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Bertschi delivers first hazmat tanks overland to China

After more than 2.5 years of 'intensive' work, Bertschi has delivered the first overland tank containers loaded with hazardous material (class 8) to China.

The tanks arrived at Luchaogang rail terminal, from their destination in Antwerp and have been unloaded by Bertschi's local Chinese partner at Caojing Chemical Industry Park (SCIP) near Shanghai.

The Swiss logistics specialist worked in close cooperation with Swiss intermodal operator Hupac and its partners Russkaya Troyka and the Chinese company GT Eurasia Transport. Between themselves they managed to organise the initial bulk transport alternative to deepsea carriage along the Trans-Siberian rail corridor via Mongolia and into China.

With these test loads together with one of Bertschi's key clients, the rail journey took several weeks. However the joint landbridge project alliance group is convinced that it can cut the transit time to less than 30 days during the next planned shipments. It is seen as a start-up to develop the hinterland of China where intermodal competence will become an essential element for the distribution of chemical products in the future.

Before the tank shipment to China, Bertschi acquired Netherlands-based tank container operator PER Plus Logistics BV, with headquarters in Zevenbergen.

Bertschi said the move was a result of increasing customer demand for global solutions, and was in line with the development of its global activities in the tank container business.

PER Plus is a global deepsea tank container and flexitank operator offering customised logistics. The clientele are mainly chemical producers. The fleet comprises some 250 standard 26,000 litre, type T11 tank containers that can carry virtually any kind of liquid chemicals.

PER Plus Logistics will continue to be managed by Rob Kruyswijk, the founder of the company, and will also in the future operate under its current brand name.

PER Plus is ISO-9001:2008 qualified and SQAS attested.

Meanwhile at Bertschi's Rotterdam terminal activity has increased so much over the past four years that the existing storage and handling facilities have reached their limits. To facilitate growth, the first of two land options will be used. One lot is situated east of the current terminal area and encompasses about 15,000 sqm, which corresponds to an increase in storage capacity of 1,000 TEU. The expansion of the terminal also strengthens Rotterdam as a plastics hub.

Next to additional storage and handling capacities, a second tilting plant will be installed. Over the past few months plastic imports from the Middle East have increased, indicating that the demand for such plants is also continuously growing. The latest developments have shown that, next to plastic granulates, coffee beans and sugar imports will be transferred from the 20ft deepsea container to European 30ft liner boxes by using such 'tilting' plants.

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Abbey ramps up powder business

Abbey Logistics Group Ltd has made significant moves to beef up its bulk powder offering, marking a strategically critical direction in the business.

Liverpool, UK-based Abbey Logistics (formerly known as Abbey Road Tankers), has acquired some of the assets of RH Stevens Transport Limited and the customer base of Macclesfield Transport Ltd.

RH Stevens Transport was a significant player in the bulk powder transport (silo) market for over five decades but due to some sizeable contract losses and a major recession the company put its three subsidiaries into liquidation.

Macclesfield Transport Ltd was established in February 2011 to satisfy the remaining contracts of RH Stevens. Since then Abbey Logistics Group has been in talks with the owners of both companies to take over the remaining operation which will give Abbey a foothold in the bulk powder transport market.

The deal will result in Abbey operating a powder tanker fleet of 25 trucks and 40 silo tanks. All drivers and planning staff will transfer to Abbey along with some workshop employees. Abbey will also continue the storage/de-bagging operation in Macclesfield until December after which a new site will be established for this operation.

Abbey is now competing in three markets, bulk liquids, palletised and bulk powders, both in the UK and Europe which was one of its key aims set out in 2009. The aim is to grow the bulk powder division by building on the customer base of Abbey and Macclesfield Transport.

"We are pleased that the deal is now agreed and Abbey has officially taken over the operation," said managing director of Abbey Logistics Group, Steve Granite said. "This will give Abbey access to another market we wanted to enter. The bulk powder transport market is one which we have experienced but never had the resources to compete with the national companies. Now we are in a position to offer a high quality, reliable and competitive alternative on a national basis. We are very keen to grow the division and feel we have the right structures in place to manage this acquisition efficiently."

Moreover, Abbey has signed a partnership with warehousing specialist Henry Diaper & Co (Diapers) in Knowsley, Merseyside. The partnership will see Abbey providing palletised transport and distribution across the UK from 1 to 26 pallets for Diapers' customers. Diapers will provide warehousing, de-bagging into, and re-bagging from, bulk powder tanks for Abbey customers from its site in Knowsley.

Diapers was established in 1860 and has since grown to operate over 50,000 sqm of warehousing space from two Knowsley sites. Both sites are approved by HMRC, AEO, Custom & Tax, FEMAS, COMAH and London Metal Exchange offering a facility for food to BRC standards as well as non-food products. Diapers also offer a fully HMRC-linked freight forwarding service.

Warehousing can be provided either on a dedicated or shared basis matching every customer requirements.

RH Stevens Tankers also operated a de-bagging service for bulk powder tankers. This operation will transfer from Macclesfield to Knowsley in January 2012 as part of the new partnership.

In October 2011 Abbey palletised operation and staff will transfer to Diapers in Knowsley along with the finance staff of Abbey. This move will further enhance the working partnership between the two companies.

Gas goes intermodal with Den Hartogh

Look closely at the gas market nowadays shows a growing trend from road transport to intermodal transport. Improvements and investments in new rail and terminal networks both in and outside Europe is opening up new markets for gas suppliers. Road destinations over 600 km become increasingly undesirable because of economic and environmental factors. This is an on-going turnaround in the mind-set of suppliers, distributors and end-receivers in the air gas industry as well as in petrochemical industries. Both sectors are more and more receptive to new opportunities in transport by rail, ferry and sea.

A part of the increasing intermodal gas volume can be found on the production and sourcing side. Historically a wide range of gas products have only been produced by a limited number of gas production plants in Europe. For many years these production sites have served their own local or nearby international markets.

The trend nowadays is that a lot of gas-consuming production sites have been moved to, or have been newly opened in, other parts of the world; first, because of economic developments in new markets; and second, to find cheaper production possibilities. These new gas-consuming production sites have moved mainly to Eastern Europe, Asia and South America. On the contrary, this same trend cannot be found on the side of gas production itself. Only in some cases have production sites followed suit. In most cases gas production plants have remained in the same locations, largely due to high investments or technical knowledge. The result of these developments is that the same volume requires longer transport distances for gas as a raw material as well as for the end product.

The alternatives to road transport are rail, barge and shortsea, of which rail transport is by far the most commonly used. Intermodal transport can be described as transport, using containers or vehicles, with more than one transport mode. As an example, a gas container that has been loaded in the Ruhr area of Germany might be transported by road to a rail terminal in Duisburg, from where it will be taken by train to a destination in Turkey, where it is off-loaded by a Turkish transport company. Furthermore, shortsea possibilities are, especially in western Europe, a good alternative for long haul road transport.

The factors encouraging a growing demand for intermodal solutions are, among others:

- Lower transport costs by optimising payloads and reducing road kilometres
- Legislation and political pressure on carbon footprint reduction
- Suppliers and customers searching for faster transit times at lowest possible costs
- Information technology - faster information and internet-created awareness of alternatives and options. Also demands and expectations are increasing.
- Shortage of (well-trained) drivers

The advantages of intermodal transport include:

- Total costs per km on long hauls (>600km) are less, so product can be transported at lower costs.
- A reliable alternative that is en route 24/7, that avoids overnight and weekend stay and traffic congestion
- Volume that is being taken of the European road network, which leads to less congestion and a better carbon footprint.

Intermodal transport involves much more than just containerising gas products

Although infrastructure is available, international intermodal transport involves much more than just containerising gas products. It requires a well organised network of offices, equipment and drivers. Co-ordination between loading and unloading of a unit with operators, own or external trucking companies and Customs offices makes the transport more complicated than normal short distance road transport. Next to that tracking and tracing of the equipment needs full attention as the rail network is huge with many operators that do not always handle gas units with the care needed. Quality and safety aspects, especially with gas transport, need extra attention and co-ordination as the load is not accompanied by a driver. Operators and foreign sub-contractors must therefore be fully integrated in the logistics service provider's SHEQ policies and procedures.

Equipment must be suitable and dedicated to this type of multiple mode transport. Heavy duty, light-weight, simple operating systems and design according to international standards are important factors for international efficient usage of this equipment.

In case of cryogenic transport of argon or CO_2 transport, longer distances, due to developing new markets in eastern Europe and Russia gives the need to have specialised intermodal gas equipment, particularly equipment that has a long holding time.

In the petrochemical and refrigerant transport markets on-going improvements in container design of high pressure 20ft and 30ft tank containers results in slightly bigger tank volume against same or even lower tare weights. This allows for improvements in both payloads and efficiency. Where older 20ft tank containers only have 20,000 litres or less, modern tanks have capacities up to 25,000 litres.

One of the companies in Europe with a large own European network is Netherlands-based Den Hartogh Gas Logistics. This separate business unit of the Den Hartogh Group started its gas activities in 2004 and became in only a few years a major player in the European gas market with an own fleet of gas road barrels and containers. Den Hartogh's gas management team uses the extended network of the parent group to open up new markets for its gas customers and offer them efficient and flexible alternatives for their road operations.

The central organisation with focus on safety and quality combined with the local presence of both Den Hartogh staff and gas-trained drivers in 28 offices results in safe and flexible solutions against lowest possible costs. The powerful ICT tools and EDI connections ensure accurate information and control during the execution of the intermodal transport.

In order to be able to meet the increasing demand for intermodal transport, Den Hartogh Gas Logistics will invest in further expansion of its container fleet. Focus will be on high pressure 20ft ISO tanks and special 20ft ISO cryogenic tanks as it is planned that the new Den Hartogh Group business unit global logistics will boost the development of global gas transport.

www.denhartogh.com


Den Hartogh has a strong focus on safety and quality

... while global team grows

In addition to growing its gas logistics business, Den Hartogh is also expanding its global team with specialists from the tank container market.

In the commercial team Mike Milner, with 30 years' experience in global logistics, joined the Den Hartogh Global team, as general manager to lead the new office and team in Houston (USA). At the same time, Frank Otting, with 21 years' experience, joined in Rozenburg (NL) as commercial manager for EMEA. As of 1 October 2011 Cheney Yang represents Den Hartogh Global as general manager for the regional office Asia/Pacific in Singapore, and from 2012 there will be a presence for marketing & sales in Dubai.

Pieter den Hartogh, group managing director, states: "Affected by turbulence in the euro zone and the USA, we see in general that the market is uncertain. Volumes are volatile, forecasting seems difficult and customer's focus on operational excellence is strong. Following to our announcements of extending our global logistic services we received positive response. The business opportunities we received increased our global business and support our ambition to serve customers on global routes.

"Despite the market turbulence, we have taken an extra 250 ISO tank containers in the fleet as per September 2011 and orders for an extra 650 new build units have been placed.

As of September 2011, Den Hartogh's equipment fleet comprised 510 trucks, 477 chassis, 391 road tankers, and 3,928 tank containers.

Rebate for hitting 4k mark

Houston-based Tank Service Inc recently celebrated a milestone with the sale of its 4,000th tank container. The tank container buyer was presented with a $4,000 rebate to commemorate the milestone.

Tank container 4,000 was one of 10 purchased recently by Transoceanic Projects & Development, a five year old Houston project freight forwarding and logistics company focused on the oil and energy sectors. Much of the company's business activity is concentrated in East Africa.

The 10 tank containers are the first ones purchased by Transoceanic Projects. They are IMO-1 tanks rated with a four-bar pressure capability and 23,000 litres capacity. They were thoroughly overhauled in the Tank Service shop and will be used for land transport of jet fuel in East Africa.

The 4,000 tank container milestone was an important achievement for Tank Service, according to Erick Garcia, vice-president of the company. "We reached this point because of customers such as Transoceanic Projects," he says. "We very much appreciate their business."

Established in 2002, Tank Service offers a range of intermodal tank equipment and services. The company sells new and used ISO tank containers and chassis and can make extensive modifications. The company also handles storage tank parts and accessories.

M&S Logistics adds US office

M&S Logistics Limited, headquartered in Sandbach, England, recently opened its newest location in Houston, TX. Wim Roldaan has been appointed vice-president, USA Logistics to head up the operation.

M&S, an accredited tank container operator, was founded in 1996 and now controls a fleet of 3,000 chemical and food-grade tanks.

www.mslogisticsltd.com

Boasso goes for brokerage

Tank container services provider Boasso America has launched a new brokerage division, MTY Express. MTY Express will initially target empty 20ft ISO tank containers being repositioned to and from depots across the US. No company assets will be used in the operation as all work orders will be brokered to third-party flatbed carriers. The division will be based at corporate headquarters in Chalmette, LA.

To spearhead the initiative, the company has hired Ernie Buisson as the brokerage division manager. Buisson has more than 30 years of transport and logistics knowledge as well as direct management experience within the brokerage arena.

Welfit Oddy marks 25 years of service to tank container industry

For Welfit Oddy Pty Ltd, part of the Buhold Group, 2011 marks its 25th year of operation in the tank container industry.

In 1986 the first tank container was manufactured under licence to Containeering for David Jenkins of Multistar, who thereafter placed the first orders and put Welfit Oddy on the tank container world map. Others soon followed suit. It is no small coincidence that 25 years after placing its first order with Welfit Oddy, Multistar continues to buy Welfit Oddy tanks, having just taken a delivery of new units earlier this year.

1986 marked a turning point in the long history of Welfit Oddy, which has its roots in the motor industry in South Africa. The company was first established 119 years ago in South Africa in 1892, by one Welfit John Oddy as a wagon builder, farrier and master wheelwright. The company grew with the motor industry and by the mid-1980s the company's trade name of Oddy's Bodies had become a household name in South Africa, and the company had grown to become a major OE supplier of light and heavy commercial and passenger vehicle bodies to the main automotive assembly plants of Ford, Volkswagen and General Motors in South Africa.

Today, the company commands a position of respect in the tank container industry, and with a 25 percent global market share in 2010 covering the most diverse range of tank containers on offer, is considered by many to be the leading tank container designer and manufacturer in the world and is the supplier of choice for many of the blue chip operating and leasing companies.

Stuart Coleby, technical director of Bulkhaul Ltd, said that Bulkhaul's association with Welfit Oddy began in 1991. "At the time South Africa had several tank manufacturers with Consani Engineering, Henred Fruehauf and Welfit Oddy being the three major players. Following site visits to all three manufacturers, Welfit Oddy was deemed to be the most suitable manufacturer based on the attention to detail, the systems adopted and quality control procedures resulting in a final product that was to an excellent engineering standard. Over the years Welfit has developed an experienced and talented engineering division. This has helped it to become the clear market leaders in terms of their innovations in tank design and specification. The strong relationship between our two organisations built on mutual respect and trust has helped Welfit Oddy become our preferred supplier for the past 20 years.

"After an initial order of 150 units in 1991, and a break in production between 1995 and 2000 when we manufactured our own tank containers, Bulkhaul has continued to build with Welfit Oddy on an on-going basis and now have in excess of 11,500 Welfit Oddy built units in our container fleet with further production scheduled for 2012."

Another turning point in the company's history was in 2000 when Burg Industries BV, which has since been restructured and renamed

Bulkhaul's association with Welfit Oddy began in 1991

Buhold Industries BV, acquired a controlling share of Welfit Oddy. This acquisition launched Welfit Oddy into the new millennium, and significant investments were made into new plant and equipment. This investment continues today, despite tough economic conditions, with new investments into a laser cutter, four new robotic welding cells, the latest in real time radiography technology and an additional 1,600 sqm of factory space. In 2010, an automated paint and blasting facility was commissioned.

Cees van der Burg, majority shareholder and CEO of Buhold Industries, reinforced his long term commitment to Welfit Oddy and to the global tank container industry. "You cannot fight a battle with obsolete weapons," he said, "and we will continue to invest in order to improve our production efficiencies, to reduce hours per tank and our total cost of production, and to improve on our final product quality. We will also continue to invest into research and development, specifically in the fields of material science, thermo dynamics and tank container design, in order to provide the market with new and innovative products to make tank containers safer to use and cheaper to maintain, and to grow the market for new containers for new products." The company won the South African Department of Trade and Industry's Award for Industrial Innovation in 2005, and in 2009 was the runner up in the same programme.

Welfit Oddy has built a wealth of knowledge and engineering expertise over the past 25 years and today has a vast database of engineering solutions that have been developed from first principles and validated through theoretical modelling and practical testing. "We manufactured containers under licence to Containeering and Holvrieka for 14 years before introducing our own designs from first principles in 1999 and 2001," added Tim McLaren, chief engineer at Welfit Oddy. The company has been accredited to ISO 9001 since 1985 and achieved the ASME U and R accreditations in 2003 and 2009, respectively.

John Oddy, managing director and fourth generation of Oddy to head up the business in South Africa, said that he was proud to continue the long tradition of Welfit Oddy. "Our core values of integrity and professionalism in everything that we do is just as strong now as it was 119 years ago. We look to the future with excitement and anticipation to roll out new developments while at the same time providing before and after sales support of the highest standard to our loyal customer base. We have every intention of being around for the next 25 years, and of being the most reliable and sustainable provider of tank container liquid transport solutions "

Jan Roebken, of VOTG, commented: "Not only is the product of such an extremely high quality but the 'all around' package provided by Welfit Oddy is superb. It starts with the technical feedback given by the engineers and does not end when the tanks leave the factory. Oddy has simply proven to be a reliable partner that does not only know how to build tanks but also how to communicate."

Buhold Intermodal BV, represented by European sales director Patrick Bos, based in Rotterdam, is the company's European office and offers a complete package from cradle to grave, commencing with an understanding of the customer's needs, delivery of tanks within Europe, depot services and after sales support.

Welfit Oddy is currently producing a mixture of standard and specialised tanks at an output of 19 units per day. "Despite our view that there will be an oversupply of tanks built in 2011 and that speculative demand will drop off causing total output to be significantly lower in 2012, Welfit Oddy is considering increasing production output by around 20-25 percent in 2012. Our order book to be built in 2012 certainly supports this view. This is made possible through our continued focus on our supply platform principles," said Wilfred Allen, the company's South Africa-based sales director. "We cut back from 28 to 15 units a day after the global economic collapse of late 2008," he said. "Since then we have implemented controlled and responsible increases up to 19 units a day. Any further decisions regarding possible increases will be taken responsibly and will be balanced with market demand. Our three core principles of operational excellence, effective marketing and strategic positioning continue to guide our decision making, and most importantly, support from our diverse and loyal customer base which appreciates the value in Welfit Oddy equipment is the key ingredient to our success."

@tco accreditation for Asian depots

The Asia Tank Container Organization (@tco) has made considerable progress since its establishment in February 2011 as a non-profit-making association that helps foster the safe use of intermodal tank containers throughout Asia. One of the most notable achievements is the creation of a depot auditing scheme designed to ensure that the region's tank cleaning stations and repair centres work to the same high standards established for such facilities in Europe and North America.

"During exploratory talks on the formation of @tco it was made clear to us by the region's chemical companies, including the memberships of the Shanghai-based Association of International Chemical Manufacturers (AICM) and the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China (EUCCC), that there was a need for an agreed set of standards governing Asian tank depot operations," stated Reg Lee, president of @tco.

"In response we have developed a third-party Asian depot accreditation programme based on standards established in the West over many years for depots engaged in the cleaning, servicing and repair of tank containers. Under our programme any depot wishing to be accredited is assessed by an independent inspector. Although the inspectors are appointed by @tco, they work on behalf of, and are paid by, the depot in question. Depots wishing to remain in the scheme will need to be re-inspected every two years."

Depots applying for @tco accreditation need to meet certain criteria. These include possession of all necessary government approvals; relevant third party and employee liability insurance; depot-specific health and safety procedures; required permits for handling hazardous materials, if applicable; and a perimeter fence/enclosing wall for the facility. The independent assessors will check the extent to which these documents or requirements are up to date and bona fide and, through a physical inspection, verify the extent to which the depot working practices meet the standards laid down in the the organisation's depot accreditation programme code of practice.

On completing the depot audit, the inspector will forward it to Graham Wood, @tco technical director, for review. If the depot is found to be compliant with the necessary standards, the facility's name will be added to the list of approved tank depots on @tco's website. Depots are not graded as a result of the audit; the website simply provides the location, opening hours, contact details and services available at the individual depots judged to be compliant with the scheme's code of practice.

@tco's Asian depot audit scheme covers six different levels of depot facility:

- Chemical cleaning station
- Chemical and food cleaning station, with separate and segregated bays for each
- 'Tip and turn' facility offering basic, quick turnaround services such as gasket replacement and minor repairs
- 'Medium repairs' facility offering services such as major component replacement, cladding repairs, minor pitting repairs and periodic testing
- 'Heavy repairs' depot able to carry out heavy-duty work such as shell inserts and major pitting repairs
- 'Major repairs' depot offering a full range of repairs as well as tank refurbishment

"Our depot audit scheme was only launched in June 2011 and already three tank depots in Singapore have successfully passed our assessments and are listed on our website," added Lee. "Furthermore, a number of depots in China, Thailand and Japan have requested audits and we are in the process of organising the necessary inspections. The @tco depot accreditation programme has received a warm welcome among not only our new and growing membership of tank container operators, lessors and manufacturers active in Asia but also their chemical company customers."

@tco has also confirmed the venue for its first general meeting. This will be held on Tuesday 8 November 2011 at 'The Eton Hotel', Shanghai, PR China, commencing 3pm. All current members are invited and the association has extended the invitation to non-members whom may be interested to hear more on the growing use of tank containers in Asia.

For more information, visit www.atcoasia.com

@tco audits verify that the depot's documentation, permits, working practices and equipment regime are all in order

Telene's supply chain transformation – with a little help from Hoyer

In June Telene SAS, the France-based supplier of specialty DCPD (dicyclopentadiene) formulated resins, concluded a five-year contract with Hoyer to cover mixing, filling and distribution of special raw materials for the plastics industry.

From its Europe and Middle East headquarters in Drocourt, France (Telene SAS, along with its Japan-based parent company Rimtec) specialises in the manufacturing, processing and distribution of DCPD-formulated resins sold under the trade name Telene.

The two-component DCPD resins system is converted by the RIM (reaction injection moulding) process, which results in a high performance polymer. Its process and properties allow the formation of large, complex design parts, resistant to hostile environments and cost-effective for small to medium series.

Telene is used in a variety of applications such as body panels for trucks, construction and agricultural equipment, and buses, as well as advanced domestic wastewater treatment units, various parts in the construction industry, and critical parts exposed to highly corrosive environments.

One of the most recent applications was for the 'Buddy'

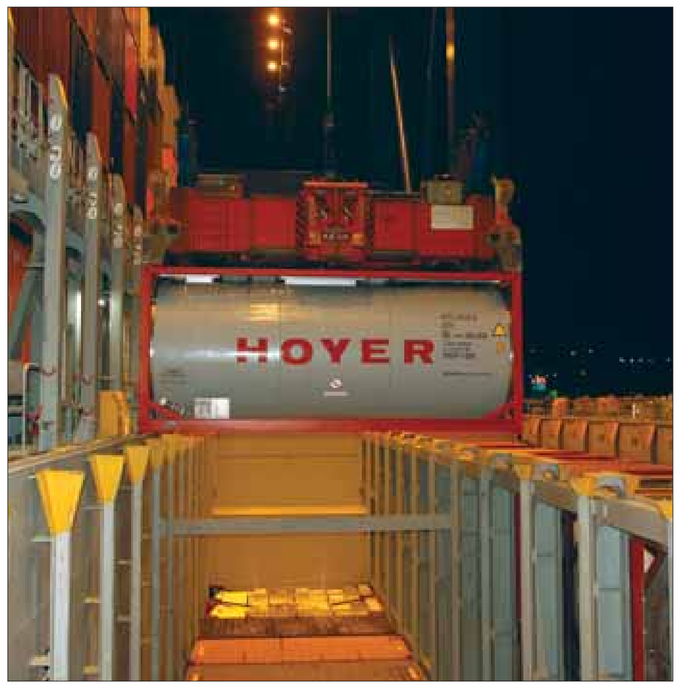
Telene is a liquid resin formulation and is classified as a dangerous good. So the supply chain and logistics for handling the product presented certain challenges. Previously, the resins were manufactured in Japan, packaged in IBCs, and then shipped to Europe. After use by Telene's customers, those IBCs were then shipped back to Japan.

However, Telene SAS started looking for ways to optimise its supply chain. The company turned to Hoyer supply chain solutions, explains Alexander Daemen, president Telene SAS. "We were particularly excited by this project as it would enable us to improve the delivery performance in IBCs to Telene's customers – IBCs being the preferred packaging unit in this market – and to have the capability to mix additives to the base formulation tailored for specific applications."

Focus of the five-year contract is the construction and operation of a special filling and mixing plant in the Dutch town of Oosterhout. The plant will be built on the premises of Hoyer subsidiary European Liquid Drumming. "ELD's core business is the filling of sensitive goods. By building the new filling and mixing plant on the ELD site Telene SAS will directly benefit from our know-how," added Ralf Schünemann, sales manager Hoyer. It is planned to transfill an annual volume of up to 10,000 tons of special resins.

After the new plant is completed, the mixing and filling processes, indeed the entire logistics chain, for Telene will be completely reorganised. DCPD resins and all additives required will now be filled into tank containers in Japan and transported to Europe. With approximately 23,000 tank containers Hoyer is the second largest tank container operator worldwide. On arrival in the Netherlands the tank containers will be transported to Oosterhout. The special resins will be mixed with additives, filled into IBCs and stored for Telene's customers in Europe.

DCPD formulated resins are flammable goods and its catalyst system is sensitive to water and oxygen. The mixing and filling plant is a closed system, designed by Hoyer in compliance with the latest safety, environment and quality standards and tailored to the IBCs of Telene. Compared to standard IBCs (1,000 litres) Telene's units have double the overall height, but the same base area and a volume of 2,000 litres each. They have special connections for quick coupling. Here not only the product, but also nitrogen is added to displace the oxygen. "Mixing and filling of these special resins is a highly sophisticated process," Schünemann points out. "Thanks to the open-minded and close co-operation with Telene we succeeded in optimising the production and distribution of Telene resins."



Instead of shipping IBCs all the way from Japan resins and additives are now being filled into tank containers and the transported to Europe

Ahlers expands

Antwerp-based forwarding group Ahlers is expanding its service portfolio by offering value added logistics to the specialty chemicals industry. Ahlers is to start up repacking services at the Straatsburgdok II, just a few minutes' drive away from the group's HQ on Noorderlaan.

In a first phase repacking services for solid chemicals will be provided. This means debagging – big bags or small bags - into silo truck and repacking of big and small bags.

Also, the group has expanded its overall capacity for storage, handling and logistics of non-hazardous chemical products. The European Distribution Centre in Ghent, which focuses on the storage, handling & distribution of non-hazardous packed chemicals has increased its capacity by renting an extra 8,000 sqm next to the existing warehouse of 25,000 sqm. This allows Ahlers to offer extra capacity the market, and optimise operations by concentrating all warehousing activities. A physical connection will be established between the existing and newly-added premises.

Finally, Arteco, the Chevron-Total joint venture producer of automotive coolants, and Ahlers signed a service contract for forwarding. Ahlers will handle export shipments on behalf of Arteco from the production site in Schoten (Antwerp) to various destinations around the globe. The main reason for Arteco to start this co-operation is Ahlers' proven expertise in handling chemical exports and the group's established network in Asia, which is a growing market for Arteco. Both Arteco and Ahlers consider this agreement as a base for growing co-operation.

Heavy handling

OPW Engineered Systems has announced the availability of its new 890 Series 'High Load' Counterbalance. This extension of OPW's line has been designed for loading arms that are required to handle extremely heavy loads; a growing trend in loading and unloading operations due to more stringent regulatory requirements, heavy loads are the result of the presence of additional valving, safety breakaways, actuators, couplers and vapour-recovery attachments.

The 890 Series Counterbalance is easy to calibrate because its spring-tension adjustments can be completed with one bolt and one socket wrench, making it a true 'one man, one arm' operation. The 890 is also ideal for extreme operating conditions, thanks to its ability to achieve motion from 55 degs above horizontal to 25 degs below horizontal, with a torque rating of 19,000 ins-pounds. A halo bracket ensures this versatile operational ability, which allows the operator to dial in the appropriate range of motion needed for a specific application. This high-load spring technology also gives the 890 the ability to handle a 50 percent higher load capacity without any of the potentially dangerous drift that can compromise load stability.

The design of the 890 Series also makes it a money-saver since it does not require the pneumatic system that is typical for loading arms that have a longer reach or additional weight from attachments. The absence of a pneumatic system means that there is no need for costly air lines or the need to maintain an air supply at the loading platform. To guarantee the viability of the 890 Series in high-load applications, OPW put the counterbalance through more than 100,000 load cycles with a fully loaded arm — approximating decades of hard duty — with zero degradation in performance.

In addition, OPW Fueling Components has appointed Phil Carlin to responsibility for OPW Latin America. Carlin will do this in addition to his current role as general manager of OPW's Fuel Management Systems business unit based in Hodgkins, IL.

Fernando Whitaker, MD of OPW Latin America, will continue to manage the day-to-day operations of OPW's manufacturing facility in Brazil and OPW's team throughout Latin America.

"We are making this change to enable OPW to service our customers in the region better as our business and the market continues to grow at a rapid pace," stated David Crouse, president of OPW Fueling Components.

The 890 series is ideal for extreme operating conditions, thanks to its ability to achieve motion from 55 degs above horizontal to 25 degs below horizontal

"Phil has solid sales & marketing experience throughout North America and Latin America. He also has experience in implementing and sustaining growth initiatives to better support customers."

OPW also launched a new loading systems video to help customers and distributor partners better understand its loading systems for the transfer of volatile and potentially toxic fluids. To view the video: www.youtube.com/OPWFTG

Smart Vent receives patent

Girard Equipment has been awarded a US patent on a new style of pressure relief vents for IBCs.

The 'Smart Vent' is a self-acting, spring-loaded device that threads into a standard 2 ins female port. Pressure settings are set at the factory to operate at 5 PSI (0.34 bar) but also can be custom-ordered with a variety of settings. Vacuum settings are set at 1 ins Hg (0.03 bar) and can also be adjusted in the field.

Each Smart Vent has a 'Quick Venting Release' (QVR) feature built into its design. The operator can simply press down on the top cover to manually relieve internal pressure. This feature has proven to be most beneficial to operators who may experience difficulties when trying to open IBCs with built up pressures or vacuum within the tank. A machine ring groove allows the vent to be tethered directly to the IBC. Available in both 2 ins BSP and NPT male connections, the design can also be customised with a 2 ins tri-clamp adaptor connection used for venting applications in food grade applications.

Other features of the Smart Vent are: all cast and precision machined stainless steel; low profile design; PTFE encapsulated O-ring seals; electropolished surfaces for easy cleaning; the vent can be hermetically sealed to guard against unauthorised access.

www.girardequip.com

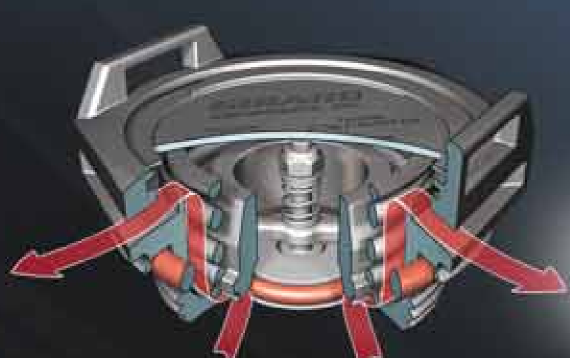
GIRARD

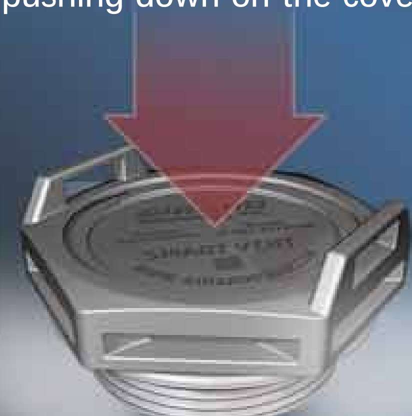
Intermediate Bulk Container Pressure & Vacuum Relief

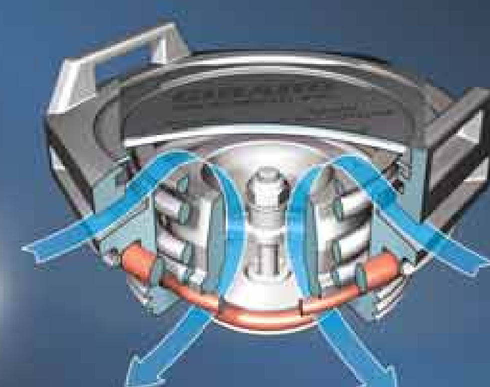
A single GS10005 sMart Vent™ protects intermediate bulk containers (IBCs) against excessive pressure and vacuum. Threading into a standard 2" port, the design features a cast stainless guard to protect the rain cover against impact damage. Engineered for low maintenance and easy cleaning, this vent offers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

SMART VENT™

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







Pressure Venting
sMart Vent™
relieves tank pressures exceeding 5 psi

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

Girard Equipment, Inc.
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EUROPE ■ CHINA ■ USA

Fort Vale improves Sealtyt flow rate

Fort Vale's range of 4 ins 90degs and 75degs pneumatically and hydraulically operated Sealtyt discharge valves is now compliant with the requirements of BS EN14433:2006 (*Tanks for the transport of dangerous goods – Tank equipment for the transport of liquid chemicals – Footvalves*).

Recent product development has resulted in the valve offering the user improved flow rates. The 4 ins Sealtyt footvalve was launched to meet the demanding requirements of general-purpose liquid road tankers, and especially for cargoes with high viscosity. A spring load of 1500N when closed to 3550N fully open is exerted onto the poppet, which allows the valve to break any crystallised product that may have accumulated around the sealing face. Lighter spring loads are available for use with non-crystallising products.

Safety and failsafe features are paramount as well as convenience and ease of maintenance, and the 4 ins Sealtyt offers several unique features. For maximum cargo compatibility and resilience, the valve is fitted with a PTFE main seal with elastomer core. The seal-retaining plate design eliminates the possibility of a leak path and ensures clean valve internal lines. Alternative seal materials with higher temperature capabilities are available if required. The main seal can quickly and easily be replaced without the need to decompress the spring. The sealing poppet is guided through the bayonet cap which eliminates the risk of the valve jamming open during service. Furthermore, the spherical location of the actuator renders the poppet self-centring which increases the sealing reliability of the valve.

Should the pneumatic/hydraulic supply fail, the valve can be manually operated using the emergency jacking point. A spindle sealing system uses metal-energised PTFE O rings which offer cost and reliability advantages over typically used chevron seals, particularly at lower and higher temperatures.

The Fort Vale 4 ins Sealtyt footvalve has an industry-standard inlet drilling and TW100 outlet flange drilling, making it compatible and interchangeable with similar units in the market. The valve is available with alternative body configurations and outlet flange drilling patterns. Standard consumable spare parts are widely available worldwide. Fort Vale can supply a range of EN Norm approved secondary closure valves to suit.

MK3 Safeload coupler with 3 Year Warranty

As previously reported in *Bulk Distributor*, Fort Vale's MK3 Safeload semi-automatic bottom loading coupler now carries a three year warranty on all metal parts under Standard Environmental Conditions.

In line with BS EN13083 for bottom loading & unloading adaptors, BS EN12266-1 and BS EN12266-2, Fort Vale recently designed and conducted an in-house endurance test programme for the coupler. Initially, Fort Vale had intended to mimic an estimated operational working life based on one operation every 20 minutes, over a constant 24 hour day for five years (equalling 131,400 cycles). In fact, the test continued to 250,000 cycles, which represents 10 times the number of cycles called for in BS EN13083. The coupler was connected, opened, pressurised with fluid for a set period of time, closed and then disconnected. A counter was affixed to the coupler to automatically record the number of connections. On completion, the coupler was found to be leak-free at the MAWP and there was no significant wear or damage to any of the parts.

Similarly, in routine inspections on units in the field, 18 month old couplers that have endured hard service through two winters with a throughput in excess of 90 million litres have shown no sign of wear to the triggers or seals.

Fort Vale's 4 ins 90degs Sealtyt Footvalve

To replicate the rigours of daily service, Fort Vale went on to perform impact testing on the MK3 Safeload coupler with repeated side impact and drop tests based on the requirements of BS EN13463. Following testing, the coupler remained in the closed position with the interlock fully engaged, proving that it is more than capable of withstanding repeated harsh treatment without compromising the safety of the product, the operating personnel or the environment.

The coupler has an extended 'wrap around' trigger design that follows the profile of the loading adaptor, covering over 60 percent of the adaptor circumference. This feature ensures maximum safety and security of connection between the adaptor and coupler, reducing the risk of product leakage. The increased surface area contact, in comparison with conventional narrow triggers, significantly reduces wear to both the triggers and the adaptor, which prolongs the serviceable life of both units.

The Safeload coupler design ensures that there is only a minimal amount of residual fuel in the poppet void space on disconnection and protects against any ingress of foreign debris. Concurrently, the amount of liquid loss on disconnection has proven to be, on average, 75 percent less than the permitted 5cc.

www.fortvale.com

NG series compressor

Blackmer has launched the NG Series Natural Gas Vapour Recovery Compressor. NG compressors are single-stage, oil-free reciprocating gas compressors that are designed to handle wellhead operations in continuous duty or remote unmanned locations. They are claimed to be ideal for enhancing oil-and-gas production in the areas of tank-battery vapour recovery, wellhead vapour control, wellhead annulus reduction and pressure boosting.

What sets the NG Series compressors apart from other competitive models is a full compartment distance piece, which is standard on all NG models. Each NG compressor is constructed with two sets of piston rod seals between the crosshead guide and cylinder area, which form the distance piece. The distance piece provides leakage control and helps prevent oil contamination from any condensates that might be in the gas stream. Connections are provided in the distance-piece for purging, pressurising or venting as needed. This design also allows the NG compressors to handle a much wider range of suction pressures, which can be a major consideration in wellhead operations that involve natural gas and methane mixes.

ML Series Sliding Vane Pumps designed to handle highly viscous fluids

Other features and benefits of the NG Series compressors, which are to be used in sweet-gas applications only, include:

- Ductile-iron head and cylinder that outperform cast-iron models
- O-ring gaskets throughout for sealing under all operating conditions
- Flow rates to 600 MSCFD
- Maximum of 50-horsepower energy usage
- Maximum allowable working pressure of 350 psia (24.1 bara)

In addition, Blackmer has released the ML Series Sliding Vane Pumps. These have been designed to handle highly viscous fluids such as oil, waste oil, abrasive slurries, asphalts, molasses and adhesives. This makes the ML pumps ideal for liquid terminal operations that require high-capacity product transfer, top or bottom loading/unloading and blending at the rack.

ML pumps are well suited for barges, ships, underground/aboveground storage tanks and terminal transfers thanks to their self-priming and high-suction capabilities that enable them to clear tanks of product more effectively and efficiently than competitive models. In fact, ML pumps can handle fluid viscosities from 30 to 500,000 ssu (1.0 to 108,000 cS) with flow rates up to 600 gpm (136 cbm/h) and at operating temperatures as high as 400degsF (206degsC), thanks to a jacketed pump-head option.

ML pumps are available with a choice of internal sleeve with external stuffing box or internal mechanical seals with external ball bearings, while modular bearing hubs allow the pumps to be easily reconfigured in the field. The pumps feature ductile-iron construction with a bolt-on internal relief valve that protects against excessive operating pressures. The symmetrical bearing support is said to assure even loading and wear, while providing seal reliability.

NG compressors are single-stage, oil-free reciprocating gas compressors

Big tractor wins for Volvo

Fourteen new Volvo FH tractor units, 10 of which were acquired to service a hard fought contract, joined 30 other Volvos working with West Country waste and recycling specialist the Bale Group recently.

Supplied by Volvo Dealer Truck and Bus Wales and West, complete with a Gardner-Denver wet pack and full ADR-compliance the 6x2 FH vehicles join a fleet now consisting exclusively of Volvo tractor units.

"Four of the new Volvos join the Bale core fleet as part of our replacement programme," explained managing director Tony Bale. "The remaining 10 are servicing the new five year Tradebe contract in Newport, Fawley, Dinnington, and Ellesmere Port," he added.

Finished in a metallic silver paint scheme the FH Globetrotter cabs are considered an essential tool of the trade by Tony Bale who claims that drivers often cover long distances and are sometimes required to work under difficult conditions.

All types of hazardous and non-hazardous liquid waste materials are handled by the company so it is vitally important that the best possible equipment is specified and that drivers are made fully aware of the technology featured in the current vehicles.

"We need practical, down-to-earth, fully-qualified drivers who can carry out their daily duties in a safe and efficient way but who can also appreciate and take advantage of the latest technological advances introduced by Volvo Trucks," explains Tony Bale. "In this way we introduce a 'win-win' situation whereby the customer, the company and the drivers all derive some benefit," he added.

Powered by the Volvo 13-litre engine rated at 460hp, backed up by the fully-automated IShift gearbox with two-pedal operation, the Volvo FH tractors are designed to be as efficient and as driver-friendly as possible.

"We would not consider purchasing a vehicle that did not have a gearbox as good as the I-Shift and an engine brake as effective as the VEB. These components are recognised in the industry as being the best in the business and that's just one of the many reasons why we continue to buy Volvo," concluded Tony Bale.

West Country-based waste and recycling specialist Bale Group have put 14 new FH tractor units into service, making the 44 strong fleet 100% Volvo.

Another recent contract win by Volvo was United Dairy Farmers which recently took delivery of a new Volvo truck from local dealership Dennison Commercials. This is a significant deal for Dennison's as it is the first milk collection vehicle that the company has supplied to the Northern Irish Group in a number of years.

Rob Ireland, sales manager at Dennison's commented: "We were delighted to be given the opportunity to supply a milk collection vehicle into the market as it represents a move back into the agricultural sector, with which we traditionally had a strong association. In particular, we are pleased that we have been able to work with United Dairy Farmers on this order as it further supports the longstanding business relationship that we have with the Group."

The Volvo FM-450 6x2 tractor unit is equipped with the 12-speed, automated I-Shift gearbox and has been specified with a shorter than normal wheelbase, to allow increased manoeuvrability and to enable the operator to access restricted spaces, as is often necessary in tight farmyards.

As a company that takes staff satisfaction and well-being very seriously, the Volvo FM truck was a perfect choice for United as it is renowned in the industry for its driver comfort, safety and on-the-job enjoyment. The unit has also been specified with a sleeper cab, which offers comfortable overnight accommodation for the driver.

Dan Carey, fleet manager of United Dairy Farmers explained: "The milk side of our business is a '24/7' job and is often carried out in challenging environments. The Volvo FM offers the best combination of operational flexibility and driver comfort and is certainly robust enough to function even in the most demanding of conditions."

Stephen Cameron, the dairy group's supply chain director, added: "The benefits of the Volvo truck package have long been recognised by United in terms of the quality of the product and the aftersales care, but most importantly we have identified that the Volvo truck offers unrivalled cost efficiency over the whole vehicle life."

L-r: Dan Carey (fleet manager, United Dairy Farmers); John Jenkins (managing director, Dennison); Stephen Cameron (group supply chain director, United Dairy Farmers); Philip Wylie (transport manager, United Dairy Farmers); and Rob Ireland (sales manager, Dennison) with United Dairy Farmers' new Volvo FM-450 – and 'Nell' the cow!

Bulgarian partner for Kässbohrer

Tank and trailer manufacturer Kässbohrer has expanded its sales and service network in Europe. Bulgarian company UBN Auto Ltd has become the latest official Kässbohrer partner in Europe, following signing of the dealer agreement in UBN's headquarters in Sofia, Bulgaria.

UBN Auto is an experienced company in commercial vehicles in Bulgaria. As a subsidiary of Belgian-Dutch Turbo's Hoet Group, UBN Auto is also a long-time distributor for DAF Trucks in the Bulgarian market.

The company plans strategic investments of €15 million for the construction of distribution and service centres in major Bulgarian cities like Plovdiv, Varna and Burgas.

The Bulgarian market has a strong demand and potential for Kässbohrer vehicles such as fuel oil Tankers, curtainsiders and low-beds.

In addition, Kässbohrer has founded a Russian subsidiary in Moscow with its first assembly facility in Tula to be established before the end of this year. OOO Kässbohrer officially started activities with its participation at the Comtrans 2011, Russia's best-known commercial vehicle in Moscow. The company exhibited a fuel oil tanker semi-trailer and curtainsider semi-trailer.

Atchison Topeka gets Grade 'A'

Third-party food ingredients logistics company Atchison Topeka has achieved a Grade A BRC Global Standard for Food Safety accreditation.

The much coveted British Retail Consortium (BRC) standard is designed to assess the ability of food processors to comply with food safety requirements and demonstrate due diligence. Atchison Topeka is one of few 3PLs in the UK to have attained certification which is prerequisite for many of the UK's leading food retailers and global food service companies.

Quality manager Joanne Bradley believes that the accreditation demonstrates what can be achieved by a focused and disciplined team sharing the same objectives: "I cannot emphasise enough what a huge commitment this is for the business and what team effort was involved in attaining this level of accreditation," she commented.

She feels that the accreditation sends out a clear message to both existing and potential customers. "As part of our continuation as a business we want to branch into the food handling sector. Inevitably with this comes a heightened expectation of food safety requirements ensuring the high standards our customers expect and themselves operate at are offered and satisfied."

Operations project manager Adam Cooper's role in providing support to the operational and technical teams was pivotal to the success of the process. "The accreditation enables us to extend the scope of our services, adding value to the traditional supply chain model," he added.

The food industry is dictated by variable demands where processors and handlers can periodically find themselves full to capacity. "AT now has the potential to offer a range of ancillary services such as co-packing/repacking, blending-powders or liquids, mixing and sachet packing which would help customers during those often unpredictable fluctuations," added Cooper.

As an endorsement of technical competence and excellence the BRC Global Standard for Food Safety accreditation will enable AT to offer a wider range of value added supply chain solutions. The extension of its core business provision demonstrates a commitment to its customers by its ability to deliver enhanced levels of service and competitive advantage.

Daily Maersk – absolute reliability?

Maersk Line's new service on the Asia–north Europe trade lane offers a daily cut-off at the same time every day, seven days a week, and always with the exact same transportation time. Containerised cargo will now be delivered with unprecedented frequency and reliability, the world's largest container carrier claims.

Up until now, says Maersk, customers have had to adjust their production schedules and supply chains to accommodate shipping lines' unreliability, as they have never been able to trust that their cargo would be on time.

The engine behind Daily Maersk is 70 vessels operating a daily service between four ports in Asia - Ningbo, Shanghai, Yantian (China) and Tanjung Pelepas(Malaysia) - and three ports in Europe – Felixstowe (UK), Rotterdam (Netherlands) and Bremerhaven(Germany) in what amounts to a giant ocean conveyor belt for the world's busiest trade lane.

Regardless of which of the four Asian ports the cargo is loaded at, the transportation time – from cut-off to cargo availability – is fixed. Daily cut-offs mean that cargo can be shipped immediately after production without the need for storage, says the carrier.

Maersk Line promises that cargo at the other end will be available for pick-up on the agreed date. To underline that Maersk Line means business and how firmly the company believes in 'Daily Maersk', the promise is backed up with monetary compensation, should customers' containers not arrive on time. The carrier says this promise is a first in the shipping industry.

"We set out to design a service that takes the stress out of our customers' lives, to change shipping from the weakest to the strongest link in the supply chain. After all, shipping is only around two percent of our customers' total cost. And yet our unreliability has until now forced them to shape their production plans and inventory around it," said Maersk Line CEO, Eivind Kolding.

"Today, shipping creates anxiety, not boredom. As a general rule, shipping lines serving the Asia–north Europe trade are unreliable, in effect providing customers with an uncontrollable conveyor belt. Some 44 percent of all containers are late; 11 percent are more than two days late, and as much as 8 percent are more than eight days late.

"The lack of on-time delivery costs our customers large sums of money because it makes shipping more of an art than a science. Companies have to make up for an unreliable supply chain; they are forced to build a buffer in their supply chains and lose income when goods are not on time," Kolding explained.

Before Daily Maersk, Maersk Line claims it was already best-in-class with 75 percent of its vessels on the Asia–north Europe trade arriving on time. But this was still not reliable enough for customers to plan their supply chains in an optimal manner. Head of logistics at the electronics giant Pegatron, Andy Tron, explained: "Reliability should be a key performance indicator for all carriers. Today, 10 percent of all our shipments are more than two days late, so we are of course doubtful any carrier can provide guaranteed reliability. But if it is possible and if it is combined with more frequent departures to meet our production schedule, it would allow us to lower our inventories and significantly lower our costs."

The key features of Daily Maersk are:

- Cut-off every day – meaning the latest time cargo may be delivered to a terminal for loading to a scheduled vessel
- Transportation time, counting from cut-off to cargo availability
- Every container arriving on time
- If cargo availability is delayed by 1-3 days, Maersk Line will pay US$100 per container. If delayed by four days or more, Maersk Line will pay back US$300 per container

Without Daily Maersk the conditions are:

- Cut-off once every week
- Transit time, counting from vessels' departure to arrival at destination
- Approximately every second container arriving on time
- No compensation if shipment arrives late

The first cut-off for Daily Maersk will be on 24 October 2011.

On time, or up to $300 back

Lehnkering launches new gas tanker

Lehnkering Reederei is adding a modern double-hulled gas tanker to its inland waterway fleet. The newly constructed liquid gas vessel LRG GAS 88 picked up its first load in the Netherlands and was used to ship propylene and propane.

LRG GAS 88 is the 17th vessel in the company's own gas tanker fleet and will mainly sail along or near the river Rhine.

The 95m long and 11.45m wide marine hull was built at the Orsova Shipyard in Romania. TeamCo Shipyard BV in the Netherlands completed the superstructure work. The double-hulled tanker is powered by two 634 kW engines with low fuel consumption. The gas tanker is equipped to operate on canals and can therefore be used on secondary waterways too. Lehnkering claims it meets all regulations governing the shipment of hazardous goods on the Rhine and can be used for complete range of gaseous products that Lehnkering transports. In other words, it is not only suitable for 'classic' products like LPG, but can also ship ammonia or propylene oxide.

By expanding its fleet, the company says it is meeting the future demands of the market. "The gas shipping market, particularly along the Rhine is growing constantly. The need for the latest vessels will therefore continue to grow," says Robert Baack, COO of the Lehnkering Shipping Logistics & Services company division. "We are using this investment to maintain what is already a very strong position in the gas inland waterway shipping sector and are making a contribution to securing energy, and raw materials for industry."

The sister vessel, LRG GAS 89 with exactly the same design, will be integrated in the Lehnkering inland waterway fleet during the fourth quarter of 2011.

Franc fort hits Hupac

In the first half of 2011, Swiss combined transport operator Hupac increased traffic volume in unaccompanied combined transport by 11.7 percent. However, the strength of the Swiss franc compared to the euro is weakening the competitiveness of rail against road, the company says.

In the first half of 2011, Hupac carried 375,893 road consignments on the trains of its European network, exceeding the record volume achieved in the same period of 2008. The route via the Brenner corridor recorded particularly strong growth with an increase of 42.5 percent. There was also a positive trend in non-transalpine traffic, with a rise of 16.6 percent. Growth in transalpine traffic was more moderate (+ 6.5 percent).

Even stronger growth was hindered by various shortages in the rail system. Accidents, storms, strikes and construction sites reduced the performance of the transport network. A number of rail connections had to be cut back or discontinued for lack of wagons. In contrast, the collaboration with SBB Cargo International, in which Hupac has held a minority stake since the beginning of the year, proved a success. The consistent rationalisation and standardisation of processes has proved effective and may yield the desired results in the interests of the market in the medium term.

Despite growth in the market, expectations for combined transport via Switzerland are cautious. This is due to the huge increase in the value of the Swiss franc compared to the Euro. "The euro is the key currency in international road haulage and therefore also in combined transport," explained Bernhard Kunz, managing director of Hupac. "As a result of the exchange loss on the euro, revenues are falling drastically and they can no longer cover the costs of Swiss rail freight transport." Hupac is countering this with further cost efficiencies and increases in productivity. "Maintaining the competitiveness of combined transport against the road requires even closer co-operation between all partners in the transport chain," said Kunz.

The opening of the Gotthard base tunnel in 2017 and the Ceneri base tunnel in 2019 are expected to stimulate substantial growth in combined transport. However, the question of access routes is still unanswered, said Hupac. The existing lines can no longer meet the requirements of modern, efficient freight transport. Due to funding shortfalls, however, the building of new infrastructure cannot be expected in the foreseeable future.

Hupac therefore advocates a pragmatic, progressive adjustment of the existing infrastructure. The existing access lines can be progressively expanded and prepared for modal shift with limited resources, so the advantages of the flat railway can be fully exploited as soon as the Gotthard base tunnel opens. The required steps include the cross-border expansion of infrastructure for train lengths of 750m and train heights of 4m. The Piattaforma Luino and Simplon Phase II must also be implemented rapidly and adjusted to meet the new requirements. According to Hupac, the priority should be on the intermodal corridors via Luino and Domodossola, as these serve the existing Busto Arsizio and Novara terminals and handle over 60 percent of combined transport traffic via Switzerland. With regard to the Chiasso-Seregno-Bergamo route, terminals east of Milan with a capacity of 30 train pairs per day should be incorporated into the planning.

For the growth market of Russia, Hupac approved a common strategy with its long-term joint venture partner Russkaya Troyka in May 2011. The aim is the enhancement of the existing combined transport service in line with the proven business model of container transport from terminal to terminal. "In the medium term, we intend to establish regular block trains between the Atlantic and Pacific, thus offering the market a competitive, reliable alternative for the growing freight traffic flows," said Kunz. To ensure better commercial and operational support for the traffic, Hupac is opening a branch in Moscow in autumn 2011. The traffic volume shared between Hupac and Russkaya Troyka in 2010 was around 3,000 containers.

The strength of the Swiss franc against the euro is weakening the competitiveness of rail against road

Waterways focus for new GL staff

Germanischer Lloyd has appointed a new business development manager, Tom Dorsman, and a dedicated technical co-ordinator, Ruben Roeleveld, specialising in inland marine transport.

Dorsman will provide a dedicated sales specialist for the inland waterway vessel market. Roeleveld will be responsible for co-ordinating activities between plan approval surveyors, field surveyors, business development managers and clients. Roeleveld will also be GL's contact with the IVW (Inspectie Verkeer en Waterstaat), the Dutch Shipping Inspectorate. Both Dorsman and Roeleveld are based, the heart of the IWV trade.

With big changes on the horizon, such as the phase out of single hull tanker barges in the Netherlands and Belgium, GL is positioning itself to help customers as new regulations and shifts take place in the market. Dorsman commented: "Getting involved with special projects with the newest technology, for example diesel-electric hybrid drives and barges running on gas engines, is where I think that GL can really help our customers in the market over the next few years."

Appointing a specialist BDM and co-ordinator builds on GL's presence in the IWV market, and follows on from GL's authorisation by the EU in 2006 to conduct statutory inspections of inland vessels navigating in community inland waterways. This year GL received full accreditation from the IVW to conduct inspections on Dutch flagged inland vessels on their behalf. GL will also soon be issuing an updated version of the rules for inland navigation vessels.

Dorsman has been involved with inland vessels and components for most of his working life. After attending the KOPS (Koninklijk Onderwijsfonds voor de Scheepvaart/Royal School for Inland Waterway Vessels) in Rotterdam, he spent a short period at sea before returning to work for Castrol. In 1992 he joined Detroit Diesel in Dordrecht Holland, and after that firm's acquisition by Daimler Chrysler, worked for MTU Friedrichshafen, responsible for sales on the inland marine market. He worked for MTU until 2006 when he left to take up a position with Kuipers Shipbuilding BV in Ridderkerk Holland. At Kuipers he worked as a broker and owners' superintendent for newbuild barges bringing cascos (IWV hulls), built in eastern Europe and later Asia, back for outfitting in the Netherlands.

Roeleveld most recently worked for the IVW as a ship inspector; conducting inspections of inland water vessels. He undertook field surveys and plan approval, as well as approving hull safety arrangements, fire insulation and other safety measures. Previous to this he was a ship plan approval surveyor at Lloyd's Register, mainly focused on hull construction in inland water vessels and yachts. He studied design, construction and production at the faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Maritime Technique, University of Delft, graduating as a Master in Shipbuilding Engineering.

Currently over 800 inland waterway vessels are GL classed, including modern double-hulled tankers. Several seagoing vessels of GL's fleet are also subject to inland waterway certification.

CINS network goes live

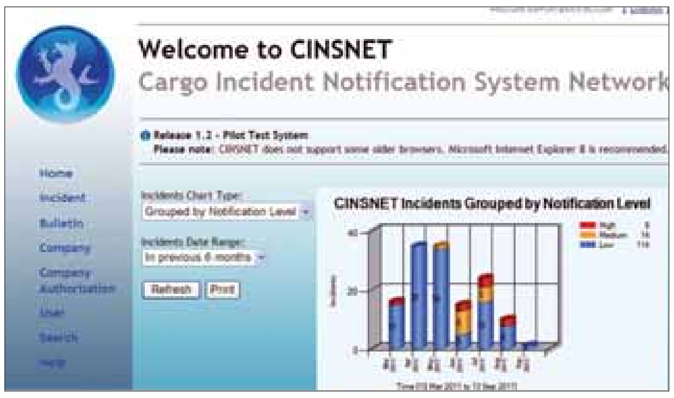
CINSnet, a database set up by five of the world's biggest container lines to share information on cargo related incidents, has gone live after successfully completing its pilot stage.

CINSnet has been funded by the Cargo Incident Notification System (CINS) organisation, a collaboration which began in November 2010 between CMA-CGM, Evergreen, Hapag Lloyd, Maersk Line and Mediterranean Shipping Company. Carriers and ship operators from across the maritime industry are now being invited to join as members of the organisation, to work together and as such try to reduce the number of accidents caused by problems including poorly stowed cargo, incorrect packaging or inaccurate weight declaration.


Example of a badly packed container

The objective of the CINS organisation is to highlight risks posed by certain cargoes and/or packing failures in order to improve safety in the liner shipping industry. This is done by capturing and analysing information within the CINSnet database, looking for specific incidents which may require immediate action or assessing incident trends. Once areas of concern become apparent they can be addressed to relevant authorities to formulate appropriate recommendations or advice, such as amendments to the IMDG Code. This may include advice on training issues on the packing and securing of cargo in containers. The main components of CINSnet are incident/bulletin reporting and searching.

"The original idea was to focus on hazardous freight, but the CINSnet will now cover all incidents that involve cargoes," said CINS Organisation chairman Dirk Vande Velde (MSC corporate manager for chemical transports and director environmental and social business affairs). "Rather than restrict the aims of CINSnet, the founder members have decided to let the scheme evolve in whatever direction seems appropriate. Eventually membership could even be extended to non-container sectors, with interest already expressed by some bulker and ro-ro ship operators who can also see the benefit of CINSnet as a valuable risk management tool. For any clear pattern emerging that could require regulatory intervention, the lines will now have the hard facts to support their claims and no longer have to rely on anecdotal evidence when presenting their case. CINS members anticipate that, over time, the database will also reveal how widespread unsafe practices are in the industry;



Charts can be produced showing incidents by notification level, incident type and date range

information which can be used to press for better advice and training, as well as legislative changes."

Policies using the information have been formulated, a code of conduct has been drawn up and the online database is now fully functional, with incident notification messages being shared between members and risk analysis conducted as a result. The TT Club and the International Group of P&I Clubs have acted as advisory members of the CINS network and the Container Owners Association is acting as a neutral host for the database.

The CINS organisation selected Exis Technologies to develop the database, report processing and network functionality. The pilot system was delivered to CINS in July after three months of development and programming. CINSnet is hosted on Exis Technologies servers managed by Aimes Grid Services, Liverpool, UK.

www.carriers-cins.org
www.cinsnet.org

Evonik calls on Portbase for seamless export

Infracor, the logistics subsidiary of Evonik Degussa, has called on Portbase, the Port Community System of the ports of Rotterdam and Amsterdam, to streamline Evonik's export flows via the Dutch ports. Infracor organises the transportat of Evonik products to destinations all over the world.

Since the first quarter of this year, the chemical producer has been making use of the recently introduced service for export containers, Portbase ECS, with the objective of simplifying the labour-intensive export process.

ECS is based on the European Export Control System (ECS), which has obliged exporters throughout Europe to submit their export declarations electronically since 2009. In the Dutch ports, like everywhere in Europe, ECS gave rise to additional Customs obligations. By participating in the ECS services, as an exporter Evonik is thereby assured of the quick and accurate processing of its export declarations by Dutch Customs authorities. This saves the company unnecessary administrative hassle to prove that the goods actually left the EU, and eliminates the risk that they will face an additional claim for VAT. In addition, they can track their cargo in the port on-line.

Connecting to the digital infrastructure behind the ports of Amsterdam and Rotterdam is in line with the strategic focus on continuous innovation within Evonik. "In submitting one message, we are talking to everyone in the ports of Rotterdam and Amsterdam," said Heinrich Rott, head of forwarding at Infracor. "This allows us to work much more efficiently and sustainably. By connecting up to this system, we can follow our cargo streams in the Dutch ports in real time. This allows us to intervene in our logistics process when necessary, and makes it possible for us to keep our clients 100 percent up to date about our delivery dates."

Portbase is a neutral hub for all logistics information in the ports of Rotterdam and Amsterdam. Over its port community system companies can benefit from a range of services for simple and efficient information exchange, both between companies and between the public and private sector. Portbase was created by a merger between Rotterdam's Port infolink and Amsterdam's PortNET systems. The new organisation was set up in 2009.

www.portbase.nl

Container cargo headed for Rotterdam in the Marl chemical park

VTG should hit 'upper end' of forecast

Hamburg wagon hire and rail logistics company VTG saw a continued upward trend in business in the first half of 2011. Revenue for the first six months was €373.8 million, representing a year-on-year increase of 21.7 percent. Operating profit (EBITDA) rose by 11.8 percent, to €83.9 million.

Operating cash flow, at €60.9 million, was 6.1 percent lower than in the same period of the previous year. This was primarily due to an increase in receivables as a result of the increased volume of business. Based on the positive trend in business, the executive board re-affirms its expectation that VTG will achieve levels of revenue and EBITDA for the year 2011 at the higher end of the forecast ranges.

"Despite the current fluctuations in the capital markets, we have succeeded in achieving the necessary conditions for pushing ahead on our path of growth. The new financing for the group at the right time has given us the flexibility to continue to pursue market opportunities as they arise," explained Dr Heiko Fischer, CEO. VTG refinanced in early May, with a US private placement and a syndicated loan. "The takeovers of the wagon hire company Sogerent and the Railcraft group of companies affirm the pursuit of our strategy of growth, enabling us to access new international customers and markets," added Fischer.

The wagon hire division saw stable growth and a continued high level of demand. Accordingly, capacity utilisation at the end of the first half of the year rose for the fifth consecutive quarter to reach 90.8 percent compared with 87.4 percent for the same period of the previous year. Revenue rose by 3.1 percent, from €142.6 in the first half of 2010 to €147.1 million. EBITDA increased by 8.1 percent, to €77.9 million. There was a year-on-year increase in the EBITDA margin related to revenue from 50.6 percent to 53.0 percent.

In rail logistics there was an increase in demand for transport services, due in part to the positive trend in business in eastern and south-eastern Europe. Other factors that contributed were the addition of the Polish subsidiary to the group of consolidated companies, due to its increasing importance in operations, and the acquisition of the rail logistics company TMF in 2010. Revenue in rail logistics stood at €149.4 million, representing an increase of 55.5 percent on the same period of the previous year. EBITDA, at €6.5 million, was 64.2 percent higher than the figure for the first six months of 2010.

As in rail, the positive trend in tank container logistics was primarily due to a continued rise in demand for transport services. In particular, there was dynamic growth in demand from customers in the European chemical industry for both intra-European and intercontinental transports. This in turn was driven by positive trends in Russia, Turkey and China. Revenue in tank container logistics rose by 12.9 percent to €77.3 million. EBITDA stood at €6.3 million, representing an increase of 38 percent on the first six months of 2010. The EBITDA margin on gross profit increased from 42.5 to 49.4 percent. As of 30 June, the number of tank containers had risen in line with transport volumes, reaching 9,800, an increase of 900 units since the same period in 2010.

Based on current economic forecasts and market conditions, VTG is confident that, in 2011, it will be able to raise performance significantly in all three divisions compared with the previous year. The group also expects a continued upward trend in utilisation of fleet capacity over the second half of the year. It expects that the rail logistics and tank container logistics divisions will continue on their growth path. The executive board expects to achieve the higher end of the forecast ranges for 2011 of €720-760 million for revenue and €165-170 million for EBITDA. This is subject to the provision that economic growth is no further depressed by the current factors causing uncertainty and that no lasting setbacks are suffered by key VTG industries.

Rail logistics saw an increase in demand for transport services

TDG boosts Dentressangle earnings

The acquisition of TDG helped Norbert Dentressangle (ND) boost its revenue and profitability in the first half of 2011. ND's first half revenue totalled €1.7 billion, up 21.9 percent on a published basis and up 6.6 percent at constant exchange rates. The performance stemmed from continued organic growth momentum and the consolidation of TDG as of 1 April 2011. The TDG consolidation had a positive impact on transport revenue, reported the French operator, up 17.7 percent on a published basis and up 8.1 percent like-for-like. In addition, logistics revenue rose up 21.9 percent (4.3 percent like-for-like).

Freight forwarding revenue has advanced rapidly since the launch of the activity in January 2010, benefiting from the successive consolidations of Schneider Logistics in November 2010 and TDG.

Operating profit before goodwill (EBITA) grew 30 percent to €58.9 million, up from €45.3 million at 30 June 2010. ND's first half consolidated operating margin came to 3.4 percent, versus 3.2 percent at the same time last year. The improvement in operating margin was particularly significant in terms of the historical scope of activity, where margin reached 3.7 percent.

Transport operating profit totalled €26.8 million, up from €20.2m, with operating margin increasing from 2.5 percent in H1 2010 to 2.8 percent at 30 June 2011. Operating margin on traditional transport business came to 3.2 percent, notably as a result of distribution activity in the UK reaching break-even.

Logistics operating profit totalled €31.6 million, up from €25.6 million at 30 June 2010, with operating margin totalling 4.3%, in line with the performance last year.

COA Code of Practice –

Progress continues following London and Shanghai meetings

In the May/June issue of *Bulk Distributor*, Chris Thornton, flexitank manager for the Container Owners Association, reviewed the COA flexitank meeting in May, where a number of amendments to the COA Flexitank Code of Practice were agreed. These amendments are now being incorporated into the third revision of the Code of Practice to be published imminently. In the second of two articles, Chris Thornton reports on the future development of the Code of Practice

Due to the nature of the materials used in the construction of flexitanks, it is very important to ensure that only suitable and compatible products are shipped in them. Firstly, flexitanks are not approved for the transportation of hazardous cargoes, so no substance that is classified as hazardous under the IMDG code should ever be loaded in a flexitank. There are also certain commodities that have a detrimental effect on the material of the tank itself, which can lead to structural failures; therefore these commodities should also not be shipped in flexitanks.

Notwithstanding the above, the majority of liquids are suitable for transport in flexitanks. To ensure that the product is suited to a particular tank, flexitank operators will ask the shipper to supply comprehensive information on the product they want to ship, in the form of a material safety data sheet (MSDS). If the commodity is not known to them, they will refer the information to a qualified chemist who will advise on its compatibility. If there are still concerns, then tests on samples of the flexitank material and the liquid in question will be conducted and the cargo will only be accepted if a positive result is obtained. To streamline the acceptance process, all the information gathered is stored in a data base so that it can be used to accept further bookings of the same commodity.

Shipping lines carry out similar checks. When they receive bookings for unfamiliar commodities, as a failsafe, they will confirm with the flexitank operator whether the commodity is compatible with the tank being used.

In the recent COA flexitank meetings in London (May 2011) and Shanghai (June 2011), there was overwhelming support for progressing the development of the COA Recommended Code of Practice into an internationally recognised standard. Consequently the COA has been investigating the options for achieving this.

It is recognised that the Code of Practice is probably not at a stage where it can be submitted

to ISO just yet. So an interim solution has been sought. One possibility would appear to be a Publically Available Specification (PAS), which is standard promoted by the British Standards Institute. A PAS can be used as a stepping stone to an ISO standard in the future. The flexitank members of the COA will soon be voting to decide if this is the right solution for them.

With the growing importance of the flexitank industry within the COA, the COA board of directors has decided that a Flexitank Division should be established so that the industry can have greater autonomy with regard to its representation within the COA and on the COA Flexitank Management Group. The Flexitank Division will have its own steering committee, the members of which will be elected by the flexitank members of the COA. The steering committee will in turn select two of its members to represent the flexitank industry on the management committee. The flexitank management committee comprises two flexitank representatives, two shipping line representatives, one technical expert and the COA flexitank manager, with the committee being chaired by the COA secretary. At the time of writing (mid-September) the election is underway for the 2011/12 steering committee representatives.

The development of the Code of Practice is continuing apace. A fully revised Code of Practice was be published by end-September, including the revisions to the sections on impact testing, materials testing, incident management and insurance – these items were reviewed in the previous article (Bulk Distributor, May/June 2011).

Part of the revised CoP includes a revised specification for the rail impact test for container/flexitank combinations, where by the test is based on a 2G acceleration at impact. During September, the first two rail impact tests were conducted to the new 2G standard, one at TUV SUD Rail in Germany and the other at TTCI in USA.

Further information on the COA Code of Practice can be found on www.containerownersassociation.rg

To contact the COA about flexitanks: flexitanks@containerownersassociation.org

It's Sun times

Sun Flexitanks, a division of Sundersons Group of Companies, introduced the flexitank to the Indian market and says it has since gained tremendous ground in India for exports of non-hazardous liquid cargoes. The first Indian flexitank company to have gained acceptance as per the COA guidelines also holds the accolade of being the only Indian flexitank company. Sun Flexitanks' units are approved for all combinations of load and discharge types.

Sun Flexitank's offering is claimed to be unique compared to competitors as it has been designed and developed considering a global approach towards acceptance. Research and development along with feedback received, led to redesign of the product taking into account the requirements of customers, current infrastructure and climatic conditions of developed, developing and underdeveloped countries. This was combined with a study of the products currently being carried in flexitanks and products that could be carried in the future. Along with compatibility and acceptance criteria, these were considered the key factors of development to provide a 'global touch' to the product. Studies showed that a product which could adapt to global conditions would be the most acceptable.

Sun Flexitanks are capable of carrying a majority of liquids which do not classify as hazardous. It is a bag-in-box concept that converts a standard shipping container into a tank to ship liquids. So whether the products are oils, water, juices, concentrates or wine, Sun Flexitanks has compatible equipment for all products. Food-grade compatibility is a standard feature of all the company's flexitanks to ensure that products transported maintain their quality for the entire journey. Depending on customers' requirements Sun Flexitanks even cater to kosher qualifications, if desired. Sun ensures that all products used in the manufacture of its flexitanks are environmentally-friendly.

Sun Flexitanks also recently introduced the Vinotank for the carriage of wines, juices, concentrates and cargoes which are hygroscopic in nature or require protection from humidity and heat transfer. Initial trial shipments have been concluded successfully with endorsed customer satisfaction.

Sun Flexitanks currently operates with its own offices in India and the Middle East along with strategic partnership alliances in the Far East, South Africa and South America with plans to open their own offices at strategic locations and alliance partnerships on global basis for supply and services of its products. A global network is in place to provide services to customers. The network provides all kinds of assistance to Sun customers, be it can help with discharging cargoes, training, consultation or disposal of the used flexitank.

"Every Sun Flexitank that has been loaded with various cargoes has been a knowledge source for the betterment of the equipment, whether it is in the form of a customer complaint or appreciation or suggestions," stated Bharat S Lalwani, joint managing director.

Whether it is freight forwarding, Customs clearance, transport, tank containers, flexitanks, hazardous cargo consultation, Sundersons says it has always been committed to the industry with its services.

"We aim to provide several specialised logistics solutions to our customers and the industry and thrive on our service quality," states Haresh S Lalwani, joint managing director.

Sundersons is an EN ISO 9001:2008 compliant company. It has been rated as SME-1 for the past three years by Credit Rating and Information Services of India Ltd (CRISIL). The company has also received a number of awards, such as Bulk Liquid Transporter of the year in Unitised Form (Flexitanks/Tank containers) at the All India Maritime and Logistics Awards 2010; and Dangerous goods/Liquid Handling Company at the Samudra Manthan Awards 2009.

www.sunflexitanks.com

Commissioner confirms 2013 ports package

Visiting the port of Rotterdam, European Commission Vice-President Siim Kallas announced his intention to issue in 2013 a package of proposals to help ports remain competitive and support the huge potential for growth in the port sector. This package is expected to contain measures to support the reduction of the administrative burden in ports, proposals to improve the transparency of port financing as well as proposals on port services.

"Ports are engines of economic development and sources of prosperity for our cities, regions and countries," said Kallas, "But in the next 20 years or so, our many hundreds of seaports will face major challenges in terms of productivity, investment needs, employment as well as integration with port cities and regions. Our ports have huge potential for growth in the years ahead, but we need to tackle the bottlenecks holding back port development and set out now a more coherent policy on ports and maritime infrastructure. I intend to bring forward proposals for the ports sector in 2013."

The review of ports policy does not come as a surprise, as it was already listed as one of the action points in the recent Transport Policy White Paper. Concretely, the expected proposals will include measures on market access to port services, improved transparency of port financing and support for measures to cut more red tape in ports. The proposals will tie in with existing initiatives, such as the Blue Belt pilot project. Also, the commission currently has a number studies running, on port labour, pilotage and state aid to ports. The latter was commissioned by DG Competition.

"We are ready to have an open-minded dialogue with the commission on all these topics," responded Victor Schoenmakers, chairman of the European Seaports Organisation (ESPO). "We believe that the 2007 Ports Policy Communication is still a good basis for action as it was based on a very extensive stakeholder consultation. We especially need legal certainty to ensure a stable investment climate in our ports. This can best be achieved through 'soft law' measures combined with a case-by-case policy where manifest problems exist. I think the past experience with ports policy has shown us that a 'one size fits all' regulatory approach does not work."

In 2012, the commission is planning to hold a conference on the future of European ports. Following consultation with stakeholders, and an in-depth impact assessment, the commission will present its proposals for the port sector in 2013.

Seaports will face major challenges in terms of productivity, investment needs and employment

Odfjell takes stake in Noord Natie

Odfjell has signed a letter of intent (LOI) to take an equity share in Noord Natie Terminal's existing facility in Antwerp. The intention is to expand the terminal by up to 112,000 cbm capacity.

The investment will be part of Odfjell Terminals (Europe), a joint venture company between Odfjell and Lindsay Goldberg LLC.

Odfjell will acquire a minority share in Noord Natie Terminals (NNT), and the proceeds from the share issuance will be earmarked for the planned expansion. Antwerp is a major hub for speciality chemicals and this investment fits Odfjell's strategy to grow its storage capacity of chemicals along major trade lanes and in major petrochemical clusters. It is expected that the investment will offer synergies with shipping and with Odfjell global network of tank terminals.

Odfjell considers NNT a well-managed terminal, with a recognised name in the local market. The present facility consists of about 265,000 cbm with a further 32,800 cbm under construction expected ready by January 2012. The intended expansion is for up to 112,000 cbm and after the expansion the terminal will have total capacity of 400,000 cbm. The existing facility and the expansion have good waterfront capacity thereby reducing risk of potential waiting time to load or unload the products. The investment will allow Odfjell to offer storage in both Rotterdam and Antwerp and is expected to enhance value for Odfjell's shareholders.

Inter Pipeline to buy DOET

Inter Pipeline Fund is acquiring the oil terminals of Denmark's DONG Energy Terminals (DOET). The sales price has been agreed at DK2.6 billion (€354 million) which reflects a multiple of 10.1 times actual 2010 EBITDA.

DONG Energy Oil Terminals is one of the leading providers of oil tank facilities in Scandinavia. The business owns and operates four oil terminals all located at deepwater ports in Denmark with a total storage capacity of approximately 1.7 million cbm. For 2010 DONG Energy Oil Terminals had an EBITDA of DK261 mill.

"The sale of the oil terminals is a part of our work on focusing on core activities. We thereby continue our transition towards a more green energy production," said Anders Eldrup, CEO of DONG Energy.

David Fesyk, president and CEO of Inter Pipeline, said the terminals represented a well-managed business with strong development potential. "It adds scale and diversification to Inter Pipeline's existing platform of petroleum and petrochemical storage terminals in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Germany." Inter Pipeline is the parent company of the UK's Simon Storage Group.

Simon opens east-west link

Investment in new fuel storage and rail loading facilities by Simon Storage at its Immingham East Terminal has helped independent fuel wholesaler, Mabanaft Ltd to create a new rail-fed fuel supply line from Immingham on Humberside to HCB Storage's Cardiff oil terminal.

Mabanaft completed a modernisation programme of rail heads at the Cardiff terminal as part of the 15-month project. The investment by Simon, Mabanaft and other business partners has opened a fuel supply line from the east to the west coast of Britain. This will bring increased fuel supply security to businesses in the Cardiff area, and means that HCB Storage's terminal is now able to receive product by rail as well as by ship. In addition, Mabanaft will have the potential to provide fuel to any other UK rail-fed terminal or depot.

At the Immingham end of the new fuel supply route, Simon has integrated new and existing facilities to allow receipt of Mabanaft product by sea from the East Jetty, from Simon's adjoining West Terminal, or from local refineries and their associated terminals. Specialist storage for ultra-low sulphur derv, kerosene and bio blend diesel is provided by six carbon steel tanks, three of which are newly built. Simon's engineering team also managed the design and build of additional facilities for the project, including new transfer pipelines and a supplementary loading facility in the existing rail loading sidings to improve turnaround times for the export of large batches of product from Immingham to Cardiff and other potential destinations.

New pipeline systems installed by Simon at Immingham enable product to be transferred from storage tanks to the rail loading gantry at a flow rate of up to 512cbm/hr. The rail loading line for Mabanaft is split into two headers with six rail loading points. Rail cars are bottom loaded via a manual loading operation designed to allow two adjacent rail cars to be filled simultaneously until the whole train has been loaded. The manual loading operation is backed up by an automatic high level cut-off probe placed into each rail car before loading commences. In the event of the high level alarm being activated during loading, the auto valve to the rail car and a common valve in the feed to the gantry are closed and the loading pump is stopped in conjunction with audio visual warnings to the loading team.

Now in its fifth decade in the UK, Mabanaft has built a strong reputation as a reliable supplier of fuel products to independent distributors, retailers, hauliers, marine-bunker providers, supermarkets, and the commercial/industrial sectors. Mark Rolph, Mabanaft's managing director, said the support of key business partners like Simon Storage contributed to the successful completion of the project which "reinforces Mabanaft's commitment to long term investment in oil supply infrastructure to ensure secure supplies for the UK market."

For Simon, the project showcased the company's engineering expertise and demonstrated its willingness to invest in specialist storage and handling facilities to meet customers' commercial objectives.

www.simonstorage.com

The investment has opened a fuel supply line from the east to the west coast of Britain

Added oil for Liqui Moly

Ernst Prost (centre) – new storage is necessary to meet growth plans

German motor oil and additive specialist Liqui Moly is spending €11.6 million for a new tank farm in the vicinity of its oil plant as well as expanding production there.

The tank farm will be constructed at the inland waterway harbour in Dillingen, just a few kilometres from the group's base in Ulm. The 10 tanks, each with a volume of 1,800 cbm, supplement the storage capacity already present on the oil plant grounds. The tank farm will cost €8 million and is scheduled to go into operation in the summer of 2012.

"This is a major step for our mineral oil plant and for the employees in the company," stated Ernst Prost, manager and owner of Liqui Moly at the cornerstone laying ceremony. "It is an absolutely essential investment. Without it we could not continue our growth to the extent planned." Currently, Liqui Moly posting double-digit turnover growth and was elected the most popular motor oil in Germany this year. However, further growth is expected to come mainly from outside Germany.

"It would be almost impossible to fulfil these plans without the new tank storage," added Prost. Another reason behind the project is the additional storage capacity for 18 million litres, making the oil manufacturer less dependent on price variations on the crude oil market.

"Construction of the tank farm is a clear commitment to our 'Made in Germany' production policy," added Prost. Approximately 30 new jobs will be created in the course of building the tank farm. The group current employs a staff of 557. When the tank farm is put into operation, it will no longer be necessary for tank trucks to drive hundreds of kilometres several times each day from refineries in the Netherlands and Belgium. Just one inland river barge will be required every two weeks. Trucks will then only have to drive the last few kilometres from the tank farm to the oil plant.

Simultaneously with construction of the tank farm, the oil plant itself will be expanded: More storage area will be created, and additional mixing vessels and storage tanks will be installed. The investments at the plant amount to an additional €3.6 million. Production will continue during the construction work.

Gate opens for LNG

The LNG carrier Bu Samra arrived at Rotterdam's newly commissioned Gate terminal on the morning of 1 September, delivering the first commercial LNG cargo.

The terminal had already received three LNG cargoes between June and July which were contracted by Gate for commissioning and testing.

The arrival of the Bu Samra marked the milestone that Gate terminal has successfully completed this test phase and the terminal is now fully operational.

Her Majesty Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands was due to open the terminal, located on the Maasvlakte, on 23 September 2011. Gate terminal (Gas Access To Europe) is the first import terminal for LNG in the Netherlands and has been developed by Nederlandse Gasunie and Royal Vopak.

The reason for developing Gate terminal as an independent distribution point for European energy companies is the rising demand for and declining production of natural gas in northwest Europe. Gate terminal receives LNG by ship, which is subsequently regasified and prepared for distribution to the Dutch gas transport network and to other northwest European markets.

The throughput capacity of the terminal is 12 billion cbm of natural gas a year. Gate has three storage tanks, two jetties and regasification systems. Each tank has a storage capacity of 180,000 cbm.

The Bu Samra is a 266,000 cbm Q-Max LNG carrier with a length of 345m and a beam of 46m. The Q-Max carrier is owned by Nakilat and is used to transport LNG from the Qatar Liquefied Gas Company to customers in Europe.

In addition, Vopak's joint venture with Enagas has successfully completed the acquisition of the LNG storage and regasification terminal in Altamira, Mexico. The jointly controlled entity has acquired all the shares in the terminal from Shell (50 percent), Total (25 percent) and Mitsui & Co (25 percent) for US$408 million. The LNG terminal in Altamira will continue to facilitate overseas LNG imports and supply of gas into Mexico and has been operational since 2006. The terminal consists of two tanks each of 150,000 cbm and a jetty capable of receiving LNG vessels with a capacity of up to 216,000 cbm. The terminal has a throughput capacity of 7.4 billion cbm a year, which is fully contracted long term.

Throughput capacity of Gate Terminal is 12 billion cbm a year