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Standardised flexitank rail impact test report proposed

As part of its project to develop a globally recognised recommended Code of Practice for flexitanks, the Container Owners Association is proposing to introduce a "COA Flexitank/ Container Combination Standard Rail Impact Test Report."

The Rail Impact test is a key part of the COA Code of Practice, designed to reflect the severe handling of flexitanks at sea, when being handled, and when being transported by road and rail. The current Code of Practice calls for flexitanks to be tested at one of two rail testing facilities: the TÜV Süd Rail facility at Görlitz, Germany; or the TTCI facility, in Pueblo, USA

The aim of this proposed new Standard Rail Impact Test Report is to enable shipping lines, intermodal operators, shippers, cargo owners and flexitank operators to have access to a single document which will indicate clearly the key information relevant to the rail test. The Report will not be a "pass/fail" report, says the COA, but simply a record of the equipment that was tested and the results of these tests.

The Report, which comprises three Parts, will be launched at the forthcoming COA Flexitank meeting on 20 May, in London.

Part 1 will give details of the Test Location and Conditions, including the name of the test facility, the date of the test and the weather.

Part 2 of the test report gives details of the container being used for the test, including the supplier, the manufacturer and information about the container wall thickness.

The TÜV Süd Rail facility at Görlitz

Importantly, this part also gives details of the flexitank itself: the serial/model/number, the volume (nominal and when being tested), the number of layers together with the thickness and material of each layer. It also gives details of the valve configuration and the bulkhead. The report will include a photo of the bulkhead that is being tested.

The third part of the report gives the results of the tests when undertaken at the different speeds defined in the Code. These include the deflections of the side-walls, end wall and door, together reports of any leakage.

Clarification to the Code of Practice

In addition to the Test Report, a number of clarifications to the COA Code of Practice will be proposed at the London Meeting.

These clarifications relate to the speeds at which the flexitank/container combination need to be tested; the permitted deflections of the container side walls, end-walls and doors; and the witnessing and reporting process that is recommended. There is also clarification with regard to the testing of top and bottom discharge systems.

The role of the COA will also be defined more clearly, with regard to the management and storage of test data, flexitank samples, photographs and other relevant information. The COA confirms that while it can act as a recorder of information, it is not a certification or accreditation organisation.

IN THIS ISSUE

Managing Editor Neil Madden
neil.madden@wanadoo.fr
Tel: +33 (0)3 88 60 30 68

Dry Bulk Editor Richard Miller
richard.miller@oakhillmedia.com
Tel: +44 (0)1424 446003

Advertisement Director Anne Williams
anne.bulkd@btinternet.com
Tel: +44 (0)1932 225632

Associate Editor Katarzyna Marszalek
kate@oakhillmedia.com

Overseas representative
Russia, CIS, Baltic States: Dars Consulting
Tel: +7 (495) 775 07 35
Email: consulting@dars.ru

Bulk Distributor is published by
Oakhill Media Ltd, Oakhill House, 22 Williams Grove, Surbiton, KT6 5RN, United Kingdom.
www.oakhillmedia.com
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Intermodal needs a new business model

Intermodal transport solutions can work but not everywhere. This creates a big challenge to industry looking to increase the share of intermodal freight solutions. That was among the conclusions drawn from a panel discussion organised by the European Shippers' Council at the SITL Europe exhibition in Paris debating whether significant intermodal freight transport growth was illusionary or could realistically be achieved.

In the panel discussion, shippers, policy makers and operators vented their frustrations at the number of obstacles and barriers to increased use of intermodal logistics solutions. The European Commission's representative, Roberto Ferravante (DG MOVE), expressed particular frustration over the slow pace of progress among member states, infrastructure managers and sectoral interests such as the rail freight industry, co-operating with each other in order to establish international, interoperable transport networks. He remarked that the Commission

was doing what it could to facilitate intermodal freight logistics but it could not do more than it was mandated.

Henk Schaafstal, a shipper member of ESC's Rail Freight Council, said he believed that new supply chain models were required to make road-rail solutions work: it would require a willingness among the rail freight undertakings and their customers to work together to find and implement new sustainable business models to integrate the different modes, and foster cooperation rather than competition between the modes. Wouter van Dijk, managing director of Optimodal (from the Kombivekehr group), and Schaafstal agreed that there were good examples of best practice which others should follow; both also indicated that industry could not wait for EU policy to be developed before making further progress.

Wouter van Dijk pointed towards the need for far more effective marketing and promotion of intermodal services that were already successfully being deployed and used for the benefit of their customers.

Jeroen Bozuwa, from Ecorys, pointed to the development of tools that helped companies, especially SMEs, to identify intermodal solutions – whether road-rail or shipping (inland, coastal or short-sea) available. He referred to the BE LOGIC project currently in progress that was developing such a tool. In his opinion, the major improvement potential in logistics performance is among SMEs, including shippers with relatively small transport volumes. A benchmark would give them insight into the potential gains of reconsidering their logistics choices in terms of costs, performance and sustainability.

Nevertheless, the biggest frustrations and concerns arose from the declining number of single wagon-load rail freight services. All agreed that it was detrimental to the development of intermodal options, reducing the likely number of access points and facilities to the rail network, effectively cutting many shippers off from using this form of transport. ESC's Rail Freight Council chairman, Georges Di Lallo warned of the dire consequences for businesses especially in France.

Knowledge of the options and performance of intermodal solutions would be key to their short and medium term uptake, suggested the Panel's moderator and ESC policy director, Dr Andrew Traill. In the meantime, he argued, it would be foolish to penalise road freight options: "We have no choice but to accept that road freight will remain for the foreseeable future industry's first choice and perhaps only choice, whether we like it or not."

Successful AdBlue audit for Hoyer

Hoyer has become the first company in the world to complete the audit programme for AdBlue distributors by the association of the German automotive industry (VDA).

Although the fuel consumption of vehicles is decreasing in many industrialised countries, the consumption of AdBlue is increasing at the same time – in Germany alone it rose by some 10 percent in the past year. AdBlue is a 32.5 percent aqueous urea solution which is used in special SCR catalytic converters to reduce the toxic nitrogen oxides produced in the exhaust of diesel-engined vehicles. This modern exhaust technology allows commercial vehicles to meet the Euro-5 emissions standards. AdBlue is increasingly available at service stations which have special pumps to fill it into the additional tanks carried by commercial vehicles.

During the first weeks of 2010, the Hamburg logistics company not only became the first logistics provider in the world but the first company ever to successfully complete this audit for distributors.

Full story p21

ISO Tank Container Equipment

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Fall prevention Protocol updated

An updated version of the "Prevention of Falls from Tank Containers" Protocol has been published by ITCO.

The International Tank Container Organisation (ITCO) has published an updated Protocol, agreed with UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE), aimed at preventing falls from tank containers.

Falls from tank containers cause serious, sometimes fatal injuries. All parties involved in the loading, discharge, storage, cleaning, repair and shipping/rail terminal operations need to have appropriate safety standards and management procedures to minimise that risk.

The Protocol advances tank-top access design during the period up to 2013 but, importantly, these improvements do not provide for safe working at height. Further measures are required and the document gives guidance on this.

The legal requirements and obligations on all participants in the intermodal supply chain dictate that they conduct risk assessments of their operations to reduce and/or eliminate risks, to protect employees and related personnel, and to co-operate and co-ordinate their activities. The Protocol arrangements do not replace these obligations or duties. Insofar as is reasonably practicable, effective measures should be taken to prevent any person falling a distance likely to cause personal injury.

The original 2006 ITCO protocol concentrated on technical aspects of tank container design, but matters such as the responsibility for access were not fully addressed. It was also not clear on practical access and the policy on single handrails and tank ladders. In 2009, the UK HSE stated that it "is unacceptable … to continue to rely on access via the tank ladder and a single handrail". The UK HSE policy will stop sites relying on inadequate systems - including tank handrails as currently used for many operations.

The aim of the protocol is to help members explain the duties and responsibilities to sites visited by tank containers, a message supported by HSE. Contents includes: the Working Protocol, Site Operators Responsibilities, Tank Operator Responsibilities, Site Equipment, and Sources and References.

The 2010 Version says:

- Adequate fall protection equipment is not available on the tank container or vehicle
- Sites are legally required to provide solutions
- Risk assessments needed by sites for: access to the high level; safe means to cross to the vehicle top; activity on the tank top

Site operator responsibilities

The 'Site Operator' (that is, the loading, discharge, storage, cleaning, repair and shipping/rail terminal facilities) has a number of responsibilities, as laid down by the HSE.

- There is a clear duty on the site operator to ensure the safety of all personnel operating on their sites and where other parties share the workplace, to co-operate with them to identify, assess and minimise the risks to the health and safety of all personnel.
- The UK HSE policy is that the need for top access should be critically appraised and where necessary arrangements should follow the control hierarchy set out in the protocol.
- If top access is needed, the risk hierarchy prefers a gantry as the appropriate control measure. In this case the site operators have responsibility for providing it.
- Connecting a harness to an untested anchor point such as a tank handrail is bad practice and significantly increases the danger when working at height.

Tank operator responsibilities

Tank container operators have responsibility to ensure the safety of personnel operating on their equipment.

- Tanks constructed after 2006 to comply with the tank specification as at Appendix D.
- Tank operators, and hauliers, must co-operate with site operators to provide safe access to suit the requirements at each site.

The Guidance Standard refers to all tank container operators who operate throughout Europe and those global operators who may from time to time also bring tank containers into the UK. Where national laws or approved Codes of Practice (COP) exist covering industry arrangements, these take precedence over this protocol.

ITCO has produced a 1-page summary for quick presentation at sites or to customers who don't realise that vehicle-based solutions are not valid. The summary and protocol are available on the ITCO website (www.itco.be). The Protocol itself will be posted on the HSE website.

ITCO members will continue to seek methods to eliminate the need to access tank tops as the preferred course of action whenever possible, but has found this is not normally practicable using vehicle–based equipment and the active support and co-operation of sites for loading/delivery, and other terminal locations is necessary.

The protocol identifies that parties should consider separately:

- Why access to tank tops is required
- The method of safe access to tank tops
- The provision of fall protection for workers on the tank top

www.itco.be

Stolt stays steady

Stolt-Nielsen reported unaudited its first quarter net profit at US$18.8 million, with revenue of $428.3 million, down from $22.3 million and $430.5 million, respectively in the fourth quarter.

Stolt Tank Containers reported an operating profit of $10.6 million, up from $9.7 million, reflecting stable market conditions overall and the benefits of actions to reduce operating costs.

Commenting on the results, Niels Stolt-Nielsen, CEO, said: "Our first quarter results reflect the challenging market conditions that we have consistently communicated to the market over the past several quarters. Stolthaven Terminals and Stolt Tank Containers both reported higher operating profits driven by increased capacity and healthy demand."

However, he questioned the sustainability of the strong recovery in China once the stimulus funding is cut back: "As the traditional Chinese export markets are buying less, China in turn becomes more dependent on its domestic demand, which will take some time to develop. We therefore repeat our concerns about the market fundamentals going forward. Our strategy is to continue to operate our businesses in a conservative manner, exercising tight control over our costs and capital expenditures."

Cronos to manage most of UES fleet

Cronos Ltd is taking over management of the majority of UES Intermodal AG's 220,000 TEU standard container fleet.

After this transaction, Cronos will operate a diversified fleet of over 650,000 TEU representing the seventh largest fleet of leased containers in the world. Cronos and UES entered into the agreement to allow UES to focus on the leasing of specialised equipment, which is in line with its long-term strategy.

"This is an excellent opportunity to grow our fleet in a capital efficient manner and to work with UES and its container investors. This transaction is a testament to Cronos' 30-year track record of delivering attractive returns to container investors as a responsible manager of their capital," stated Peter Younger, CEO of Cronos.

Klaus Koencke, CEO of UES, added: "We look forward to working closely with Cronos on this transaction. We believe that it will be beneficial for our container investors based on Cronos' reputation as an equipment manager, its global operating and financial infrastructure, and its financial strength. Notwithstanding this transaction, we remain committed to the transport equipment leasing business and serving the needs of our long-time customers."

www.cronos.com

CIMC niche markets stable

China International Marine Containers announced net profit fell 32% year on year to RMB 959 million in 2009 from RMB 1.41 billion in 2008.

The company attributed the plunge to weaker demand for its dry-bulk containers and chemical industry equipment, according to the firm's annual report. CIMC's revenue was RMB 20.5 billion last year, down 57 percent from RMB 47.33 billion in 2008.

The company predicted that it may see a rebound in demand for its main dry-bulk container business this year, thanks to a recovery in the global shipping industry and an improved outlook for China's exports.

The group's energy, chemicals, liquid and food equipment business was affected by the economic downturn and the declining market demand, especially the demand of the tank containers for chemicals transportation. Thus operating income and net profit fell sharply over the past year. In 2009, the operating income was RMB 3.6 billion, down 53.67 percent over the same period in 2008. Net profit amounted to RMB 105 million, down 79.84 percent.

The Nantong Tank subsidiary saw demand and orders from the chemical logistics equipment market drop sharply. It recorded operating income of RMB 584 million in 2009, a substantial drop of 77 percent and just achieved a slight profit. However, as the petrochemical industry is growing rapidly in China, CIMC expects tank containers will be more widely used.

Singamas looks to greater specialisation

Container manufacturer Singamas is putting its faith squarely in producing more specialised containers.

Singamas's annual results for 2009 showed a decline of 80.2 percent for the year owing to the global economic downturn. The group reported consolidated revenue of US$275 million resulting in a consolidated net loss of US$52 million, against net profit of US$4.5 million in 2008.

With "very soft demand" for dry freight containers, the group said it was operating well under capacity in the production of dry freight containers, which have traditionally been its major revenue stream. The smaller-scale specialised container business, however, performed "satisfactorily", especially given the economic conditions.

Commenting on the results Chang Yun Chung, chairman of Singamas, said this bodes well for the group's future plans to develop new specialised products. "The downturn in the group's performance was the result of a sudden global slowdown in trade which began in the second half of 2008, and continued with an even further drop in global trading volumes in 2009. In response to this once-in-a-century financial crisis, the group continued to implement proven cost control measures to ensure it operated at optimum levels of efficiency. Besides, the group managed to give a significant boost to its financial position through rights issue and share placement during the review period. An aggregate of around HK$871 million was raised for repaying the group's bank borrowings and financing new products development."

The manufacturing business contributed around 86.5% of total revenue in 2009. The segment recorded revenue of US$237 million, an 82.4% drop compared to 2008. The group responded to the slowdown in demand for containers by reducing its container production capacity. Total output for the year was 86,600 TEU, down 84.7% from the previous year. Of this number, around 36,300 TEU were higher margin specialised containers, and the remainder traditional dry freight containers. Consequently the manufacturing business experienced a sharp fall in revenue, leading to a loss before taxation and minority interests of US$66 million.

Towards the end of 2009, encouraging signs were evident of the beginnings of a gradual recovery, the group said. These include the fact that the number of idle containers in the China dropped from over 5 million TEU in the first quarter of 2009 to under 2 million TEU by December. Indicators of an upward swing will result in a rise in container demand in 2010, and started hiring workers after the Chinese New Year to ramp up production capacity.

Average selling price of a 20-foot dry freight container was round US$1,986, while tank containers were sold for around US$27,512. These prices were slightly lower than 2008 (US$2,262 and US$30,600, respectively) due to the drop in raw materials prices. With the price of Corten steel predicted to rise gradually in the coming year, the group expects average selling prices to rise correspondingly.

The Group is especially optimistic about the prospects for specialised container products, which have been under development or in the early stages of production in the past year. These should continue to diversify the group's business interests, improving the product mix, and attract new customers from outside the traditional spheres of shipping and container leasing companies.

On average, the gross margin for new three specialised containers is over 10%, significantly higher than the margin obtainable on dry freights. Over the next three to five years, Singamas aims to promote and distribute sales to the extent that specialised containers come to represent approximately 40-50% of the group's total revenue.

The specialised range includes fresh seafood containers, designed to transport time- and temperature-sensitive seafood products. These are currently at the final testing stage. The Group has also developed and produced 300 units of environmental friendly trash containers, which will be introduced at the Shanghai World Expo in 2010.

Another specialised product is the Complete Knock Down (CKD) container house that can be used for temporary or permanent accommodation.

De Rijke Logistics receives AEO certificate

In an official ceremony on 17 February 2010 Mr Mulder and Mr Meijer of the Dutch Customs Authorities handed over the AEO certificate to Wouter Brouwer - business unit director of De Rijke Logistics and Kees De Rijke, owner of De Rijke Group.

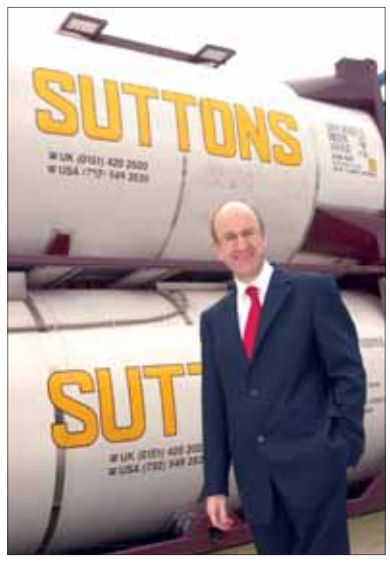
By means of the certification De Rijke Logistics can officially call itself an EU Authorised Economic Operator and therefore meets the requirements as laid out by the EU in the Community Customs Code as amended by EC Regulations 648/2005 and 1875/2006.

As a result of this De Rijke Logistics is able to strengthen its role as a supply chain partner as the goods flow handled by De Rijke Logistics will be subject to fewer controls and priority treatment, as well as will gain easier access to simplified Customs, the possibility to request a specific place for controls, and allows for prior notification in case of shipments under Customs regimes.

Suttons Singapore appointment

Suttons Group has appointed Paul Sireci as regional technical manager based in Singapore. The company opened its Singapore operation at Wcega Tower in November 2009.

This latest appointment follows the company's investment of £12.5 million in new ISO tanks during the past year and further supports its expansion in the Asia.



Andrew Palmer, group MD of Suttons which has invested £12.5m in new tank containers in the past year

Paul Sireci has considerable experience of managing technical operations and inspection activities for international companies. He has also managed maintenance and repair for ocean carriers and specialised commodity services.

Andrew Palmer, group managing director of Suttons, said: "I am delighted that Paul has joined Suttons based in our new Singapore office. His experience and ability will greatly enhance our technical customer support as Suttons continues to develop throughout Asia.

"Paul has vast experience of establishing tank container cleaning and repair operations in Australia and the USA and many of his projects have involved training clients in activities such as inspections, managing hazardous materials and safety. These training skills are increasingly important to Suttons as we look to further develop a support services offering for in-house fleets and share our award-winning safety philosophy."

Suttons, based in Cheshire, UK, operates globally with key business centres in Antwerp, Essen, Houston, Kuantan, Le Havre, New Jersey, Shanghai, Singapore and Tokyo.

Pelican opens for business in China

Pelican Worldwide has opened its first domestic sales office in China. Located in Hengyuan Industrial Park in Cixi City, the new location is strategically situated between Shanghai and Ningbo in Zhejiang Province. This location is in a bustling industrial and shipping hub, the most efficient site from which to serve new consumers of Pelican products in China, the company says.

While Pelican has already established a presence in China for manufacturing, the company will now be building relationships as a vendor and supplier. Locoo Lu has been appointed to establish the business network and run operations, beginning with the tank container market and eventually adding the tank truck market and industrial valves and seals. He can be contacted at locoo@pelicanworldwide.com

Pelican Worldwide also recently achieved the Quality Management System upgrade. This accomplishment gains Pelican the new version of International Standard ISO, namely ISO 9001:2008.

Lloyd's Register Nederland BV, for and on behalf of Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance Limited, and accredited by United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS), has been chosen as Pelican Worldwide's partner in the process.

For the previous three years, Pelican determined that one of its priorities was to upgrade the quality systems of the whole organisation. This has been accomplished in the areas of manufacturing, customer service and product quality. Pelican upgraded to ISO9001: 2008, and for ongoing improvement the valve line was certified according to new EN standards EN14432, EN14433 and EN14025, which will be effective beginning in 2011.

The achievement of ISO 9001:2008 certification affirms Pelican's ongoing commitment to the quality of the products and services it provides to what Pelican states is its most important asset, the clients of the tank industry.

www.pelicanworldwide.com

Rebranding for SCF Group

Australian container company SCF Group is undergoing a major rebrand, and streamlining the company structure.

For almost 20 years the company has been known as SCF Containers International, with offshoot businesses Simply Containers, and Tank Containers. Now it is all under one brand SCF Group with four business divisions including Rail Containers, Simply Containers, Tank Containers and the new addition Container Rooms.

SCF group director Richard Sykes said this would make it easier for customers to understand the extended range of products and services on offer. "Our name may have changed but we still have the same core values of impeccable customer service, high quality products and innovation to suit our customers' needs," Sykes said.

The evolution of the SCF Group has seen the company progress from a start-up operation to a well-respected national enterprise, which employs a team of 50 and leases 8,500 containers to Australia's most significant transport industry players.

Sykes said the move would unify the company and its team members, while engaging clients with new-look container products.

In the Tank Containers (TCA) division, a rise in gold prices has meant the mining sector has increased its demands on the supply of sulphuric acid tanks putting a strain on the limited number of the specialised tanks available within Australia. TCA moved quickly by increasing its fleet size to meet these specialised demands by purchasing more acid tanks. Due to special requirements and safety compliances, TCA had these tanks fully modified and furbished.

www.tankcontainers.com.au

First Robogrind in Asia

Singaporean company Kerry-ITS, which specialises in the service and maintenance of tank containers, has started using Robogrind's technology, a modified grinding robot specially adapted for local conditions. The robot will move in each tank automatically, grinding the inner surface of the without human intervention.

According Kerry-ITS managing director William Loh, the use of green technology is an important goal for the company in its operations. Thanks to this "ecological technology" the time needed for tank grinding will be significantly reduced, thus shortening the time each unit cannot be used to carry product. Moreover, the personnel and environment will not be exposed to the grinding dust as the metal dust can be easily collected and disposed of properly.

The grinding robot was handed over by Robogrind's managing director Raimo Siipo, who is also the inventor of the system.

Civacon introduces 2-wire overfill sensor

Civacon, a tank-truck components and systems provider, has launched a new 2-wire ROMLink 'Plug-N-Play' optic overfill sensor. This 'next-generation' overfill sensor features enhanced electronics that are located in the cap, joined by a modulator connector to the sensing tube that contains only the optic head. By locating the electronics in the cap, the height of the sensing tube needs to be set only once. In addition, the newly designed one-piece Pyrex glass prism and sensing devices that are located in the sensing tube should never need to be replaced.

The 2-Wire sensor has also been designed with ease-of-maintenance in mind. Should the sensor's electronics ever need to be serviced, maintenance is simply a matter of removing the cap, unplugging the connector and plugging in a new cap assembly, all without the need of tools. Plus, any maintenance required will not affect the sensing height or the compartment's vapour-tight integrity. These features and benefits are also available in Civacon's 5-wire ROMLink optic overfill sensor.

Other features of the 2-wire sensor include digital electronics with temperature-stabilised potting; dual O-ring seals for improved sensor-tube-to-housing sealing; zero glue or adhesive construction for wide chemical compatibility; a new housing and moulded non-corrosive cap design; tamper-evident cap to prevent sensor-height tampering; approval to North American regulating standards; operating temperatures between -40 degsC to 71.1 dgesC; and storage temperatures from -55.6 degsC to 137.7 degsC.

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Connon Oils improve safety and efficiency

Connon Oils, an Aberdeenshire supplier of oils, coal, gas and lubricants for domestic, agricultural and engineering users, wanted to improve safety and efficiency by installing a new 4-arm bottom loading skid.

Richard Connon, managing director at Connon Oils, askled Alpeco for advice, having heard of the company's reputation and products. Negotiations completed, Connon Oils placed the order and the new 4-arm bottom loading skid was manufactured, installed and commissioned on time and within budget.

The client placed a second order for three delivery tankers equipped with Alpeco 550 pumping equipment. One is Taska built 4-wheel tanker while the others are 6-wheel RTN built tankers. All three are now successfully plying their trade throughout Aberdeenshire and the surrounding areas.

Northern Scotland is renowned for its harsh winter climate and Connon is delighted with the performance of the products all of which have functioned perfectly through the hardest winter in the region for over 50 years.

Mouvex SLP series sliding vane pumps

Mouvex, a manufacturer of positive displacement pumps and compressors for the transfer of liquids or dry bulk products, has announced launch a new SLP Series Seal-less Sliding Vane Pumps. The SLP Series have been designed with no magnets, no mechanical seals and no packing, "making them one of the most economical, environmentally friendly and energy-efficient pumps for applications that demand leak-free operation". The initial model available in the new SLP Series is the SLP25i. The SLP25i has a maximum flow rate of 110 gpm (25 m^3/h), differential pressures to 12 bar (174 psi), can handle viscosities up to 60,000 cst/278,000 ssu and can operate in temperatures up to 100 degsC.

Leaking pumps generate additional costs to operators due to production stops, product losses, maintenance and cleanup costs. When the leaks involve a substance that is toxic, corrosive, hot, polluting, flammable or explosive, the costs can rise exponentially. With this in mind, Mouvex has designed its SLP Series pumps with a revolutionary shaft that is sealed by a unique double stainless-steel bellows, which eliminates the need for magnets, mechanical seals and packing. The bellows covers an eccentric shaft that drives the bellows in a circular motion during pump operation. This motion rotates the pump shaft and rotor via an integrated crank system. This makes the pump 100 percent seal-less and leak-free, and the ultimate solution against leaks, product loss and health risks.

The design of the SLP Series also leads to energy savings when compared with equivalent mag-drive pumps. In fact, the use of SLP pumps can result in a 30 percent reduction in energy consumption. The pumps are easy to maintain with no special tools required for routine maintenance. The vanes are also easily replaced with the pump in place. The SLP pumps are ATEX-certified and can dry-run for up to 10 minutes. All body parts are made of 316 stainless steel, with FEP-coated FKM O-rings and TVP (PEEK) vanes.

www.mouvex.com

Working for the Marine Corps

The racks were customised to accommodate vehicles varying in height as well as to withstand specific environmental conditions

Oscar W Larson Company, headquartered in Clarkson, Michigan, has served as a fluid handling and equipment contractor for the petroleum distribution industry for over half a century, with customers also involved in automotive, commercial, government, military and other applications. When OW Larson was tasked with building a refuelling system for military vehicles and tanker trucks at Camp Lejeune, a Marine Corps Base in North Carolina, it was the first time the company had needed to build a loading rack for their system design. The rack would be used to provide sufficient, safe operator access to the vehicle during the refuelling process — and a standard model wouldn't suffice.

"We needed loading racks with a broad range of flexibility, as they would be used for filling vehicles of different sizes," said Darren Painter, project manager at OW Larson. For this project, the company selected five loading racks from the Green Access & Protection line by Benko Products. The Green Loading Racks could be customised in size, with access options such as safety stairs and bridges, as well as a variety of canopy styles to meet OW Larson's specific application requirements.

"We design each loading rack for the geographical zone in which it is located, including hurricane-prone areas or those susceptible to high winds," said Doug Ingram, general manager for the Green Access & Fall Protection line. "This customer-specified construction ensures the access equipment can withstand up to a decade of frequent use, while our structural platforms and canopies last several decades."

Some racks included canopies incorporated into their design, which are used to protect operators from rain, snow or even sun during the refuelling process. They also help protect the integrity of the gasoline, diesel and JP-8 fuel that operators use to fill the vehicles, keeping unwanted moisture from entering the tanks. These canopies are often customised to pass building codes or extended to accommodate larger vehicles, as was needed with the Camp Lejeune project.

"In this application, we were dealing with larger-than-normal military vehicles and taller-than-standard tanker trucks," Painter said. "It was a custom project from the onset."

"Every loading rack and canopy is custom-built to meet our customer's needs," Ingram added. "Here, we needed to extend the canopies without extending the structural platforms beneath them. Plus, we made the racks about ten feet high to accommodate the larger vehicles."

Other options OW Larson selected included aluminium safety enclosures, which provide fall protection for operators during refuelling, and adjustable chain stops that make the rack's gangway self-supporting, thus providing extra sturdiness. They also selected aluminium self-levelling stairs that offer both stability and convenience.

"Some trucks they're refuelling are 9 or 10 ft high, while others such as iso tank containers have tanks that are 13 ft high," Ingram said. "If the trucks are misspotted, the operator will be unable to reach them without taking the time to reposition the truck, which is both inconvenient and time-consuming. But the stairs OW Larson selected are on a pivot mount, so they can be moved 15 degs left or right, making the system more forgiving of misspotting and saving operator time and hassle."

For their first rack installation Painter said he and his co-workers at wanted to see for themselves how the loading racks were designed. "We went to the factory to see how they were fabricated, and to get a feel for what would be required for installation in the field," Painter said. "The project involved lots of co-ordination between vendors to make sure all the equipment selected would complement one another."

OW Larson installed the five loading racks without vendor assistance beyond the detailed installation instructions Benko provided. "We offer free supervision, so they knew they could call us at any time if they needed help, and we'd come in," Ingram said. "But we didn't even have to stop by."

Now the system has been in use for almost a year, and Painter said it was the combination of customisation and simple installation that made the Green Loading Racks the right selection for the Camp Lejeune project. "The biggest benefit for us was that, instead of a cookie-cutter solution, we got something that exactly met our needs," Painter said.

www.larsonco.com
www.green-mfg.com

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FV Shanghai celebrates fifth anniversary

Fort Vale is celebrating the fifth anniversary of its facility in Shanghai, China. With many years experience in the tank industry, Fort Vale's Shanghai Manager Elton Liu has been with the company since 2003. Fort Vale Shanghai progressed from providing technical expertise and support to the Chinese and Asia Pacific market to opening its first storage and distribution premises in Shanghai in 2005, employing eight people.

Such was the success of this venture that Fort Vale Shanghai moved to new premises occupying 5100 sq m in 2008 and currently employs around 60 personnel. The company's capabilities have expanded and it is now designing and developing valves for the Asia market. On-site, it has a range of advanced CNC lathes and machining centres, welding plants and finishing machines as well as co-ordinate measuring machines and laser marking capabilities. In addition to supplying the OEM tank builders in China, Fort Vale Shanghai provides a full repair, refurbishing and testing service to end-users and carries large stocks of genuine spare parts and consumables. It is also accredited with ISO9001:2008.

"We are proud to have a highly trained and well motivated workforce. Customers can be assured that we have installed an excellent quality system that parallels that of the UK," says Liu. "The company has rewarded the dedication and loyalty of its staff and employees on this milestone achievement with a special team-building excursion. The day provided a great opportunity to reinforce relationships within the company and to focus on the future growth and success we are all striving towards."

www.fortvale.com

Fort Vale Shanghai office staff on their recent trip to climb the extinct volcano Halla Mountain in Korea

Weigh indicator connectivity

Avery Weigh-Tronix's new 1080 indicator range offers connectivity across several network technologies from a compact size of just 15.4cm x 8.2cm x 14.7cm. The panel mounted indicator is a cost effective data management and process control solution for a wide range of weighing equipment.

In addition to general weighing functions, the 1080 indicator has a suite of specialised applications. These include batching routines, counting routines, peak weighing, checkweighing and split axle truck weighing.

Offering versatile data connectivity, the 1080 can share weight data and control commands both locally and worldwide. An Ethernet port provides an IP network, a USB devices enables connectivity to a nearby PC and the RS 232/422/485 interface provides data transfers for legacy equipment. The RS 422/485 also allows a long interface cable length for remote displays.

When the application requires connection to a Fieldbus network, the 1080 can communicate from its standard Profibus or Ethernet 10/100 outputs to a PLC. It also supports ODVA protocols and can be fitted with an option to support analogue values.

Additional features include data transmission to peripheral printers and computers and an accumulation function so that the total amount of weight in a given period can be measured.

www.averyweigh-tronix.com

Blackmer offers versatility

Blackmer says its GX and X Series Sliding Vane Pumps are designed for application versatility within liquid terminal operations. GX and X Series pumps are ideal for liquid transfer for in-line blending, mixing, packaging and loading/unloading applications of various chemicals within liquid-storage terminals.

The GX and X Series pumps, which come in eight different models with maximum flow rates between 40 and 528 US gpm (150 and 1,998 lpm), are designed specifically for reliable continuous product transfer. These pumps are "ideally suited" for handling numerous chemicals and petrochemicals thanks to their self-priming and high suction lift capabilities, which make them ideal for pumping from underground storage tanks and bulk plants, clearing lines, and removing product from rail and transport tankers. The GX and X Series pumps are available in 2ins, 2.5ins, 3ins and 4ins flanged port sizes.

The vane technology principles of the GX and X Series ensure proper sealing and volumetric output performance, even after significant in-service time. This eliminates the efficiency-robbing "slip" that shortens lobe and gear pump life, and improves production yields by stripping lines clean of residual product.

"The GX and X Series both provide smooth, sliding vane action without metal-to-metal contact, which reduces pump friction, eliminates galling and minimises agitation of fluids, resulting in shear-sensitive, mild handling of thin liquids without product degradation," the company says.

www.blackmer.com

Blackmer GX sliding vane pumps

Proactive about plastic

Caroline Bowie, brand manager for Durapipe PLX, discusses the advantages of using plastic pipework systems in the bulk refuelling market

Refuelling vehicles is an essential operation for airports, marinas and railway stations and so operators are always looking at ways to improve speed and efficiency of the process to reduce downtime. Furthermore, refuelling is such an important part of the overall efficiency of transport it is vital that reliable products are specified to carry out this job.

The pipework that carries the fuel is an integral part of the system and within the bulk refuelling market, traditionally stainless steel pipe-in-pipe systems have been specified by contractors for conveying fuel. However, these systems do not always provide a cost effective pipework solution.

When dealing with the transportation of fuel, particularly in large volumes, it is becoming increasingly consistent for contractors to use secondary contained (pipe-in-pipe) systems due to the potential safety hazards caused if fuel were to leak into the atmosphere. Secondary contained pipe systems, are becoming compulsory for many pipework applications, and are the specified solution for fuel conveyance. However, Durapipe UK is keen to stress that not all secondary contained pipe systems are the same and they all offer different performance and installation capabilities.

For bulk refuelling installations, performance capabilities over a long period are essential due to the volume of fuel being transported on a regular basis for the vital operations within the transport sector. This reiterates the requirement for reliable and durable systems that can ensure they will continue to operate and provide a reliable transportation process for the fuel.

A consistent flow rate of fuel is essential to keep the bulk refuelling process in operation and to avoid costly delays. As the fuels for these modes of transport can vary in composite and blend, clogging and corrosion, which can occur with steel pipe systems, are issues that contractors need to consider in relation to flow rates. Clogging and corrosion have the potential to reduce fuel flow rates, stop it altogether or potentially contaminate the fuel it is carrying. These issues highlight just how important it is that careful consideration is given to the type of pipework system that is specified for bulk refuelling applications.

Although stainless steel has been widely used in many applications, its lifespan can be questioned when conveying aggressive liquids such as fuel. This provides concerns for bulk refuelling applications; contractors need to be aware that with an estimated fuel carrying lifespan of just over five years, steel is a solution that cannot guarantee performance capabilities over a long period of time, and would need frequent maintenance and replacement work to ensure it is continuing to perform to the required standards.

In some stainless steel pipework systems, the build up of particles in the inner bore can contaminate the fuel it is carrying which has potentially hazardous consequences for the vehicle. For instance, contaminated fuel can result in damage to the engine it is powering and in certain cases can result in the fuel tank within systems needing to be replaced incurring additional costs to the running of these means of transportation. These issues highlight the need and importance for rigorous and frequent quality control checks on

For bulk refuelling installations, performance capabilities over a long period are essential

Continued on page 11

Girard sMart vent for IBCs

Girard Equipment recently unveiled the latest product to its line of IBC Pressure/Vacuum Relieving Vents. The 2 ins sMart Vent along with its 3 ins Stainless Fusible Cap, will give protection for most intermediate bulk containers. The sMart Vent fits into a standard 2 ins bung port; the design features a cast stainless guard to protect the vent against impact damage.

Engineered for low maintenance and easy cleaning, this vent offers superior protection for metal IBCs. The sMart Vent has a "quick venting release" feature built into its design. Pressing down on the rain cover releases internal pressures insufficient to trigger automatic venting. This feature proved to be most beneficial to operators who may experience "splash-backs" when trying to open IBCs with built up pressures within the tank. A machine ring groove allows the vent to be tethered directly to the IBC.

Some of the features that make the sMart Vent so smart:

- All cast and precision machined stainless steel
- Low profile design
- "Quick Venting Release" QVR feature
- Rugged and durable
- Compact and easy to install
- Electro-polished to allow for easy cleaning

www.girardequip.com

Committed to customer service

Since it was established in 1999, PER Plus Logistics has built up a reputation for providing customer-based global bulk logistics solutions

Having recently celebrated its 10th anniversary, global bulk logistics specialists PER Plus Logistics BV is now embarking on it second decade with a commitment to expanding its two core business activities – tank containers and flexitanks.

Based in Zevenbergen, PER Plus was established in October 1999 out of the collapse of Dutch tank container operator Cargotank. Initially, the company's two founders – Rob Kruyswijk and Paul van der Vaart – were asked by lawyers acting on behalf of Cargotank's creditors to locate and return the fleet of 2000 tanks to their owners, a number of tank leasing companies.

Once this had been achieved and with most of the tank containers successfully returned, PER Plus soon commenced its own operations, with many of Cargotank's former customers – and the leasing companies providing the tanks – willing to support the new business. Within a couple of years, Paul van der Vaart had sold his shares to Rob Kruyswijk, leaving him as the sole owner of the company. And in 2007, PER Plus moved to its current offices in Zevenbergen.

Tank container growth

The company initially had a fleet of 200 leased tank containers; but with a steady annual acquisition of 10 to 15 tanks every year (mainly from Welfit Oddy in South Africa), the fleet has now grown to over 300 units, of which 120 are owned and the rest are leased. The standard specification of its own tanks is the 26,000 litre type IMO/ADR T11 single compartment unit.

During the past 10 years, its business has become global, with operations throughout Europe, the Middle East, Africa, South America and India.

The company focuses exclusively on the transport of chemicals, providing services to both large and small shippers. Its staff seven includes three Dangerous Goods Transportation Specialists. As part of its policy to offer quality service and continuous improvement, PER Plus Logistics has achieved ISO-9001:2000 and SQAS.

Introducing the flexitank

As an addition to its tank container business, PER Plus has in the last few years established itself as a specialist operator of single-trip flexitanks.

The company first entered the business in 2005, when one of its tank container customers requested the use of flexis to ship its products - and this market has now become its fastest growing sector.

PER Plus offers a "door-to-port" service, whereby the fitting and road transport of its flexitanks is undertaken by its local trucking partner, Overmeer Transport. Delivery and unloading services are provided by its local partner, while the responsibility for flexitank disposal rests with the buyer/consignee of the products. It sources its multi-ply flexitanks exclusively from German manufacturer Büscherhoff, whose product quality meets the expectations of its customers.

Kruyswijk reports an "almost zero" failure rate in his flexitank operation, putting this down to the critical importance of implementing the correct procedure throughout the operation: checking the MSDS, using the right materials, selecting the appropriate container selection and fitting the flexitank correctly.

As with its tank container business, PER Plus's flexitank operations depend on its commitment to providing personal service to its customers. Indeed, looking at the business as a whole, Kruyswijk believes that the company's relatively small size is a signification benefit, enabling it to give a highly dedicated and flexible service.

"Our philosophy is to find solutions for our customers," he says, "and even if a project doesn't seem possible, we try to do the impossible!"

www.perplus.nl

The PER Plus fleet has now grown to over 300 units. The standard specification of its own tanks is the 26,000 litre type IMO/ADR T11 single compartment unit

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pipework systems that cannot convey fuel to all transportation vehicles.

In terms of the installation process, this can be lengthy with traditional metal systems such as stainless steel. Whether these systems run above or belowground, it requires skilled installers to fit the pipework. In the case of installing underground pipework systems, hot works permits are needed, and extra wrapping has to be added to the outside of these pipes, which can result in an extremely complicated and timely installation process. Considering these issues, sparks the question of why innovative materials, such as plastic, are not being readily used by contractors and specifiers.

Plastic is an example of a reliable alternative material that can be used to provide pipework solutions for bulk refuelling applications. Lightweight and easy to install by nature, plastic pipework eradicates the complex installation properties associated with metal alternatives. Plastic pipework systems simplify the installation process for contractors, as they do not need a skilled welder to install the system due to the innovative electrofusion jointing system. What is more, they do not require the use of hot works permits when being installed, which greatly speeds up the installation time as well as significantly reducing labour time and costs. These sorts of economic savings can be extremely beneficial for contractors in a time when project timings and budgets are continuing to be ever narrower.

The secondary contained system provides resistance to long term stress cracking

PLX from Durapipe UK is an example of a viable pipework alternative that can be used for bulk refuelling applications. Manufactured in a polyethylene material, the secondary contained (pipe-in-pipe) system, which has been extensively used in the forecourt market for over 15 years, provides resistance to long term stress cracking and is ideal to carry a wide variety of fuel based liquids. Additionally, its durability gives it a design life of 30 years – making it ideal for use in applications such as bulk refuelling, where it is imperative to install a system that does not have to be regularly maintained or replaced.

Alternative pipework solutions that build on the performance quality of traditional materials while addressing its limitations are available to contractors and need to be more readily explored in the initial specification process. In an industry that is continually looking for higher performing and more reliable products, it calls for a reassessment of just how well traditional materials, such as stainless steel, are working within the bulk refuelling market and why alternatives are not being explored at the outset of projects.

www.plxpipe.com
www.durapipe.co.uk

Flexitanks deliver drinking water to Chile

Trans Ocean used flexitanks to deliver drinking water to victims of the earthquake that struck Chile on 27 February. The US Geological Survey said the quake struck at a depth of 22 miles in the early hours of Saturday 27th February. It was much more powerful than the quake that devastated Haiti in January, but because it was deeper, and Chile's buildings are sturdier, there were fewer casualties. Collapsed roads and bridges complicated travel across the country and access routes in the south were closed. Electricity, water and phone lines were cut in many areas.

In Santiago, the damage was not as severe as in the valleys of the south of the country. But it was vital that people in the more remote areas desperately needed help quickly. Due to the urgency of the problem, the Trans Ocean team (part of the Hillebrand Group) based in the capital had to act without any delay. The next step was to arrange delivery of flexitanks into the most desperate areas, transporting 50,000 litres of drinking water supplied by the 17th Fire Company of Santiago. As well as successfully supplying the water, Trans Ocean also donated a VinLiner "thermal blanket"; these were given to homeless families to protect them from the cold and rain.

This was an excellent opportunity to show how flexitanks are versatile, particularly when usually they are carrying 24,000 litres of Chile's best wine for export. Trans Oceans' bulk logistics services have a strong presence in South America, importing and exporting bulk liquid in flexitanks.

Preparing to deliver drinking water from a Trans Ocean flexitank

Luckily the Chilean team and their close network of logistics partners came to the rescue during this tragedy. Companies such as MSC, Stanmore (trucks) and Sudtrans, along with the Chilean Army - everybody came together to help and deliver the water successfully to a small town called Chanco.

No damage was incurred to the Trans Ocean office in Santiago and the team worked together to continue business after a few days. Trans Ocean was very happy to be involved to help others in need: "Co-ordinating this delivery gave us a lot of satisfaction to know that some of our products were useful in this tragedy," said a company spokesperson.

Since the start of the year, Trans Ocean Spain has moved on from an agency arrangement to an owned and operated TransOcean structure, based at the company's own group offices in Valencia and Barcelona. These offices will be responsible for all industrial, food and beverage bulk shipments, operating in: Spain, Portugal, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria.

This transition to its own office network has been made possible by to the operations team and support from the Barcelona bulk team (formally HillebrandBulk) and the long standing expertise Trans Ocean have built up in Spain and surrounding countries.

This is definitely a challenging time ahead for Trans Ocean Iberia as they are one of the first offices globally to co-ordinate and manage all import and export shipments for ISO tanks, alongside own flexitank shipments for these countries.

Jason Wright - general manager for Iberia, commented: "Customers can continue to receive the excellent service in bulk liquid logistics that we have been fortunate to offer. Trans Ocean spent a great deal of time to make the transition a smooth one for all our customers and staff. We set high standards for our logistics team and the Hillebrand Group only strives to employ the best people around the world to deliver our first class bulk liquid services."

To contact the Iberia team:
Tel +34 96 3243617

Rail impact test

Trans Ocean recently undertook a flexitank/container combination rail impact test at the TTCI test facility in Pueblo, USA. The company reports that the flexitank that was tested met the rail impact test criteria, as laid down by the Container Owners Association's Code of Practice.

Commenting on the work to develop the COA Code, Brendan McKenna, JF Hillebrand Board Member and head of Engineering and Manufacturing at Trans Ocean commented as follows: "I am very encouraged by the progress to date and thank all the participants for their hard work and support. Four years ago this looked like a very tough hill to climb and to be at a place where we are today is truly an amazing achievement and testament to the value the flexitank can bring to the market when manufactured and operated in a safe and professional manner. I also believe this is only the first step in a process which will eventually lead the industry to full ISO certification for flexitanks. This has to be our long term goal."

www.transoceanbulk.com

LAF tested

In order to be thoroughly prepared for the rail impact testing at Goerlitz, Germany, Qingdao LAF claims it has obtained approval for its flexitanks in the China Ministry of Railway Impact Test on 1 February 2010 and also obtained approval of the Russian Railway Authorities on 2 December 2009 which declared that LAF Flexitanks meet the "Technical Requirement of the Single-Trip Flexitank in all aspects of the Flexitank Test".

www.flexiblebag.cn

PHILTON Success TÜV Süd - GÖRLITZ CRASH TEST

Philton Polythene Converters (PPC) are pleased to announce that their UK manufactured Single-ply flexitank came through the TÜV Süd crash testing unscathed.

The COA TÜV Süd - Görlitz test calls for 4 separate impact tests, 3 of which are at door end at 5km/h, 9.5km/h and 12km/h, with one final impact at 12km/h on the opposite end.

PPC's flexitank passed without leaking all of these impact tests as well as a further 2 impacts at the opposite end (6 in total) with the last being at 14km/h.

This is a massive achievement considering that to date there have been over 15 tests from some of the worlds most prominent flexitank producers, with most failing due to leakage in their Flexitanks at the second test or third tests of 9.5 and 12 km/h.

PPC have always been proud of their quality record built up over the last 40 years of manufacturing liners for the bulk transportation industry. Their ongoing commitment to product and material development, as well as implementing their own testing equipment, has been the key to their success. PPC Managing Director Andrew Tisi says, "We took the decision to design and build our own testing simulator as we felt it was necessary to further understand the forces and stresses that flexitanks are subjected to during normal operating conditions. I firmly believe that the lessons that we have learnt through having the simulator have led to us being able to produce a product that can withstand the crash testing".

PPC have been involved with The COA Flexitank Working Party since it's inception and remain firmly behind the concept of bringing a Code of Practice to the industry. Tisi states. "For this industry to continue to grow we must have the confidence of the shipping lines. I believe that the best way of achieving this is to have a strict code of practice that will ensure properly regulated manufacturers and operators throughout the industry. Once the Code of Practice is established it will undoubtedly deter those who wish to make a quick buck from our industry without the commitment to quality. The sooner these companies are found out the better for those of us who are in it for the long haul".


PPC's Test Simulator at their UK site

Philton Polythene Converters Ltd
Charfleets Road
Canvey Island
Essex SS8 0PQ
United Kingdom
Tel: +44 (0)1268 696331
Fax: +44 (0)1268 510517
sales@philton.co.uk
www.philton.co.uk

PPC's Flexitank under-going testing in Görlitz

No let-up in innovation at Büscherhoff

In addition to the launch of several new products this year, Büscherhoff is also increasing flexitank manufacturing capacity at its Steinfeld factory

Innovation and expansion are clearly in evidence at Steinfeld-based specialist packaging manufacturer Büscherhoff Spezialverpackung GmbH. This year, in addition to moving into a new production hall, the German company is also introducing several new designs into its product range – including a 40ft flexitank, a new flexitank heating system and a new design of conductive film for 20ft container dry bulk liners.

Although Büscherhoff has become particularly well-known in recent years for the development of a range of flexitank designs, the company's original business was based on other types of other special film packaging. Its product range includes bags and sacks for bulk solids for 10-50 kg, inner liners for a range of IBCs, drums and Octabins, dry bulk container liners for use in 20ft/40ft containers and injection moulded valves and related fittings.

Its complete range thus offers products from 3 litres capacity to 27,000 litres – and apart from producing this packaging, the company also extrudes its own film for small capacity bags and liners.

Büscherhoff's new design of 40ft, multi-layer, flexitank for use in trailers and containers comprises seven compartments

Büscherhoff's new film for dry liners includes conductive strips, aimed at avoiding the risk of a build-up of static electricity, leading to possible dust explosions

New flexitank production hall

However, it is the flexitank market which has shown the most rapid growth recently. And, to meet increasing demand, earlier this year, Büscherhoff moved all its flexitank production into a new hall at its Steinfeld factory, which will be officially opened in June 2010. Flexitank manufacturing is centred at Steinfeld – the company has two other production facilities for its bulk liners and smaller volume packaging, one in Belgium and one in Bosnia.

The new hall in Steinfeld provides enough space for three production lines for three different designs of flexitanks. It will enable the company to manufacture up to 50,000 flexitanks per year, on a one-shift basis.

Together with the construction of the new flexitank production hall, the company is also building a new office reception area, meeting room and administration offices.

The opening of this hall is thus also providing extra space for the company's production of its dry liners and its inner liners and its injection moulding activities.

40ft flexis

One of the new products which will be manufactured in the new flexitank hall is Büscherhoff's new design of 40ft, multi-layer, flexitank for use in trailers and containers. Divided into seven compartments, the trailertank flexitank (patent pending) incorporates six baffles, aimed at reducing the effects of sudden acceleration/deceleration. Each baffle incorporates a hole in it to permit the movement of liquid from one compartment to the next, when loading and discharging.

The 40ft flexi can carry volumes up to the maximum payload of a 40ft container, although it is expected to be used for transporting 27,000 litre consignments – especially foodgrade cargoes and other high value products.

When loaded, it has a height of 1.20 metres in the middle and 80cm at the sides. When loaded into a 40ft container, it has the significant advantage of not touching the side walls, end wall or door of the container. For carriage in a road trailer, one of the regulations is that it must touch the side walls.

The 40ft flexitank is currently being tested on road operations in Europe. Specialist manufacturing equipment is being installed by Büscherhoff (which designs and builds all its own production equipment), and full production will commence later this year.

Heating pads and conductive dry liners

Another new product being introduced in 2010 is a re-usable electrical heating pad system for flexitanks. The system comprises a number of connecting heating pads, which are positioned on the bottom and side walls of a container, thus enabling products to be heated before and after shipment (for loading and discharge purposes). No heating is required for these cargoes during shipping. Cargoes can be heated up to a maximum of 60degC, although the normal temperatures are expected to be 40 – 50degC.

As indicated above, one other product recently introduced by Büscherhoff is a new design of conductive film for dry liners for container. The conductive strips in the film mean that the risk of a build-up of static electricity, leading to possible dust explosions, is avoided.

In addition to these products, further new designs will be launched later this year.

www.buescherhoff.com

Research and testing of new products is an on-going process at Büscherhoff

The Büscherhoff factory in Steinfeld, Germany. As part of its expansion programme, new offices are being opened in June

The new hall in Steinfeld provides enough space for three production lines for three different designs of flexitanks

Braid "reaches 100,000 flexitanks" in current financial year

Further evidence that the flexitank market has, in the past year at least, defied the global economic downturn is provided by Braid Logistics (UK) Ltd (formerly John S Braid & Co Ltd). The company reports that it is "on course to achieve a global volume of 100,000 flexitanks" in its current financial year (ending June 2010) with solid growth reported in each of its main industrial, food and wine markets.

Braid, which has in-house flexitank manufacturing at locations in China, Singapore, Thailand and UK facilitating and supporting its global bulk logistics services, states that, in terms of flexitank movements, it is the largest flexitank service company and – it believes - the first to achieve the 100,000 tanks per annum mark, with an estimated market share close to 40 percent.

Established in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1955, the Braid Group comprises companies located in France, Germany and Spain in Europe, in Chile and Brazil in South America, in Melbourne and Adelaide, Australia, in Houston USA and in Cape Town, South Africa. Braid Logistics Asia has its head office in Singapore, with group companies located in China, Indonesia, Taiwan and Malaysia. In addition to its extensive office network, the Group works with some 62 dedicated and exclusive agencies worldwide.

As well as its flexitank operation, the company is also well-established as a specialist food-grade tank container operator, with a fleet of 1,700 food-dedicated steel tanks, mostly of 26,000 litre capacity (of which the majority are owned). This enables the company to offer its client base the dual bulk modes of ISO tanks and flexitanks in the wine and food sector. Braid's tank container fleet is also actively engaged in the spirits and potable alcohols market, products that require food grade steel tanks.

Maintaining technical innovation

Braid estimates that the bulk wine market currently generates some 45,000 to 50,000 flexitanks per annum, much of which consists of bulk shipments of wines from New World countries shipped into Europe, Asia and North America. Braid also advises that the trend in favour of bulk wine over cased shipments is expected to continue for a variety of reasons, mainly economic and environmental in nature.

Braid's technical director Andrew Watson explains that a unique feature and benefit of the Braid wine flexitank is its exclusive integral aluminium foil barrier, which provides for enhanced protection and wine quality irrespective of levels of temperature, humidity or moisture.

The Braid wine flexitank is fully encapsulated within the alu foil barrier and this, asserts Watson, is the most complete and effective barrier protection - in relation to gases, vapours or other contaminants or residual odours within the container - that is available.

"Some flexitank companies," he comments, "wrap their tanks externally with barrier materials so the tank is not encapsulated and many use EVOH (ethylene vinyl alcohol copolymer), which as a barrier tends to lose its properties and its effectiveness at elevated temperature levels, such as when New World wine containers cross the equator."

Braid CEO Allan Leddra (pictured right), with technical director Andrew Watson

Watson, a polymer scientist with 20 years experience in the PE industry, reports that Braid's alu foil barrier wine tank material has an oxygen transmission rate of 0.1 cbm/sqm/d/atm (ASTM D-3985 at 23degC and 50 percent relative humidity). By comparison, Watson assesses an EVOH barrier material's OTR as several times higher, up to 1.0 cbm/sqm/d/atm depending on EVOH spec, according to independent data. Watson asserts that the design, material spec and properties of the Braid wine tank mean that bulk wines can be shipped across the equator and be exposed to different levels of temperature or humidity and still deliver in excellent condition, a result that cannot be achieved, he believes, with most tank designs currently available.

Another issue that has exercised Braid's technical minds and resources in recent months has been the shipment of wine flexitank containers on the Australian railroads.

"From some distant inland origins, these have always been arduous journeys involving multiple rail shunts and lifts," comments Watson. "However changes in the Australian rail-road intermodal modus operandi in recent months resulted in many flexitank companies experiencing damaged and bulged containers with many cross pumps in Melbourne or Adelaide."

Braid has adapted its PE resin and introduced an uprated combination of integral internal and external layers to produce a unique design for shipments involving the Australian railroads. The design contains the tank within the container and reduces stresses transmitted to the container sidewalls and ends, resulting in less damage to flexitanks and containers alike. The modified tank is, Watson explains, still being tested and monitored, but Braid is confident that "it will make a considerable contribution towards improved quality, safety and reliability for inland intermodal rail-road movements from Australia."

Braid's CEO (flexitanks) Allan Leddra, comments that Braid's market position and achievement in reaching 100,000 tanks per annum is a result of its investment in purpose-built manufacturing plants incorporating quality standards and operational disciplines in the field well above industry norms.

"Control over the supply chain from zero defect manufacturing to packaging and storage, fitting and technical support, when required for loading and discharging, has been key to our service and growth," he reports, "and we are proud that many of the world's major petrochemical multi-nationals and food majors entrust their flexitank shipments to Braid.

"Our aim is to continue to innovate our products and services and to offer our clients the best possible combination of quality and value. We are presently in discussion with strategic suppliers to vertically integrate our manufacturing operation further with regard to in house production of our proprietary films and ancillary components."

www.braidco.com

Braid is on course to top the 100,000 flexitank movements mark in the current financial year

EPT introduces Wine-Pac at LIWF

Environmental Packaging Technologies, Ltd (EPT) will unveil its new Wine-Pac flexitank system at the London International Wine Fair 2010 (LIWF).

EPT has invested a great deal of time and money to re-engineer and test its products in order to bring flexitank packaging into the 21st century. The EPT Wine-Pac incorporates the latest technology and performance features available in the bulk wine packaging industry and meets the Container Owners Association (COA) Code of Practice for Flexitanks requirements.

The Wine-Pac's construction features an outer woven layer of polypropylene specially woven with 'strength bands' running the length of the bag. These bands help stiffen the flexitank which decreases liquid dynamics and improves the stability of bulk wine cargo. EPT's Wine-Pac incorporates a third inner liner of EVOH film that provides an impressive 0.027cc/100sqin/dayMax oxygen permeation rate.

The Wine-Pac is designed for maximum discharge. "We modified our compression fitted flange with a new anti-suction design and combined that with a true 3ins valve," stated Roger Goose, VP operations at EPT. "Our customers commented that other flexitanks didn't fully discharge and we responded with new innovations to minimise their concerns."

In addition to the EVOH barrier built into the flexitanks, each EPT Wine-Pac comes with an extremely durable, 5-layer Barrier Wear Sleeve that protects the bottom and sides of the flexitank and offers an oxygen transmission rate of zero. The proprietary woven and foil layers provide superior protection against chemical, odor and vapor migration, such as: oxygen, naphthalene, hexane, xylene, etc. An integrated snout encloses the valve after filling to also protect it from odour or vapour migration. The snout design captures any potential residue from disconnecting the hose and is sealable, providing added tamper protection.

The Wine-Pac's construction features an outer woven layer of polypropylene specially woven with 'strength bands' running the length of the bag

The Wine-Pac comes as part of an integrated flexitank system that includes EPT's patented Swept-bar Bulkhead. The Swept-bar Bulkhead's unique design helps absorb shock from liquid motion, totally eliminates pressure on the container doors, minimises side-wall deflection and preserves the integrity of sensitive bulk wine cargo whether shipping by road, rail or sea. EPT's flexitank is authorised by several North American railroads and domestic shipments of wine will begin at the start of third quarter. Currently EPT is shipping wine globally from Argentina, Chile, South Africa, Australia and the US.

"We're excited to launch our new Wine-Pac at this year's London International Wine Fair," stated Goose. EPT's booth is I-32.

John Duckett, EPT's new global business development manager

Strategic partnerships

In an effort to better serve its customers around the world, EPT has also announced the formation of strategic alliances with four well-established transportation and logistics companies.

TIBA International is a global operator of logistics services headquartered in Spain. "With over 25 years of experience, TIBA brings to EPT's customers a wealth of industry knowledge, geographical expertise and logistics solutions," observed Peter van Schaik, managing director of Europe/ Middle East/South Africa operations for EPT. "We are rapidly growing our business which requires logistics partners with strong global capabilities yet agile enough to quickly provide solutions such as TIBA."

EPT has also partnered with Worldwide Logistics Co, Ltd, headquartered in Shanghai, China. Worldwide has successfully built a network covering all of China and major economic centres of the world, has a solid customer base and a well-respected brand. Worldwide Logistics compliments the offices EPT already maintains in China, Singapore and South Korea and will help service the growing logistics needs in this region.

Secure A Load out of New Zealand will serve as the Australasian Distributors for BIG Red Flexitanks and BIG Red Dry Liners. Secure A Load is a supplier of transport and material handling equipment. "As a provider of safety and security products for the material handling industry, Secure A Load understands the importance of proper training and fitting of our flexitanks," stated Nancy Wendrock, president of EPT. "We're very pleased to have them representing our products and providing the expertise our customers expect."

Another addition to the EPT growing global network is Megafreight Services. Megafreight is an international freight forwarder ranking among the top 10 leading forwarders in South Africa. The company specialises in air and ocean freight, customs clearing, project shipments, warehousing and complementary ground based logistics. Megafreight will help EPT offer seamless solutions for the bulk wine export business, as well as expanding bulk liquid packaging solutions to other industries.

At the same time John Duckett has been appointed global business development manager. John Duckett has been involved in the manufacture and operation of flexitanks for over 25 years. His company, Magnum Worldwide, manufactured flexitanks in the UK, Malaysia and Bulgaria and operated them throughout the world with depots on five continents until it closed and its worldwide operations were dispersed in 2004. The company was especially strong in shipments of wine, latex and oils. Before becoming involved with flexitanks he was the managing director of two industrial chemical companies with international operations. The first, Revertex, manufactures natural latex and synthetic resin emulsions and the other, Doverstrand (now Synthomer) manufactures synthetic latex. Both companies operate globally and are now large users of flexitanks.

Approved by Russian Railways

In further development, EPT says it has successfully passed the requirements necessary to become the first flexitank ever to receive approval from Russian Railways (OAO 'RZD').

On 14 April, EPT's Russia office (OOO 'EKOPAKTEKH'), located in Moscow, completed the last requirement of Russian Railways with a long-distance trial shipment. 'EKOPAKTEKH' began the process in November of 2009 by conducting a series of required crash tests. Two separate 20 ft containers were used; one outfitted with a BIG Red Flexitank using a straight-bar bulkhead, the other equipped with a BIG Red Flexitank and swept-bar bulkhead. Both containers underwent a series of 'crash' rail tests at speeds from 4,8 km/ _ (3 mph) to 9,1 km/ _ (5.7 mph) and each successfully completed the test.

Russian Railways then required an additional series of 12 high-speed impact tests. Again, two standard 20 ft containers were used and equipped with BIG Red Flexitanks – one with a straight-bar bulkhead and the other with a swept-bar bulkhead. EPT has strengthened the standard industry straight-bar bulkhead with design features incorporated into the 'skirt' of the bulkhead. EPT's patented swept-bar bulkhead is specifically designed for use on rail. It is engineered to absorb shocks incurred during transport by rail while maintaining the bottom valve safely away from the doors.

Both flexitanks were loaded with 22 tons of a non-hazardous chemical, lignosulphonate, for the impact and shipment trials. During the impact tests both containers had their right doors open to allow for observation. This is not typical protocol, however, and can substantially increase the potential for failure.

The flexitanks successfully passed the impact tests at speeds of 4 km/ _ (2.3 mph) up to 9 km/ _ (5.6 mph). The same containers were then shipped 1,500 km (932 miles) from the Nizovka (Northern Railways) rail station to the Chernikovka (Kuibishevskaya Railways) station where the product was fully discharged. Containers for the trial shipment were provided by OAO 'TransContainer', the largest container terminal owner and container provider in Russia. A representative of 'TransContainer' conducted an inspection of both the containers following the final shipments for any deformation and reported that no deformation had occurred.

As a result, EPT says it has received official approval from the 'RZD' sanctioning the use of BIG Red Flexitanks for the packaging and transportation of bulk liquid, non-hazardous products in universal, heavy payload containers within the entire 'RZD' network.

www.eptpac.com

The Russian Railways impact test

VTG hits revenue forecast

VTG group for 2009 revenue decreased compared to the previous year by 4.5 percent to €581.5 million. Operating profit (EBITDA) fell against the adjusted figure for the previous year, by 3.8 percent to €149.4 million. With these results, the company says it achieved its forecast made in February 2009 for the year as a whole.

"Despite the economic crisis, we used 2009 for further development," commented Dr Heiko Fischer, CEO of VTG Aktiengesellschaft. "We were able to further diversify our wagon fleet, invest in our plant and workshops, expand Rail Logistics and directed Tank Container Logistics well through the crisis." For 2009, VTG maintained cash flow and profitability in a difficult economic environment, focused on strengthening the core market of Europe, and slowed down the rate of expansion into other global markets. "Even though 2010 will again be a difficult year, I am in no doubt that we will benefit from the strengthening of our business model, since the long-term trend of growth in global rail freight traffic has not been interrupted, even by the economic crisis," added Fischer.

In the past financial year, group revenue showed a moderate drop of €27.2 million, to €581.5 million. EBITDA fell only slightly against the adjusted figure for the previous year, by €5.7 million to €149.4 million. Group profit decreased by 5.4 million to €22.5 million. As of 31 December 2009, the Group had 963 employees: of these, 678 were in Germany and 285 abroad.

In the Wagon Hire Division, the company has pushed on with its strategy of wagon fleet diversification, expanding the fleet with the addition of wagons for transporting coal, sand, steel coils, iron ore, and limestone. Additionally, VTG strengthened the plant and workshops and accompanying services. Waggonbau Graaff, which VTG bought in 2008, was integrated successfully into the Group and was already back at a production level of more than 250 wagons per annum and had produced its first wagon enhancements. Within the European network of repair workshops, the spare parts management process was optimized and VTG's own workshops were modernized with investments into the infrastructure, new machinery and equipment.

Wagon Hire showed a moderate decrease in revenue; a decrease that slowed again in the second half of the year. The Rail Logistics Division has pushed ahead with its strategy of international expansion. Accordingly, the division opened a sales office in Rotterdam in August 2009 to raise its market profile in the Benelux countries. In Hungary, operations were expanded with the transport of biofuels. In Turkey, new sales opportunities are being opened up through a partnership entered into in 2009 with a rail forwarder. The newly acquired southeastern Europe transports, the positive development of block train and liquefied gas transports, coupled with the expansion of the range of services and the acquisition of new customers and routes more than compensated for the downturn in chemical transports. Acquisitions made at the turn of the year – LOG-O-Rail customer contracts and the takeover of the company Braunert Eisenbahnverkehr – will further improve business in 2010.

Rail Logistics successfully increased its revenue, despite growing competitive pressure, by 1 percent compared with the previous year, to €179.4 million.

From India with added spice

Gone are the days when bulk bags originating from the Subcontinent were widely regarded as being of no more than average quality – and consequently only suitable for transporting lower-value materials such as sand or waste products. Within the past three to four years considerable further progress has been made with regard to both consistency of production as well as reliability of delivery to customers in Europe and further afield. Nowadays India's leading FIBC producers, many of which have gained certification to produce pharmaceutical-grade bags under clean-room conditions, can match the rest of the world in terms of technical sophistication.

Here we examine a dozen representative manufacturers from the viewpoint of production capacity, export markets and the types of FIBC on offer.

Buildmet Fibres Pvt Ltd: Operating from two plants in Bangalore, Kanatake, Buildmet Fibres exports 98% of its FIBC production mainly to the UK, Continental Europe, USA and Canada. End users are mostly from mineral and fertiliser industries, although the bags are also widely used for building materials, sugar and chemicals.

Most FIBC categories are produced including form-fit lined bags, ventilated bags, baffle bags and Type C static-conductive bags. Depending on customer needs, the company also sometimes trades in FIBCs not of its own manufacture. Buildmet additionally produces dry bulk container liners.

S Ramakrishnan, Buildmet Fibres

BulkPack Exports Ltd: This producer has a single plant in Pithampur, Madhya Pradesh. It sells exclusively its own bags and the entire production is exported, the three main buyer territories being Europe, USA and Australia. The company caters for all industries and among specialist types of FIBC are industrial clean bags for use with products which need to be handled under hygienic conditions. Bulk Pack also produces conventional sacks.

Emmbi Polyarns Ltd: Based in Mumbai, Emmbi Polyarns has recently completed its initial public offer for raising 10 million US dollars which will be used to expand its present annual capacity from 2.5 million FIBCs up to 7.5 million by the end of 2010. The company has two FIBC manufacturing plants, one catering for the domestic market and the other, which is located close to the port of Mumbai, for export production. It only sells bags which it produces itself and 80% of total output goes overseas. Main export regions are Europe (EU as well as non-EU countries), USA, Canada, Australia, the Gulf and various Middle East countries. In order to service emergency deliveries to various European countries, the company has entered into a contract manufacturing arrangement with a Hungarian FIBC assembly plant.

Makrand Appalwar, managing director of Emmbi Polyarns

Main products carried in this company's FIBCs are chemicals, construction materials, agrifoods/seeds and cement. In addition to making all usual designs of FIBC, it produces Type C conductive bags, from manufacturing the basic thread through to final assembly. It also makes palletless FIBCs and air-filled dunnage bags, as well as a liquid-carrying FIBC called Flexi Tank. The company's clean-room manufacturing facility is currently undergoing certification approval and it is expected to be both ISO 22000 and HACCP certified within the next three months.

Apart from its two Indian FIBC production plants, Emmbi Polyarns has a marketing company called Global Bag where Emmbi owns part of the share holding in the Czech Republic. In addition it has an exclusive distribution agreement in the Benelux region with Mibrian BV and an importing company called Emmi BV for distribution in various European countries.

Production Unit 2 of Emmbi Polyarns

Rinku Appalwar, director of finance, Emmbi Polyarns

Apart from FIBCs, the company makes plastic woven sacks as well as container liners for both dry and liquid cargoes. It is also a specialist producer of asbestos packaging bags.

G P N Guptha, managing director, Jumbo Bag

Jumbo Bag Ltd: Established in 1995, Jumbo Bag expects to manufacture around 2.8 million FIBCs this year. With its marketing department in Ponneri Taluk, Tamil Nadu, the company has four manufacturing facilities in India. It also trades in FIBCs which are not of its own manufacture.

Jumbo Bag exports 50% of its FIBC production, mainly to the USA and Middle East countries. It also has distributors in various European countries. Principal products for which its bags are used are, in descending order of importance, chemicals, petrochemicals, carbon black and minerals.

Special FIBC designs made by the company include baffle lined bags, ventilated bags, co-extruded and aluminium foil bags, bags produced under clean room conditions for use in food and pharmaceutical industries, and static-protected bags (Jumbo Earth Type C conductive bags and Jumbo Stat Type D static-dissipative bags). The company also makes dry bulk container liners.

Karur KCP Packkagings Ltd: This manufacturer is also located in Tamil Nadu and expects to produce three million FIBCs this year. All production is carried out in a single plant under one roof. The company only sells bags of its own manufacture, with all of its production being exported mainly to the UK, Continental Europe and the USA.

The main products for which these bags are used are fertilisers, cement, chemicals, minerals, sugar and other foodstuffs. The company's range of FIBCs includes special designs such as baffle bags and it has clean room production facilities for food-grade bags. Karur also makes PP woven/ESKP sacks in the 25-50kg capacity range.

Mittal Technopack Pvt Ltd: Like the preceding company, Mittal Technopack, which is based in Kolkata, West Bengal, expects this year to manufacture around three million FIBCs. The company sells only its own bags all of which are manufactured at a single plant. Exports account for 80% of total production, the main receiving countries being Italy, Spain, Belgium, Australia and the USA.

Chief products for which Mittal Technopack bags are used are chemicals and mineral powders, foodstuffs, building materials, raw materials for steel production, cement and fertilisers. Special FIBC designs include form-stable bags. This company makes no other type of industrial packaging apart from FIBCs.

Neobags Overseas Pvt Ltd: Established as recently as 2007, this Mumbai-based company is currently producing about 250,000 FIBCs annually. Manufacture takes place at two separate locations but by December of this year the company expects its new manufacturing facility to become operational which will be dedicated just to FIBC production.

Clean-room production facility at Jumbo Bag

One of the FIBC looms at Mittal Technopak

Neobags sometimes trades in bags not of its own manufacture if demand exceeds present production capacity.

All of the company's FIBCs are exported principally to the UK, Continental Europe, North America, Africa, Australia and Israel. Main user industries are construction/civil engineering, agriculture, petrochemicals and waste management. Later this year Neobags is planning to set up sales offices in Europe and the UK as well as in North America.

At present Neobags makes all main types of FIBCs with the exception of pharma/food-grade categories. However, there will be a clean-room production facility at its new manufacturing plant opening at the end of the year. This company also makes PP sacks and horticultural bags.

In addition to FIBCs, Palmetto Industries also makes PP/BOPP bags which are produced under clean-room conditions.

Palmetto Industries (India) Pvt Ltd: This year Palmetto Industries expects to produce about 2.4 million FIBCs at its plant at Chinna Kalapet, Pondicherry. Here all bulk bag production is under one roof. Since the company is ISO 22000 and HACCP certified, its manufacturing process has to adhere to very stringent requirements. Its parent company Palmetto Industries International based in Grovetown, GA, has joint ventures as well as a supply base in China.

All production from the Pondicherry plant is exported and since the parent company is headquartered in the USA, over 75% of FIBC output goes to that country. Other key customers are located in Europe and Latin America. The company only sells bags of its own manufacture.

Main products for which Palmetto Industries' FIBCs are used include – in descending order of importance – foodstuffs (flour, sugar, peanuts, corn, salt), mining materials (kaolin clay, talc, calcium carbonate), chemicals (titanium dioxide, carbon black), fertiliser and cement.

Palmetto Industries is one of very few companies which have a licence to manufacture Crohmiq Type D bags. The company also offers stringently

Shankar Balan, president, Palmetto Industries International

monitored clean room operations for food-grade customers. In addition to FIBCs, the company also manufactures PP/BOPP bags that can be printed with a maximum of 10 colours. These bags are manufactured in the same campus and adhere to the ISO22000 and HACCP certifications. Used primarily by pet food, grains and seed industries, they are manufactured by a fully automated system. The company additionally makes dry bulk container liners.

Plastene India Ltd: This leading manufacturer based in Usmanpura, Ahmedabad, Gujarat, aims to produce around 10 million FIBCs this year. These are manufactured at three separate facilities: at Nanichirai, Gandhidham; at Rajpur, Ahmedabad; and at Ganhidham (by associate company Oswal Extrusion Ltd). The company only sells FIBCs of its own manufacture. All production is exported, the main buyer territories being Europe (notably UK), USA, Australia and Central and South America. The company makes a broad range of bag designs and at present concentrates exclusively on FIBC production.

Rishi FIBC Solutions Pvt Ltd: Located in Vadodara, Gujarat, this company started making bulk bags only two years ago and expects to produce three million units this year. It operates a modern, totally integrated facility with all production taking place under one roof.

The company sells exclusively FIBCs of its own manufacture and does not produce any other type of industrial packaging. Exports account for 95% of

One of the wide range of FIBC designs available form Neobags Overseas

Production details of 12 leading Indian FIBC manufacturers

Manufacturer (location)	Year started	No of FIBCs produced in 2009	Estimated No of FIBCs produced in 2010	Percentage exports	Website/contact
Buildmet Fibres (Bangalore 561 203)	1996	3.75 million	3.9 million	98%	www.buildmetfibres.in Mr S Ramakrishnan ramakrishnan@buildmetfibres.in ramakrishnan@transpacasia.com
BulkPack Exports (Indore 452 001)	1998	3.5 million	4 million	100%	www.bulkpackexports.com Mr R K Tekriwal pppl@sancharnet.in
Emmbi Polyarns (Mumbai 400 053)	2003	2.5 million	7.5 million	80%	www.fibcindia.com Mr Makrand Appalwar Managing director makrand.appalwar@emmbi.com
Jumbo Bag (Ponneri Taluk 601 204)	1995	2.4 million	2.8 million	50%	www.jumbobaglimited.com Mr G Ramraj Director (marketing) ramraj@blissgroup.com
Karur KCP Packkagings Karur 639 001)	2001	2.4 million	3 million	100%	www.karurkcp.in Mr S Pasupathy General mgr - commercial pasupathy@karurkcp.in
Mittal Technopack (Kolkata 700 001)	2004	2.4 million	3 million	80%	www.mittaltechnopack.com Mr Manoj Agarwal Managing director manoj@mittaltechnopack.com
Neobags Overseas (Mumbai 400 001)	2007	200,000	250,000	100%	www.neobags.biz Mr Harish Jajodia CEO ceo@neobags.biz
Palmetto Industries (India) (Pondicherry 605 014)	2001	1.7 million	2.4 million	100%	www.piindia.com Mr Shankar Balan President shankar@palmetto-industries.com
Plastene India (Ahmedabad 380 013)	2005	7 million	10 million	100%	www.champalalgroup.com sidh@champalalgroup.com
Rishi FIBC Solutions (Vadodara 391 440)	2008	2.4 million	3 million	95%	www.rishifibc.com Mr Joseph Fransis Executive director & CEO joseph@rishifibc.com Mr Arvind Nopany Managing director arvind.nopany@rishifibc.com
Royal Touch Fablon (Kolkata 700 001)	2004	1.8 million	3 million	70%	www.royaltouchfablon.com Mr Vikash Kandoi royalttouchfablon@gmail.com
Shankar Packagings (Waghodia 391 760)	1985	5.5 million	6.2 million	93%	www.shankarpack.com Ms Neha Thacker Assistant mgr, int'l marketing neha@shankarpack.com

Joseph Fransis, executive director and CEO of Rishi FIBC Solutions

Rishi FIBC Solutions' integrated plant where three million bags are expected to be produced this year.

One of Shankar Packagings' production units

production, half going to Europe and half to the USA. Main user industries are food, chemicals, polymers and pharmaceuticals. Types of FIBC include food and pharma bags and baffle liner designs as well as static-protected Type D and Type C categories.

Rishi FIBC Solutions is certified by AIB (American Institute of Bakers), BRC (British Retail Consortium) and the company has also gained ISO 9001: 2008 accreditation.

Royal Touch Fablon (P) Ltd: Based in Kolkata, this company expects to manufacture three million FIBCs this year. This compares with 1.8 million in 2009, a poor year for most FIBC producers on account of the global economic downturn (four years previously the company had already achieved an annual output of two million bags). Its fully integrated production facility includes extrusion, weaving, lamination, printing, sewing, yarn production, label production, baling, testing, etc. The company only sells bags that it makes itself, with 70% of production being exported mainly to the UK, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Belgium, Lithuania, the Netherlands and USA.

Main products carried in Royal Touch Fablon bags are building materials, petrochemicals, minerals and materials for waste disposal (including asbestos). Special FIBC designs include form stable categories and the company plans to provide clean-room production facilities from beginning of 2011. It also makes various types of sacks with or without lamination, printing, etc. BOPP reverse printed bags are also available.

Baled FIBCs being despatched from the Pondicherry plant of Palmetto Industries for delivery to worldwide destinations

Shankar Packagings Ltd: Located in the state of Gujarat, this company has two FIBC production plants which are both in the same area (Waghodia GIDC, Baroda) and only 500m apart. This year the company aims to produce just over six million bags of which some 93% will be exported mainly to Europe, USA and Africa. It only sells bags of its own manufacture. In Europe the company works in close association with LC Packaging and in the USA with Global Pack.

Main user industries are chemicals and allied products (45%), minerals (25%), food and pharmaceuticals (20%) and construction (10%). The principal FIBC designs produced by Shankar are – in descending order of volume: dust-tight bags, clean room bags, form stable 'Q' bags with standard and net baffles, standard bags, liner bags, tubular bags (made from circular fabric), UN bags, Type C conductive bags, and ventilated bags. The company concentrates exclusively on FIBC manufacture although it does also supply fabric in the form of rolls. It was established in 1985 initially to produce small bags and FIBC production began in 1992.

In the July/August Bulk Distributor *we shall focus on China, the other major global power-house of FIBC production.*

Shankar Packagings' young international marketing team

BULK DISTRIBUTOR

will be reporting in depth on the following FIBC-related subjects later this year:

July/August 2010 issue
- Fabric, webbing, thread and production machinery
- Area Review: China

September/October 2010 issue
- FIBC cleaning, reconditioning and recycling
- Area Review: Turkey & Middle East

November/December 2010 issue
- Combating problems of static electricity
  Filling & discharge of FIBCs

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New CEO spearheads Newtec Group restructure

Following the recent retirement of chairman Jean-Bernard Ihler, the leading global end-of-line packaging specialist Newtec Group has promoted Didier Pradeilles to the position of chief executive officer. Before joining the Rousset, France, headquartered company some 18 months earlier, he had been president of Danfoss Commercial Compressors and more recently branch president of Valeo.

In the aftermath of the economic downturn, which in 2009 caused sales to decline by 20% to €53M compared to the previous year, Pradeilles has instigated a corporate strategy which focuses on the group's core competence in palletising both sacks and unit loads. The group, which previously comprised five separate SMEs (newtec bag palletizing, newtec case palletizing, newtec alvey, newtec handling systems and newtec filling systems) has been reorganised into a global entity with a common sales and service organisation into four well defined areas: end-of-line systems for unit loads; end-of-line systems for sacks; logistics distribution systems (handling systems, manual and automatic warehouses, etc); and services which includes training, provision of maintenance contracts and spare parts.

Production now takes place at three dedicated and specialised competence centres. The Saint Laurent sur Sèvre, France, site (formerly newtec case palletizing) becomes the palletising centre for unit loads. Mulhouse, France, (formerly newtec bag palletizing) becomes the palletising centre for sacks, while Oudenaarde, Belgium (formerly newtec alvey and newtec handling systems) becomes the centre for logistics and distribution equipment.

An enlarged R&D department has been established to prepare future product ranges. At the end of 2009 the industrial site at Rousset, France, was closed with manufacturing being relocated to the Oudenaarde plant in Belgium. R&D on filling activities has ceased (previously focused on newtec filling systems) although an after sales service continues to be provided. The company has retained and expanded its Somefi mail order selling activity as an autonomous business unit.

Didier Pradeilles

After the reorganisation which was begun in 2009, the group sees 2010 as a transition year in readiness for the recovery. Despite a slight upturn in projects in recent months and a well filled order book, activity this year is expected to remain at a similar level to 2009 owing to the continuing difficult economic climate.

Group strategy is currently focused on four key areas:

- Developing export sales in targeted areas.
- Globalising the Newtec Group.
- Boosting R&D activities for the company's product ranges.
- Entering into partner alliances to extend the product ranges, as either a commercial or capital partnership, in line with the group philosophy to be an international supplier of logistic solutions for industry.

www.newtec-group.com

Newtec bag palletizer

Kässbohrer exhibits at Bauma

Kässbohrer, part of Turkey's Tirsan Group, participated for the first time at the Bauma international construction industry trade fair which took place 19-25 April in Munich, Germany. Prominently featured on the company's stand was a powder tanker semi-trailer designed for transport of cement. The company offers a broad selection of dry bulk semi-trailers which are designed to suit the different densities and flow properties of a wide range of bulk products. The cement vehicle (pictured) features an aluminium chassis and body in order to reduce deadweight and maximise payload capacity.

The other main exhibit on the company's Bauma stand was a four-axle extendable lowbed with one fixed and three hydraulic steering axles specially designed for heavy haulage. Kässbohrer, which was established in 1893, offers Europe's largest road trailer product range, in addition to specialising in custom-made transport vehicles. It was acquired in 2002 by the Istanbul-based Tirsan Group which one year later also took over Talson, the Dutch specialist manufacturer of box-type trailers. In 2007 the Group acquired Hendricks, the leading Germany manufacturer of road tankers for liquids. Tirsan Group is now among Europe's top 10 semi-trailer manufacturers and has set itself the target of being among the top five within the next few years.

www.kaessbohrer.com

Kässbohrer road tanker semi-trailer for cement

Fully automatic octabin tipplers

Eichholz Silo- und Anlagenbau, Schapen, Germany, has extended its materials handling equipment portfolio with the introduction of a range of fully automatic octabin discharge stations. The company has acquired the distributorship for these GENIUS machines in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. By being upended through 120 degrees, each container is completely emptied. The machines are designed to handle octabins up to 2.2m high and weighing up to 2000kg.

www.eichholz.com

GENIUS octabin tippler now available from Eichholz

Schmidt installs giant silos for Vinnolit business

International bulk logistics operator Karl Schmidt Spedition headquartered in Heilbronn, Germany, recently brought into operation the three largest silos it has ever installed. After a construction time of no more than six months, the new silo plant at Merkenich near Cologne was commissioned. It has been built to service the recently expanded cooperation between Schmidt and its customer Vinnolit GmbH & Co KG, Europe's foremost manufacturer of PVC raw materials.

Each of the three silos, which were constructed by Ellimetal of Belgium, has a capacity of 1200m³ for storage of S-PVC powder. They have a diameter of 7.5m and a cylindrical height of 26.5m, with a total height of 42m including the base structure. In addition to maintaining and operating the silo plant on behalf of Vinnolit, Schmidt provides bulk transport and distribution services for its client.

www.schmidt-heilbronn.de

The three Ellimetal silos being erected at Karl Schmidt's Merkenich site

Gravity discharge directly into bulk containers or road powder tankers can be achieved by means of Cimbria Moduflex telescopic loading chutes

Avoiding dust and spillage at conveyor transfer points

Transfer points tend to be the weak link of any belt conveyor system. They give rise to dust pollution and spillage, resulting in environmental headaches as well as loss of the material being conveyed. In recent weeks two separate developments have been announced which go a long way to providing a cure for this problem.

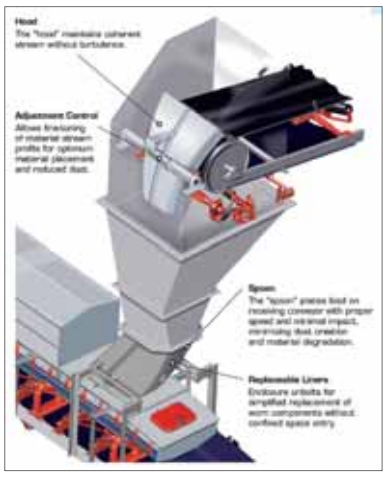
UK-based Cleveland Cascades, famous for its novel loading chute technology, has recently devised an entirely new transfer point concept which has been designed to eliminate bulk material spillage as well as generation of dust. In a similar initiative, Martin Engineering of the USA has introduced new transfer chute technology which achieves a similar objective.

The new Cleveland Cascades system is so effective that auxiliary dust filtration and extraction equipment is not required, thus providing significant savings in maintenance and energy costs, not to mention the purchase cost of the equipment. Material fed from the delivery conveyor enters the headchute section of the transfer point, from where it is directed to flow into the deflector section. Here the material flows downwards over a series of inclined deflector plates which have the effect of slowing its descent to the extent that it attains a state of mass flow without entrainment of air.

The angles of the inclined deflector plates can be adjusted to optimise performance of the transfer point, even when different materials and flow rates must be accommodated. If required these adjustments can be performed remotely. Where reception and delivery conveyors are set at an angle to each other, each deflector plate is partially rotated so as to redirect the material flow gradually into the correct orientation, whilst at the same time eliminating any degradation of the material or dust pollution.

In the TaperFlow® section material is placed gently on to the reception conveyor in the direction of travel, minimising impact damage and belt abrasion as well as reducing the need for impact sections. This arrangement eliminates the need for skirting systems, frequently a cause of belt tracking problems and related maintenance costs. There is also no build-up of material in valley angles, further reducing housekeeping costs. Where highly abrasive materials are being handled, the transfer point can be supplied with material running surfaces protected by a range of wear-resistant linings including ceramic tiles, Hardox steel, UHMWP plastic or chromium carbide.

To accommodate unavoidable surges in the amount of material flowing through the transfer point, the surge capacity section has been designed to retain excess material without spillage



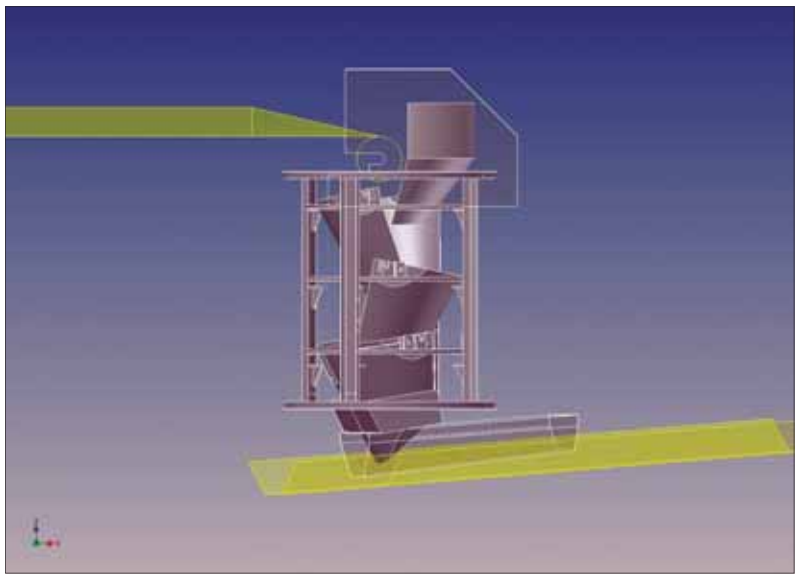
Inertial Flow transfer chute from Martin Engineering

until it can be fed to the reception conveyor via the TaperFlow delivery section.

The Cleveland Cascade transfer point is available in a range of diameters, providing for throughputs typically within the range 40-6000m³/h. The system has been developed using latest dynamic modelling technology.

Martin Engineering, headquartered in Neponset, IL, has introduced Inertial Flow™ transfer chutes which, by carefully controlling material speed and direction, are designed to minimise impact and wear on liners and belts, while containing the dust and spillage that are often generated at transfer points. The patent-pending, engineered chutes employ special geometries that capture and concentrate the material stream as it travels through the chute. Every design is tailored to suit specific material characteristics and individual conveyor layouts.

www.clevelandcascades.co.uk;
www.martin-eng.com



Cleveland Cascades transfer point

Successful AdBlue audit for Hoyer

Hoyer has become the first company in the world to complete the audit programme for AdBlue distributors by the association of the German automotive industry (VDA).

Although the fuel consumption of vehicles is decreasing in many industrialised countries, the consumption of AdBlue is increasing at the same time – in Germany alone it rose by some 10 percent in the past year. AdBlue is a 32.5 percent aqueous urea solution which is used in special SCR catalytic converters to reduce the toxic nitrogen oxides produced in the exhaust of diesel-engined vehicles. This modern exhaust technology allows commercial vehicles to meet the Euro-5 emissions standards. AdBlue is increasingly available at service stations which have special pumps to fill it into the additional tanks carried by commercial vehicles.

During the first weeks of 2010, the Hamburg logistics company not only became the first logistics provider in the world but the first company ever to successfully complete this audit for distributors.

Independent auditors examined Hoyer's entire AdBlue distribution chain, including transport equipment and the analysis of product samples – from being manufactured until being delivered to the service station or filled into smaller containers for final use. Following the successful audit, Hoyer received a certificate confirming that its logistical services for AdBlue including the necessary management system all conform to the applicable standard ISO 22241. The certificate is valid for three years and describes all the audited corporate sectors, all the specifications and the business partners.

Hoyer actually managed to surpass the already high demands of the standard. In order to ensure the complete cleanness of the transport containers, all units are dedicated AdBlue only.

The high grade of cleanness and uniform quality are fundamental preconditions for the smooth operation of an SCR catalytic converter. Modern exhaust technologies can only gain a secure foothold internationally if the quality of fuels and additives is prescribed and assured uniformly throughout the world. Correspondingly high demands are therefore made of logistic service providers who distribute AdBlue.

Hoyer has been involved in this business ever since AdBlue was introduced in 2005, and the business has developed very successfully. At first

it carried out one transport per month; now, some five years later, the annual volume exceeds 100,000 tonnes.

Hoyer's 40 special-purpose units, consisting of tank containers and semi-trailers, carry the product both for manufacturers and for their distribution partners. The tank containers have baffles and a fully calibrated dispensing system. Substantial investments were necessary for the dispensing system and the other requisite special equipment. The dispensing system is built onto the chassis, but the tank containers and trucks need to be specially modified too.

The logistical details vary and are tailored to the needs of the customers. In most cases intermodal transport is used (30 tonnes in intermodal transport, 25 tonnes by road). Each unit supplies up to twelve customers.

- At the beginning of the year 2010, the Hoyer Group took over 100 percent of ELD (European Liquid Drumming) BV, based in Oosterhout. Since 2002, it had held a 50 percent share in a joint venture with the Dutch Peterson Group.

The service portfolio of ELD covers a variety of logistics services for liquid products. This includes filling, packing and dispatch of dangerous goods (classes 3, 6.1, 8 and 9) as well as of non-dangerous goods. IBCs, drums and small containers are filled in state-of-the-art filling facilities, to be dispatched as single units or on pallets. Storage facilities with a capacity for 12,000 drums are available. Blending of liquid chemical products is also possible. Depending on customer requirements, these goods can be decanted into containers from one to 1,000 litres.

Door-to-door round-the-clock availability to all major pan-European business hubs completes the service.

During recent years ELD has significantly expanded its capacity. Six filling lines are currently available, two of them exclusively for IBCs. Customers include major European chemical companies. Last year, 30 employees generated a turnover of approximately €5 million.

The take-over of ELD completes Hoyer's logistics service portfolio in the Benelux countries.

www.hoyer-group.com

Kombiverkehr expands services

Kombiverkehr KG introduced new train departures between Germany, Austria and Hungary from beginning of May. Improvements on the operations side will also allow journey times to be shortened and the reliability of the connections enhanced.

"The most important new feature is that there will now be a direct train service between Neuss-Hessentor and Wien-Nordwest CCT, and running five times a week in both directions," said Robert Breuhahn, general manager of Kombiverkehr. "That enables us to boost capacity between the Ruhr district and Austria by almost 50 percent."

The new train complements the existing services between Duisburg-Ruhrort Hafen and Wels and between Neuss-Hessentor and Wels. The direct connection means that containers, swap bodies and trailers will in future reach the Austrian capital some 10 hours sooner than before. With a complete wagon group continuing on to Budapest-BILK, further quality benefits can be realised because it removes the need to transfer shipments to and from Budapest by crane onto the connecting train in Wels. "Now the fixed wagon group together with its loading units is simply separated, ensuring rapid onward carriage," Breuhahn added. To guarantee the fastest possible connections, the frequency of trains between Vienna and Budapest will be increased from three to five departures per week, also from 3 May. This also applies for the service between Ludwigshafen and Wels and for the connecting trains between Wels and Vienna.

"The new services and the daily departures from various regions in Germany allow us to strengthen the position of Combined Transport between Germany, Austria and Hungary as an alternative to pure road transport," Breuhahn said. "The greater capacity and the improved service should make it even easier for transport companies and forwarders to switch to environmentally friendly CT."

Kombiverkehr's Armin Riedl - the new rail track is extremely important for the development of seaport-hinterland traffic. DB AG/Michael Neuhaus

Combined transport by road and rail, including the initial and final legs, reduces the CO_2 emitted by end-to-end road transport by about two thirds on average. On the route between Neuss-Hessentor and Vienna, transporting a semitrailer with cargo weighing 25 tonnes by rail produces 1.29 tonnes less CO_2 than end-to-end road transport. Individual route-specific information about the pollution produced by transport can be obtained from Kombiverkehr's online timetable information service on the internet.

- PKV intermodal terminal in Port of Duisburg-Ruhrort has been expanded. With an investment of €3 million the handling capacity of the freight station has risen to annual 220,000 containers, swap bodies and semi-trailers. At the same time, a 780m track for future handling of super-long trains has been installed, the first in Duisburg.

"With the expansion of the PKV terminal we have reached an important milestone to secure the future for more combined transport," said Andreas Schulz sales manager of DB Intermodal, joint shareholder along with Kombiverkehr KG. Armin Riedl, managing director of Kombiverkehr, added: "The new rail track at this location is extremely important for the development of seaport-hinterland traffic. Thanks to the new track the terminal will speed up handling and has a positive effect on truck throughput."

The terminal is not only the origin and destination of many national and international trains, but also a major hub for combining maritime and transcontinental traffic. This opens the terminal to a large number of additional connecting opportunities within Europe.

Wincanton strengthens gas distribution business

Wincanton has strengthened its relationship with two of the UK's biggest petroleum and industrial gas suppliers through extensions worth £112 million to its distribution contracts with Chevron and Air Products.

The Chevron contract extension, which is expected to generate in the region of £60 million turnover over three years, "reinforces Wincanton's status as Britain's market-leading petroleum distributor and continues its 17-year association with Chevron," said the logistics provider.

Wincanton will continue to operate the contract from Chevron's network of UK terminals, transporting over 9 billion litres of fuel over the lifetime of the agreement to Texaco-branded petrol stations across the UK.

In 2009, Wincanton carried over 3 billion litres of fuel and travelled 15.6 million kms for Chevron.

The Air Products deal, worth £52 million over three years, sees Wincanton extending its long-standing contract to carry bulk liquid nitrogen, liquid oxygen, liquid argon and hydrogen gas for the manufacturing industry and for the growing medical market, which includes hospitals and clinics.

Sixty Wincanton-operated road tanker vehicles and 120 drivers, working round the clock, will deliver 80,000 tonnes of gas every month from seven Air Products terminals in the UK, making around 100 deliveries every day.

Commenting on the contract wins, Wincanton's CEO Graeme McFaull said: "These new contract extensions are testament to the continuing strength of Wincanton's core markets in the UK. Cost savings and productivity improvements remain at the top of our customers' agendas and we continue to work proactively with them to identify and deliver significant financial and operational benefits.

"Transporting fuel and liquid gases requires the highest safety standards, and we are proud of our outstanding safety record. Wincanton operates a programme of continuous improvement that includes a driver training programme that is the envy of our industry, with over 3,000 drivers now holding an NVQ driver qualification."

The renewals follow Chevron's award for the 'Most Admired Carrier in the Africa, Pakistan, Europe (AEP) Region for 2008' – the first European company to receive this award.

www.wincanton.co.uk

Vopak maintains ambitious development schedule

Royal Vopak is keeping up its global expansion strategy with a number of new investments and share acquisitions. The Dutch independent storage terminal operator has acquired 80% of the shares in the Spanish company Alpetrol from Novaro, a subsidiary of the Russian oil company NK Alliance.

Alpetrol holds a concession granted by the Algeciras Port Authorities and obtained all relevant permits for the construction and operation of a bulk liquid storage terminal in the port of Algeciras. The remaining 20% of the shares are held by Vilma Oil, a Spanish company that provides oil related logistical and technical services.

Through Alpetrol, Vopak and its partner Vilma Oil will start the construction of a storage terminal for oil products with a capacity of 403,000 cbm at Algeciras. The terminal, which will be named Vopak Terminal Algeciras, is the first to offer independent bunker storage services in the Spanish port and is expected to be commissioned in mid-2012.

Algeciras is strategically located on the Straits of Gibraltar and the Mediterranean Sea. This is a key transit area at the crossroads of the world's main shipping lanes that connect Europe, West Africa, America and Asia. Together with the ports of Ceuta and Gibraltar, Algeciras is part of the second largest European market place for bunkering services and an important logistic hub.

Vilma Oil was founded in 1996 and provides oil related risk management, logistical and technical services. The company mainly focuses its activities on the Mediterranean area. However, Vilma also has a leading role in the development of storage facilities in Georgia and Russia.

Growing demand for storage, gasoline and related product flows between Europe, North America and Asia. With the growing geographical imbalance between supply and demand, the new Vopak terminal will enable both existing and new customers to strengthen their positions. A substantial proportion of the total capacity has already been leased on a long-term basis from the completion date.

Map and artist's impression of Vopak Terminal Algeciras

Automotive gas oil (diesel fuel) and gasoline products will be blended at the terminal with other components to bring them up to specification for the various markets. Gasoline will be distributed by tanker to such destinations as the USA, where there is a structurally high demand for gasoline. In addition, tank barges will serve the European market by inland waterway.

Vopak has also opened the first independent import terminal for oil products in Jakarta, Indonesia. The terminal provides storage and distribution services to Indonesian and international oil companies, as Indonesia's import needs continue to grow.

The terminal will help to meet the huge demand for storage capacity in the Amsterdam-Rotterdam-Antwerp (ARA) region. Port of Amsterdam plays an important international role in the ARA region as a logistics hub for blending and transhipment services for gasoline and other light oil products has prompted Vopak to expand its terminal currently under construction in Amsterdam's Westpoort industrial zone.

The investment in Spain followed news of a near doubling of capacity at Vopak's terminal currently under construction in Amsterdam's Westpoort industrial zone. The 620,000 cbm storage capacity provided by phase 1, which is already under construction, will be increased by a further 570,000 cbm. After the phased completion of the terminal between 2011 and 2012, total storage capacity will be approximately 1.2 million cbm.

Vopak Terminal Jakarta

The terminal was inaugurated by the Co-ordinating Minister for Economic Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, HE Ir M Hatta Rajasa and officially opened for operation by John Paul Broeders, CEO of Royal Vopak in the Netherlands, and Haryanto Adikoesomo, President Director of PT AKR Corporindo Tbk in Indonesia.

The terminal has a storage capacity of 250,800 cbm and enables the distribution of oil products in the greater Jakarta area. The facility has been designed and constructed in compliance with the highest Health, Safety, Security and Environmental standards and with high levels of integrated automation. Vopak Terminal Jakarta will be part of Vopak's global network, which consists of 80 terminals in 31 countries. Capacity can be expanded to 450,000 cbm in the future depending on market demand. Vopak also operates an import terminal for chemicals in Merak, which is located in West Java, Indonesia.

The market in Indonesia holds great potential, according to Vopak. The economy is growing at a healthy pace and since 2005 Indonesia has started to open its oil market to private participation. Furthermore, Indonesia's import needs for oil products continue to rise and the need for an independent terminal was felt. PT AKR Corporindo Tbk and Vopak recognised this opportunity and decided to make this infrastructure investment to support the growing import and distribution requirements.

PT AKR Corporindo Tbk as the local partner is Indonesia's largest private sector distributor of petroleum products and basic chemicals. AKR brings over 25 years of experience in operating terminals for bulk chemicals and petroleum products and has an extensive network of logistics facilities. AKR operates terminals in 14 locations in Indonesia with a total storage capacity of more than 500,000 cbm and serves customers in the industrial, mining, bunker and power sectors.

BTT open for transhipment

Even though the first piles have yet to be sunk in the ambitious storage capacity expansion process of Rotterdam's Botlek Tank Terminal BV (BTT), customers can already turn to vessel-to-vessel transhipment of a range of liquid products.

Until recently, BTT was only allowed to carry out transhipment of edible oils, but as of 1 March 2010, the terminal became fully licensed for transhipping liquids such as petrol, diesel, ethanol, MTBE, and chemicals at its sea berth in the Rotterdam Botlek area.

The 420m long sea berth is capable of facilitating two ocean-going vessels of up to 100,000 dwt simultaneously, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. A 300m x 70m area is subject to the petroleum regime.

BTT has already satisfactorily performed transhipment for various vessels. BTT says it position makes it ideal for such transhipment. Depth alongside is 13.65m.

In mid-March 2010 contracts were signed with Polimex-Mosostal SA in Warsaw to effect construction of the initial stage of the expansion of tank storage capacity. Construction has commenced, and will be completed by the final quarter of 2011. Until then, the sea berth will not be occupied by vessels for storage activities, resulting in ample space available for transhipment.

The contract for the strong expansion of capacity, from 11,000 cbm to 200,000 cbm was signed on 18 March. The expansion involves the construction of 130,000 cbm storage tanks for mineral oils and 70,000 cbm storage tanks for vegetable oils or biodiesel. More than 50 percent of the new capacity is already covered by long-term contracts with customers.

Canaport completes third tank

Canaport LNG has completed Canada's first LNG receiving and regasification terminal with the completion of the third LNG storage tank. With the capacity to hold 10 billion cubic feet (BCF) of natural gas, Canaport LNG now boasts the largest above ground LNG storage capacity in Canada and the US Northeast.

The completion of the third tank strengthens Canaport LNG's ability to provide a reliable supply of natural gas and will also provide greater flexibility in the scheduling of tankers making deliveries at the terminal.

Canaport LNG Limited Partnership is a partnership between Fort Reliance and Repsol YPF, SA subsidiaries. Situated in Saint John, New Brunswick, the terminal has a maximum send-out capacity of 1.2 bcf a day, destined for markets in Canada and north-eastern US. The natural gas is delivered through the Brunswick Pipeline to Maritimes Northeast Pipeline in Baileyville, Maine.

"This is a significant moment for Canaport LNG, Saint John and the hundreds of people who have been involved in the project," said Adolfo Azcarraga, general manager of Canaport LNG. "Without the commitment and support of the Saint John community and the hard work and effort on the part of our contractors and sub-contractors, this project would not have been possible. Now that Canaport LNG has completed construction at the terminal, our commitment to safety remains our number one priority in our day to day operations."

The terminal is claimed by Canaport to be the most technologically advanced LNG receiving and regasification terminal in the world. SNC-SNAM, GP, a partnership between SNC-Lavalin Inc and Snamprogetti Canada Inc, was awarded the EPC contract for onshore facilities and jetty topsides, providing full procurement and supervisory responsibilities for the onshore portion of the project while the Kiewit-Weeks-Sandwell Partnership (KWS), a consortium of Peter Kiewit Sons Co., Weeks Marine and Sandwell Engineering was awarded the EPC contract for the terminal's offshore facilities, including the receiving jetty.

Plans to construct the third tank were announced in September 2007 and construction began in May 2008. The third LNG tank was originally approved by the Provincial and Federal governments under the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) completed on the project in August 2004. The Terminal has created 70 permanent positions and over 1,600 jobs at peak construction.

Identical to the two existing full-containment tanks which were completed last year, the third tank consists of an inner tank made of high-performance nine per cent nickel steel, an interstitial space filled with insulation followed by an external outer shell of cryogenic concrete 80cm thick.

With this additional tank now complete, Canaport LNG is well positioned to be an important part of the North-eastern US market. Already able to accept Q-Flex and Q-Max vessels, the terminal also has the storage capacity to handle these huge shipments. One Q-Max LNG carrier holds 266,000 cbm of LNG which fills 55% of the terminal's capacity.

Jesus Chillon, Repsol's director of operations & projects said: "The completion of the project solidifies Repsol's reputation as a major natural gas supplier in the global LNG industry. Already able to berth the largest LNG tankers in the world, the completion of the third LNG storage tank enables Repsol to offer a more reliable and diverse supply of natural gas to our customers and provides greater flexibility in meeting our customers' needs throughout the year."

In the US Northeast, Repsol has firm supply contracts with a number of sources that complement the operations at Canaport LNG. The facility is currently capable of supplying a maximum of 1.2 bcf of natural gas per day, enough to heat 5 million homes.

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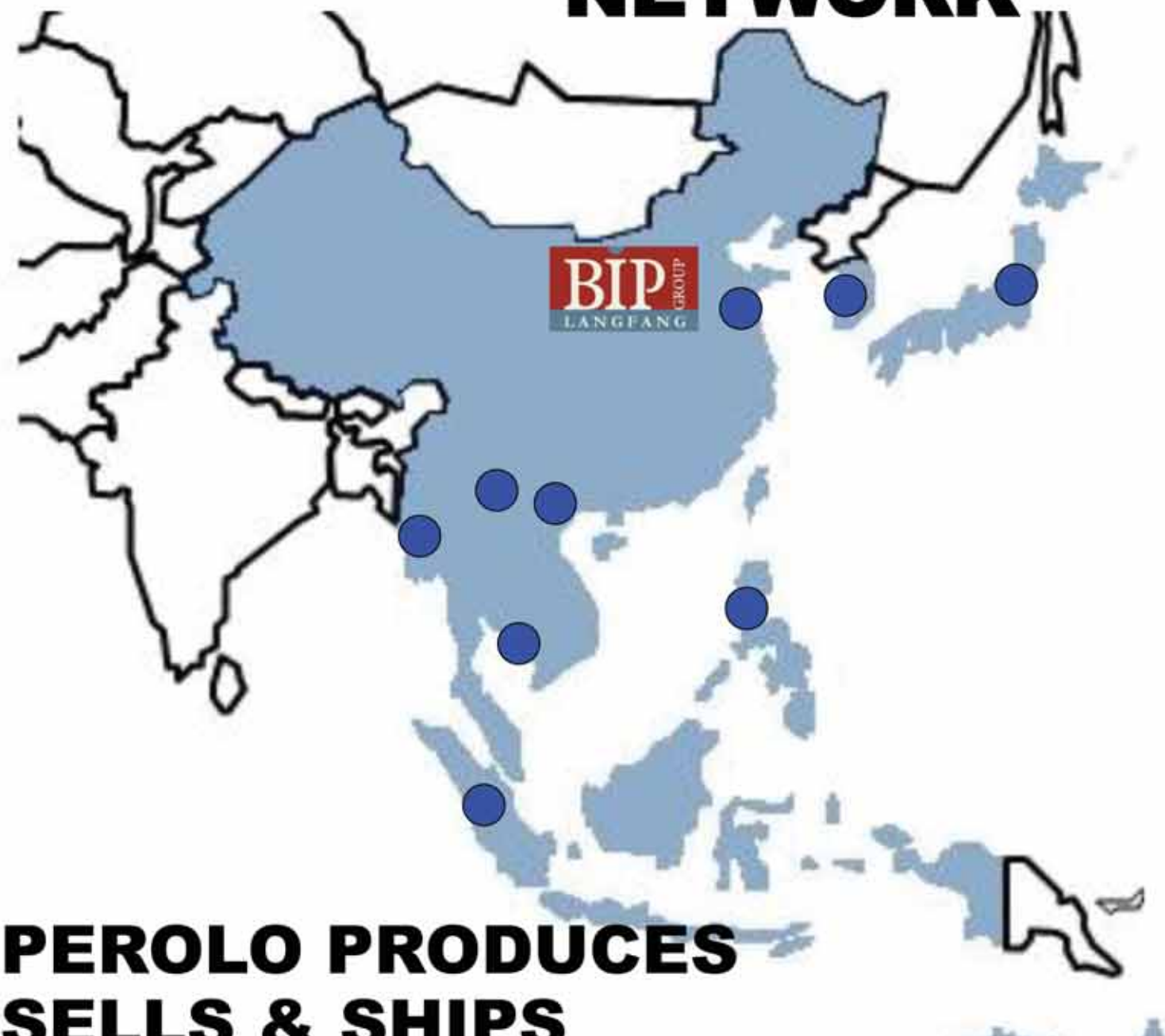

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BLUE EXPRESS
Tel: +81 442701637
kyanase@blue-express.co.jp

Korea
ISOTANK SERVICE DEPOT
Tel : +82 51611 6998
isotank@isotank.co.kr

Vietnam
GAVAN PRODUCTS PTE LTD
Tel: +65 6369 3515

Philippines
GAVAN PRODUCTS PTE LTD
Tel: +65 6369 3515

Thailand
GAVAN CHEMICALS LTD Bangkok
Tel: +66 (2) 3991 451
milrith@gavanproducts.co.th

Singapore
GAVAN PRODUCTS PTE LTD
Tel: +65 6369 3515
teckbi@gavanproducts.com.sg

Malaysia
GAVAN PRODUCTS Sdn Bhd
Tel: +60 (3) 33445446
vanitha@gavanproducts.com.my

Indonesia
GAVAN PRODUCTS PTE LTD
Tel: +65 6369 3515

Australia, Sydney
GAVAN CHEMICALS PTY LTD
Tel: +61 (02) 9540 5566

Australia, Victoria
GAVAN CHEMICALS PTY LTD
Tel: +61 (03) 9369 4511
bradmcmullan@secureload.com

Australia, Queensland
GAVAN CHEMICALS PTY LTD
Tel: +61 (07) 3348 8510
benfitzgerald@secureload.com

Australia, West Autralia
GAVAN CHEMICALS PTY LTD
Tel: +61 (08) 9358 2773

New Zealand, Auckland
GAVAN CHEMICALS LTD
Tel: +64 (09) 527 8698
greggrant@secureload.com

New Zealand, Christchurch
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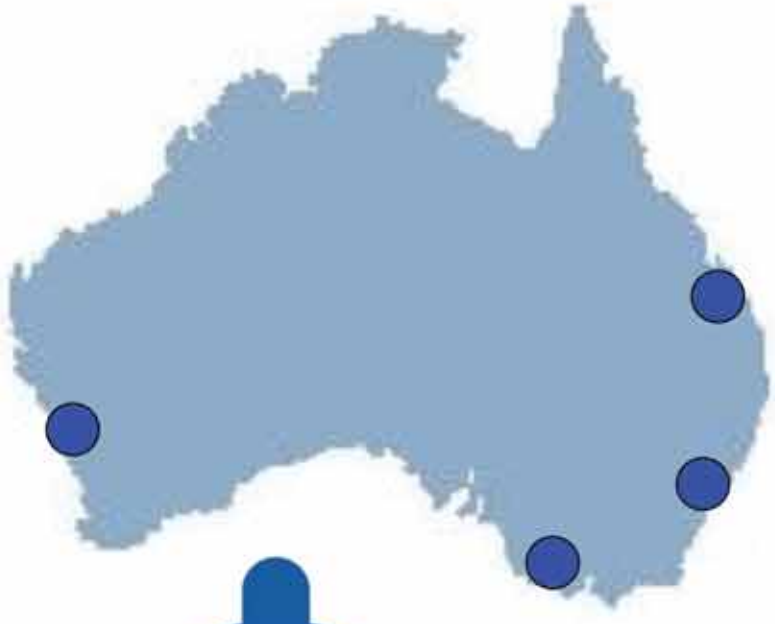

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