbags.com/why-tellap/tellap-calculator**

Manufacturing to drive bulk packaging

Freedonia's latest bulk packaging report* predicts growth in global manufacturing activity will be the primary driver of demand, with film wrap, FIBCs, RIBCs, and material handling containers among the best opportunities.

The research outfit says world demand for bulk packaging is projected to increase 5 percent annually to US$59.2 billion by 2018. This will represent an improvement over the 2008-2013 period, when growth in demand was particularly sluggish in the world's most developed markets, especially Japan and Western Europe.

Although the improved performance for bulk packaging in developed markets is notable, the fastest gains will be in developing regions, such as the Africa and Middle East, Asia/Pacific, and Central and South America. India and Indonesia will be among the fastest growing national markets. Growth in China's manufacturing sector is beginning to decelerate after a few decades of world-leading growth -- but advances in bulk packaging demand in China will still be among the world's strongest.

In developed markets, advances will be more modest. In the US, gains will be driven by increased demand in food and chemical applications, as growth in both food and beverage processing and chemical and pharmaceutical production are expected to accelerate. These same developments are expected to drive demand in Western Europe and Japan, though gains will be somewhat muted as the manufacturing slump in these areas has been more enduring, and the recovery is also expected to be less explosive.

Flexible bulk packaging will register slightly faster growth than rigid packaging, the report adds. Gains in flexible bulk packaging will be led by film wrap and FIBCs. Film wrap will post healthy gains due to its increased use in securing pallets and other packaging formats during shipment, and the growing use of film to bundle bulk and multipack items in retail settings such as warehouse-style stores.

*World Bulk Packaging. Industry Study 3233.

www.freedoniagroup.com

FIBCs will register strong advances due to the advantages they offer in terms of loading and unloading products

Greif down in third quarter

Greif, Inc reported third quarter 2015 net income of US$8.6 million or $0.15 per share compared with net income of $13.7 million in the corresponding period of last year.

Sales amounted $930 million against $1,124 million last year. After adjusting for the effect of divestitures in both quarters and currency translation for the third quarter 2015, sales were 2.7 percent lower for the quarter when compared to the third quarter 2014.

David Fischer, president and CEO, said of the results: "We are pleased with the progress of our transformation initiative. While much work remains, during the third quarter we continued to reduce complexity in our businesses, achieved a 16 percent decrease in expenses excluding the impact of currency translation compared to a year ago, and improved capacity utilisation in our rigid industrial packaging (division)."

In the division net sales fell 19.2 percent to $669 million for the quarter compared with $827.7 million for Q3 2014. Excluding the impact of divestitures, net sales decreased 14.4 percent to $667.9 million. The decrease in net sales was primarily due to the negative impact of foreign currency translation of 10.8 percent and price decreases of 3.7 percent, due mainly to the impact of decreases in raw material costs, compared to the same quarter 2014.

Operating profit was $29.5 million for the third quarter of 2015 against $43 million. Greif attributed the decrease to a number of factors including the negative impact of foreign currency translation, higher restructuring and non-cash asset impairment charges, and a write-down of the value of the company's inventory in Venezuela of $9.3 million as part of the overall recalculation of the Venezuelan balance sheet resulting from hyper-inflation in the troubled South American country.

Operating profit before special items and excluding the impact of divestitures was $60.2 million versus $63 million for the third quarter of 2014.

In flexible packaging net sales fell 26.2 percent to $79.2 million against $107.3 million for the third quarter 2014. The decrease was primarily due to of lower sales volumes of 8.9 percent, offset by an 11.1 percent increase in prices, plus the negative impact of foreign currency translation of 15.7 percent.

Operating loss was $9.7 million for the quarter, lower than the loss of $12.9 million for the third quarter of 2014. Operating loss before special items and divestitures was $4.3 million for the third quarter of 2015 against $5.6 million. The decrease in operating loss was mainly due to lower personnel, security and alternative supply costs compared to the prior period which included costs of the occupation of Greif's Hadimkoy facility, in Turkey, as well as reductions in production costs.

Fischer added: "Concerning the growth elements of our transformation activities, we are equally encouraged with the progress made on several key initiatives including our IBC global expansion efforts and by the exceptional performance of recently completed investments at the Riverville, Virginia (USA) mill and the additional corrugator in our paper packaging division. These transformation improvements bode well for 2016."

www.greif.com

Werit innovations at Fach Pack

Werit presented a number of innovations at this year's Fach Pack fair in Nuremberg, Germany.

These included new Euro Standard Stacking Containers, a new series of Stack and Nest Containers and new pallets from the IKP series. These were presented exclusively at the trade fair.

In addition, Werit presented the TOPline IBC, which is capable of holding liquids with a density up to 2.4 grams per cubic centimetre. The all-plastic IBC has been developed further in form and function, the company said.

The Euro Standard Stacking Containers can be used particularly in the food or non-food industries. The containers, which are made of HDPE, are designed to be easy to clean and thus suitable for use in hygienically sensitive areas such as the foodstuff industry.

They allow manual handling and also use on the corresponding conveyor technology. The containers are available in the size 600 x 400 mm in four different heights (120, 170, 220, and 320 mm). Customers can choose between handle strips, two or four handle openings and four different colours (nature, grey, red, blue) as well as the corresponding accessories. Stability, functionality, and design are the main features of these containers.

Another innovation Werit presented at FackPack was a new series of Stack and Nest Containers. These are an addition to the established DSB-N series in the size 600 x 400 and complete Werit's range of volume reducible containers. These products in the size 400 x 300 mm are available in three different heights: 170, 220, and 270 mm, furthermore there are different kinds of bottom, closed or perforated walls, as well as the corresponding accessories provided.

The containers, which are also made from HDPE, are easy to clean, functional and robust, said Werit. They can be used as a classical transport, storage or even commissioning container. By default, the containers are produced in a resistant grey, but individual colours, imprints, stickers or engravings can be ordered.

In addition to the new container families the TOPline IBC with its 2.4 density for the transport of hazardous goods was on display, as were Werit's extensive plastic pallet range, from the Euro H1 Hygiene Pallet, which follows GS1-requirements, to medium pallets of the IKP series in different new designs.

www.werit.eu

A view from…

A practical test has confirmed that low rolling resistance tyres for HGVs can save €1.5 million in fuel costs significantly reduce CO2 emissions. Peter Viebig looks at the figures

Why green tyres help you to stay in the black

As the Chinese philosopher Confucius once said, the journey is the destination. About 2,500 years later, two 40-tonne, identically-constructed articulated trucks proved his point by hitting the road, travelling back and forth for two months between the towns of Hürth in the Rhineland and Loos in northern France.

The round trip amounted to around 650km, and, in total, the HGVs covered a distance of 40,000km. The driver, payload and refuelling operations remained exactly the same for both trucks. So what was the difference between them? While one truck was equipped with standard tyres of fuel efficiency class D, the other one rolled along on class B so-called 'green tyres'. The idea was to determine how much fuel could really be saved with this smooth-running rubber.

The results speak for themselves: 'green tyres' reduce fuel consumption in HGVs by 8.5 percent. Vehicle fleet operating companies which are constantly struggling with the pressure of costs could save many millions of euros a year. Additionally, tyres with optimised rolling resistance reduce the CO2 output of commercial vehicles significantly compared to standard tyres.

Lanxess, the world's leading manufacturer of high-performance synthetic rubbers, has developed and implemented a comprehensive test procedure together with TÜV Rheinland and Talke. "We have now been able to prove in practice that quality tyres with low rolling resistance offer a large saving potential in the commercial vehicles sector," said Axel Vassen, fleet vehicle expert at Lanxess.

The tyre label is a new labelling requirement introduced by the EU at the end of 2012. This applies to both personal and commercial vehicle tyres. The label indicates the rolling resistance of the manufacturing brand from grade A (low) to grade G (high). Additionally, it rates the wet grip and the roadway noise.

The TÜV Rheinland experts recorded all the findings during the tests. "Our inspectors were on site for all refuelling operations and examined the quantity contained within the tank. This demonstrates the hundred percent monitoring we are talking about. Additionally, our experts checked the tyre inflation pressure or the vehicle weight every time. All this ultimately leads to reliable results," emphasises Professor Dr.-Ing. Jürgen Brauckmann, member of the board of management of TÜV Rheinland Berlin Brandenburg.

Talke is one of the first in its industry in Germany to have subscribed to the Responsible Care initiative through ECTA. "We've been using 'green tyres' on our fleet for many years now," explains Christoph Opperman, Responsible Care Coordinator at Talke. "We haven't been using the efficiency class D tyres that were fitted to the test vehicles for a long time now. So for us it was quite striking to see how unambiguous the test results were."

The following example shows what a change to 'green tyres' means: up to now, a fleet of 300 heavy trucks has been using tyres that have a D rating value for rolling resistance according to the EU label. But if the company were to switch to tyres rated B (A tyres for HGVs are currently very difficult to get hold of), they could save €1.5 million a year in fuel costs alone (for a distance of 150,000km per vehicle and at a fuel price of €1.40). After deducting the extra charges of €140,000 for the 'green rubber', you are still left with a plus of around €1.45 million. The CO2 savings amount to more than 3,000 tons a year.

"The analysis speaks for itself, but it also confirms the experience we have gained over many years. This slightly higher price for a 'green tyre' pays off quickly," explains project manager Armin F. Talke. If all of the approximately 14,300 registered 40-tonne trucks in Germany were equipped with low rolling resistance tyres, trucking companies could make total net savings of more than €69.5 million a year. Additionally, greenhouse gas emissions would be reduced by around 150,000 tons a year.

"The test is a further demonstration of the great benefit afforded by sophisticated modern standards, including in the chemical transport sector," says Marc Twisk, managing director and Responsible Care Coordinator at ECTA. The use of low rolling-resistance tyres is a best practice that can help the members of his association to improve efficiency, even in an increasingly competitive business environment, while maintaining or improving safety and at the same time operating in a more sustainable manner.

Making trucks more economical – with "green tyres". Specialty chemicals company Lanxess joined forces with chemical logistics provider Talke and inspection association TÜV Rheinland to carry out a practical test on truck tyres. At the end of the test it emerged that by changing to "green tyres", it was possible to reduce fuel consumption by 8.5 percent.
Photo: Lanxess AG

Christoph Kalla, tyre and rubber expert at Lanxess, explains where the development of environmentally friendly tyres is heading: "Within the tyre industry, every possible avenue in terms of construction has been exhausted to a great extent. In other words: the age of the material has begun." Due to their specific characteristics, high-performance rubbers provide more fuel efficiency and elasticity as well as greater wear and tear resistance. Kalla is confident: "Further development of these materials will allow tyre manufacturers to reduce the rolling resistance even more in the future."

Peter Viebig is director of transport for Alfred Talke, a member company of ECTA

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Gauging the wider responsibility

Hoyer Group is determined to continue being a leading player in worldwide bulk transport and logistics for the long term. Having been in business since 1946, the Hamburg logistics firm is now in a private ownership transition between the second and third generations of founder Walter Hoyer's family.

The Hoyer family firmly believes that in an increasingly global marketplace social, environmental and economic responsibility is critical to achieving sustainable long-term business success.

This is why some five years ago, it decided to develop a sustainability policy, which makes commitments regarding how the company is run, sets out plans for the future and puts management and measurement systems in place to help it achieve its objectives.

The Sustainability Policy and Strategy comprises three focus areas:

- Social responsibility, both internal and external
- Protection of the environment
- Economic sustainability

With more than 5,000 employees in over 80 countries, Hoyer operates 33,800 tank containers, 2,500 trucks, 2,900 road tankers, 23,600 intermediate bulk containers, and numerous logistics facilities, transport depots, tank cleaning stations and specialist tank workshops.

Recently, Hoyer presented the latest key figures reporting on the sustainability of the company's operations. In this Sustainability Report, Hoyer underlines its responsibility to employees and the environment and publicly defines its objectives in those areas. The report makes it clear that economic, ecological and social aspects of sustainability are given equal status at Hoyer, aspects the company sees as key to long-term success and a secure future.

The report shows that the logistics company has in 2014 once again succeeded in reducing CO_2 emissions per tonne-kilometre – now to its latest and lowest level of 21.11 grams. Over the past five years, pollutant output has therefore been cut by no less than 25 percent. Furthermore, 95 percent of Hoyer's trucks are now powered by low-emission engines in the Euro V and Euro VI classes. Intensive training in terms of energy-saving driving styles is also paying dividends.

As a result of the efficient integration of railways and shipping, intermodal transport now accounts for 80 percent of transport movements. This percentage continues to increase year on year, thereby making a substantial contribution to the reduction of CO_2 emissions.

In 2014, Hoyer again made considerable investments in the further training of employees. On average each of the company's professional truck drivers received roughly two hours more training than in the previous year. This has also had a positive effect on accident statistics, with the number of more serious incidents reducing to 69, well below the company's target. In 2009, the group defined a target to halve so called 'main incidents' by 2020 and in that way achieve a core objective of social responsibility for all employees and the general public.

As a consequence of these long-term measures, Hoyer is also an attractive employer for young people: in 2014, the family company boasted the highest number of employees under the age of 30 in its corporate history.

The firm is pursuing a number of other key initiatives. These include optimising payload, and so minimising empty running and kilometres.

A range of measures in Hoyer's tank cleaning operations are also being undertaken to reduce energy, water and waste water, by up to 5 percent per order using new and optimised heat recovery and waste water technologies.

The group's approach even extends to a new company car scheme with a focus on safety features, engine performance and fuel efficiency. In addition, Hoyer has been rolling out e-learning tools to improve performance and efficiency, while reducing the environmental impact of delivering the training.

Environmental Protection KPIs Transport	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Intermodal transports (% of km covered in intermodal transports – including overseas)	69.2	75.5	70.1	77.7	80.5	80.8

Hoyer's intermodal transport now accounts for 80 percent of movements and continues to increase year on year

Collaboration - a win-win strategy

Long-term partnerships between shippers and carriers can bring real sustainability gains and significantly cut costs, writes Frank Verhoeven

Every company using transport & logistics services wants to drive down its costs, and tenders are typically the key tool used to do this. But a narrow focus on tendering brings only short-term gains.

The road less travelled is to opt for a collaborative approach aimed at fostering long-term, collaborative relationships. These open up opportunities to achieve huge benefits both to the planet and the bottom line.

When products and services are seen merely as commodities, 'getting the best deal' is just another way of saying that one has paid the lowest price. Consumers as well as businesses are mainly driven by price, and when goods or services truly are commodities, this makes sense. Why pay more for something that's no different from a cheaper alternative?

The truth of this can be clearly seen in transport and logistics services. For straightforward demands, a simple tender process may be the most appropriate way of agreeing a contract – and tenders are also an important way of testing market conditions. While price is key to such tendering, switching costs also have to be taken into account. This is one reason why the relationship between shipper and logistics service provider is continued in more than 60 percent of tender processes, as research by ABN AMRO Bank has shown.

But there is another kind of price to be paid for relationships exclusively based on cost – and one that is not recognised often enough. In the transport and logistics sector, requirements on providers tend to be sophisticated and call for a tailored approach to achieve the best results. What's more, many shippers are keen not only to cut costs but also to reduce their environmental footprint. To achieve these goals, collaboration and partnerships are the way to go.

Real collaboration - a game-changer

Take Michelin, for example, a Vos Logistics client. Hubert Franck, the Michelin manager responsible for sourcing European logistics services, was looking for a way to reduce the company's costs per tonne moved. But he was looking for more than this, as he explains: "I wanted a durable relationship with partners, whatever the market is like. Usually when the market is slow, it isn't difficult to find a transport company. Basically, they're crying out for work. But when the market goes up, these companies want to renegotiate. A longer-term commitment to work together can change the game for the better for all involved."

Having identified the need for a collaborative approach with service providers to meet his company's logistics demands, Franck worked closely with Vos Logistics and several other operators to arrive at precisely the right relationship model. In doing so, he opened up new opportunities to increase efficiency – by avoiding empty kilometres and waiting time for drivers, for example, and by designing smart loops instead of point-to-point deliveries.

Durable relationships call for commitment

The high-value needs of big companies like Michelin can only be met by a select group of operators. Scale is obviously important, but quality of materials, environmental standards and the flexibility that allows for building a relationship are also key. A durable commitment can only be assured through adequate investment capacity and continuous progress in operational quality.

This sort of relationship also asks a lot from the shipper, not least because it involves a closer link between transport and logistics services and the value cycle of the shipper's company. To avoid loss of time for the transporter, the in-house logistics service has to be connected flawlessly. And when European loops cover countries from France to Spain, Poland and Hungary (as is the case with Michelin) planning and execution depend on close attention to detail on both sides. To ensure this, top management commitment is crucial, both in the contracting and the operational phase.

Getting operational performance up to speed is demanding – success means that the process will run like a finely tuned but complex machine. But the sort of long-term relationships that make this possible, built on trust and two-dimensional commitment, also lead to better understanding of mutual needs, more dedicated staff (eg, by allocating teams of drivers who know their clients) and fewer incidents and accidents.

The potential gains to be made from reducing empty kilometres through co-operation are highly significant, in both financial and ecological terms. At present, no less than 30 percent of the truck capacity in Europe currently drives empty.

But there are other kinds of optimisation that are best achieved through a collaborative approach. The use of eco-combi trucks, as are already operating successfully in Scandinavia and the Netherlands, is a potential enabler for further efficiency in international transport, for instance, while the potential of multimodal transport (rail and ferries) in Europe offers plenty of room for further development.

Developing these concepts and convincing national and European governments of their relevance calls for a mutual approach that takes a long-term view of the relationship between shippers and logistics service providers.

The potential cost savings to be gained from real collaborative initiatives could add up to a double-digit percentage

Frank Verhoeven is CEO of Vos Logistics, based in Oss, The Netherlands. Vos Logistics is a specialist in a wide range of transport and customer-specific logistics services and is active across Europe through a network of 30 locations. With 2,000 employees, it operates some 1,100 vehicles, 3,000 loading units and 200,000 sqm of storage space. In the bulk and volume transport markets, Vos Logistics is one of the largest road hauliers in Europe.

This article was written with the support of Wouter Scheepens, owner/partner at Stuard Redqueen, a specialised consultancy that works across the globe advising organisations on impact and sustainability.

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Partnering for planet and profit

We are increasingly aware of the need to transition to a low-carbon economy, and for a growing group of companies this is – quite rightly – an increasingly important objective. But in transport and logistics this transition can only be achieved through partnerships that take a long-term view.

A good example is switching to liquefied natural gas (LNG), which is 20-30 percent cheaper than diesel and much cleaner, thus offering big financial as well as ecological gains. But running routes on LNG not only requires the trucks but also the fuel station infrastructure.

At Vos Logistics, we are working with several companies in consortia that take a joint approach to expanding the European LNG network. In financial terms, the overall cost can be lower due to a lower variable component (fuel), despite higher fixed truck costs. But the bigger picture is that partnering in this way to realise a shared ambition should usher in cleaner, cheaper and quieter transport.

And this is only the first step towards truly carbon-neutral transport in the longer term, as replacing LNG by biogas (LBG) is only a small step away.

Partnerships are also likely to prove vital if we are to reap the benefits of other technological innovations that will define the future of the transport and logistics sector. Connected trucks are a first step towards driverless trucks, which are currently being tested by a range of manufacturers. It remains to be seen how quickly regulators will adapt to such new technologies, but I have no doubt that they will be most successfully integrated when the demand and supply sides in our sector are able to build on the experience of a collaborative partnership approach.

Collaborating for a cleaner and more prosperous future

It is worth stressing that tendering will still have an important role to play. Hubert Franck of Michelin was very clear about this when he opted for a collaborative model. As he puts it: "This way of working does not replace tenders, which in some cases deliver just the kind of solutions I need. It is the combination of instruments that helps me make the most of my portfolio of activities."

But I believe that the potential cost savings to be gained from the kind of collaborative initiatives I have outlined will add up to a double-digit percentage – a gain of a scale that cannot be expected to be captured sustainably by conventional tenders.

Success in transport and logistics will depend crucially on remaining proactive and riding new waves of innovation. Working in partnership is a precondition to doing so effectively. This means taking a differentiated approach to sourcing, and embracing collaborative loops alongside straightforward tendering. Working together in this way, shippers and carriers will build the foundations for the kind of partnerships that can propel the transport business into the future.

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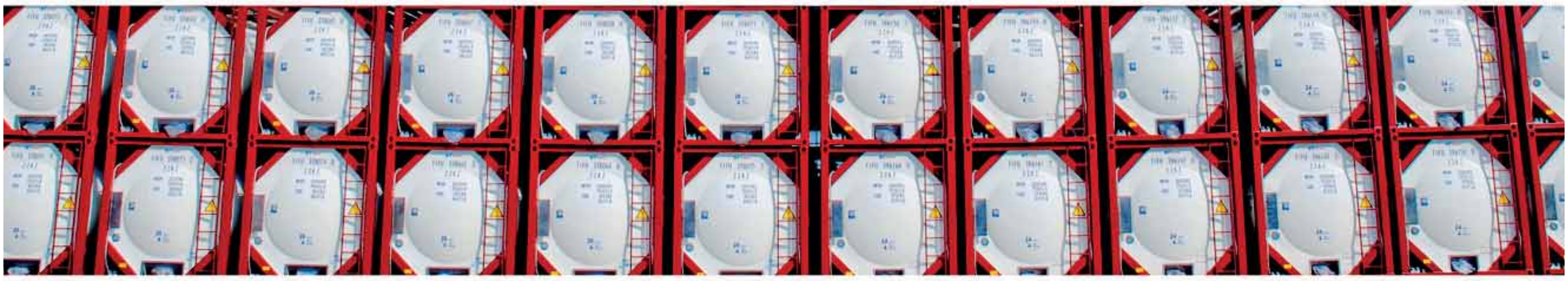

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California cousins combat congestion

Battered by a long running strike during the past year, the neighbouring Californian ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach also sometimes suffer significant congestion for trucks entering and leaving the ports' gates.

So in the latest in a series of measures to combat congestion, PierPass Inc has grouped together 10 of its member container terminals in a co-ordinated initiative to establish appointment systems for trucks delivering containers to and from those terminals.

PierPass is a not-for-profit company created by marine terminal operators in the two ports to address multi-terminal issues such as congestion, air quality and security.

In this latest initiative, the terminals have adopted an appointment system action plan and committed to a set of common requirements. The five terminals that currently operate appointment systems have agreed to adopt these requirements, and five more plan to introduce appointment systems in 2016 that will follow the same guidelines.

Three major common rules will apply.

First, appointments will be mandatory at all participating terminals. At times, appointments have been treated as optional, which has reduced the intended benefit of smoothing out truck traffic flow.

Second, the systems will apply to import containers at all terminals. Appointments for exports are being evaluated as a potential future requirement.

Finally, all individual terminal appointment systems will be accessible via links from PierPass' websites.

"The increasing number of containers unloaded by larger new ships has put the traditional random access system – where any truck can arrive at any time to pick up any container – under strain," said John Cushing, president of PierPass.

"Appointment systems are part of the growing set of tools terminals are embracing to fight congestion and reduce turn times, alongside innovations including free flow and the off peak programme of night and Saturday truck gates."

"Since we updated our appointment system in 2014, we have seen a marked decline in queuing at our gates and better turn times for our truckers," added Mark Wheeler, vice president and general manager at West Basin Container Terminal (WBCT) in Los Angeles.

For truck drivers, trucking companies and cargo owners, the appointment systems will add predictability to the supply chain, PierPass claims. The variable queue lengths at different times of the day will be flattened out, which is expected to reduce the longer truck turn times. Appointment systems also allow terminals to group appointments for specific stacks of containers, reducing the time spent waiting for container moving yard equipment to move between stacks.

"Co-ordinating pick-ups and deliveries with the trucking companies will increase productivity for the truckers and for our terminal operations," said Sean Lindsay, chief operating officer of International Transportation Service (ITS) terminal in Long Beach. "Therefore, we will be implementing an appointment system in 2016 to achieve this."

The terminals that currently have appointment systems are: APM Terminals (APMT), Eagle Marine Services (EMS/GGS), West Basin Container Terminal (WBCT), Seaside Transportation Services (STS/Evergreen), and Total Terminals International (TTI).

Those which plan to implement systems in 2016 are: Trapac, Long Beach Container Terminal (LBCT), SSA Terminals (Long Beach) (Pier A), International Transportation Service (ITS), and Pacific Maritime Services (PCT).

www.pierpass.org

Odfjell edges up

Odfjell's tank terminals business delivered an EBITDA of US$9.3 million in the second quarter, up from $9 million in the previous quarter.

Performance was driven in part by the high demand for spot and mid-term storage due to forward prices for oil being sufficiently above spot prices to make it profitable to put crude into storage for a given period, a market known as contango.

Additional capacity at the terminals in Houston and in Charleston contributed to a slight increase in the EBITDA of the North American terminals, while reorganisation at the Rotterdam distillation site implemented last year improved results, with EDITDA was reduced to -$1.6 million compared with -$2 million in the previous quarter.

The tank terminal group as a whole saw commercial occupancy edge up to 92 percent, against 91 percent last quarter, largely due to progress in Rotterdam, Charleston and Korea.

Odfjell's Tianjin facility, located in a new industrial development area, was not directly affected by the explosion in the Tianjin old harbour in August. However, the group said the event would most likely delay action on permits, and it now expects operations to commence in October.

Odfjell Terminal (Rotterdam)'s commercially available occupancy at the end of the second quarter was 93 percent, up from 87 percent previously. The four distillation columns were fully operational at the end of the quarter. In the second quarter, an additional 4 percent of capacity was added, with a total of 860,000 cbm being commercially available by end of June compared with 826,000 cbm as of end previous quarter. With the current market activity, Odfjell expects to add further capacity.

BTT hits half-million

Rotterdam's Botlek Tank Terminal (BTT) reached the milestone of half a million tonnes handled by rail during the summer.

In the past two years various customers have used the new rail loading and discharge facility, part of BTT's vision to provide all modes of transport and is a response to growing customer demand for rail movement. The rail loading rack is used to handle block trains with biodiesel, as well as palm and soybean oil. The facility can also be used for other vegetable oils, such as sunflower and rapeseed. In future, the facility can also be expanded to handle products such as aviation fuels, gasoline and diesel.

The loading/unloading station has two rail tracks with a length of 340m. A block train of 24 wagons can be handled with expansion possibilities up to 30 wagons. With a capacity of 400 tonnes per hour, six wagons can simultaneously be loaded or discharged. Accordingly, two block trains a day can be handled.

Oiltanking stake in Acu

Brazil's Prumo has signed a contract with Oiltanking to sell a 20 percent stake in the Acu Port Oil Terminal for US$200 million.

As part of the agreement, Oiltanking will operate and manage the terminal's crude-handling operations. The transhipment terminal has a licensed capacity to handle up to 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil and is designed to accommodate VLCCs. It shares existing infrastructure with Acu Port's operational iron ore terminal and is scheduled to begin operations in August 2016.

Oiltanking believes that the large-scale terminal offers customers state-of-the-art transhipment facilities, with mineral oil storage, blending and treatment facilities to be added in the future.

NuStar gets dock go-ahead

Port of Corpus Christi, Texas, has approved a lease for NuStar Energy.

This gives NuStar the space to develop another private marine loading dock at its North Beach Terminal. NuStar hopes it will be completed in the second quarter of 2017. It will be designed to load Suezmax vessels at rates up to 30,000 barrels per hour and the ability to expand to 50,000 barrels per hour (bph). With the new dock, NuStar would have access to four loading docks in Corpus Christi, including two private ones, and would be able to load crude oil onto ships simultaneously on all four docks at a maximum rate of 90,000 bph.

Allard Castelein, CEO Port of Rotterdam (left) and Bambang Eka Cahyana, Director of Pelindo 1

Rotterdam explores Sumatra

Port of Rotterdam is looking to construct a deepsea port in Indonesia.

The Port of Rotterdam Authority signed a partnership agreement with the Indonesian Port Corporation Pelindo I in Medan, North Sumatra for the development of the new deep sea port Kuala Tanjung.

The Dutch port authority will now carry out a feasibility study for the new port together with Pelindo I. A project organisation will be created that will include a number of the Rotterdam's employees, both locally and based in Rotterdam. Depending on the outcome of the feasibility study, Rotterdam will assess whether it will enter into a joint venture with Pelindo I for the further realisation of the port.

Rotterdam CEO Allard Castelein signed the agreement on behalf of the authority. "We want to share our knowledge in the construction, development and management of Kuala Tanjung," he said. "We are confident that our port authority and Pelindo I will form a strong team that will serve the country and provide for a better future."

Castelein took part in a Rotterdam delegation that travelled through Indonesia under the leadership of Ahmed Aboutaleb. The Mayor of Rotterdam was present during the signing and indicated that he hoped that new port will create many new jobs in Sumatra. "This is a good opportunity to develop new activities and to attract investors," he said.

The development of a deepsea port in Indonesia is consistent with Rotterdam's foreign policy that, among other things, is focused on creating opportunities for Dutch companies abroad. Participation in port development in countries that are of interest is one of the ways in which to achieve this. Hence, in 2003, the port authority signed a joint venture with the Sultan of Oman – Sohar Industrial Port Company – for the development of the Port of Sohar, and also why it is focusing on developing Porto Central in Brazil.

Kuala Tanjung is a newly to be developed port near the city of Medan located in the Strait of Malacca, one of the most important shipping routes in the world. Joko Widodo ('Jokowi'), who became Indonesia's president last year, has made strengthening the maritime sector a spearhead of his policy in order to promote economic growth, currently 6-7 percent a year. Kuala Tanjung is one of the main projects in the national maritime strategy.

Until now, Indonesia's large scale ports have been concentrated on the island of Java, where the capital Jakarta is situated.

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ISSN 1462-0731

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Vopak stays on target

Vopak EBITDA increased by 11 percent to €408 million in the first half of 2015, primarily due to higher occupancy rates and positive currency translation effects.

EBIT increased by 12 percent to €282 million, while net profit attributable to shareholders increased by 17 percent to €162 million.

The group divested seven terminals and two plots of land in the period and consequently its worldwide storage capacity on a 100 percent basis decreased by 1.1 million cbm to 32.7 million cbm compared to year-end 2014.

Vopak reconfirmed its outlook for 2015 to realise an EBITDA - excluding exceptional items - exceeding the full year 2014 result (€763 million), although the second half of this year will not be higher than the EBITDA of the first six months due to the impact of the divestments and "the more challenging business circumstances in Asia".

On 13 July, Vopak announced it received a non-binding offer on all of its UK assets. Based on this interest, exploratory meetings are taking place, but as the outcome of these meetings is unknown, the group has not released further details.

Meanwhile, on 15 July, Vopak sold its Finnish entity Vopak Chemicals Logistics Finland Oy. The divested entity comprises two terminals: Vopak Terminal Mussalo and Vopak Terminal Hamina with a combined capacity of 175,400 cbm. The net cash proceeds were approximately €43 million and the exceptional gain on divestment was approximately €18 million.

Old father Thames keeps rolling along

To mark London International Shipping Week in September, the Port of London Authority (PLA) published data showing the tidal Thames is thriving.

Economically the PLA counted over 40,000 jobs linked to port operations. But also the port says its amenity value is worth more than £100 million in health benefits for residents alone who enjoy 10 million bike rides and walks on the towpath every year.

The data was revealed by two research studies into the economic impact of port, passenger and other operations on the Thames; and a first-of-its-kind assessment of the river's 'amenity' value.

The Thames is home to the UK's second biggest port, the busiest inland waterway in the country with 10 million passenger trips and five million tonnes of freight moved between river terminals every year. It is a vital supply line keeping families across London and the south east supplied with food, fuel and other essentials, as well as being a haven for nature and a centre for sports and recreation.

"We knew the Thames was economically important and this data underlines that, as it supports over 43,000 jobs and generates over £4 billion for the economy," commented PLA chief executive Robin Mortimer.

"What's really new with this research is the first attempt to gauge the less tangible, amenity value of the river, for example how the Thames supports the health of people using the river and towpath for sport and recreation; and how this contributes to tourism spend in the capital."

The PLA commissioned the research as part of a year-long project to develop a Vision for the future of the tidal Thames, the 95 miles of river that stretches from Teddington Lock through the heart of the capital to the North Sea.

The research showed that £1 billion of new investment is planned for Thames port and marine operations over the next five years. New investments include two new fast ferries for MBNA Thames Clippers which are due to be delivered this month, a new engine line at Ford's Dagenham plant, Stolthaven's new bitumen import facility and the continued development of London Gateway Port.

Perry Glading, whose Forth Ports group includes the Port of Tilbury, the biggest single port operation on the river, explained the attractions of the Thames as a place to invest.

"It's all about connections," he said. "The Thames gets you to the doorstep of the largest consumer market in the UK. We're making continued significant investment in facilities for our customers, keeping Tilbury at the forefront of access to London and the South East. Our new distribution centre for Travis Perkins, where building materials can be distributed within hours of coming off a ship, shows that port-centred logistics is the way to go. That's what attracted NFT Distribution to develop its new temperature-controlled distribution centre at Tilbury, with more than 300,000 sq ft of new warehouse space and over 800 new jobs."

Lucy Haynes, London director for the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), added: "With over 10 million people expected to be living in the capital by 2030, it's vital we see a boost in river transport for both passengers and freight to keep the capital moving. The River Thames is London's lifeblood, and has a key role to play in enabling the city to grow and compete globally"

The economic impact report was completed by SQW Limited, while Oxford Economics conducted the amenity value study.

£1bn of new investment is planned for Thames port and marine operations over the next five years

Rhenus Midgard opens tank wagon station

Rhenus Midgard has begun operating a tank wagon unloading station at Nordenham.

The unit, which was built at a cost of €250,000, will be used to handle and store heavy oil for Aegean Bunkering Germany. The unloading station has enabled the port logistics specialist to invest in the expansion of existing structures for its liquid goods business.

"Since this summer, our new tank wagon unloading station has provided us with a handling method that was not previously available in this form," said Uwe Oppitz, managing director of Rhenus Midgard in Nordenham. "By using this unit, we can fill two of our tanks, which together hold 10,000 cbm. Heavy heating oil, which is required to operate ships' engines, complements our existing handling and storage business for liquid goods in a sensible manner."

One block train a week with 24 tank wagons each containing 70 tonnes of heating oil has been arriving at the urban port of Nordenham since mid-July. Rhenus Midgard is both the owner and operator of the port, which sits at the mouth of River Weser near Bremerhaven. The near 1,700 tonnes of fuel arriving on each train from various refineries in Central and Eastern Europe can be quickly and safely unloaded using the pump systems that form part of the new unit.

"The unloading process involves us working in a temperature-sensitive corridor," added Malte Richter, who works in the business development department at Rhenus Midgard. "The heavy heating oil must have a temperature of at least 50 degsC when it is pumped out; otherwise it's no longer possible to complete handling operations with this liquid in a problem-free manner."

The freight and passenger vessels, which depend on the Aegean Bunkering heating oil stored temporarily in Nordenham, can have the fuel component delivered by tanker vessel, if required.

"Nordenham is the ideal site for this task as a result of its location and its railway connections and Rhenus proved to be very flexible when organising this project. As a heavy oil supplier, we're very happy with the professional standards used for handling liquid goods at the port site," said Jens Reese, bunker trader at Aegean Bunkering Germany.

One block train a week has been bringing heating oil to Nordenham since mid-July