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IN THIS ISSUE

Managing Editor: Neil Madden
neil@bulk-distributor.com
Tel: +33 (0)3 88 60 30 68
Advertising Director: Anne Williams
anne@bulk-distributor.com
Tel: +44 (0)20 854 13130
Business Development Executive: Mike Reardon
mike@bulk-distributor.com
Tel: +44 (0)1565 653283
Features Editor: Paul Stephen
paul@bulk-distributor.com
Tel: +44 (0)1565 653283
Circulation: Sandra Curties
sandra@bulk-distributor.com
Tel: +44 (0)1565 653283

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Ashley & Dumville Publishing Ltd
Caledonian House, Tatton Street, Knutsford,
Cheshire WA16 6AG, United Kingdom
www.bulk-distributor.com

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VTG, Brunsbüttel ink LNG supply strategy

VTG and Brunsbüttel Ports have signed an agreement to develop a logistics system for LNG.

Both companies have been actively involved with LNG for some time now. Brunsbüttel Ports has been pressing ahead with plans for an LNG terminal in Brunsbüttel, which sits at the western end of the Kiel Canal, near the mouth of the Elbe River, in northern Germany. At the same time VTG is building two tank wagon prototypes for transporting LNG.

"We can see great potential for synergies", said Frank Schnabel, managing director of Brunsbüttel Ports and the Schramm Group. "LNG is the ideal solution for environmentally friendly, sulphur-free ship propulsion. Furthermore, liquefied gas is emerging as an attractive alternative to pipeline gas for the industrial sector. A Europe-wide industrial supply, which also extends to cover inland sites, is the fundamental precondition driving this development forward. Having an LNG terminal at Brunsbüttel as a starting point and onward distribution by rail with the VTG LNG tank wagons would ensure that we can provide the industry, as well as potential gas users inland, with an efficient supply."

VTG is building the prototype LNG rail tanks with its Czech partner, Chart Ferox. The Hamburg-based wagon leasing company is responsible for the development and completion of the wagons, including authorisation and putting into service, while Chart Ferox is constructing the tanks.

Exceptionally good insulating properties enable the cryogenic LNG to remain in the tank wagon potentially for up to six weeks. A particular development effort was required for a unique suspension technique between the tank and the underframe, together with the complex dynamic und vibration calculation tests performed by VTG and Chart Ferox.

As an additional safety measure, the tank wagons are being equipped with 25 tonne wheelsets instead of the 22.5 tonnes which is legally required and a GPS monitoring option for the tank. Transport to and from Spain is also possible, despite the different gauge widths. The wagons are being constructed in such a way that regauging can be performed at the French-Spanish border interchange stations.

Natural gas is traditionally transported in a gaseous state via pipelines. However, cryogenic LNG can be transported by ship, truck and tank container, as it is cooled to a temperature of -162 degC, which reduces its volume 600 fold.

Two tank wagons on the tracks replace four trucks or five tank containers on the road, says VTG. This means fewer traffic jams, less environmental pollution and lower costs.

Continued on p21

VTG is building the prototype LNG rail tanks with Czech partner Chart Ferox

Tank production up another 10%, reckons @tco

Almost 40,000 tank containers were built last year according to estimates by Reginald Lee, president of the Asian Tank Container organisation (@tco Asia).

According to Lee's latest update, production in China during 2014 reached 33,000 units (2013: 29,000); in South Africa the figure was 5,400 (2013: 6,000); in Europe, 1,000 (2013: 1,250); and the Rest of the World, 500, unchanged from the previous year.

If these estimates are accurate global production would have been in the order of 39,900, up from the previous year's figure of 36,750. Stripping out an estimated 1,000 tanks scrapped, Lee reckons the current world fleet rounded up to the nearest 1,000 is now between 412,000 and 455,000.

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

Lee expects this trend to continue for at least another 5-6 years as older tanks with the thicker shells are used up. With the selling price currently low, he said, leasing companies are buying again from Chinese manufacturers, with many of these tanks being leased to Asian companies to feed the growing need for equipment in the region.

Gas tanks are not included in the latest estimates, but lee said that as this sector is expanding he will include this information in next year's report.

Finding the right chemistry

'Global competitiveness and the chemical industry: what about europe?' was the principal theme of the 2014 EPCA Annual Meeting, held in Vienna

EPCA president Tom Crotty opened the plenary session saying the event had attracted a record number of registrations, almost 2,800.

"I'm not sure whether this is a sign of a recovery in the industry, or whether in the face of adversity it's better to have strength in numbers," he commented. Certainly, the global chemical industry is seeing seismic change, with massive shifts in global demand and in energy supply, Crotty noted. For this reason, the meeting's presentations focused on how the European petrochemical sector can remain competitive in the face of these changes and the new challenges they bring.

Staying alive

Does Europe's chemical industry have the right ingredients to stay competitive despite the region's difficult economic struggles? This was the question posed by the first keynote speaker, Graham van't Hoff, Shell Chemicals' executive vice-president.

He believed it does, but saw two major challenges – the cost of production, and the potential threat of North American shale gas. To these, he identified six key responses: leveraging clusters, technology investment, refinery integration, advantaged feedstock, a better industry image, and gaining the support of policymakers.

If the industry gets it right, the Shell executive believed the chemicals sector could play a key role in re-industrialising Europe and in securing a sustainable future for the region.

It might be the case that van't Hoff was speaking before the prolonged drop in oil prices, but there is little reason to suppose that longer term the situation will be seriously affected by this.

When van't Hoff joined the industry in 1984, there were fears that new Middle East production capacity based on cheap feedstocks would destroy the European petrochemicals sector by 2000. However, "Today, the European chemicals industry appears to be alive and kicking. It is a €558 billion industry providing over 1 million direct and nearly 5 million indirect jobs in Europe."

But while Europe's chemical sales have doubled since 1992, its market share fell from 30.5 percent in 2002 to just 17.8 percent in 2012.

Did Europe get lucky, or take measures to remain competitive? Probably a combination of both, said van't Hoff. As Middle East production grew rapidly demand in Asia, and particularly China, also grew well ahead of expectations. Europe also had some good fundamentals, including highly energy-efficient plants, a productive labour force, and a vast, differentiated product portfolio.

Today, Europe has to grapple with increased production costs, including feedstock, fixed and variable costs. For example, IHS reckons that in 2008 an average European cracker cost 20 percent more than its global equivalent, van't Hoff noted. By 2014, this cost gap had risen to 45 percent, and by 2018 is expected to be at least 55 percent, due mainly to hydrocarbon and energy costs. Europe also faces a widening energy cost gap: industrial electricity prices are more than double US prices, and 20 percent higher than China's; industrial gas prices are three to four times above US and Russian prices, and 12 percent higher than in China. Given the close relationship between chemicals and manufacturing industries, rising energy costs will have impacts across Europe's economy.

Having outlined the key challenges, van't Hoff suggested how Europe's chemical industry should respond, by building on strong fundamentals to enhance competitiveness. "We should continue to leverage our clusters…such as the Antwerp-Rotterdam and Rhein-Ruhr clusters, down to Ludwigshafen and Marl," he said. Competitive clusters are more robust, as they are well integrated in terms of logistics, ownership and derivative units; and they have low cost to serve.

However, smaller clusters with fragmented ownership may struggle, and producers with less derivatives integration would be more exposed to the merchant market and need to secure enough contractual volume to ensure full asset utilisation.

Graham van't Hoff - competitive clusters are more robust as they are well integrated in terms of logistics

Van't Hoff also pointed to significant value in integrating refineries and petrochemical plants. Shell, for example, draws strength from mega sites in the Netherlands, the US Gulf Coast, and Singapore, and continues to invest in enhanced integration between Moerdijk plants and the Pernis refinery, and in Rheinland.

He continued: "Globally, chemicals has and is expected to continue to be a high-growth hydrocarbon outlet, with growth forecast at 50 percent over the next 10 years, compared to oil products at 10 percent. In Western Europe, chemical demand is stagnating, but fuels demand is worse, declining at 3 percent per year."

Europe – like many other regions – has surplus gasoline, with no obvious 'new home' for that extra volume. An efficient refiner would switch its attention to aromatics and discover growth and margins from petrochemicals.

Producers should also seek more advantaged, lighter feedstock, such as LPG, although structural changes are required for feedstock flexibility. From 2010 to 2013, natural gas liquid (NGL) cracking rose 13 percent to 31 percent, with coastal plants accounting for about 41 percent, and non-coastal for only 13 percent.

The first wave of Europe's 'going lighter' strategy was mainly through LPG; the second wave is through cracking imported ethane.

However, not everyone can import ethane, as investments in onshore logistics, vessels, and import facilities are required, making it a viable option only for a few water-based locations with easily adaptable cracker infrastructure.

Beyond feedstocks, the industry must continue to invest in developing chemicals technology – for more efficient and flexible production, new products and a greener global economy. It must also work harder to tackle its image problem with stakeholders, and make policymakers understand its key role in economic growth, and that competitiveness needs to be the touchstone for all EU policies.

"Europe needs coherent, non-conflicting energy and climate policies, aligned across the EU, that deliver secure and competitively priced energy, without creating an overly burdensome regulatory environment," said van't Hoff.

He also said Europe needs a consistent and predictable legislative framework that does not drive away investment, and urged a focus on regulatory efficiency.

"The cost of compliance with REACH should be addressed and other national and EU legislative initiatives should be consistent with this objective. These should be streamlined, so as to deliver the same level of protection to workers and consumers, but at the lowest possible cost.

And the conditions and needs of small and medium-sized enterprise have to be taken into account in such a process."

The Shell executive also urged the EU to step up its support and encouragement for young people to choose a scientific education, and fully implement the single market for jobs.

Ferrari's keys to competitiveness

Daniele Ferrari, CEO of Versalis Spa and chairman of Matrica Spa, gave his vision of a regional petrochemical producer under transformation. Opening his presentation, Ferrari noted that the European chemical industry is struggling, and is threatened by a number of "game changing" developments impacting competitiveness.

North American producers have seen their energy costs reduced by shale gas, which could account for 35 percent of US energy production in 2035, and will increase US exports of gas and polyolefins. The Middle East has access to low-cost feedstocks and is increasing integrated downstream capacity, while China continues to invest in chemicals production.

But he said it is also important to recognise the impact of Latin America's focus on renewable feedstocks. The region is already producing about 33 percent of the world's bioplastics, and renewable feeds offer big opportunities for the Brazilian petrochemical industry.

Despite being energy-efficient producers, European manufacturers are losing competitiveness in the face of a "deadly spiral" of related energy factors, Ferrari continued. The spiral started with the boom in US shale gas production which had cut US gas prices, lowered US coal prices and seen a drop in CO_2 prices caused by the economic crisis, leading to more imports of US coal into Europe. This change in the European powergen mix has seen coal increase and gas decline, which is increasing CO_2 emissions despite more than €60 billion in subsidies for the renewable energy sector.

The end result is a dramatic energy cost gap, whereby in 2013 European gas prices were three times higher than in the US and European power costs were double US levels.

In addition, the European industry has to cope with a strong institutional and bureaucratic burden, Ferrari continued. "We have about 3 or 4 European Commission directorates overlapping on energy matters. We have 74 EU directives and regulations, and dozens of different national legislative initiatives. This situation is not sustainable. The EU's 2020 energy policy was supposed to support competitiveness and sustainability. But it was based on some erroneous forecasting, and we're not getting there."

Versalis's CEO said EU energy policy should be addressing a major issue: the lack of integration in the energy market. Today, there are 28 separate gas markets in the EU, when what is needed is a 'United States of Europe for gas'. Europe already imports over 60 percent of its gas requirements and between 2020 and 2025 this is likely to rise to 80 percent. What's needed is a well-functioning and interconnected energy market to improve the competitiveness of the EU's energy-intensive industry and the economy as a whole.

Energy is a really big deal for the chemical industry, which has already played its role in achieving efficiency, and reduced its energy intensity by 50 percent in the past 20 years despite increasing production by 60 percent. Now the EU is discussing a 40 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, which would mean

the industry achieving reductions of 70 percent from 1990 levels. "This is not sustainable, and an unrealistic target that risks further penalising our industry," Ferrari insisted.

What Europe needs is predictable, achievable, sustainable and integrated energy and climate policy, he said. Right now, energy issues are putting European supply chains at risk. In plastics, for example, that means half a million jobs, and about €300 billion in turnover. Uncompetitive production factors in Europe will mean increased imports and relocation of players further down the value chain, he warned.

So what should the industry do in response? Ferrari suggested three key options. First, in the short-term, pursue right-sizing and integration, which requires rationalisation and consolidation, and – further downstream – by increasing or realising the value of by-products. Second, over the medium-term, look to improve flexibility by using cheaper cracker feedstocks, such as ethane, and streamline the supply chain.

Daniele Ferrari - European manufacturers are losing competitiveness in the face of a "deadly spiral" of related energy factors

Third, over the long-term, focus on the transformation of the production base by making 'brownfield' investment in new industrial platforms, and by increasing differentiation and/or switching to 'green' production.

Ferrari then turned to some of the consequences for Versalis of pursuing these options. He noted that the company has some particular challenges because it is only partially integrated and is not a global petrochemical player. However, he believed Versalis is increasing its competitiveness by making changes.

"The most obvious choice for us was to optimise the asset base and have the right scale, and look for downstream integration and portfolio specialisation."

At Priolo, Versalis has improved integration, reducing ethylene cracking and closing the polyethylene assets, and focusing on some higher value products in the C9 and C5 chains, embarking on a technology joint venture.

At Brindisi, which is already integrated with captive use of C2 and C4 cuts, the effort has been limited to feedstock flexibility and downstream further specialisation of the product portfolio. Although it was unfortunate, Ferrari said that cracking and polyethylene facilities at Gela in Sicily, which were old and uncompetitive, had been closed, and that the company's Sarroch facilities in Sardinia will be transferred and re-integrated with the adjacent SARAS refinery, according to a preliminary agreement signed last October.

Ferrari said the medium-term option of maximising flexibility of lighter feeds is an interesting initiative. At Dunkerque, France, there is the potential to use ethane to produce up to 50 percent of ethylene from ethane. This will require some major logistics modifications – such as cryogenic storage and supply system – and changes to specific cracking elements.

Long-term sustainability requires a market-driven approach, Ferrari continued. By focusing on megatrends, it is possible to identify opportunities for alternative technology platforms related to energy, feedstock, environmental sustainability and intelligent materials. For that reason, Ferrari said, Versalis decided to develop integrated green platforms – via plant reconversions – for new bio-based products at two of its sites.

At Porto Torres in Sardinia, the Versalis-Novamont joint venture, Matrica, has invested in an oxidation green chemistry platform, with a biorefinery-based integrated biochemical complex to produce biochemicals for applications in bioplastics, biolubricants and personal care, and as additives for rubbers and polymers.

Concluding, Ferrari outlined four key routes to remaining competitive. Have a fully integrated up/downstream platform, with good geographical reach and an energy efficiency base in continuous evolution.

Focus on capacity right-sizing and repositioning, and take a fast and pragmatic approach to rationalisation. Foster a deep research and innovation culture, and use it to generate regional megatrend-driven products and feed international growth. And finally, take an early adoptive and creative attitude towards renewable technologies, and target performance products based on specific building blocks.

Supply chain leaders

As usual, logistics stakeholders gathered for the EPCA Supply Chain and Logistics Leaders breakfast.

Welcoming participants, the session's chair Johan Devos, Bertschi AG's group sales director, said the aim was to generate both discussion and ideas about how to improve supply chain and logistics performance across the industry.

The session began with a brief presentation from Jan Fransoo from Dinalog, focusing on collaboration opportunities. This was followed by round-table discussions and reports on five specific topics: shale gas; global trade and HSSE standards; collaboration/Dinalog; global trade and intermodal; and shipping.

The workshop output is used to guide future work planning by EPCA's Supply Chain and Logistics Committee.

Devos reminded the workshop of how much progress has been made through EPCA's Supply Chain and Logistics initiatives. These have produced around 20 publications and led to the creation of working groups and their reports, all of which continue to "push the boundaries of increasingly strategic supply chain and logistics activities".

Devos said: "Already in 2014, the Talent & Technology workshop has highlighted the importance of bringing in new, creative people to complement skilled staff in designing and implementing supply chain and logistics innovations, to enhance industry competitiveness and sustainability."

Tactical collaboration

Professor Jan Fransoo, is professor of operations management & logistics, School of Industrial Engineering, Technische Universiteit Eindhoven & also VP of Dinalog – the Dutch Institute for Advanced Logistics.

Fransoo's main message to the European chemical industry was clear: to achieve competitive advantage and sustainability requires tactical collaboration, which requires a redefinition of product flows rather than simply sharing transportation.

To date, collaborative initiatives have focused on operational collaboration, the he said. This is understandable, because it delivers relatively short-term, quick wins through working together.

However, Fransoo felt that a lot of the low-hanging fruit in this area has been picked. And while strategic, structural collaboration is possible – through joint ventures, mergers and acquisitions – it requires major commitments to change.

For this reason, the time is right to pursue the many potential opportunities in the area of tactical collaboration, which involve forward planning and replacing material flows with information flows to add value to the supply chain, Fransoo continued.

Dinalog, the professor explained, is a public-private partnership focused on horizontal collaboration between producers and logistics service providers, and which is currently active in projects involving about 200 companies from several sectors.

One of these projects is 4C4Chem, which is a partnership between several organisations – Technische Universiteit Eindhoven, SABIC Petrochemicals, Shell Chemical Europe BV, Dow Europe GmbH, Den Hartogh Logistics BV, Cargogator BV, and VNCI – and which is aiming for a 5-10 percent improvement in current chemicals transport capacity utilisation rates of 60 percent.

The project identified four key reasons for less than optimal capacity utilisation: an imbalance between the location of production and consumption; empty returns; a short-term focus on optimisation; and limited flexibility for carriers to plan shipments.

While it cannot impact the first issue, 4C4Chem is addressing the others in three stages: plan, bundle, and combine. Plan involves improved forecasting and planning of transport needs, and better short-term co-ordination between on-site and off-site logistics. Put simply, the aim is better alignment between shippers and carriers, by taking into account items such as end-to-end costs and turnaround times, and having transparency so trade-offs can be made in terms of investment costs in extra assets. The project has also developed a tool available to all partners to enable them to evaluate product swaps.

Bundle is focused on bundling barge transport flows on the Rhine from the upstream chemical cluster to downstream users.

Combine is focused on minimising flows of commodities by creating a virtual pipeline – based on the ARG ethylene pipeline model – by pooling production and inventories.

Fransoo said that achieving a 10 percent improvement in capacity utilisation is a conservative target, but added that "While achieving this will take real commitment, it is definitely worth getting out of bed for!"

Round-table discussions

The round-table discussions elicited some interesting debate and feedback.

Concerning *Collaboration and Dinalog*, it was thought that collaboration is not rocket science, but more about common sense. However, there is an issue about information sharing and trust and stakeholders will always require some kind of intermediate organisation or layer to start facilitating this, both in terms of IT systems and trust and transparency. Another table's consensus was that having talked about collaboration for 15 years, there are still not many really great examples, Dinalog being an exception.

There is also still resistance to collaboration. The further you go upstream in the chemical supply chain the more collaboration you have. The further you go downstream, and as you interface with many customers, the more difficult it gets.

Discussing *Global Trade and Intermodal*, one table felt that Europe today has a pretty well-established intermodal operation, with a dense network that functions quite well, although it can always be improved.

But one issue is how to connect today's network more globally, particularly regarding flows from the Middle East and elsewhere. In ports there is need for more multimodal terminals and IT infrastructure for tracking and tracing, etc.

The relationship between shippers and their customers, in terms of changing daily or weekly flows, and how these impact LSP capacity utilisation was also raised.

In *Shipping*, the discussion focused on trade and infrastructure. Examples were cited of infrastructure bottlenecks, such as truck driver shortages in the US, or congestion in European and Asian ports. There are capacity issues at ports and with hinterland equipment, facilities, personnel, etc.

In the next 30 years, transport demand is set to double, which means a significant challenge. Will the logistics sector be able to cope, it was asked? New ports are being built, but there is also a need to upgrade existing facilities. There are big issues of timing given the long lead times on infrastructure investment, even if the political will exists.

There are issues between the private and public sector, and there are broader political issues to be addressed. Companies can address some of the short-term issues through investment and collaboration, but work is needed across industry sectors, and across governments.

For its 49th Annual Meeting, EPCA returns to Berlin, gathering on 3-7 October 2015
www.epca.eu

Driving improvements forward

At the 17th annual ECTA meeting, held in Dusseldorf, Bulk Distributor spoke to the association's president Andreas Zink

Zink: Due to the RC programme the transport industry can be more transparent and react better to questions from the chemical industry and public

For those who are not so aware of ECTA, please tell us a bit about the association.

The European Chemical Transport Association (ECTA) was founded 17 years ago due to demand from the European Petrochemical Association (EPCA) to have a singular, united voice for the chemical logistics service providers (LSPs). Since then ECTA has separated from EPCA and become an independent entity, but still maintains links and interaction with EPCA and a great deal of involvement with the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC). The purpose of ECTA is to provide a voice for the chemical transport industry, development of best practice guidelines and support a sustainable future for their members and the industry.

ECTA comprises a managing director and administration manager as the only paid positions. The rest of the board work voluntarily. I became a member of the ECTA board initially in 2002 following the retirement of one of my colleagues from LKW Walter and have now been president for four years. LKW Walter was one of the founding members and there's always been a strong encouragement from the company to support ECTA.

Tell us about the transition from EPCA to the independent ECTA, was that a difficult journey?

Well of course, there were difficulties at the start; there always are when a child first leaves its parents! The issue was that EPCA is primarily a networking forum and ECTA developed out of that remit into more of a European voice for logistics as it is now today and so we had to make the separation.

However, from what started as a handful of founding members we can now say that 80 percent of chemicals transported in Europe today are done so by one of the 102 members of ECTA. Our 17th annual meeting saw attendance growing again from the previous year to more than 120 participants including non-member service companies and representatives from the chemical manufacturers.

While we have been financially independent from EPCA since 2008 with the transition starting in 2006, we still share an office with EPCA and maintain open lines of communication. The relationship we have with CEFIC is very productive in that there is an open exchange of information both ways with any queries we may have. We have a very open minded collaboration, always involving them in discussions and working groups that ECTA host as we feel that there is no point in having these conversations without involving the industry which it concerns.

With these working groups we have what we consider a great contribution from our members with 35 percent actively becoming involved to shape the decisions and direction which ECTA takes. This is key to ensuring that we are truly representing the industry.

Bulk Distributor last interviewed you not long after you became president, nearly three years ago now. What have you achieved in that time?

The main development since 2009 has been the Responsible Care (RC) programme with guidance from CEFIC. This was the first Europe-wide implementation of the scheme for the transport industry, with all previous iterations taking place on a national level. This wouldn't have worked for ECTA, however, due to our members having offices all over Europe so we needed a standard which all of their sites strive to.

We initially had nine companies involved with this and with CEFIC's assistance we were able to implement the programme and influence national chemical bodies. After 2011 we really started to see the effects of the programme due to the number of members involved reaching a critical mass and becoming statistically significant. Now with 59 companies involved with RC, we can see from the key performance indicators provided by all of our members that the number of unloading incidents has steadily decreased with both chemical manufacturers and their customers over the past three years. The KPIs we use measure incidents, accidents and driver training across different aspects of the logistics process.

Can you tell us more about the purpose of the responsible care programme?

The RC initiative is owned by CEFIC and its purpose is to provide a rigorous assessment of companies aimed at continuously improving the environmental, health and safety performance of members. The KPIs form a key part of this as you can't manage what you don't measure. Another integral part of the programme is the improvement plan which all members sign up to, meaning a commitment from all members to strive to be better.

The initial stage of an RC application by ECTA would be to go through the applicant's SQAS assessment in detail to confirm compliance with 59 RC questions, all of which must be answered positively in order to be RC approved. They then sign an agreement to commit to the terms set out by the programme and begin providing the KPIs we require an annual RC improvement plan.

ECTA consolidates all of the KPI figures and improvement plans to ensure anonymity of members and publishes the results publically.

What if someone doesn't pass the initial qualifying questionnaire? Is that it for them as far as involvement in RC goes?

No, we don't aim to exclude companies! If an applicant doesn't qualify, ECTA will help and guide them to become better performing in HSSEQ. This is the benefit of joining ECTA – access to our collective best practice guidelines and support.

What has been the most difficult challenge for ECTA in implementing this programme?

Besides the initial issue of getting enough companies involved so that our statistics became significant and meaningful, the biggest challenge is that there is currently no recognition of RC with the chemical manufacturers and they aren't really aware of what RC is all about. Most companies ask if a service provider has ISO and SQAS accreditation and then tick the yes box but don't really look into the assessments, and I think this is the same for RC currently. Only one manufacturer in Europe currently requests to see the RC assessment in order to approve service providers.

In order to get the buy-in from chemical companies I believe they need further information

on what RC is and what we at ECTA are striving for. We hope that once the industry comes on board they will start making RC a requirement from their service providers and the wider industry will see the results that ECTA has witnessed.

Another potential issue is that a lot of the players in the European market are also dealing all over the world. One big victory for us is that the Gulf Petrochemical & Chemicals association (GPCA) has announced that it is to use SQAS assessments with establishment of an SQAS committee and qualified auditors. This will ultimately lead them to RC, although it is not an instant progression, and will help members have standardisation across both Europe and the Gulf region.

How does the future of ECTA look?

The future is positive, before RC we only had a clue as to what was needed to develop best practice, but now we have statistics that show there is still room for improvement and a need for, I don't like the word regulation, standardisation. As I said, you can't manage what you don't measure, and we all talk about needing to improve CO2 reductions, now we can measure and influence this. We can further influence this be using more intermodal transport, and the progressive improvement of engine efficiency is an inevitability which will lower emissions.

Due to the RC programme the transport industry can be more transparent and can therefore react better to questions from the chemical industry and public. The chemical industry has a bad public image due to the impression of it being dirty and dangerous. For example, if a truck transporting nappies (diapers) unfortunately has an accident it will be unlikely to receive publicity. However, if the truck is transporting an absorber, which is 80 percent of a nappy, it will be treated as "another danger from the chemical industry" by the media. By publishing these statistics we can help negate this public image, increase public awareness and show that we are constantly improving.

We will finish the interview where we started – you have now been president for four years. With the developments and challenges they will bring, do you see yourself wanting to remain president for the next four?

Well, they haven't found anyone else willing to volunteer yet, so…

I am very happy to carry on for another four years and excited about what the future will bring. Everything is decided with the board who are all volunteers and do this out of their own time, so I don't have too much individual responsibility.

From the perspective of a member, LKW Walter definitely sees the value of ECTA, if we didn't we wouldn't invest our time and money in membership. I am glad to be contributing to such a positive future, and hope that ECTA continues to grow and develop.

Measure, monitor, improve

The transport industry continuously strives to improve the safety of operations by undertaking HSSE initiatives, such as SQAS and BBS Best Practice Guidelines, for example, safe driving and safe loading/unloading, working at height, etc.

Over the years this has led to a decrease in the number of road transport accidents. However, this trend has halted in the past few years, with the annual accident statistics of individual transport companies showing signs of flat lining.

There are a number of external issues that have contributed to this, being, increased traffic and congestion across Europe, transport volume requirements in general, work pressure and also because of general behaviour and demographic changes, the demands on drivers of large goods vehicles are now much more complex and pressing than in the past.

In order to provide a new stimulus for reducing further the number of road transport accidents during chemical transport, ECTA took the initiative to put together a working group to update and revamp the wider implementation of behaviour based safety (BBS) in the safe driving of road freight vehicles.

This has at the same time been aligned to the EU Driver Training Directive 2003/59/EC to assist trainers in meeting these requirements.

The above was finalised and published by ECTA.

BBS Safe Driving of Vehicles guidelines

The previous guideline was in circulation for some 10 years and ECTA wished to:

- update the guideline to reflect present day thinking
- incorporate the latest on training techniques available
- look at ways of reducing the risks associated with driving – (a risk reduction model is in the guideline with a description)
- look at defining roles and responsibilities within the driving and associated areas of driving activities, eg, operations personnel and management
- incorporate training programmes for five levels which are now clearly defined for all roles required under BBS
- incorporate an implementation and gap analysis which is now contained within guideline

All of the above are clearly described in the new guideline which is a distinct improvement over the previous one which lacked detail to some degree.

This would in effect allow LSPs to train against the guideline while at the same time complying with the European Directive requirements, eg, a one stop shop training exercise means an efficiency gain as the driver is not away from his job of driving on two occasions. The guidelines contain cross referencing for the two areas.

A further copy of this has been sent to the EU asking for consideration to be given to the BBS Safe Driving guidelines to be considered as meeting the European Directive.

Un/Loading Guidelines incorporating BBS

It was decided at the outset to change the references from BBS un/loading to un/loading followed by BBS requirements as it was felt that the two elements were separate and should be described as such.

With this guideline it was decided that a completely new approach was needed that would focus on:

- Roles and responsibilities for all in the supply chain coupled with a schedule detailing BBS requirements and checks to be performed
- Risk management of the un/loading process for liquid, bulk and packed goods with the major emphasis being on bulk DG liquids for obvious reasons
- Use of the SULID document (Safe Unloading Information Document)
- Better and more descriptive information on hoses and connections and the use of different hoses for different products for DGs
- Application of BBS for all activities associated with the above process

The above was finalised in the third quarter 2014 and published on the ECTA website in November.

As can be seen from the above two guidelines, greater emphasis has been placed on risk management, and roles and responsibilities associated with, and combining, BBS in all areas of the operations profile.

ECTA Database on Accident/Incident recording

This particular area has been developed to assist those smaller to medium sized companies that do not have the expertise or infrastructure to develop or support such activities.

The rationale behind this was to have in place a method that

- Assisted companies to record/analyse and put into action improvement plans to reduce all areas associated with accidents and incidents
- Companies would be able to measure themselves against the industry norms
- Be in a position to report/discuss with their customers their KPI accident and incident performance
- This would then assist companies to complete annual returns to ECTA as required under the ECTA Responsible Care scheme that records and measures over 22 KPIs.

The whole objective being To measure, To monitor, To improve

www.ecta.com

The guidelines place greater emphasis on risk management and roles and responsibilities in all areas of operation. Pic: Den Hartogh Logistics

MCC investigates stress reduction

With the extensive use of tank containers in chemicals and petrochemicals, safety assurance is a key issue.

However, stress corrosion crack (SCC) has been observed on the vessel head of tank containers in recent years and has attracted much attention from researchers. This kind of SCC cannot be easily detected until the leakage penetrates the insulation, or until a tank container undergoes the next hydrostatic test, therefore it is difficult to prevent in advance.

Together with the R&D faculty of Tianjin University, MCC tank has recently developed an experimental method. By using, the behaviour of the SCC on the vessel head can be investigated; therefore the inner factors that cause SCCs can be determined. Hence an extra facility is applied during the process of tank manufacturing to eliminate the inner factors theoretically.

MCC Tank is a wholly owned subsidiary of Metallurgical Corporation of China (MCC) which is a Fortune Global 500 company (#302 in Y2013). MCC is biggest Chinese metallurgical engineering contractor and provider of technological upgrading and reconstruction services in metallurgical engineering with a complete industrial chain in ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy. MCC Tank started tank container manufacturing since January 2013 with an annual production capacity of 5,000 TEU. The workshop is located in Hangu district of Tianjin, 30km from port Xingang and 180km from Beijing capital airport.

The experimental team of MCC Tank investigated dozens of tank containers with leakage and the results indicate that most SCCs occur within the 50mm radius from the heat affected zone of girth weld on the vessel head of tank containers.

Further comparative experiments were carried out on specimens with SCC, new vessel head specimens and original stainless steel specimens by the team. In order to determine the type and inner factors of SCC, the microstructure, the composition on the surface of crevice and the elements of the remaining corrosive substance were analysed using an optical microscope (OM), scanning electron microscopy (SEM) and X-ray diffraction. The results of experiments indicate that there are three main factors causing SCC as following:

- There is a Cr-rich phase precipitating from the austenitic stainless steel (Stainless Steel 316L) during the service life. Cr does not diffuse easily thus the areas around the second phase become Cr-depleted and are sensitive to corrosion.
- With exposure to chloride ions, pitting and inter-granular corrosion will appear in Cr-depleted regions, which leads to crevice corrosion under the influence of residual stress.
- The decrease of Cr and segregation of S element on the tip of the crevice increase the corrosion susceptibility of 316L SS.

In other words, there are three prerequisite conditions for SCC on austenitic stainless steel 316L:

1) Nature of chemical transport: chance of coming into contact with a corrosive substance, eg, chloride ions

2) Nature of SS 316L: Microstructure susceptible to SCC – nature of SS 316L

3) During manufacturing process: tensile stress

SCC occurs under the combined effect of the above three prerequisite conditions, and the absence of each of the three conditions can hinder the stress corrosion cracking.

As a tank manufacturer, MCC Tank aims to eliminate the tensile stress accumulated from applied stress or residual stress caused by heat treatment. This can be achieved by converting the tensile stress into compressive stress during tank manufacturing process. An additional ultrasonic facility with an efficiency of 9m per minute is used in the tank manufacturer's workshop which can make the conversion.

So far the data show that the chance of SCC on tank containers can be reduced by up to 10 times by the new MCC technology which patent-protected.

For more detailed information

www.mcctank.com

So far, data show that the chance of SCC on tank containers can be reduced by up to 10 times, MCC says

Cronos acquisition finalised

Global Sea Containers Ltd has completed the acquisition of Cronos.

The Bermuda-based holding company of Seaco is owned by Bohai Leasing Co, Ltd, a public company listed on the Shenzhen stock exchange.

The acquisition of Cronos will complement Bohai's existing investment in the Seaco Group. With the amalgamation of the two companies Bohai says it will hold the largest and most diversified container leasing company in the world by container equivalent units.

"We are delighted that our shareholders' have facilitated and supported our expansion in the container leasing sector," said Jeremy Matthew, CEO of Seaco. "The acquisition of Cronos is an opportunity to bring scale and additional efficiency to our existing business. The complementary nature of Cronos and Seaco, both with diversified fleets and strengths in different geographical markets makes this a strong combination which will strengthen Bohai's global market position."

Bravia Capital, a Hong Kong-based investment and advisory firm, arranged the transaction.

10,000 T(h)anks!

TAL International started 2015 on a high after seeing their 10,000th tank roll off the production line in China at the beginning of January.
Tank VP Mike Broadhurst commented on the event. "We are extremely appreciative of our loyal and growing customer base, thanks to which we have reached this important milestone in a relatively short space of time. Naturally we will make every effort to repay this debt by maintaining our core focus on customer service and supply at competitive terms for years to come''.
TAL ordered and built 1850 tanks during 2014 and plan for a similar number throughout 2015. Their Tank-Container fleet currently consists of a range of capacities from 21000l through to 35000l 'Swap Bodies', with availability in all major hub locations around the world.

For more information and to contact TAL International:

ASIA / PACIFIC
Mike Broadhurst, Vice President
78 Shenton Way,
#15-01A
Singapore 79120
TEL: +65 9152-8057
mike.broadhurst@talinternational.com

EUROPE / MIDDLE EAST
Alasdair Voisey, Director of Marketing
Gramayestraat 4/b3
2000 Antwerp, Belgium
TEL: +32 475-520281
alasdair.voisey@talinternational.com

AMERICAS
Robert Spangle, Director of Marketing
1225 Nth Loop West, Suite 302
Houston TX 77008, USA
TEL: +1 713-907-5401
robert.spangle@talinternational.com

Suretank acquires Prior Diesel

Suretank has announced the acquisition of Prior Diesel, an oil services company based in the oil & gas centre of Great Yarmouth, UK. The acquisition was made with the support of Ulster Bank.

Prior Diesel has served the oil & gas, marine and industrial sectors since 1980, with the design, manufacture and servicing of a wide range of well service equipment, including nitrogen pumps, specialist skids, coil tubing and wireline units.

In addition to its strong well service operation, Prior Diesel represents and supplies many leading diesel engine manufacturers as well as offering packaged solutions such as Zone II powerpacks, Power Generation sets and Hydraulic powerpacks. All of its new products are supported by thriving service and parts departments that specialise in engine rebuilding, maintenance contracts and supplying components for most of the leading engine, transmission, pump and equipment manufacturers.

Joint managing directors of Prior Diesel, Chris Conroy and Gordon MacLean, together with founder and chairman Archie MacLean, will remain with the business.

"This new strategic relationship with Suretank is an exciting and important move for Prior Diesel," explained Chris Conroy. "It represents an opportunity for the business to grow and develop into new markets by taking advantage of Suretank's strong global presence and marketing reach to strengthen our brand and reputation."

Gordon MacLean added: "With our worldwide reputation for quality engineering and first class customer service, combined with a highly skilled experienced team, we have a very clear fit with Suretank."

John Fitzgerald, CEO at Suretank added: "We are delighted to welcome Prior Diesel into the Suretank family.

Hüni, Van Loon in coatings venture

Hüni + Co and Group Van Loon are joining forces for tank coating repairs in Benelux.

A rising demand for high-quality coating repairs for tank containers in the Benelux area has led to the co-operation between coating specialist Hüni, based in Friedrichshafen, Germany, and Antwerp -based tank container service provider Group Van Loon (GETS).

With the global growth of the tank container industry, the demand for specialised equipment has also risen significantly. More and more coated tanks (mainly for corrosion protection or anti-stick applications) have entered the market. Allied to this also the demand for quality maintenance is also more important.

"A perfect application of any chosen coating system is the base for a long-lasting protection of the equipment," commented Peter Hüni, managing director of Hüni + CO. "But also quality maintenance, which includes good cleaning procedures and repairs performed to the best practices available, are the key to coating success. We want to make sure our customers have the best service and support possible in these fields."

Gas Equipment Testing and Services (GETS), a subsidiary of Group Van Loon offers services for specialised tank container equipment, including gas & cryogenic tanks.

"Adding coating repairs to our range of services was a logical next step in enlarging our service portfolio," added Günther Van Loon, group CEO. "There is a clear and present demand for these services in our region, but we did not want to enter the market without being able to offer the best techniques, knowledge and quality in the market because we believe only by offering high quality can we add value to our customers' tanks."

Hoover's thermo oxidisers

Hoover Container Solutions Ltd has installed thermo oxidiser units at its Scott, Louisiana, and Houston service sites.

In addition to providing comprehensive interior and exterior tank cleaning services for hazardous and non-hazardous materials, the facilities are now equipped to clean and service tanks that have contained volatile organic compounds (VOCs). In an effort to control VOC emissions, the hydrocarbon based pollutants are destroyed using thermal combustion, chemically transforming emissions into carbon dioxide and water.

Hoover's thermo oxidiser units are designed to eliminate more than 99.5 percent of hazardous air pollutants (HAPs) and VOCs from industrial air streams.

"Adding thermo oxidiser units to these facilities allows Hoover the opportunity to offer customers a broader range of washing and service capabilities, while helping to limit the emissions of harmful air pollutants," said Paul Lewis, president and chief operating officer of Hoover. "Our company prides itself on providing efficient and high quality solutions that improve customer performance and reduce environmental effects when possible."

Hoover has installed thermo oxidiser units at its Scott and Houston sites

Contamination causes claims

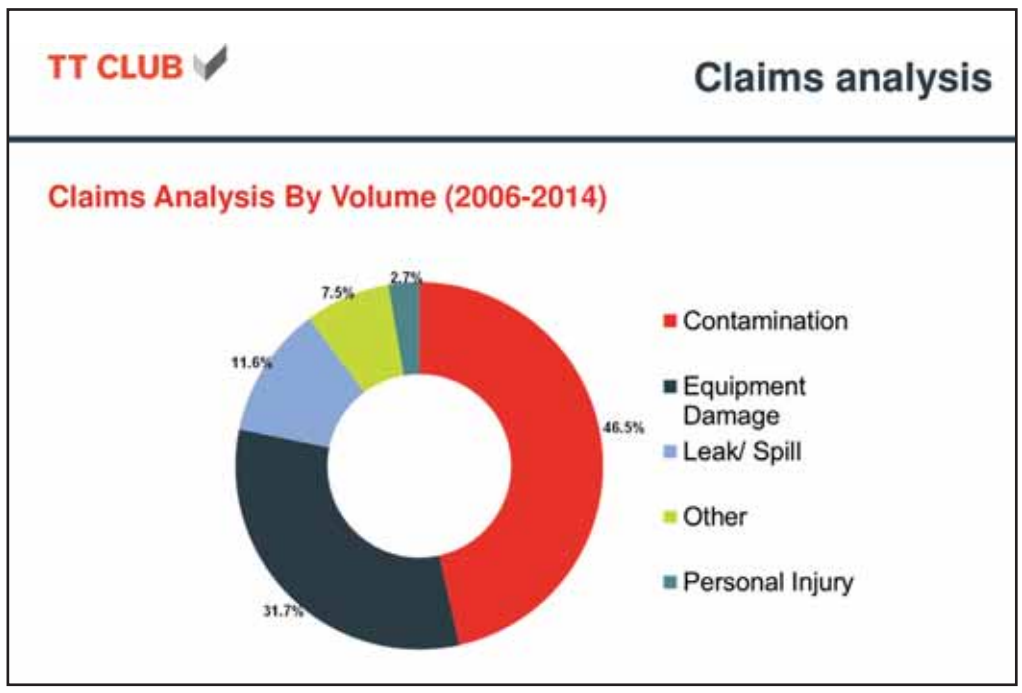
Contamination accounts for nearly half of tank container claims, according to freight transport insurer TT Club.

Speaking at the Asia Tank Container Organization's General Meeting (@tco Asia) in Shanghai, TT Club's regional director, Asia-Pacific Phillip Emmanuel outlined the major risk exposures facing the tank container industry.

Based on an analysis of the Club's claims experience resulting from incidents involving tank containers, Emmanuel pinpointed contamination as the leading risk, accounting for over 46 percent of the volume of incidents on TT's books in the past nine years. Damage to tanks was responsible for another third.

Revealing the more detailed dangers to the conference Emmanuel explained: "Contamination can result from any number of factors. However, the incompatibility of the tank itself with the cargo concerned is the most common cause. This is often the result of insufficient cleaning, particularly of the discharge valves and baffle plates, following the carriage of the previous cargo. Corroded or worn man lid seals, and issues occurring either at the origin land tank or during the loading procedure are also common contributory factors."

Emmanuel provided insight into the nature of these incidents and the best forms of damage limitation and risk avoidance. "In terms of impact damage, most tanks are built to highly robust



Causes of claims involving tank containers, by volume (2006–2014)

A needs for wider industry analysis of incidents accompanied by knowledge sharing

standards and the incidence of leaks from such accidents is low. Damaged or failure of valves, seals and gaskets are much more common in occurrence," he said.

He went on to define the chief safety precautions recommended to avoid such risks. These include comprehensively interrogating and validating the Material Safety Data Sheet to ensure the tank and its components can fulfil all special requirements demanded by the cargo and the shipper.

In addition, regular inspections of the outer shell and insulation should be undertaken. Man lid gaskets and seals need to be fitted correctly including ensuring the appropriate tightening of swing bolts on man lids.

Assessing the most appropriate selection of gaskets and seals for each cargo is also important. Particularly invasive cargoes can simply destroy any exposed area of the gasket and/or seal.

"When there is a failure in any of the above control factors, something as simple as a change in ambient temperature through the supply chain can result in a sufficient build in pressure to cause a leak," said Emmanuel.

Looking to the future, he concluded by outlining the priorities that TT Club consider noteworthy in bringing down both the cost and danger of tank container operation. There needs to be wider industry analysis of incidents accompanied by knowledge sharing so that lessons can be widely learned. There should be a continuous review and identification of risks together with greater transparency within the supply chain, as both its complexity increases and the nature of its environment evolves. Finally, there must be a greater emphasis on training.

www.ttclub.com

LNG tank reaches Hamburg

This year, the Hummel LNG Hybrid Barge will enable Becker Marine Systems to supply low-emission power to cruise ships lying at port in Hamburg.

As part of the LNG hybrid barge's testing programme, the first gas container for the marine fuel was delivered late 2014.

"The testing of the gas engines at the Port of Hamburg is a first for both the classification society and participating authorities," said Dirk Lehmann and Henning Kuhlmann, joint managing directors of Becker Marine, a supplier of high-performance rudders.

The gas container from Shell Ganor, represented by Aksel Skjervheim, marine LNG business development manager, was formally delivered to Becker at the Blohm + Voss shipyard after being shipped from the Fluxys LNG Terminal in Zeebrugge, Belgium to Hamburg.

The barge works like a floating power plant and uses low-emission LNG to supply environmentally-friendly energy to cruise ships. Compared with conventional marine diesel with 0.1 percent sulphur content, sulphur dioxides and soot are no longer emitted. Emissions of nitrogen oxides and carbon dioxide are also significantly reduced.

The barge, developed by Becker Marine Systems and recently christened the Hummel (German for bumblebee), will officially start operating at the port of Hamburg at the beginning of the cruise season in spring 2015.

L-r: Aksel Skjervheim, Shell Gasnor; Dirk Lehmann, Becker Marine Systems; Max Kommorowski, Becker Marine Systems

Bertschi, Hoyer, Hupac take RSC stake

The Port of Rotterdam Authority and the RSC Rotterdam rail terminal have reached agreement on a new 20-year lease.

To position the terminal more broadly, the ownership base has been expanded with several partners. DB Schenker Rail continues to own 51 percent of the shares, while intermodal carriers Bertschi, Hoyer and Hupac are together taking a 49 percent interest. RSC will continue to operate as a neutral terminal in the new shareholder set-up.

The four companies are among the largest European intermodal carriers. They all have a strong presence in Rotterdam and a lot of experience, either alone or in combinations, in running rail terminals all over Europe. Moreover, they haul a significant number of tank containers across European markets.

RSC Rotterdam, in the Waalhaven/Eemhaven area, will play a crucial role for containers, swap bodies and trailers in the development of hinterland transport by rail. In total, the terminal has four modern cranes for handling cargo at its disposal, with a total capacity of 350,000 units a year. Forty trains a day call at the terminal.

Axel Marschal, member of the board at DB Schenker Rail, said: "Modern cargo handling centres like the RSC Rotterdam literally form the hub between maritime and continental intermodal transport flows. The RSC is now positioned more broadly and will play an even greater role in the port of Rotterdam's growth plans."

"The expertise of the new shareholders will provide an impetus for further growth of the cargo handling operations in maritime and continental rail transport," added Emile Hoogsteden, director of containers, breakbulk and logistics at Port of Rotterdam Authority. "This is necessary for our competitive position because many growth regions in the hinterland are geared strongly towards rail transport."

Planning & transport automation at Stubbe

A brand new DEPOT Software module has been implemented at Stubbe Logistics, a tank service depot based in Gouda, The Netherlands.

With the depot management system the company based is the first to use the new planning & transport module.

"We can now have all our data in just one system, that's the most important reason for us to use this solution," a Stubbe spokesperson said. "All of our activities can be managed within the system. We only have to enter data once to start using it for all departments and services. This way everyone is using the same information."

DEPOT Software is a full-service depot management system allowing container depots and terminals to manage all of their processes and activities in one system. The new planning & transport module supports companies with fleet management, planning, price agreements, declarations and calculations.

Meanwhile, the company's Cleaning Guard has been successfully audited by SGF.

The audit report accreditation states: "The auditor concludes that the present system of Gröninger-Lucrasoft-Cleaning Guard, as a third party data processing, is robust and reliable and in general complies with requirements as laid down in the SGF Control Code. Taking everything into consideration the auditor recommends SGF International eV to accredit Gröninger-Lucrasoft as a third party with a robust, reliable and working data monitoring system."

Cleaning Guard is a collaboration between Gröninger Cleaning Systems and DEPOT Software providing tank cleaning companies with all needed hard- and software to manage, control and monitor all cleaning operations.

www.depotsoftware.com

ITCO Houston meeting

ITCO is to hold its next North America Regional Meeting in Houston, Texas on Wednesday 18 February.

Taking place at the Hilton Post Oak Hotel, Houston, the Meeting will comprise: an informal welcome reception on Tuesday 17 February; networking breakfast on Wednesday 18 February; Plenary sessions on Wednesday morning, covering key industry trends; break-out sessions in the afternoon, focusing on specific ITCO work projects; a final plenary session reviewing the discussions during the day; and networking cocktail reception directly after the end of the conference.

The registration fee for attending the Meeting is:

ITCO Members: US$395

Non-Members: US$795

Manufacturers of bulk liquids, powders, gases: US$125

Heike Clausen was re-elected as ITCO president at the organisation's annual meeting in Frankfurt.

Her presidency now runs until the end of 2016. In addition, the board elected Jochen Köppen to be the next ITCO vice president for two years, effective from 1 January 2015.

In electing Heike Clausen as president, the Board thanked her for the progress that the organisation has made during the past two years. In particular, it highlighted the work that she has done to provide guidance, support and transparency to ITCO projects. In addition, considerable attention has been paid to strengthening important activities, such as the focus on safety, the international development of the organisation, the publication of technical reports, the high profile at trade shows, a co-ordinated PR campaign and the introduction of Corporate Responsibility into the agenda.

"I'm looking forward to another two years of challenging - but rewarding - work for ITCO and the industry that the organisation represents," she commented. "I thank the board for the positive feedback, support and trust to move forward on the path towards more transparency and guidance - in particular for the overall aim of safety and for the reputation of our industry."

Clausen is managing director of VOTG Tanktainer, based in Hamburg, while Köppen is managing director of Köppen GmbH, a leading tank container service provider, based in Duisburg, Germany.

For more information visit:

www.itco.org

A quick word with...

Karina Borlenghi, Managing Director of Brazilian depot company Depotce

Karina Borlenghi, Managing Director of Brazilian depot company Depotce

Please tell us a little about Depotce and Cesari?
Cesari has extensive experience in the transport of chemicals and petrochemicals and over the years the company has grown, developed and embraced other sectors in order to offer to customers a complete logistics solution. In 2008 Depotce started providing tanks and stationary tank decontamination, repair, storage, waste management, sanitation, and emergency care.

I joined Cesari in 2008 and went through various departments such as human resources and purchasing, but soon got interested in the Isotank segment focusing on the growth of Depotce. Since then I have dedicated my work to the ISO tanks market for structuring and qualification of our depot in Cubatão and recently opened branch in Suzano/São Paulo. I am ever watching the market to invest in opening new branches in Brazil with strategic points for our customers.

How has the company developed over recent years?
The business plan was based on the needs suggested by the market regarding customer dissatisfaction with their logistics operators. Thus, the Depotce business model was structured in pillars that aim to solve these dissatisfaction points with fully customised solutions for each client, structured methodology with strong investment in people and technology for quality management, continuous pursuit of operational excellence, and relentless focus on continuous improvement.

How competitive do you consider the market you operate in?
Our company is constantly evaluating and correcting sizing of facilities and equipment and the definition of business strategy with high calibre professionals to focus on the demands of customers and meet their needs.

What are the main challenges you face in this market?
We know the challenges that we have to win because there are good logistics services providers established in the market. The biggest challenges are the constant qualification of manpower, maintain certifications, meeting 100 percent of the legal and environmental requirements, providing a differentiated service and better quality.

What do Depotce offer to your customers to create customer loyalty?
Personalised service and constant pursuit of operational excellence to meet the needs and expectations of our customers.

Depotce recently announced the inauguration of an exclusive food grade tank cleaning station, what encouraged the company to open this specialised station?
Over the years, some of our customers requested this service and we saw that it would be an opportunity to upgrade our services. Because of a certain complexity in food grade certification there are few companies providing this service so we considered it a good strategic decision.

The current economic climate in Brazil and, indeed globally, is uncertain for many businesses, has this affected Deptoce and do you have concern if this continues?
We must recognise that the challenges are substantial for next year. We really need to throw ourselves in to our work and continue with the improvement in technological innovation, continue diversifying our services and seeking to strengthen our partnerships. Our profitable growth pillar is also to deepen our knowledge, to offer our clients unique solutions and ensure efficiency and quality of our services.

The big difference that we strive for day to day, is that we want to be the most recommended company by our customers. This already provides a great advantage, because we always try to provide a service with the highest possible quality to our customers.

RAM sees niche

RAM Intermodal is now offering a low cost flexible package for smaller tank operators.

As a leading provider of software to the tank operating industry, RAM has seen an increase in the number of enquiries from smaller operators with fleets of 500 tanks or fewer.

For those companies using spreadsheets, basic in-house systems or out of date legacy systems and with less than 500 tanks, RAM Intermodal says it can provide a fixed price package including implementation costs, the option to pay a licence fee or spread the cost annually, and complementary additional modules.

A new leaf for Haesarts

Green Freight Europe (GFE) has awarded Haesarts Intermodal NV with its first leaf - an award given to companies that have shared CO2 data and information on policies. strategy and intentions to reduce CO2 emissions stemming from transport operations.

Other companies, including Dow Europe, Procter & Gamble and Hewlett-Packard, were also awarded the first leaf.

The first leaf is part of a four-tier labelling programme by GFE that recognises and benchmarks members based on their efforts to improve CO2 reduction measures.

Based in Breendonk, Belgium, Haesaerts Intermodal has been a member of GFE, an industry initiative to support companies in improving their environmental performance, since 2012.

In 2015 GFE will improve the programme of CO2 data exchange. Additionally, all members have access to the GFE Sharing Platform offering expert knowledge, best practices and other information supporting the industry to further improve on their environmental performance and to intensify collaboration. GFE will continue to raise the bar for its members but strives to recognize more members with additional leaves next year.

In February 2009, 19 chemical companies officially declared their participation in Responsible Care at the annual conference of the European Chemical Transport Association (ECTA), in Barcelona, Spain.

CEO of all 19 member companies signed a declaration of commitment as well as a Responsible Care implementation agreement.

ECTA was the first chemical transport association to launch a Europe-wide Responsible Care programme based on a partnership with the European Chemical Industry Council (CEFIC), signed in October 2008.

Haesarts was one of the first companies to state strong commitment to Responsible Care. It should be noted that ECTA does not consider the measurement of CO2 emissions to be the sole area of Responsible Care. Over the past three years ECTA has developed a set of KPIs that measure indicators related not only to CO2, but also HSSE measurement.

Chile, Bolivia agent for Eurotainer

Eurotainer US has selected APM Terminals as the exclusive agent for sales and marketing of the company's tank container leasing services in Chile and Bolivia.

APM Terminals has a solid business foundation in the region serving the container industry through equipment lifecycle management, transport services and cargo support.

An experienced sales and customer service team is on hand with established connections to the chemical, mining, agriculture, energy, food & beverage industries that make up the largest target markets for Eurotainer. Eurotainer's fleet comprise 29,000 tank containers in 150 types and sizes.

APM Terminals network is in 66 ports in 39 countries, with seven new terminal projects and 16 port expansion programmes on-going. The Maersk-owned group also has 165 inland services locations in 47 countries.

Boasso's Newark facility

APM Terminals network is in 66 ports in 39 countries

Combining tradition with modern technology is the Boasso way

From humble beginnings in 1985, housed in a small trailer in an open field in New Orleans East, Boasso America has grown into the nation's leader in providing depot and transport services to an ever-growing 20ft tank container industry.

Founder Walter Boasso's concept for the company was simple: Do whatever it took to satisfy customer needs and take care of the company's people.

This is a tradition that has carried on through the leadership of current Boasso president Scott Giroir, who partnered with Walter Boasso to start the company 30 years ago.

This partnership created a concept built on constant growth, evolution and 'will do' customer service.

Boasso America currently operates as a division of Quality Distribution, Inc, out of nine terminals throughout the United States. Even through the transition from privately-owned company to corporate entity, the influence of the people first mentality has never changed. In fact, Boasso America's influence inspired its now parent company to adopt similar philosophies.

In a constantly evolving business climate, many might say that sticking to the 'old way' of doing things does not yield progress. However, Boasso America's focus solely on its internal and external customers has led to an open door of adaptation on every level.

Many practices in the tank container world have changed since 1985, from DOT regulations to telecommunications. Boasso is currently completing the final stages of becoming Responsible Care certified, just one of many steps the company has taken to expand its dedication to customers, employees and the general public, by enhancing safety and best practices.

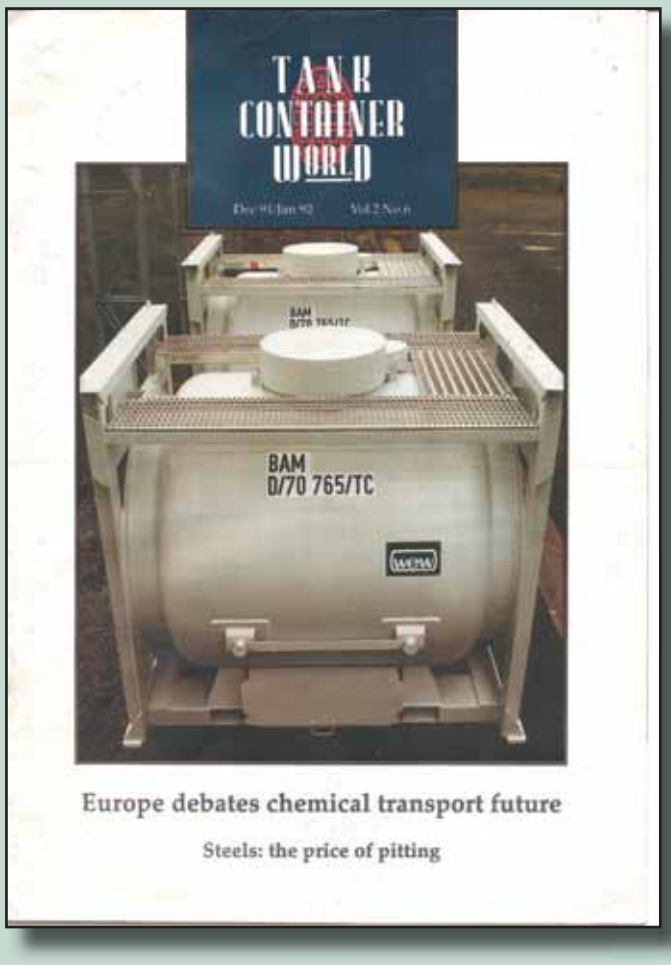
Boasso has installed electronic on-board recording devices in all of its trucks, creating a constantly updated online customer portal and external communications, in addition to providing all employees access to mobile technology to increase efficiency. Despite the technological advances, Boasso America strays from the 'standard business' practices of virtual presence, and still knows the best way to go to business every day is face to face.

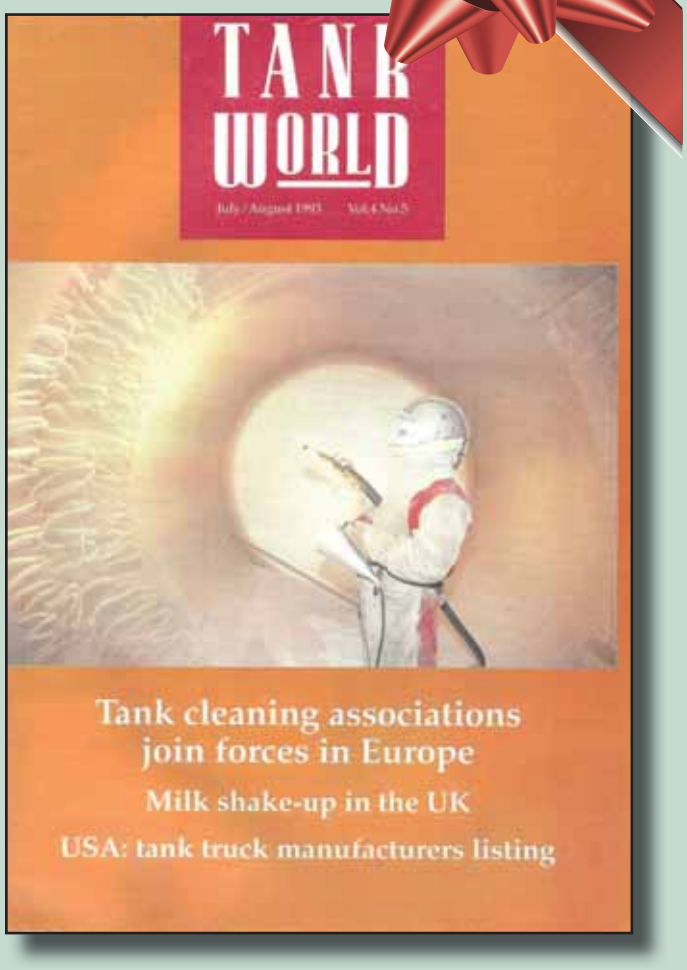
The company's customers can essentially, through e-mail, phone, text, and social media, reach anyone at any terminal at any time of the day. Being a major shift in accessibility, Boasso has made strides to go that extra mile to accommodate this expected 24/7 level of service.

With after-hours contact numbers and constantly updated contact lists sent to the customers, along with mobile e-mail and phone access for its employees, Boasso America has changed to adjust from the country's standard hours to the hours that accommodate business.

Happy Birthday, BD!

This year, 2015, Bulk Distributor celebrates 25 years of reporting on the bulk logistics industry worldwide.





The magazine has come a long way since those early days. In fact, 'BD' started as a modest offshoot to a sister publication ***Container Management*** (unsurprisingly, 'CM').

CM was a specialist business publication established by Patrick Hicks, now secretary general of the International Tank Container Organisation (ITCO). It was dedicated to the growing intermodal container industry, reporting on box technology, as well as port and shipping line strategy and those related technologies needed to handle and transport containers.

In the late 1980s, the team at Patrick's company, Baltic Publishing, increasingly found themselves reporting on the emerging tank container industry.

Launch editor Rachael White explains that the genesis of 'BD' arose from the belief that a specialist publication dedicated to the tank container would quickly gain popularity as this sector, more than dry freight, included highly specialised technologies. At the time, the UK was also going through the process of harmonising the regulation of tanks with ADR, and so the moment to launch '*Tank Container World*' seemed right.

In order to bring the publication to a wider audience, dedicated tank container events were also launched - one in Europe and one in the USA. The impact was immediate with significant interest in, and support for, both magazine and networking events.

This was particularly the case in the USA, notes Rachael, given that tanks were experiencing something of a bonanza at that time and a lot of people wanted to know more about this unique sector.

1: WEW bulk, tipping discharge tank

2: WEW fluorocarbons tank

3: WEW tank for lead alkyl

So the product was there and the market interest was there. However, in those days, adds Rachael, producing an international magazine could be rather challenging. There was no internet or email, for example, press releases and reports had to be sent by post or at best fax, with all the implications that had for immediacy!

Text was keyed into ancient PCs and sent to the printers who then returned paper galley proofs that had to be cut and paste onto layout grids along with related pictures.

There were no mobile phones, of course, so when one of the team went on an editorial or a sales visit they would often be out of touch for several days at a time. The only way to check in was to phone from a hotel, usually at extortionate call rates.

Money, too, was an issue; most trips required stuffing a fistful of travellers' cheques into wallets and handbags.

"It's difficult to imagine now how we managed to get the magazine out, but we did," says Rachael.

As the 1990s rolled on publishing technology became more common, and Baltic Publishing was one of the early adopters in the UK, installing giant Apple Mac screens that could collapse a desk – flat screens were still a long way off.

In 1993, the magazine morphed into *Tank World*, in recognition that the traditional road tanker still had a role to play in bulk logistics with many operators using both equipment types.

And cognisant of equally valued transport technologies, in 1994 the magazine was retitled Tank World & IBCs Today. But the transformation didn't stop there. To avoid having to rename it once more to something like *Tank World, IBCs, FIBCs, Flexitanks and Bulk Liners Today*, the all-encompassing title of Bulk Distributor was chosen in 1997.

Over the years, companies in the bulk logistics sector have come and gone, but it is surprising (perhaps a bit frightening) as to just how many people we know and talk to have been in the industry since the birth of BD, a fair few for even longer!

Rachael White has kindly gathered this selection of front covers and pages from previous issues and we are also grateful to WEW for sending us some photos of older tanks so that you can enjoy this little trip down Memory Lane.

During the course of 2015 we will publish further reflections on how the bulk logistics industry has changed over the past 25 years. **Neil Madden, Managing Editor**

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Alpeco helps fuel Singapore

Alpeco has shipped three truck systems to CNC Petroleum in Singapore. The company is one of around 20 oil distributors on Singapore and is headed by a group of directors in their 30s who are keen to raise the general standard of equipment used for fuel deliveries in Singapore and Malaysia.

Currently there are no real regulations employed in Singapore for the safe carriage and delivery of fuel oils so the team at CNC believes it can win lucrative contracts if it invests to raise the standard of equipment used in the region.

To this end CNC approached the relevant government departments in Singapore and have been allocated a grant to help purchase new state-of-the-art tank and metering equipment from Alpeco Limited, of the UK.

CNC Petroleum was incorporated in 2008 as an oil distribution company that trades and distributes refined petroleum products. It is the key downstream petroleum dealer for the Singapore Petroleum Company. Customers now include major construction companies, ship and rigs builders, factories and other users that need petroleum products as fuel to operate their machines and equipment. The product range includes gasoline, kerosene, lubricants and, especially, diesel which represents 99 percent of the company's product sales.

Singapore is going through a transitional phase in term of manpower deployment. The government is encouraging local businesses to increase productivity and efficiency by the introduction of technology and automation. CNC submitted a proposal to have an ERP system that integrated Alpeco's MF800 product with full mobile connectivity. The government supported the proposal and offered a grant that has enabled the project to proceed. By using Alpeco's MF800 product, CNC also receives major tax rebate benefits.

Alpeco has shipped three truck systems to CNC Petroleum in Singapore

Local tank builder Ryobi Kiso is assembling the three new tankers which will be mounted on Volvo chassis incorporating Alpeco MF800 tank and electronic metering equipment. When completed, the trucks will be added to CNC's existing vehicles, boosting the fleet size to 10.

They will then deliver fuel across Singapore and be used to demonstrate Alpeco equipment to other oil regional companies that might be looking to enhance their own fleet efficiency and safety. CNC will act as Alpeco's distributor in the region which hopes to sell more tanker and depot equipment in the future.

Sean Chua is CNC's director responsible for the daily business activities. He recalled: "Our current road tankers are equipped for top or bulk discharge operation. The existing truck meters in the truck are the rather old-fashioned mechanical type so drivers have to write the dispensed quantity and issue a hand-written delivery receipt. Alpeco's MF800 gives us a turnkey solution that enables us to have both top up and bulk operations in one vehicle. The flowrate is automatically set for hose reel or bulk discharge.

"The system also provides information about dispensed product in digital format that then communicates directly with the head office in real-time thereby affording a seamless and mobile solution which integrates with the company's ERP system," Chua continued. "Information such as an accurately calculated delivery inventory for each vehicle is automatically sent back to the office as soon as a delivery is completed. Fully detailed and accurate invoices can then be issued on completion of the delivery via the Alpeco MF800."

Alpeco's MF800 has full UK type approval that encompass the complete system. Today in Singapore, the Weights and Measures authority has regulations pertaining to flow meters only. CNC sees Alpeco's MF800 as the prefect product to build and to underpin customer confidence in the accurate reporting of product volume delivered and the transparency this brings with it.

The 3 trucks purchased by CNC were acquired directly from Volvo Group Trucks sales & marketing APAC. It bought the very latest, new technology series FMX models which included 1 Volvo FMX 8x4 Tridem which comes with air suspension, and a small turning radius achieved because the rear axle also steers, plus two Volvo FMX 6x4 vehicles.

Speedier milk flow

In conjunction with Dublin based Piper Systems, Meller Flow Trans is offering a solution for farm collection milk tankers.

The company's approach to milk collection is to keep the system as simple as possible, while still providing high performance in speed and efficiency. The Twin Pump metering system includes a Packo centrifugal pump and a flexible impeller priming pump, both hydraulically driven. These systems have a proven flow capacity of over 50,000 litres an hour and are rugged and reliable. The centrifugal milk pump carries a five year warranty against manufacture defects.

Completing the system is our new touchscreen HMI driver controller and complete hydraulic drive package. Optional extras include barcode reader, farm sampler, load sampler and barcode printer.

Meller says the system benefits include quiet operation due to the centrifugal main pump, low maintenance costs, and increased accuracy due to the large air eliminator.

www.melleruk.com

New weigher for Carlsberg UK

Premier Tech Chronos has upgraded an APW series in-process weigher at the Northampton brewery site of Carlsberg UK.

The new design enables the weighing of precision batches of barley for the brewery's steeping section, which is the crucial phase of the malting process. This helps Carlsberg to ensure that the correct amount of barley is available at all times to prevent over and under steeping ensuring a good quality brewing process.

Since being installed the throughput into the steeping section has increased to 13 tonnes an hour, from 8 tonnes an hour. Moreover, by fitting the three loadcell system the weighing accuracy has also been enhanced.

The APW weigher has been changed from a single loadcell design. Using a retrofit kit of parts the weigher was changed on site to provide a 3-point ATEX compliant loadcell weighing system. This ensures that the weighing accuracy in the installation is not compromised whatever the product being monitored, batch weighed or totalled. Throughput capacities of up to 50 tonnes an hour can be achieved depending on materials being weighed and the APW version selected.

All APW in-process weighers are designed for simple integration into new or existing installations and are capable of free-standing operation. They can also be interfaced with any plant process control system and their compact designs, feature integral feed gates and discharge doors. Control of the weigher is managed by a PC456i controller.

www.ptchronos.com

Perolo in Lion City

Perolo has opened its own distribution operation in Singapore.

The site includes a warehouse with stocks of spares and equipment to serve the market in South East Asia.

Thomas Low has joined Perolo to develop the business. Low has been involved in the tank market for many years, having worked for another valve manufacturer.

Full-stroke

Wilden has released a 76mm full-stroke integral piston diaphragm (FSIPD).

The company says the diaphragm is ideal for use in Wilden's Saniflo FDA pumps, as well as its Original, Advanced and Advanced FIT series of air-operated double-diaphragm (AODD) pumps.

It is also well suited for hygienic applications because it is constructed of food-grade Wil-Flex (Santoprene), and unlike conventional diaphragms, the integral piston is completely encapsulated within the TPE material, meaning there is no outer piston that can trap fluid and particles.

The diaphragm's full-stroke design increases product displacement per stroke, which translates into improved suction lift, greater flow rates and higher efficiencies than experienced when using pumps that operate with reduced stroke diaphragms.

Wilden's FSIPD family includes 25mm, 38mm and 51mm sizes. All four sizes are suitable for general industrial applications where downtime and maintenance are more costly than replacement parts. For the 76mm FSIPD, repair kit options are available that include two inner pistons, one shaft and two wedge-installation aids for convenience.

New Roto Val range

Rota Val has launched a new modular range of rotary valves.

The new heavy duty modular (HDM) and blowing seal modular (BSM) ranges have been designed using finite element analysis to make the valve housings even more robust. Where the valve feeds directly in to a conveying line, the BSM range has been designed to optimise product conveying using computational fluid dynamics techniques.

For industries where hygiene is a major consideration or where different products are processed through a common valve, the modular range will feature a new version of the rapid access design for quick cleaning. HDMF and BSMF fast clean versions have been designed with safety and ease of use in mind. The guide rails are a parallel design with an option for a rotor support tray which makes servicing in difficult areas a much easier proposition.

The rotor centralising mechanism has been designed so that the bearings can be replaced during maintenance without the need to reset axial rotor clearances. This means operator and maintenance staff can now service the valve without the need to remove it from situ.

Ease of use is further aided by a tapered bore design, a feature which is unique to Rota Val that ensures fast scratch free rotor extraction and insertion. When the rotor is extracted, the rotor clearance gaps get larger. At this point, the extracted rotor can be manually turned for cleaning whilst still attached to the end cover. When the rotor is reinserted, the gap naturally closes up to the correct running clearance thereby eliminating the possibility of damage to the valve internals.

In addition to full ATEX certification, Rota Val has always hydraulically pressure-tested each valve housing to ensure 100 percent casting integrity when supplying valves for explosion and flame containment applications.

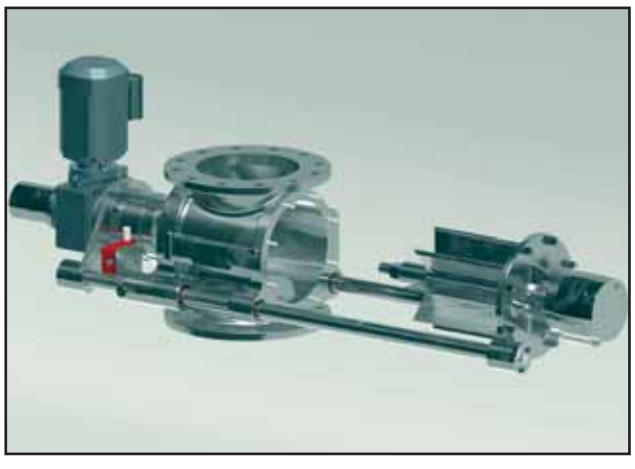
Another safety feature that can be added to all valves is the RotaSafe RM2. This patented rotor contact monitor will send a signal to stop the rotor instantly should metal contact or contamination be detected. This protects the valve internals and the system by eliminating product degradation and contamination from being conveyed downstream.

Roto Val says competitive price and delivery objectives have been achieved through a range that uses just two different body configurations; one body casting for rotary valves and one for blowing through versions. This reduces the delivery times through increased stock holding. Additionally, due to a commonality of components across the range, cost savings have been made which further help to make the range competitive.

At the same time the modular range is not a compromise; what has changed is the way these valves are manufactured. A new casting pouring method has been developed which has improved the external finish of the valves. While internally, Rota Val will continue to provide highly polished surface finishes that are suitable for chemical, food and pharmaceutical industries.

Another area where the modular range scores is in its adaptability. Heavy duty modular cleanable (HDMC) valves are a cost effective solution for occasional cleaning of the valve internals. With the new design being modular and the HDMC incorporating a tapered rotor it can be converted into a HDMF fast clean version by retrofitting the guide rails.

As a demonstration of the confidence Rota Val has in its new modular range, the warranty period has been extended to 18 months. The range is available in sizes from 150mm to 400mm and can be manufactured from either cast iron, aluminium or 316 grade stainless steel. Valves manufactured from special grades of stainless steel are also available. Full production started in January.



State-of-the-art safety

A new powder tanker jointly developed by Agility Chemical Logistics and Abbey Logistics is claimed to be equipped with some of the most advanced safety features in the UK chemical logistics industry.

The tanker took six months to develop and includes a number of features designed to protect the driver, the public and the environment, while enabling a bigger payload of up to a maximum of 31,500kg. The tankers are used to carry granular sodium carbonate and bicarbonate of soda and salt to a variety of manufacturing processes.

Abbey Logistics is one of Agility's equipment partners and has deployed a fleet of 26 new tankers, including the Agility co-branded units, to serve Tata Chemicals Europe in the areas of Winnington, Lostock and Immingham as well as Tata's subsidiary, British Salt, in Middlewich.

"Agility delivers what our customers value most: being a safe, reliable, and cost effective supplier," said Liz Preston, Vice President for Agility Chemical Logistics in Europe. "By collaborating with Abbey Logistics, a partner equally committed to safety, quality and environmental protection, we developed a powder tanker fleet that is one of the safest in the industry."

The powder tanker jointly developed by Agility and Abbey Logistics is claimed to be equipped with some of the most advanced safety features

Abbey Logistics managing director Steve Granite said the two partners were setting a new benchmark for powder tanker safety.

The powder tanker includes a full-scope reversing camera with low light enhancement, in-cab audio warning, and ultrasonic reversing sensors that automatically apply the brakes when an obstacle is detected.

Accessing the tank-top has been made safer with an interlocking system that automatically applies the brakes and stabilises the vehicle when the access handrail is raised, staying in place until the handrail is lowered.

Driver tank access via an inclined ladder reduces the steepness of the climb, along with a parachute-type harness to arrest any falls while working from the gantry.

There is an emergency shutdown system designed to allow untrained operatives to stop tank discharge safely if the driver becomes incapacitated. The system also allows the driver to manage the discharge from a single point for better control in any unforeseen situations such as a discharge pipe burst or silo overflow.

Stability assurance systems keep the vehicle upright and ensure that it remains rigid and secure during loading and discharge. When on the road, the vehicle stability control system uses electronic sensors to monitor speed and direction with automatic brakes to maintain stability and control.

Finally, on-board weighing technology enables significant payload increase and more accurate loading to achieve maximum payload. The average payload could increase by 16 percent and eliminate one in seven trips, reducing operating cost and environmental impact.

First Euro-6 for Arclid

A 6x2 new series Volvo FH, equipped with a lightweight pusher axle, has entered service with specialist bulk powder haulier Arclid Transport. It is the first Euro-6 compliant Volvo to join the 26-strong fleet. The truck was supplied by Thomas Hardie Commercials, of Middlewich, UK.

The Globetrotter-cabbed tractor unit is the second new series Volvo FH to join the Sandbach, Cheshire-based fleet of privately-owned Arclid Transport.

The company, which is part of The Archibald Bathgate Group, specialises in the carriage of bulk powder, granular raw materials and minerals for general industrial use. Archibald Bathgate Group is a privately owned group based in North-West England that includes Bathgate Silica Sand, Bathgate Flooring and IT company Databax.

General manager David Robinson explained that the company is also a major user of Volvo Construction Equipment machines, such as the new L220H Wheeled Loader. "This machine features Volvo's OptiShift technology, which reduces fuel consumption by up to 18 percent and increases machine performance," he said. "We operate a fleet of high quality, high specification trucks and machines and enjoy a very low staff turnover. We have a number of long serving drivers, for example, that have been with us for between 15 and 25 years."

Competitive unladen weight is a key requirement of the Arclid Transport operation, says transport manager Peter Conway, who reports that the new FH tares out at 7.9 tonnes 'as delivered'.

A number of incremental weight savings have been made by adjustments to the specification. For example, a fixed fifth wheel is fitted and there is only one bunk in the sleeper cab. Durabrite aluminium wheels also contribute to the competitive unladen weight.

The D13K, 13-litre engine, rated at 500hp, was specified for durability and also provide enough torque and power to effectively 'future-proof' the truck in the event of a legislated increase in the gross operating weight, added Conway. The FH is equipped with the I-Shift automated gearbox and a higher diff ratio was specified, says Peter, to reflect the amount of motorway running undertaken by the fleet and save fuel.

The same driver will stay with the truck, which will remain coupled to one of the Spitzer or Feldbinder tanker trailers operated by Arclid. Maintenance is carried out overnight and at weekends by Thomas Hardie Commercials, Middlewich, on a Volvo Repair & Maintenance contract.

Another Sandbach-based specialist road tanker haulier James Lynch & Sons (Transport) Limited is celebrating the family-owned company's 60th anniversary this year. As part of the recognition of this milestone, it has invested in a high-spec new series Volvo FH 6x2 tractor unit, the first to join its fleet.

James Lynch & Sons currently operates 38 Volvo tractor units. The company also operates more than50 rubber-lined road tanker trailers for the carriage of acid and alkaline specialist chemicals. These are used in a wide range of industrial applications and each tanker is dedicated to one product.

The company has an international operating licence and, in addition to the UK, makes deliveries across Europe.

Its fleet is 100 percent Volvo. The company began operating Volvo trucks around 25 years ago, said managing director Mike Denny, adding: "We operate Volvo trucks because of their reliability. The new FH helps update the image of our fleet."

Specification of the new FH, which was also supplied by Thomas Hardie Commercials, includes the D13K Euro-6 engine rated at 460hp and I-Shift automated gearbox. Driver comfort is enhanced with the addition of the Globetrotter cab, leather upholstery and home-from-home details such as the under-bunk located fridge-freezer.

James Lynch & Sons invested in a high spec Volvo FH tractor unit as part of the the family-owned company's 60th anniversary celebrations

Although James Lynch & Sons carries out its own maintenance, using Volvo-trained technicians, the new FH will be serviced by Thomas Hardie on a Volvo Gold R&M contract which includes uptime assurance.

The first Euro-6 compliant Volvo FH tractor to join the fleet of bulk powder specialist Arclid Transport

ADR compliance takes centre stage

The issue of road tanker compliance with ADR and other regulations was a central theme of the UK Freight Transport Association's Fuel Tanker Conference, which took place in December.

At the centre of concern are tankers built by South African manufacturer GRW Engineering which were found to be incorrectly certified by Bureau Veritas in South Africa as meeting international dangerous goods standards. The UK government has said Bureau Veritas South Africa is not authorised to issue UK Department for Transport (DfT) certificates.

Since the issue first came to light, about 100 replacement tankers have entered into service, reducing the numbers that are not in full compliance to around 130 tankers.

During this time the DfT commissioned a £1.5 million research programme to inform decisions about the future use of these vehicles. Based on the outcome of the research published on 18 December 2014, the date by which those tankers built after the middle of 2010 are to be withdrawn (about 70) has been extended subject to further work to establish acceptance criteria that may allow an individual tanker to continue in use for up to 12 years after entering into service. Those tankers still in service that were built before the middle of 2010 are to be withdrawn as originally planned a year ago.

The existing Authorisation 426 expires at the end of June, but on 14 January the DfT issued Authorisation 439 which continues the provision to the end of December 2015. The authorisations require regular inspections and restrict the use of the tankers to Great Britain.

Sound condition

At the FTA conference, tanker inspection and the need for operators to be intelligent customers was the topic of an HSE presentation delivered by Steve Gillingham of DfT's Dangerous Goods Division.

A tanker in sound condition should be expected to survive a side impact or rollover without significant release. Keeping tankers in sound condition requires intermediate or periodic inspection every three to six years with the customer needing to know what is required of an inspection and ensuring that the Authorised Inspection Body (AIB) delivers.

For an effective inspection, knowledge of degradation mechanisms and examination techniques are key, but when neither man entry nor remote inspection occurs, HSE is concerned that internal examinations cannot be undertaken to an acceptable standard.

"Are you likely to find cracking simply by looking from the manway," said Gillingham. "In my view, No!" Custom and practice need to be realigned with legislation and standards to ensure inspections are effective. Costs may increase, but operators would get full value.

Inspecting tanker compliance

With the Secretary of State having an obligation to ensure tankers are ADR compliant, and compliance being checked by AIBs, Gillingham referred to the 'very diligent AIB' that raised weld quality concerns on a GRW Engineering tanker during a routine inspection a few years ago.

Found not to be fully ADR compliant; when the circumferential welds were radiographed, numerous and extensive indications typical of lack of fusion defects were discovered. Samples taken confirmed the defects, indicating that the welds were not 'skillfully made'.

While some faults could be addressed - could these tanks survive a rollover and how long could they be safely allowed to run? This was originally decided as six years from the date of initial inspection or until 30 June 2015, whichever is the sooner. (To date there has been no dramatic loss from these tanks.)

Focusing on circumferential weld strength in preventing loss in a rollover, as well as service life, DfT commissioned the research programme which concluded in November, with GRW and owners and operators of GRW tankers being kept informed.

The written statement can be found at: **www.gov.uk/government/speeches/petroleum-road-fuel-tankers-compliance**

Research reports can be found at: **www.gov.uk/government/publications/petroleum-road-fuel-tankers-technical-assessment.**

Paucity of information

TRL, one of the contractors involved in the research, found 'a paucity of detailed information' about accidents with 'quite significant' under-reporting of ADR accidents. While the UK had no directly relevant published research, the USA, Germany, Spain, Netherlands and China had such studies.

There were 15 relevant overturn/spillage incidents between 2005-2013 according to ADR/RIDDOR reports to HSE and DfT, with no evidence of circumferential welds being significant in real world fuel spillages, although no tankers with poor circumferential welds are known to have been involved in such incidents. The possibility of a collision of a GRW tanker involving spillage could be expected around once every three years.

Tests and analyses were conducted by Health & Safety Laboratory (HSL) and The Welding Institute (TWI). Using water rather than fuel, HSL simulated a rollover of two GRW tankers, manufactured in 2008 and 2011. TWI found critical defects in the former, while defects in the latter were less severe. To determine how long it takes for a subcritical crack to become unacceptable, an instrumented tanker was driven on a route in south east England collecting fatigue data. Looking at geometry, material properties and stresses, it was seen from weld and joint geometry that service life should exceed 12 years.

With good sound evidence needed for the Secretary of State to make decisions, finding no evidence of fatigue crack growth was 'some comfort' together with confirmation of a low likelihood of roll over. However, Steve added that the ignition of just one petrol spill had the potential for a high impact incident.

Tank certificates

The Vehicle Certification Agency's (VCA) Mike Protheroe said a more robust system of control was required for certificates issued for tanks carrying dangerous goods. All certificates will be kept at www.tanks.dft.gov.uk; although it will take three years to load pre-existing certificates. The new system will give public access to certificates with records created and stored for a tank's life including records of inspections.

DVSA and ADR testing

Issues arising from VOSA's transition to the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), which has sites in Edinburgh, Manchester, Derby, Newcastle, Avonmouth, Gillingham, Leighton Buzzard, Beverley, Southampton and Norwich, were addressed by Nigel Maden and Steve Whitehart.

Revised ADR111/ADR111(S) test application forms can be found at www.gov.uk for first and subsequent ADR tests respectively. It is crucial to bring or send the existing ADR1C certificate to the test – copies are not acceptable.

A computerised Technical Application System will allow electronic transfer between test sites with rollout for ADR due February/March 2015. A rollout of Next Generation Testing in 2015/16 will enable IT and printers to be on site at test locations so that certificates will be available without delay.

A quick word with...

Michael Cundy, Managing Director of Suttons Road Tankers

Michael Cundy, Managing Director of Suttons Road Tankers

Can you provide an overview of Suttons Group's operations?

Suttons Group is a leading international logistics and supply chain specialist focused on delivering products and services to the chemicals, gases, fuels and food sectors.

The company operates in Europe, the USA, the Middle East, South East Asia, China and Asia Pacific.

Our aim is to create high quality, transparent, streamlined, efficient and safe supply chains. We have the assets, people and experience to deliver this and generate real operational and commercial benefits for our customers.

Our services include domestic and regional road tanker transport, tank container import and export, 4PL, contract logistics, fleet management, supply chain management, warehousing, drumming, on-site logistics activities, tank cleaning, tank and vehicle (HGV) maintenance and testing, freight management and consultancy services.

How many tankers and drivers does the road tanker division have and how many different products are carried?

In the UK, the Suttons fleet consists of over 360 tanker trailers and more than 230 tractor units; the Imperial Tankers fleet has 350 tanker trailers and more than 180 tractor units. The two companies operate separately but our teams do support each other through periods of increased demand. This gives us, and consequently our customers, added flexibility and resource at very short notice.

Suttons transports chemicals, gases, fuels and food throughout the UK and increasingly into and out of Europe. Within these commodities there are thousands of different products each with their own specific transport requirements. Some are highly temperature sensitive and food products require strict hygiene processes and procedures. For the highly hazardous products we carry, specific loading and unloading procedures must also be adhered to at all times. Put simply, if it's a liquid, gas or powder, we have the knowledge, expertise and equipment to load, transport and deliver the product.

In addition to the fleet based in the UK, we also have road transport operations supporting our intermodal fleets in Saudi Arabia, China and Singapore.

What are the main challenges faced by a company running a road tanker operation?

There are many different types of road tanker operations in different sectors, each with their own challenges. I think across the board in the UK there is a growing issue with skilled and qualified drivers. Of course, fuel and maintenance costs are also always going to be a continuous challenge.

At Suttons, we sell our services based on two key elements of safety and quality and we are uncompromising about ensuring we achieve both. To do this we invest heavily in driver training, equipment, IT systems and personnel. We are competing against many companies with different priorities and our challenge is to ensure that we maintain and build on our levels of service and safety while at the same time remaining competitive and attractive to our customers.

How do the operating challenges differ for the different products carried?

Many operating challenges that we faced in the past are no longer challenges due to technical advances. It's now relatively easy to maintain product temperature, for example, if you have the right equipment.

We do face seasonal challenges with some products in greater demand at certain times of the year. The challenge for us is to ensure that we have the assets and drivers needed to cope with the demand spikes, some of which are at very short notice. In the slower months we must then ensure these assets and drivers are used elsewhere in the business. It is therefore vital that we have the ability to handle this and I think that through our excellent planning teams, our extensive depot network and large fleet, we are well placed to meet these challenges.

What makes the tanker division of the Suttons Group stand out from its competitors?

Suttons is unique in that it approaches each customer as an individual with their own challenges, requirements and opportunities. We try to understand what is needed from the customer's point of view first as a one size fits all, off the shelf solution doesn't work.

In order to maintain consistently high levels of customer service, innovation and continuous improvement, we work with our customers, maintain regular contact and seek regular feedback. By taking a collaborative approach with them, we can often identify problems before they arise and resolve them. This is imperative if we are to ensure no disruption of service to our customers.

I also think that one of the great strengths of Suttons is that it is still family-owned and enjoys the flexibility that this brings. Yes we are a large international logistics company, but our customers know that if they have an issue and want to pick up the phone and talk to our CEO John Sutton or me, they can, and they know that we'll listen.

Suttons has also been around a long time and this year is our 60th anniversary. We are very proud of our heritage and I believe a key element to the success we've had during this time is that the company regularly takes stock of where we are today and where we'd like to be tomorrow.

What have been the most interesting developments and achievements across the wider Suttons Group over the past year?

The past year at Suttons has been a very exciting place to be. John Sutton has taken over as group CEO having previously been managing director of our international business. John has ambitious plans which include organic growth in some areas and substantial investment in others. In the past 10 months alone we have made two significant international acquisitions in China and Singapore and in September last year we acquired Imperial Tankers in the UK. I have been fortunate enough to have been heavily involved in all of these transactions and can see first-hand the added value we are now able to bring to our customers through added capability, flexibility and scale.

We were again recognised at the Motor Transport Awards and collected the partnership award for our achievements with a key customer. This award has particular significance as it not only demonstrates that our approach is successful and an example of what can be achieved through customer collaboration, but also recognises all the hard work put in by our teams.

Our international division is also going through a period of exciting growth. Our recent acquisitions in China and Singapore are both significant steps as we continue to build our business in logistics hubs and petrochemical manufacturing zones across the world.

Looking to the future how would like to see the road tanker division develop over the next five years?

In addition to our road tanker business, Suttons International is one of the world's leading ISO tank container operators. The division provides intermodal bulk liquid and gas logistics and supply chain services for most of the world's largest chemical and petrochemical companies. We achieve this through a large and technically diverse tank container fleet and network of international teams based in major logistics hubs around the world.

I see our road tanker division and our intermodal division operating much more closely with each other in Europe and the UK. There are times when a road tanker is the best option for our customer and times when an ISO tank would be more appropriate. It's important that our customers have these options and can mix and match our services to best suit their needs.

We are the largest bulk industrial gas transporter in the UK and have been for some time, transporting gases in road tankers, cylinders, bottles and ISO tanks. We also successfully diversified into the food sector in 2008 and through this we have demonstrated the skills and attributes we offer are readily transferable into other markets. I'd like to see these areas of the business grow alongside our chemicals business as I feel we have a great deal of knowledge and expertise to offer these sectors.

Carbery gets packing

Premier Tech Chronos has secured an order for a complete packing system for Carbery Food Ingredients at its Ballineen site, near Cork, Ireland.

The system features a high accuracy bottom-up filling system with two dedicated dosing systems, compact palletiser, hygienic FIBC system and a Stretch-all stretch hooding system.

The new packing facility is part of a major investment project that will help Carbery maintain its position as an innovative supplier of nutritional and functional ingredients based on whey proteins. These products are supplied to manufacturers of foods, drinks and nutritional products all over the world.

Operating in a hygienic clean-room environment and designed to comply with the latest European Hygienic Engineering Design Group (EHEDG) standards, the Premier Tech Chronos OML-2040-BFH1 bottom-up filling system will pack high value powdered products into block bottomed paper bags with PE inner liners and pinch top closures.

The OML-2040-BFH1 is a twin head filling system that includes two gross dosing and two fine dosing systems, which have dedicated product hoppers to prevent contamination between different products. It also features an easy cleaning dosing hopper for better clean-down between products. The system will also have product de-aeration, bag top air removal, heat sealing with pinch top bag closure system for sealing the PE liner and activation of the pre-applied bag mouth glue.

Filled bags will be transported to a CPL-600 palletiser, via a bag conveying system that will incorporate metal detection, in line dynamic check weigher, auto reject station and batch printing facility using an ink jet printer. The CPL-600 palletiser will incorporate an empty pallet magazine and paper sheet dispenser for bottom sheets. Pallet sizes 1200mm x 800mm Euro up to 1400mm x 1100mm including 1200mm x 1000mm will be handled. The Stretch-all stretch hooding system will be incorporated for automatically hooding pallets

To supplement the 25kg packing system Premier Tech Chronos is also supplying a high accuracy hygienic FIBC filling system. This will use a pallet dispenser to release empty pallets to the filling system, which will also be located in the clean-room. A pre-inflation system will help to ensure optimum filling of the FIBCs, which when filled will be moved on a conveyor out of the clean-room to be transferred to a pallet transfer conveying system outside of the clean room environment.

"We choose Premier Tech Chronos based on a wide range of criteria including performance, quality, hygiene, track record, industry reputation, price and follow up service," commented Martin Everard, production manager at Carbery Food Ingredients. "I was impressed by the various hygienic bagging systems and the associated personnel that I visited and inspected prior to order placement. I was also grateful for the detailed technical sales support that the company staff provided as we worked on the project."

A Premier Tech Chronos Stretch-all hooding system, as will be supplied to Carbery Food Ingredients

More than 15 hygienic filling lines have been ordered from Premier Tech Chronos for the dairy industries in the past 18 months. Installation of the new filling system at Carbery is scheduled to take place by late 2014.

www.ptchronos.com

Caustic handling

National Bulk Equipment (NBE) has launched a bulk bag unloader system for handling highly caustic and severely agglomerated material.

It operates as a closed process; ensuring the protection of operators from migrant, airborne material and eliminating the possibility of contamination of material in-process.

The highly compressible material requires integrated bulk bag conditioning to provide sufficient material supply. The system also has sequential, four-stage process, including: hydraulic de-blocking rams, each with 28,000 pounds of force; hydraulic massage paddles each with 2,200 pounds of paddle pressure; an E3 enclosed, bag spout interface to collect dust and aid discharge; and automatic bulk bag loop retractors to ensure complete material discharge, work together to condition the material from football-sized chunks to quarter-inch, or smaller particles. The enclosed system conveys the material downstream at a rate of 18,000 pounds an hour.

NBE's integrated automation centralises system control, communication, monitoring, and reporting using dust-tight enclosures, and a single, UL listed HMI. Operator exposure to caustic material has been eliminated, NBE claims, and operator physical ergonomics have been optimised as a result of rigorous risk assessment procedures.

Flexicon's metal detector

New from Flexicon is a stainless steel, sanitary bulk bag filler that detects and separates metal as it fills bulk bags by weight, dust-free.

The filler frame is a patented Twin-Centrepost design that maximises strength, reduces cost and improves accessibility to bag hooks, Flexicon says.

It is equipped with an integral metal detector/separator that detects metal in the free-fall stream of material entering the filler, and then ejects it through a chute that discharges into a removable drum at the rear of the unit.

The filler also incorporates: fill head height adjustment to accept all popular bag sizes; an inflatable cuff forming a high-integrity seal to the bag inlet spout; a blower to remove bag creases prior to filling; load cells for filling by weight; a vent port for dust-free air displacement during filling; pneumatically retractable bag hooks; and an automated vibratory deaeration/densification system to maximise capacity and stabilise the bag for storage and shipment.

The first bulk bag filler to receive USDA acceptance, it is constructed of 316 stainless steel, finished to sanitary standards and configured with full-length forklifting tubes allowing it to be moved throughout the plant.

It can be integrated with optional conveyor feed systems including Flexicon flexible screw conveyors, Flexi-Disc tubular cable conveyors and Pneumati-con dilute-phase pneumatic conveying systems, as well as existing plant conveyors or overhead storage vessels.

Once the operator connects an empty bag and presses 'start', weigh-filling functions are automatic; the controller runs the conveyor (or rotary valve) at high feed rate, actuates the vibratory deaeration/densification system, steps down the conveyor (or rotary valve) to trickle feed rate immediately prior to stopping it once the accurate fill weight is gained, and then releases the bag straps. The filled bag is then removed by forklift and the operator is clear to connect the next bulk bag.

The company also manufactures rear post bulk bag fillers and patented fillers that pivot the fill head for floor-level bag connections, as well as bulk bag dischargers, bulk bag conditioners, bag dump stations, drum/box/container tippers, weigh batching systems and engineered plant-wide bulk handling systems with automated controls.

www.flexicon.co.uk

Flexicon's sanitary Twin-Centrepost bulk bag filler with metal detection/removal weigh-fills and deaerates/densifies bulk bags, automatically and dust-free

Local warehouse for the world

Fourteen local businesses have helped develop a major new warehouse facility in east Hull, UK.

Neill & Brown Global Logistics' £2.5 million, 40,000 sq ft warehouse at Marfleet Environmental Technology Park, has been built locally but with global business in mind.

Peter Brown, CEO of Hessle-based Neill & Brown, said: "We have created a high quality logistics facility for our international customer base using as many local suppliers as possible. We are proud to be based in Hull and there is plenty of expertise in the supply chain to enable us to adhere to 'buy local'."

The companies involved are: Allan Wood & Partners, Arco, Houlton, Beech Electrical, Elite Pest Control, Intrasource, John Moore Security, KC, Kingstonian Storage Equipment, Merlin Office Equipment, MH Industrial, Morgan Lloyd Jones Partnership, Sovereign Signs, Spitfire Services and Stoneferry Estates.

Supported by the Humber Local Enterprise Partnership's 'Growing the Humber' fund, the facility will create 21 new jobs over three years.

Brown, who is also a director of World Trade Centre Hull & Humber, added: "The increased capacity and proximity of the new warehouse to the ports will provide an enhanced service to our customers and give us an edge in developing more export and import work to and from Europe. It also complements our primary facility at Livingstone Road in Hessle."

The development follows a previous investment at Marfleet in 2011, when Neill & Brown joined forces with Japanese-owned chemical company Nippon Gohsei to create a 60,000 sq ft laboratory, manufacturing, storage and distribution centre for the packaging product Soarnol.

It employs 117 staff and offers numerous secure, daily, timed collections and deliveries, tailored for a range of products, from food ingredients, packaging, machine equipment and general cargoes, to chemicals, hazardous and specialist loads.

L-r: Carl Andrew, logistics director; Colin Moody, managing director; Peter Brown, CEO; Kishor Tailor, chief executive of the Humber LEP; Michelle Cartwright, warehouse manager and Ian Halder, finance director

VTG, Brunsbüttel ink LNG supply strategy (Continued from Front Cover)

Dr Heiko Fischer, CEO of VTG, commented: "I am delighted that we have taken the next step with our partner Brunsbüttel Ports to develop further an LNG transport and logistics system. Together, we intend to use and extend opportunities for a land-based LNG supply chain across Europe from Brunsbüttel port."

Plans for the LNG terminal in Brunsbüttel comprise three components: an LNG tank at the site can supply LNG to the maritime transport sector as an alternative fuel; supplies can also go to regional and national industry; additionally they can be used as a nationwide alternative gas supply.

In addition to supplying LNG to the maritime sector, LNG has aroused particular interest in Brunsbüttel's local industry because of new environmental directives for ship exhaust gases. ChemCoast Park, the largest industrial area in Schleswig-Holstein, providing approximately 4,500 direct and around 12,000 indirect jobs, is home to many well-known corporations with a high level of local gas consumption. Forecasts have indicated that the demand for gas in the Brunsbüttel industrial area will increase considerably over the coming years. The ports group says this illustrates the great significance gas supply has for the industrial companies in the area.

"The Brunsbüttel industrial sector can thereby guarantee the basic operating rate of an LNG terminal," the group stated. "Nevertheless, a Germany-wide supply of LNG is necessary in order for it to become an established alternative to pipelines. A direct LNG supply to industrial companies covering longer distances could be carried out from Brunsbüttel with the VTG LNG tank wagons."

In view of the growing uncertainty over long-term gas supplies due to the crisis in Ukraine, an LNG terminal in Brunsbüttel could also be used as a strategic gas reserve. Alternative and, in particular, more independent gas supply concepts have to be taken into account in future, the group believes. To this end, LNG has already proven itself in numerous other countries and it could certainly also grow to become an important part of the energy mix in Germany.

Locational factors make Brunsbüttel a good site for Germany's first LNG terminal. Situated at the intersection between the Elbe and the Kiel Canal, it offers a strategic location to supply ships with LNG. In regard to supplying the industrial sector, large-scale quantity buyers are already based there and supplying across Europe could efficiently be performed by way of a rail connection. Furthermore, Brunsbüttel Ports GmbH already has decades of experience handling gas (LPG) and other hazardous liquid goods.

New name and ambitions

The Contargo Group's subsidiary in northern France has been operating as Contargo North France SAS since 1 December 2014 and has set up its headquarters at Bruay-sur-l'Escaut, in Nord department.

The Contargo Group has been active in Nord-Pas de Calais now for 18 years, and during this time it has experienced constant growth, both in the transport of containers by inland waterway and in the handling volume at its established terminal in Prouvy.

To strengthen its regional presence and support its development, the former CCES (Contargo Container Escaut Service SAS) has now been renamed Contargo North France SAS and has moved to new premises in Bruay-sur-l'Escaut, just north of Valenciennes.

Despite considerable congestion at the Prouvy terminal, which had become too small, Contargo broke its inland navigation record in 2014 with 28,100 TEU, a rise of 6 percent, transported by barge between the Nord-Pas de Calais region and the western seaports of Rotterdam, Antwerp, Dunkirk and Terneuzen. Handling also reached a record volume at 64,000 TEU.

In April 2014, the French subsidiary of the Contargo Group also obtained a public service delegation contract to operate the Escaut Valenciennes barge and rail terminal located in Bruay-sur-l'Escaut. Following final building work, which took several months, operations started on 1 January 2015.

Buy-out for Vos Logistics

European logistics company Vos Logistics is undergoing a management buyout in co-operation with Scheybeeck Investments. The parties will be supported by Delta Lloyd Mezzanine Fund by means of a subordinated loan. The change in share ownership is a logical step in the company's growth strategy and ambitions.

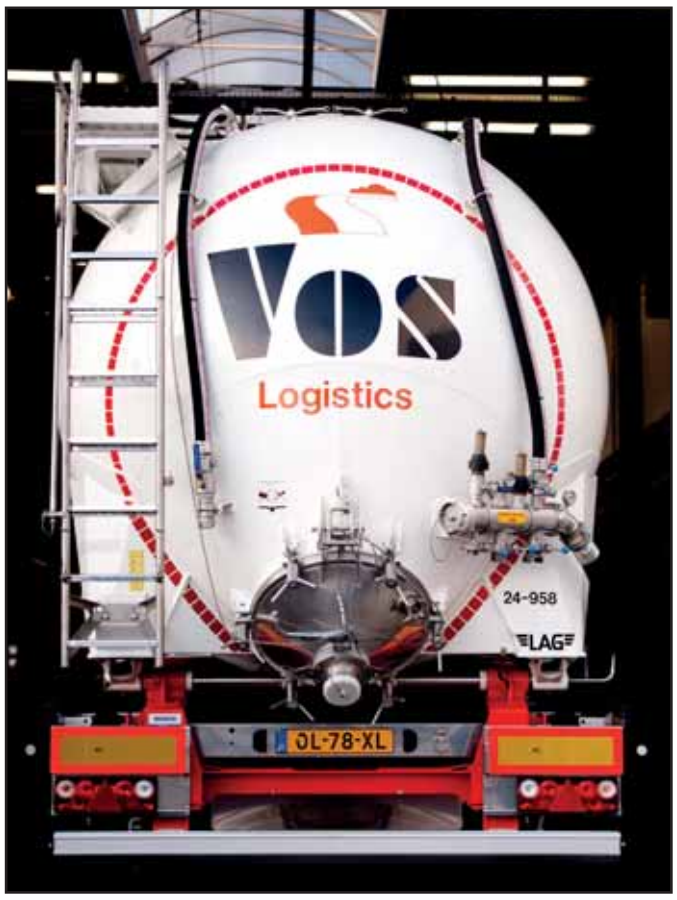
Vos Logistics has undergone a transition in recent years to become a professional and flexible organisation. The company says it has successfully cut its structural costs and returned to health in a competitive and rapidly changing market.

Vos has also given priority in the past three years to making itself more agile and sustainable. A substantial investment programme has been implemented to underpin growth.

In the coming years, strategy will be directed at: optimising goods flows in co-operation with customers in order to create "cleaner and more efficient logistics and transport solutions"; further optimising the cost of international transport networks for packed goods and dry bulk; realising controlled growth in customer-specific logistics services both organically and through selective acquisitions.

The new shareholders are willing to invest in this long-term strategy, said a Vos statement. In addition, the capital position will be strengthened and debt will be reduced to lay solid foundations for the company's future.

The investment in Vos Logistics is said to match the long-term vision, entrepreneurship and experience of Scheybeeck in transport and logistics. Currently, 80 percent of Vos shares are held by banks.



Hull biomass terminal opens

Port of Hull's dedicated biomass terminal, built to support Drax Power Station's conversion to a lower carbon power generator, has been officially opened.

The opening was conducted by Councillor Mary Glew, Lord Mayor of Hull and Admiral of the Humber at an event attended by representatives of Drax and ABP, as well as those companies involved in the construction and operation of the terminal.

Associated British Ports (ABP) will handle up to 1 million tonnes of biomass a year in Hull, in north east England, as part of a 15-year agreement with Drax. The Hull rail load-out facility, which was built by Spencer Group, will enable biomass to be transported to Drax Power Station at Selby as part of an ambitious programme that will see Drax transform into a predominantly biomass-fuelled generator.

Speaking at the opening, ABP Director, Humber John Fitzgerald said: "The opening of this facility is further demonstration of ABP's infrastructure innovation. It underpins the continuing importance of our estuary in powering the UK.

"The Humber ports have always been integral to the UK's energy supply and as electricity generation moves to a low-carbon base, we too are investing in facilities to serve this transformation. Whether it's biomass at Hull or Immingham, or offshore wind at Green Port Hull, the Humber ports will continue to be at the centre of this vital industry."

Dorothy Thompson CBE, chief executive of Drax, is also looking forward to the partnership with ABP. "The Port of Hull has always played an important role in the history of our company and I am delighted to be standing here today to mark the opening of this terminal and the start of a new chapter," Thompson said.

"When we were looking to move to low-carbon power generation and we were considering biomass, we knew that the solution would lie with the ports here on the Humber. This terminal and the facility in Immingham are testament to innovation, creative thinking and hard work and it makes me enormously proud to see the facility operational and officially opened."

The £16 million facility will handle biomass imported by sea from North America and Europe in the form of wood pellets created from sustainable forestry residues and thinnings. The biomass is stored in warehouses before being delivered by truck to the new facility and unloaded into feeders which take it to a 250m conveyor, carrying it to the top of the silo.

The silo is capable of storing up to 1,800 tonnes of wood pellets and is filled by 60 truckloads of biomass over a three-hour period, twice a day, loading at the rate of 600 tonnes an hour.

Technology ensures an even load as the biomass is discharged into rail wagons which pass slowly through the corridor at the base of the structure. The automated system is capable of loading up to 25 rail wagons with 1,600 tonnes of material in just 35 minutes.

On the south bank of the river at the Port of Immingham, ABP is also investing to support Drax's biomass supply chain. Immingham Renewable Fuels Terminal is a fully automated wood pellet handling facility and in its first phase, currently under commission, will be able to handle three million tonnes of biomass a year.

L-r: ABP Director Humber, John Fitzgerald; Dorothy Thompson CBE, chief executive, Drax; Cllr Mary Glew, Lord Mayor of Hull and Admiral of the Humber; and ABP chief executive James Cooper in front of Port of Hull's dedicated biomass terminal

Simon Storage rebranded

As of 1 January 2015, Simon Storage has been rebranded as Inter Terminals. This brings together the Simon Storage operations in the United Kingdom, Germany and Ireland under the same trading banner as Inter Terminals, Denmark.

The Simon Storage and Inter Terminals businesses are wholly-owned subsidiaries of Inter Pipeline Ltd, the petroleum transport, storage and natural gas liquids extraction business based in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Inter Pipeline Ltd is one of the largest energy infrastructure businesses in Canada, and ranks among the top 50 companies listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange.

The combined Inter Terminals business represents one of the largest independent bulk liquid storage businesses in Europe, with more than 3 million cbm of storage capacity located across 12 terminals. The terminals in the UK, Germany and Ireland provide storage and distribution facilities for a wide range of hazardous and non-hazardous liquids, including oils, chemicals, biofuels and waste oils.

Terminals are located at the coastal ports of Immingham, Teesside and Tyneside in the UK, on the Shannon estuary, Ireland and on the Rhine River at Mannheim, Germany. In Denmark, Inter Terminals operates deep draft coastal terminals which provide build bulk, break bulk and custom blending services for distillates and heated oil products.

Inter Terminals will be led by Martyn Lyons, who will be promoted to Chief Executive. With over 25 years' experience in the tank storage sector, Lyons is well known within the industry and continues to serve as chairman of the UK Tank Storage Association. He succeeds Richard Sammons who is moving into a new role as executive chairman. In Denmark, Uffe Kirk has been promoted to managing director, succeeding Aage Faurholt who in turn becomes chairman of Inter Terminals, Denmark.

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Dunkirk choose LNG partners

Port of Dunkirk, France, has chosen a consortium three companies to work with on a project study to set up an LNG bunkering facility.

The port called for expressions of interest in April last year to establish a marine bunkering facility and on-land supply chain for small-scale LNG. After evaluating the submissions the port has selected a group comprising Dunkerque LNG, Air Liquide and Exmar.

The successful bidders will first make an in-depth study of the project in order to define the best conditions for its execution. At present, the project is expected to be implemented in a number of phases, beginning with the construction of an LNG-filling station for tank trucks, followed by the construction of an LNG bunkering ship and the necessary adaptation of the existing wharf to allow its berthing.

Depending on market trends, a subsequent phase could see the building of a new dedicated pier for LNG bunkering.

An agreement is currently being drawn up between Port of Dunkirk and the winning consortium. At the same time an application for co-funding under the European Union's TEN-E proposals scheme, is being prepared and will be submitted to the European agency by the national authorities before 26 February.

Odfjell suspends Le Havre project

Odfjell Terminals has suspended its planned project for a new storage facility in the French port of Le Havre, citing economic uncertainty in the French and European petrochemical sectors.

The Norwegian operator was to have invested €150-200 million in the 31.5ha, 400,000 cbm terminal. Odfjell told French media that it remained interested in Le Havre as a strategic port location but it would need further commitments from the petrochemical sector to proceed with the project.

In the meantime, the port authority - Grand Port Maritime du Havre (GPMH) - said it will call for further expressions of interest in developing the facility.

Nidera acquires Constanta terminal

Rotterdam-based agribusiness and trading company Nidera has acquired the USA/USC Terminal in the port of Constanta, Romania.

Port of Constanta is a traditional partner for Central and Eastern Europe countries with significant agricultural production. It plays a key role in the export of product from Romania and the Balkan states.

For a number of years Nidera has been using USA/USC terminal for the export of various grains and oilseeds. However, with an increasing market share, full ownership of a terminal in Constanta was seen by Nidera as essential for its growth strategy in the region.

The terminal is in addition to the two currently owned inland silos and two planned silos in Romania. This new network of facilities will allow Nidera to increase its origination capacity and optimise its logistics. The USA/USC terminal is understood to be the most efficient in the port.

Marc Kwakkelstein, executive vice president Europe of Nidera, said: "This acquisition fits perfectly in our growth strategy. It is a great opportunity for Nidera to establish and sustain a leading position in the origination and distribution of agricultural commodities in Central and Eastern Europe".

The terminal has a total storage capacity of 250,000 tonnes and is able to load two Panamax vessels at the same time, with loading facilities for trucks, trains and barges.

Nidera was founded in Rotterdam in 1920, with its early activities focusing on grain and foodstuffs merchandising in the regions from which it took its acronym: Nederland, (East) Indies, Deutschland, England, Russia, and Argentina. Currently Nidera has domestic and international operations in 21 major export and import countries.