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H Essers buys Tank Management

Belgium's H Essers has bought Norwegian-French tank operator Tank Management, some two years after acquiring another tank container specialist Huktra.

Tank Management specialises in multimodal transport services of liquid chemicals. With branches in Oslo, Le Havre, Milan and Rotterdam, its geographic coverage complements Huktra's European presence. The development of multimodal liquid bulk transport also fits H Essers' strategy of delivering integrated and sustainable logistics to the hazardous chemical goods industry.

The Tank Management family business was founded in Oslo in 2006 and has evolved into a European specialist in the temperature-controlled transport of liquid loads, specifically for the chemical and food industries. Transport is mainly organised by rail, as well as short sea and road.

With a turnover of €40 million, Tank Management currently has 35 employees. Its fleet consists of 800 ISO tanks capable of transporting liquids at different temperatures ranging from -10deg to +120degC. As with Huktra, all units are equipped with real-time track & trace. The temperature inside Tank Management's fleet can be remotely monitored and controlled.

Liquid chemical bulk transport is part of a long-term strategic plan for H Essers. This is a sector with complex logistical challenges, stringent regulations and specific operating conditions (such as temperature control, safety and environment). H Essers is concentrating increasingly on synchromodality, ie, intelligently combining various modes of transport.

Huktra, a family business based in Zeebrugge, and specialising in multimodal transport of liquid chemicals, was acquired at the beginning of 2018. This solid basis is now substantially developed with the acquisition of Tank Management, the Belgian logistics group stated.

Huktra already had branches in Belgium, the UK, Spain, Italy and Romania. The takeover of Tank Management has added France, the



H Essers' acquisition of Tank Management comes some two years after it bought Huktra

Netherlands and Scandinavia to the list.

With these additional regions, the service area is also being expanded. The firm's transport range for liquid chemicals now extends throughout Europe, from Gibraltar to Murmansk, from Ireland to the Urals.

With the takeover, there will be an even stronger focus on temperature controlled transport for the chemical industry. On top of this, Tank Management provides heated and cooled transport of liquid pharma goods and food products.

"After the substantial growth Tank Management has recorded in recent years, it is now time for the next step," said a spokesperson for the Nordbo and Philippe families, Tank Management's owners.

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"Thanks to the acquisition by a strong industrial player such as H Essers, Tank Management will continue to excel in service, to grow and to expand its expertise in the coming years."

H Essers' CEO Gert Bervoets added: "The acquisition of Tank Management fits into our strategy of sustainable development of synchromodality within the chemical segment. It enables us to offer our customers a new way of managing transport flows, which are not only more efficient but, thanks to this approach, also more sustainable. It's a win-win situation for all parties: customers, logistics service providers and our community."

"Tank Management is a family business that shares our values," Bervoets continued. "As is the case in our company, safety and quality are paramount. As an example, material and equipment are frequently renewed to ensure that the operations meet the most stringent standards and strictest requirements. We are very much looking forward to welcoming our new colleagues into the H Essers family and to shaping our future together."

The takeover was completed at the beginning of July. The current Tank Management directors will remain on board, as was the case with the Huktra takeover. The focus in the first phase is on the integration and consolidation towards one entity, specifically for conditioned liquids transport for the chemical industry. This entity represents a turnover of €100 million and a fleet of 2,000 tanks.

www.essers.com



Liquid chemical bulk transport is part of a long-term strategic plan for H Essers

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Hoyer doubles reefer tank fleet

Hoyer Group has one of the biggest fleets of foodstuff tank containers in the sector.

The company's experts constantly set new standards by developing container technologies and logistics solutions. To this end, 50 new ISO reefer tanks, 25 of which have integrated stirrers, have been brought into Hoyer's fleet.

The tank containers score points with a newly-developed cooling system and the latest smart technologies linked to the Smart Portal – for greater product safety, economy and sustainability.

Explaining the reasons behind the investment, Brian Woudsma, Hoyer's global food director, said: "Hoyer is a specialist for intermodal transport operations to meet the food sector's high demands in the overseas area. With customised logistics solutions, we have made a strong name for ourselves in the market. This greatly increased the demand for transport services, which led us to take further strategic steps."

Hoyer's reefer tank fleet size has now doubled to 100 units.

A special feature of the new tanks is the refrigeration units which have the latest control technology and integrated stirrers. This system allows Hoyer to guarantee the required temperature is maintained during the entire transport movement within the whole tank space evenly – from loading to unloading. Parameters are defined according to the respective product. This guarantees the quality of sensitive liquid foods such as fruit juices, alcoholic drinks, liquid yeast and many other products, even on lengthy transport journeys. A heater can be used to ensure complete emptying of the tank container of certain products.

A key benefit compared to big drums, says Hoyer, is the smaller risk to the product, eg, resulting from frequent pump transfers into different tanks. Another advantage is that they can be used for storage purposes. This increases flexibility when planning and carrying out transport movements. The standard equipment also includes CIP (cleaning-in-place) cleaning units that meet high hygiene standards.

The heart of the reefer tank is the telematics system integrated into

the refrigeration controller. As part of its digitalisation campaign, Hoyer is progressively equipping all its tank containers with telematics to measure parameters including location, temperature, pressure and filling level. More than half of the fleet is already 'smart', and the entire tank container fleet, currently 40,800 units, is scheduled to be equipped as Smart Tanks by the end of 2021.

Combining with an information and warning system that collects all the sensor data and displays it in its own online portal, almost in real time, enables optimum monitoring of the load, with proactive analysis options. This avoids the need to create and update complex overview tables manually. A single glance shows where a tank container is located, whether its temperature, filling level and pressure are within pre-defined limits, or if there is a need to take action.

Woudsma added: "Continuous temperature monitoring is especially important when transporting foodstuffs. The system raises an alarm immediately if the temperature deviates." Correction can take place either through the Smart Portal or directly at the tank container.

Smart Tank and Smart Portal make logistics not only safer and more secure, but also more cost-efficient and environmentally friendly, the Hamburg-based logistics firm maintains. In addition, there are constant technical optimisations on the tank containers. To achieve this, Hoyer has its own in-house specialists. Chemists, engineers, sales and marketing experts work as a team to drive forward developments.

According to engineering director Hans Demarest: "As a logistics company, having this in-house know-how is a significant competitive advantage and a quality factor. Due to our interdisciplinary collaboration, we are able to find the best solution for every need." The team also works constantly on payload optimisation of the ISO reefer tank containers to enable transport movements to be carried out more efficiently.

www.hoyer-group.com

MDI distribution for Den Hartogh Turkey

Recently Turkish company EMA Kimya awarded Den Hartogh a contract for the distribution of methylene diphenyl isocyanate (MDI) and polyols for the Turkish domestic market.

The first shipments were loaded at the beginning of August. Den Hartogh uses specifically modified tank containers for local market requirements that comply with ISOPA (the European trade association for producers of diisocyanates and polyols) standards. The transport movements are handled by experienced and ISOPA-trained drivers.

Den Hartogh has been in the Turkish market since 2009. Kerem Gürlü, general manager of Den Hartogh Lojistik Hizmetleri, said: "We strive to serve EMA Kimya and its customers in the Turkish market with the highest safety and performance standards by providing them with innovative solutions through the application of operational excellence and customer centricity that help to create a sustainable future, while doing no harm to people or the environment."



EMA Kimya is a subsidiary of Huntsman Polyurethanes. MDI is used in widespread applications across multiple industries.

www.denhartogh.com

Fresh TT Club guidance

With an insurable interest in excess of 50 percent of the world's tank container fleet, freight transport insurer TT Club has an intimate understanding of the sector.

Its latest StopLoss guidance for tank container operators in managing risk in this element of the global supply chain contains valuable advice.

Tank containers have been used in the international supply chain to distribute cargoes for many years. In March this year, ITCO released its 2020 Global Tank Container Fleet Survey. While covering a period prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the survey highlighted a slowdown in the growth of the global fleet in 2019 (7.88 percent) versus 2018 (10.81 percent). This was partially a consequence of the fall in global trading conditions experienced by many sectors of the container shipping industry.

On the positive side, however, the fleet continues to expand. This can be attributed to shippers recognising the benefits of shipping their cargoes in tank containers (as opposed to drums or parcel tankers). The survey reported strong growth for Chinese domestic bulk liquid movement, as well as within the intra-Asia trade.

Having this heritage in the insurance of maritime containers, TT Club has used its experience of working with operators, answering their queries and handling their claims to create a StopLoss document.

The StopLoss advisory follows on from the success of TT's tank container seminar in late last year and confirms the Club's commitment to provide supportive understanding for those businesses entering or on the periphery of the industry as well as established operators. Additionally, TT collaborated with a number of industry and technical experts to produce this new guidance focused on managing tank container risk.

The intention of the publication is to identify and highlight common claims exposures, whether operational or connected with the care of the tank as an asset. The StopLoss provides a platform from which TT can disseminate this analysis output and provide guidance for the benefit of all. In line with other recently published work by IMDG Code Compliance Centre the guidance seeks to bring clarity as to the responsibilities of the various stakeholders.

This practitioners' good practice guide is aimed at all stakeholders through the tank container transport chain whether operating, filling, discharging, cleaning or handling tanks. Informed by typical incidents, the document is structured in such a way that it follows the natural chronology of the transport chain in order to provide ease of access.

The publication incorporates several pieces of valuable operational insight, with references to applicable regulations. In the interests of increasing the longevity of the tank as an asset, the topical subject of corrosion/pitting is extensively covered within the guidance, likely of interest to tank owners and operators.

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As the largest tank container operator, Stolt Tank Containers (STC) has a unique perspective on how the global Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the industry.

With a fleet of more than 40,000 tanks and 22 cleaning and repair depots, STC operates on all continents.

Bulk Distributor spoke to some of STC's regional directors to ask how the pandemic has affected business in different regions and what might or might not change once the world returns to something approaching normal circumstances.

The directors contacted were: Greg Vinson (Asia), Laurent Grandjean (Europe), Brandon O'Brien (Americas), Ian Harvey (Middle East/Africa), and marketing director Mark Bertens.



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BD. What has been the impact so far of the pandemic in terms of demand for tank transport?

Greg Vinson – Asia. At the outset of the pandemic, customer reaction was limited. There were the obvious spikes in demand connected with products for sanitisers, but little change early on in many industries, with hope that the virus would subside or be limited geographically.

There was also the perpetual motion of the supply chain that seemed to be unaffected for quite some time, with demand fall-off only evident once product stacked up at destinations. At the same time with producers being different than consumers, plants continued to run and build export stocks as buyers forecasts were slow to be adjusted.

Cargo had to move and in many cases it did, just to go into storage at destination. Industries already under pressure remained so, with cashflow taking on even greater importance. When the pandemic expanded beyond China first to Europe and SE Asia, there was a net positive effect for STC as our very strong business technologies framework allowed us to transition our business activities seamlessly from home to office, while maintaining high levels of service and reliability that customers clearly valued and welcomed.

As a result we have seen some new customers who are concerned about their supplier's ability to serve, rely heavily on STC.

Laurent Grandjean – Europe. Demand shrank significantly in May and June. However, it now seems to be bouncing back.

Brandon O'Brien – Americas. There was a wait and see sentiment when this all began in China, but quickly became a concern for customers once there were Covid outbreaks in Europe, followed by the US. With our customers and their products often heavily involved in keeping large plants operational, there was a long lag before we felt the impacts. As the slowdown began, the slack was picked up by sanitising and cleaning based chemicals. Once containerised trade was clearly impacted, the ocean carriers' ability to control capacity led to many customers turning to reliable and sustainable suppliers like STC.

Ian Harvey – Middle East/Africa. In the Middle East and Africa we saw a downturn in business, especially in the second quarter as Europe started to be hit hard by the virus, and businesses were either shut or manufacturing was scaled back. The fact that the markets to which we were shipping were affected at different times, rather than all at once, helped mitigate the slowdown.

The deficit in shipments was driven not only by the severity of the pandemic in certain areas, but also the fear of the unknown as to what the near future might be in terms of supply and demand of the products we move.

Many of the large chemical producers continued to produce with little or no disruption, and luckily due to robust systems, procedures and a seamless transition from office to home, our offices in the region were able to handle all customer requests and operations without any disruption. This was noticed and highly commended by customers, in many instances.

How has demand impact played out in particular regions?

Greg Vinson. There has been a flight to quality in Asia. Significantly, this was first due to our ability to continue operating without interruption as Covid-19 moved around the globe. In this respect, we believe that customers found challenges with some competitors and shifted their business to STC.

In other cases, we believe that customers, fresh off the Hanjin bankruptcy a few years ago, simply wanted to be sure that their cargo was in tanks and under the control of a financially strong company. One important element in our favour was that we knew all the time what our network of depots could do, how the people were reacting and what was possible to promise customers when so many other operators could not get their tanks cleaned.

Aggregate demand has not increased. We have successfully converted cargo from flexitanks and built on already strong customer relationships to grow volume further. India has suffered greatly as a country during the lockdown, probably much more than is fully known. With so many factories employing workers from distant states, restarting production has been painfully difficult and keeping them going just as difficult. With credit tightening and the government mandate of full payment to staff during non-revenue shutdown, it has really impacted some companies' viability.

Brandon O'Brien. With direct reference to South America, STC's growth and strategy changes there began in mid-2019, and so started well before the onset of Covid-19. That momentum carried us into the pandemic period and positioned us to capitalise on the increased customer demand for sanitisers.

With STC being respected and having a local network in Latin America, customers looked to us for quality and reliability in supporting them in these difficult times. Unlike North America, South America faced far more hurdles in governmental involvement directly impacting the movement of goods within their jurisdiction. In North America, we shifted focus and saw a very strong start to 2020 prior to the pandemic. Demand has remained buoyant, but with different product mix.

Ian Harvey. So far, the pandemic has had limited negative effect on the Middle East, as we saw chemical plants continue to produce with little disruption to output, and the staggered effect of markets



More efficient work organisation and process is going to be deployed by using lessons learned from the crisis

opening and closing helped keep products moving. However, one of the biggest effects on the Middle East was the closure of the Indian market.

What about shipments traversing two or more regions, eg, Asia-Europe, Asia-America, North-South?

Greg Vinson. The big challenge on these lanes was the large number of blank sailings put in by the shipping lines as they were faced with plummeting demand for space and responded by cutting back dramatically on capacity. This extended customers' supply chains, reducing the speed and flexibility of their solutions.

In many ports, national authorities put in unilateral berthing delay structures, in some cases requiring ships to have a minimum of 14 days between their last port and their next one.

Brandon O'Brien. Carriers and governments were the two biggest challenges on international trade lanes. Carriers learned early when Covid-19 hit China right before Chinese New Year that their ability to control capacity was extremely lucrative in an otherwise terrible demand market. Additionally, governments had changing guidelines as cases increased from specific countries and information on the virus became available.

The early impacts on the international logistics chain were there, yet customers were looking to us to support them. Our systems in place allowed us to work seamlessly between our geographical locations, as well as being efficient moving from in the office one day to fully remote the next.

Has the pandemic had unexpected positive consequences for certain shipments?

Greg Vinson. In essence, the strong can get stronger, if they take the advantage to do so. And the weaker are vulnerable and are much more likely to be culled from the pack. On the chemicals side, really ethanol and isopropanol producers are the two biggest benefactors.

Laurent Grandjean. We have seen an increase in sanitiser ingredients coming into Europe.

Brandon O'Brien. Chemicals used for sanitising and cleaning will see increased demand even after Covid, but no one knows to what extent.

Ian Harvey. Where we have seen land borders closed, this has allowed us more short-sea movements and more local distribution opportunities, as well as short term storage for chemical plants that need to keep production going. Some additional deep-sea loads have also been secured, especially for ethanol.

What has been the impact on fleet utilisation rates?

Greg Vinson. Positive for STC at the start, but this also has had a coincident connection to some of our structural fleet strategies.

Laurent Grandjean. Utilisation dropped although not to levels first expected as a portion of the fleet was sitting in plant storage or awaiting delivery.

Brandon O'Brien. With a backed-up supply chain at customer facilities, we have seen an increase in utilisation and customers holding onto equipment longer.

Ian Harvey. It's had a positive effect on utilisation, in that tanks have been kept by receivers (and shippers) for longer, which has helped utilisation.

What do you see as the most likely long-term consequences of the pandemic for the tank container markets?

Greg Vinson. Leasing companies will have been burned by small operators and freight forwarders, and will be somewhat risk averse going forward. Lower demand means that there will be fewer new tanks purchased and the number of builders will reduce through closure. With many companies failing, there will be a smaller range of retail products available for consumers, with a resulting reduction in demand of some specialty products.

There will be reduction in drums and small packages as contact spread of the virus will incentivise bulk and fewer handling of any such items. Reduced air travel will impact demand of many products. More stay at home activities will increase demand for electronics, and their chemicals, etc.

The bottom line is that there will be fewer tank container

operators as customers fly to the safety of solid companies.

Laurent Grandjean. This depends on how quickly a vaccine can be found and deployed. Should the threat remain for several years then some markets will be structurally disrupted, such as chemicals used in the mobility sector, plastics lubricants and additives for cars. Depressed economies and the subsequent job losses will reduce demand overall despite government emergency plans to support consumption

Brandon O'Brien. Customers will be looking to secure their supply chains for the future. This could mean holding additional inventory

and being more diligent on the financial stability of their suppliers and customers. As companies struggle with cash flow, the impacts of that will be remembered after this storm.

Ian Harvey. The biggest concern here is how economies will be affected by the pandemic, and whether we will have a global recession. Massive industries such as airlines or automotive have taken a huge hit and this will have an effect on our business, especially the auto industries. It would stand to reason that a vaccine would help, however, that will take over a year for all countries to get supply, and then there is the apparent lack of full understanding of the virus itself, and how it works.

Might it speed consolidation in the operator and/or leasing sectors?

Greg Vinson. Capital remains so cheap that consolidation of leasing will only happen for companies in the most dire of circumstances. Even then, these companies could be hived off at 50 cents on the dollar and survive. Fundamentally, acquisition is valueless without physical assets of the purchased company. There is no structure in which a buyer of a company of leased-in tanks is worth paying anything to acquire.

Second, with capital conservation, it will be more difficult to find operators with the cash and the confidence to part with it for an acquisition. This is going to be one big circling of vultures to take advantage where the chance comes...at all levels.

Continued on page 6 →

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Driving digital change

What investments has STC made in its digital strategy recently?

Mark Bertens, marketing director. Over the past couple of years we have invested heavily in digital connectivity options for both customers and suppliers. Examples of these investments are our Track & Trace service on our upgraded website, the industry's first Supplier Portal, the ability for customers to book digitally with STC via well-known supply chain platforms like INTRA and InforNexus, but also in a new pricing and quoting platform.

An upgraded version of our mySTCtanks online customer portal is currently being developed and will be launched at a later stage. Further innovations are in the pipeline.

What benefits do these investments bring to your customers?

Mark Bertens. The starting point for all our digitisation efforts is that any investment we make must make it easier and faster for our customers to do business with STC, and offer them a true competitive advantage through higher efficiency and lower cost.

We do so by providing customers and suppliers with improved information flows and real-time updates, and by offering them

a choice of various easy-to-use tools and platforms. Furthermore, digitisation of customer transactions and touchpoints not only reduces the risk of errors, it also allows our people to deal better with exceptions, and give our customers the personal touch that they appreciate.

Has the pandemic boosted customer interest in and uptake of digitisation?

Mark Bertens. Absolutely! Ever since the pandemic started to spread at the beginning of the year, and more and more customers started to operate from their home offices, we have seen a sharp rise in the number of customers and suppliers wanting to connect and transact with us digitally, either directly or via one of our third party platform options.

At the same time we have noticed an increase in the usage of our online Track & Trace service, as well as overall website visits as customers are, more than ever, looking for up-to-date information. It is safe to say that the pandemic has accelerated digitisation, and it reaffirms the importance of our ongoing digitisation efforts and investments.

www.stolttankcontainers.com

→Continued from page 5 Laurent Grandjean. I don't think so, although some may not be able to last over a two year depressed cycle.

Ian Harvey. I expect to see small, inexperienced, regional players begin to fail as customers seek quality, reliability and financial strength. There is still a glut of tanks around the world, and I don't see opportunities to buy or consolidate with smaller operators, as most of their equipment is leased, and we are mostly serving the same customers. Leasing companies would probably be hurt the most in such a scenario. They have already been consolidating prior to the pandemic, and don't see much possibility for more consolidation at this time.

Could it also mean more transports over shorter distances as supply chains become shorter?

Greg Vinson. Covid doesn't really drive that. Reduced consumption and supply means that more product will have to go farther to find a home. If you loop in the USA/China trade war as a separate subject, perhaps there is something to this...but I don't really see supply chains getting shorter...and with fewer vessel options, etc... I expect they will be slower anyway.

Laurent Grandjean. Government might (perhaps should) ask to reshore some supply chains for medical ingredients.

Brandon O'Brien. There has been discussion on near-shoring supply chains for years prior to Covid. I don't think the pandemic will change these decisions. During the lockdowns, customers saw that logistics chains were reliable. The bottlenecks and issues were more domestic, thus shorter supply chains would not have helped.

Ian Harvey. Shortening supply chain routes will take time, and this is something that was being discussed, even before the pandemic, more so because of the trade war between the US and China. This is not something that will happen overnight as it will take many years, except in possible areas of national importance, eg, pharmaceuticals.

It has been reported that certain shortages in dry freight containers had given a boost to converting some cargoes away from flexitanks back to tank containers. Is this likely to continue, or is it more a temporary phenomenon?

Greg Vinson. I don't think there is a shortage of boxes. With global trade being depressed there are more boxes available than there were before, unless they are sitting full of cargo, not moving. There could be some conversion due to supply, but I think it is more due to concerted pushes for sustainability, and the rebellion against single use plastics, and tank containers being competitively priced.

Brandon O'Brien. In the early days of the pandemic there was some back up of containers at ports and importers were having difficulty moving boxes inland. If there was any cargo transition as a result of this, it will not be continuous. Cargo transition happens when customers make the choice to use a more sustainable mode of transport.

Ian Harvey. We have seen this to a certain degree, which we believe is a result of these containers being returned empty more slowly (and so unavailable), due to the pandemic and uncertainty surrounding it. I think that a different trend will, in time, affect flexitank use more...sustainability and environmental awareness, especially for those importing and exporting from Europe.

What investment do you envisage in terms of fleet additions, modernisations, etc?

Greg Vinson. We will grow organically and add to our fleet. We will continue to invest in business technology and improving the efficiency our depots for faster processing and more services. There are a few companies worth acquiring, but every buyer needs a seller and a pitch worth considering.



Laurent Grandjean. This crisis has proven that our digitisation journey that we embarked upon several years ago was the right one, and has brought immediate benefit when we could turn homes into offices without any service impact. More efficient work organisation and process is going to be deployed by using lessons learned from this crisis.

Brandon O'Brien. Our investments will continue to be in technology and digitising our business for the future. We will focus our resources on further integrating with our customers and providing services they value.

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Utilisation dropped although not to levels first expected as a portion of the fleet was sitting in plant storage or awaiting delivery

Bertschi well-positioned despite pandemic

At the start of summer, Bertschi shareholders were reminded that the Swiss bulk logistics group cannot escape the impacts of Covid-19.

But at the annual general meeting on 4 July, directors said the company handled the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic with aplomb, thanks in part to its advanced digital transformation, which is to be accelerated.

The company also aims to seek out opportunities during the crisis and continue to invest in innovative customer solutions. Meanwhile, the group board of directors has been expanded to include China expert Kurt Haerri, as well as Jörg Berner, the first member of the family's third generation.

Bertschi said it has so far coped well with the effects of the pandemic, helped by the prompt and successful manner in which Bertschi China tackled the challenge at the outset. Similarly, the group's major investments in its digital transformation over the past two years enabled it to shift 80 percent of its office-based staff to home offices within days and with no impact on quality. These digitalisation efforts are now being extended. The focus on combined transport, with block trains crossing national borders rather than trucks with drivers, also enabled smooth transport operations during the border closure phase in Europe.

The health and safety of employees is always the top priority at Bertschi, particularly during the coronavirus outbreak. "Thanks to organisational precautions, a high level of awareness and great care on the part of all employees, as well as a comprehensive working-from-home structure and separate shifts in operational processes, we have so far navigated the crisis without a single case of infection within the group," said group CEO Jan Arnet.

Furthermore, based on the financial scenarios for 2020 and 2021, management and directors have secured the group's long-term liquidity with additional bank loans. The robust financial footing and its outstanding rating from banks facilitated favourable borrowing conditions.

"In addition to long-term liquidity, we have achieved our objective of attaining sufficient room for manoeuvre to take advantage of opportunities offered by the market even during the crisis," added Hans-Jörg Bertschi, executive chairman of the company. As a result of the pandemic, business volumes in Bertschi's most important European transport market declined by almost 20 percent since April, due mainly to a slump in demand in the automotive and durable consumer goods sectors, which use many chemical products. Recovery of the two sectors is expected to be slow, possibly lasting until the end of 2021.

The coronavirus situation also yielded some new opportunities. The experience spurred many customers to diversify and strengthen their supply chains, and greater sustainability is becoming increasingly important to them. Bertschi wants to seize these opportunities with new services and thus compensate for transport losses.

Arnet emphasised: "Even during the crisis, Bertschi is proactively seizing new opportunities in the market and investing in innovative and sustainable customer solutions. This applies to both the European market and our global services, where we see considerable potential for future growth."

Bertschi Group's business performance over the first five months of 2020 was satisfactory in view of the major challenges it faced. The road back to normality will take some time, however, and there is a continued risk of further setbacks. "We do not expect global demand for chemicals to return to pre-crisis levels until the end of 2021. However, we do see short-term opportunities in the market and can implement the necessary investments very quickly thanks to our robust financial situation," said Hans-Jörg Bertschi.

On the expansion of the group board, Kurt Haerri has worked for Schindler since 1987, currently as senior vice president. From 1996 to 2003 and 2017 to 2019, he worked for the company in China, where he managed the business for new installations. From 2006 to 2014, he served as president of the Swiss-Chinese Chamber of Commerce (SCCC) and is currently a member of its board. His many years of experience in the Chinese market and in global supply chain management will bring new impetus to the group, Bertschi believes.

With Jörg Berner, the board adds a member from the third generation of the Bertschi family for the first time. Berner attained a master's degree from the University of St Gallen in 2013 and was an investment manager at Invision in Zug from 2013 to 2016. Since 2016, he has worked for the Bertschi Group as a project manager in strategic projects. In 2018, he helped establish the new company site in Houston (US) for the acquired subsidiary Elite International Logistics. His appointment to the board is in line with the succession concept and the Bertschi family constitution of 2009, which aims to facilitate the transition from the second to the third generation with a transitional phase in between.

www.bertschi.com

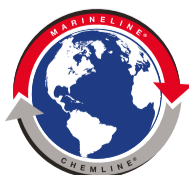


Bertschi said it has so far coped well with the effects of the pandemic

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Refurb for Abbey food grade washbay

UK bulk food road tanker company Abbey Logistics has reopened its food grade wash bay in Hull following significant investment in the site.

Located minutes from Port of Hull, Abbey's wash bay has been providing food grade tanker wash services to its own and third-party hauliers' road tankers for more than 30 years.

During that time, the company has worked hard to keep pace with steadily changing customer needs, regulations and demand patterns.

As part of that continuous improvement, work began in late 2019 to overhaul the wash bay in Hull bring it up to date with the latest technology with a focus on creating a facility that can offer hauliers in the area and those using the port, a cost effective, accredited and efficient service.

Improvements include a new boiler system that ensures heat stability and reliability. The boiler system is fed by a new fully insulated hot well which improves reliability to the boiler by eliminating cold water shock.

Hard water in Hull creates significant limescale in any water system so Abbey has installed a water softening plant to prevent build up. The plant also has the added benefit of only needing low level salt dosing which removes the need for chemicals and the associated downtime required to descale the system.

New spinners to regulate water flow and ensure a thorough and complete wash provides efficiency benefits and combined with state of the art in-line thermometers that deliver a constant reading of water temperature, allows complete quality control of all wash cycles.

Abbey points out that it is vitally important that tankers are washed to a standard that exceeds legal compliance and all customer requirements. Abbey's detergent injection system guarantees the correct dosage for every product through fully regulated flow controls that ensure correct dosages are applied to each and every wash.

A new gantry and fall arrest system for wash bay operatives was also installed along with improvements to the on-site interceptor



Improvements include a new boiler system that ensures heat stability and reliability.

which pre-treats wash water prior to discharge.

Abbey's project lead on these improvements was Adam Copping, the company's technical and quality manager. He said: "This project was a major undertaking and we are delighted with the improvements made to the facility.

"Our goal was to set the standard for food grade tank washes in terms of reliability, quality and environmental efficiency and I think what we have achieved in Hull does that.

"Abbey can now offer customers a leading tank cleaning service that is fast, efficient, reliable and exceeds legal compliance, giving them peace of mind that tanks are cleaned to the strictest levels of compliance. Several international food manufacturers have audited and approved the changes we have made, and we are in the process of securing SQAS and EFTCO accreditation.

"Future plans for the site include further improvements to our IBC wash capabilities which will be operational later in the year."

- Abbey has also been awarded accreditation from Alcumus SafeContractor, for achieving excellence in health and safety in the workplace.

Alcumus SafeContractor is a third-party accreditation scheme which recognises extremely rigorous standards in health and safety



management. The scheme is accredited by UKAS, the UK's national accreditation body for certification providers and they are also a member of Safety Schemes in Procurement (SSIP) Ltd, ensuring that their accreditation services also follow best practice.

Under the SafeContractor scheme, Abbey underwent a strict audit process which looked at our health and safety procedures and management processes together with our track record for health and safety compliance.

Kenny McCallum, Abbey's head of SHEQ, said: "We are a safety-first business which applies to employees, customers and to members of the public that we come in to contact with, and this accreditation is another demonstration of our commitment to ensuring we operate all aspects of the business in the safest way possible."

www.abbeylogisticsgroup.com

Two big wins for Suttons

Two significant business wins were unveiled by Suttons Tankers during the summer.

The logistics firm has been awarded a 10-year contract for the transport of bio-resources for Yorkshire Water, while the company is now also working for petrochemical firm Essar Oil UK.

Suttons was appointed by Yorkshire Water to support the utility in delivering its commitment to OFWAT to be the UK's leading bio-resources provider by 2025.

A key indicator of trust for Yorkshire Water came from Suttons' commitment to continuous improvement and an innovation-led operation throughout the contract. Suttons' bespoke solution reduces Yorkshire Water's cost to serve and environmental impact, resulting in nearly 10,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions saved each year.

Michael Cundy, managing director of Suttons Tankers, explained said: "We are delighted to have been awarded this contract with Yorkshire Water which demonstrates the divisional strategy of expanding into alternative sectors."

Ben Raistrick at Yorkshire Water added: "Suttons Tankers' ability to

Suttons won a 10-year contract for the transport of bio-resources for Yorkshire Water



build a bespoke solution which added value to our business and drove efficiencies for our customers was a key factor when awarding the contract. The agility and expertise of the team assured us that the operation would be safely carried out with service excellence."

For Essar Oil UK Suttons is now transporting products from the Stanlow Refinery to customers in the Midlands and across North West England.

Essar selected Suttons as one of its haulier partners to strengthen its supply chain. The scale of the Suttons network was a key factor in meeting Essar's business needs.

Suttons is keen to expand in the fuels sector and demonstrated a willingness to invest, as well as having the ability to offer agility and flexibility to meet the customer's needs.

Michael Cundy said: "This new contract with Essar marks a significant point in our strategic objective to grow in the fuels sector. Our ability to drive cost efficiencies for Essar, especially in the current climate, is crucial and demonstrates our commitment to providing our customers with tailored solutions."

Essar's head of logistics Mark Barnes commented: "Suttons are a significant and reputable player in the market and we were impressed with the company's detailed approach in understanding the needs of our business throughout the tender process. Following a successful implementation at the start of July, Suttons has so far demonstrated that it will be a partner adding strength to our supply chain."

www.suttonsgroup.com

Wincanton opts for Volvo

Britain's largest third-party logistics firm Wincanton has taken delivery of two new Volvo FM 8x2 tankers to work within its milk delivery division, supplied on a five year operating lease through Volvo Financial Services.

Both new trucks replace older models from a rival marque and have been built on a 5,100mm wheelbase, with a rear-steering tag axle for maximum manoeuvrability when loaded, and reduced tyre wear and improved fuel economy when running empty.

Power comes from Volvo's D11K Euro-6, Step D engine producing up to 430hp and up to 2,050Nm of torque.

They are mounted with bodywork by Sayers Road Tankers and will be in operation 24/7, covering up to 180,000km a year and collecting up to 89,000 litres of milk each day from farms across South Wales.

Dave Rowlands, Wincanton's technical services director, commented: "These are very high-spec tankers built for a specific contract, and Volvo could meet the precise configuration we needed. They'll be serviced and maintained through Volvo and we know from previous experience that we'll receive fantastic support.

"Quality and safety are key to milk transportation," he added. "We're confident these new trucks are among the safest and most efficient of their type on the road, offering maximum reliability on a contract where they literally never stop working, except for planned maintenance."

Both vehicles benefit from adaptive cruise control with forward collision warning, a lane departure warning system and driver alert support, which tracks driving behaviour and steering wheel inputs, providing an alert if it detects the driver might be tired and needs a break.

Wincanton has also specified a four-way recordable camera system linked to a dashboard-mounted monitor, rear-facing cameras down each side, an audible reverse alarm, park brake alarm and Brigade's Cornerscan ultrasonic obstacle detection system to detect objects in the front nearside blind spot.



For Essar Oil UK Suttons is transporting products from the Stanlow Refinery to customers in the Midlands and across North West England

Adler and Allan partners with Hoyer Petrolog

Environmental risk reduction specialist Adler and Allan has agreed a three-year partnership with Hoyer Petrolog UK Ltd to carry out road tanker testing across its road fuel tanker fleet.

The contract with Hoyer Petrolog UK includes holding fleet details on a secure database to ensure that all tests are carried out on schedule. Clients have password-protected database access to view their fleet information, including test results and certificates.

The integrity of the barrel and tank on road tankers should be tested every two years according to the UK Road Traffic (Carriage of Dangerous Substances in Road Tankers and Tank Containers) Regulations 1992.

Adler and Allan is approved by the Department for Transport to provide road tanker testing across the UK and issue Safe Loading Passes as well as meeting strict UKAS standards (0311 Type C Inspection Body Accredited to ISO/IEC 17020:2012).

Adler and Allan is also approved and accredited for testing general purpose and bitumen tanks as well as meter and fire extinguisher testing which is required annually.

Andrew Clarke, forecourt services managing director, Adler and Allan, said: "We are delighted that Hoyer Petrolog UK has trusted us with its road tanker testing in the UK. As well as road tanker testing



Adler and Allan has agreed a three-year partnership with Hoyer Petrolog UK to carry out road tanker testing

we are accredited to perform vapour tightness testing, intermediate and periodic inspection and testing.

"We are also experts in chemical compliance and have a 24/7 hazardous materials advice line. If you are transporting any bulk liquid in the UK, we can ensure you remain compliant and safe."

The news follows the latest announcement that Adler and Allan has extended its leak detection capability by offering Leighton O'Brien's automatic tank gauge alarm management solution and Wetstock Live fuel management software to the UK petroleum

industry.

Adler and Allan provides environmental risk reduction through preventative and responsive solutions, offering a 24-7 service to its customers. The company provides emergency response in a variety of settings, and customers include multinational blue-chip organisations across a range of sectors including defence, utility, marine, fuel, forecourt and facilities management.

www.adlerandallan.co.uk

Dover Precision increases robotics

Dover Precision Components (DPC) is activating robotic tuggers to improve product flow and advance lean manufacturing at its Inpro/Seal manufacturing facility in Rock Island, Illinois, USA.

The robotic tuggers mark an expansion of the use of manufacturing automation by DPC.

Inpro/Seal will be using the robotic tuggers to move raw materials, in-progress parts and completed products around the facility, eliminating safety risks associated with manual material handling. The system will also help regulate production cell pacing to reduce work-in-progress (WIP) and achieve lead time reductions.

The adoption of the autonomous tuggers is part of a long-term manufacturing strategy that aims to improve safety, ensure quality, optimise productivity, and quickly scale manufacturing volume in response to customer demand. From a safety perspective, the removal of risk is the best form of control, and the adoption of the tuggers will remove heavy lifting, pushing and tugging from human operation. From a lean manufacturing perspective, the robotic tuggers will eliminate waste associated with moving materials and parts, improve workflow and optimise lead time.

"DPC is committed to continuous improvement," said Dave Brown, the company's vice president of operational excellence. "The implementation of automation in our manufacturing processes is targeted at eliminating the 'seven types of waste' and focusing our energies on activities that add value to customers."

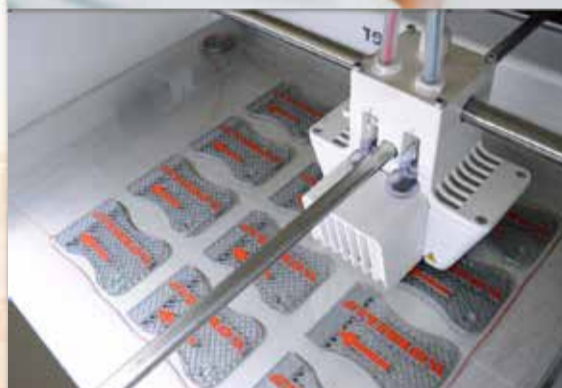
Previous automation upgrades at DPC's manufacturing facilities have also focused on the elimination of manual material handling. They include the introduction of automatic bar feed at the Inpro/Seal facility and the use of an articulating arm for loading material into CNC machines at the Cook Compression facility in Jeffersonville, Indiana, among others.

www.doverprecision.com



Inpro/Seal will use robotic tuggers to move raw materials around the facility

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Putting the power in powder transport

The performance capabilities of new screw compressors from Mouvex allows Lomas Distribution to maximise unloading times with hard-to-handle dry bulk products

With his broad-shouldered stature, walrus-style moustache and deep, gritty voice, no one would ever mistake Kevin Mears for an adolescent.

But to hear the veteran transport-truck driver talk about the capabilities of the MX12 Series Screw Compressor from Mouvex, one could easily envision him as a young boy who had just become the first kid on the block to be gifted with the hottest new video-game system or shiniest new bicycle.

"Other drivers want to know how I can build so much air so quickly; it's not a problem for me, it's a problem for them," Mears says with a sly chuckle.

The 'air' that Mears refers to is the two bars (29 psi) of pressure that are required when he is tasked with unloading granular or powdery substances like fly ash, lime and ferrous sulphate.

"A lot of the products are heavy products, granular stuff, so it's lumps and powder, and we need two bar to get it going," he explains. "[The MX12] is a fantastic bit of kit, really strong, powerful, does the job. Gets straight up to two bar and holds it there. That's where I need to be, two bar."

Mears' tipper trailer was recently chosen by his employer, Lomas Distribution, to be outfitted with an MX12 screw compressor on a trial basis. Buxton, Derbyshire, UK-based Lomas – which is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year – is one of Western Europe's largest privately-owned liquid and dry bulk haulage companies, and employs a rolling fleet of more than 1,300 vehicles.

In fact, Lomas was recently named the 'Tanker Operator of the Year' at the Tip-ex Tank-ex Awards 2019. These awards, which are part of the annual Tip-ex Tank-ex convention, honour the individuals, teams and businesses that are shaping the bulk haulage industry.

Lomas Distribution itself was chosen to field test the MX12 screw compressor by Meller Flow Trans (MFT), of Bradford, West Yorkshire, UK. Founded in 1960, MFT focuses on and specialises in developing liquid- and powder-based product transfer solutions for the transport market, regardless of industry. MFT has been a distributor for Auxerre, France-based Mouvex, part of PSG, based Oakbrook Terrace, IL, USA, for more than 25 years and in 2018 was actually named Mouvex's 'Distributor of the Year'.

The relationships MFT has built with both Lomas and Mouvex over the years and successful installations have helped make Lomas a regular user of Mouvex products. In fact, Lomas was one of the first UK haulage companies to embrace the innovative Mouvex MH6 Series Screw Compressor, which combines the power take-off (PTO) mechanism with the compressor. Therefore, it was almost natural that Lomas would beta test the MX12.

"MFT has been a key supplier to Lomas Distribution for many years and our partnership with Mouvex goes back over 25 years," says Mike Conway, key account manager for MFT. "The Mouvex MX12 is the latest compressor to join the Mouvex family and it is perfect for the UK 6x2 tractor market."

That market is governed by the Euro 6 regulation that puts limits on the size and weight of transport vehicles in Europe. To ensure that product transport payload capacities can remain as they were, truck manufacturers have begun designing lighter tractor-trailers that have very little space inside the truck frame for ancillary components, such as compressors and pumps.

The MX12 overcomes this challenge by being lightest and



The compact size and light weight (110kg) of the MX12 allows it to fit easily within the truck frame

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The ability of the MX12 to create two bars (29 psi) of air pressure is critical when unloading dry-bulk products



Specialising in dry-bulk transport, UK-based Lomas Distribution has grown into one of Western Europe's largest privately-owned haulage companies

compact, at a weight of just 110kg.

"Tractors are now extremely tight, space is at a premium, and the MX12's design allows for a very compact installation," says Conway. "It has been designed to maximise the space that is available."

Take a load off

While being able to place an MX12 on the new generation of Euro 6 transports is nice, the ultimate requirement is can it reliably perform, especially when handling a substance such as ferrous sulphate, which is an essential component in cement that is used to reduce the toxicity level of the cement.

"The best delivery time I've had is 22 minutes for 29 tons," adds Kevin Mears. "That was for ferrous sulphate, which is a granular product that you need a lot of air for. [The MX12] produces so much air, I even have to bypass it at times because it's producing too much."

When Mears' payload has been fly ash – a by-product of burned coal that is another common ingredient in cement – Mears has achieved a top unloading time of 15 minutes for 22 tons.

These unloading times can be produced because the two bar of air pressure that the MX12 creates enables it to achieve flow rates of up to 1,130 cbm/hr (18,833 L/min). That capability enables Mears to

unload, on average, a 28-ton trailer in 35-45 minutes, a process that would previously take more than an hour to complete.

The MX12 also checks other boxes for optimized screw-compressor performance, specifically those pertaining to vibration and noise levels.

"The shaft stops where it is, no rumbles, no tweaks or anything; super smooth," says Mears. "There's no vibration on it, it sits and runs perfectly, always straight in line, no problems whatsoever. I really enjoy using the Mouvex MX12, it's a fantastic compressor, easy to use, quiet."

The configuration of the MX12's ports allows for quick, simple installation, while its large and variable inlet speeds are able to match up with basic PTOs with low motor speeds. Should they ever be needed, repairs can be performed quickly and easily due to the MX12's modular design, which is also a benefit if the operator desires to make modifications or upgrades to the compressor system.

These benefits make the MX12 ideal for use with, as illustrated, powdery or granular substances, but also diverse dry-bulk products like plastics, gravel, animal food and cereals.

The capabilities of the MX12 also fit hand-in-glove with the business strategy that Lomas Distribution has recently developed. Namely, the company has made the conscious decision to have none



Lomas Distribution driver Kevin Mears (right) received an early Christmas present when Mike Conway, key account manager for Mouvex distributor Meller Flow Trans, recommended an MX12 Series Screw Compressor be installed on a trial basis on Mears' tipper trailer

of its 1,300-strong vehicle fleet be in service for more than three years before replacement, which is atypical for the transport market. As such, Lomas strives to outfit its transport fleet with the best equipment and systems available.

"As an organisation, it is very demanding," says Conway. "The focus and ethos are based on safety, green technology and green solutions wherever possible, with exceptional customer service. Lomas expects to provide exceptional customer service and, as a result, demands that from key suppliers."

"The Mouvex MX12's performance and low noise levels make it an ideal choice for a variety of different products and tractors in the powder market," Conway adds. "It provides maximum performance with extreme lightweight capability, quiet operation and maximum reliability."

www.mouvex.com

The design and operation of the MX12 allows for reliably high air pressures, no vibration, reduced noise levels, compact size and light weight



BIP Perolo - preparing for the next 100 years

Last year BIP Perolo celebrated its 100th anniversary and as such consolidated its reputation as a world leader in the supply of valves and fittings for tanks – whether an ISO tank container, a road tanker, a rail tank car or an IBC/offshore tank. Today, however, with COVID-19 disrupting the global economy, the festivities of last year seem to belong to a long lost past. Although this is what you might think, isn't it?

Truth shows us actually the contrary. It cannot be denied that global traffic was seriously hit when lockdown measures were taken for half of the world population. Yet, the markets seemed to have withstood better than expected and early signs of markets picking up are being registered, with the rail tank car and road tanker markets leading the way.

With this optimistic outlook, BIP Perolo has elected to seize the opportunity of this current dip in the markets to prepare for the future. Indeed at a time when most companies are reducing their investments, BIP Perolo is doubling its investments in 2020. Investing money is one thing, smart investment is another story. How to be sure that your investment pays off at a time when everybody is talking of 'the world before' and 'the world after' or also 'will we ever get back to normal'?

The answer to that question is quite straightforward. Whatever the new world will be, it will always require trained employees and up-to-date technology. Therefore, BIP Perolo made some strategic decisions. First of all, deploy a massive investment plan in state-of-the art technology in both factories in China and France. Second, make sure that employees are fully trained and have received the latest information concerning their job positions.

Among these investments BIP Perolo has acquired new 3D printers,

laser markers, robotic welding equipment and laser cutting machines. 3D printers not only greatly help the R&D department when developing new valves and fittings but will also allow speeding up the process of casting prototypes. Furthermore, it proves useful for demonstration and marketing purposes. As for laser markers, they enable streamlined tracing of parts and material.

Robotic welding will improve efficiency and consistency of the welding process for the whole of the Perolo range of equipment whether in carbon steel, stainless steel or aluminium.

Lastly, BIP Perolo invested in new laser cutting machines which have been installed in a brand new purpose built and dedicated workshop. With the new machines, the company is switching from CO2 to fibre laser cutting technologies. Next to doubling its production capacity, it has another advantage of power consumption that will be reduced by half. As such, the investments continue the path towards a greener production facility.

However, as stated before, technology is only beneficial when operated by trained and certified staff. Therefore, the second part of the investment plan concerns training programmes for BIP Perolo's employees, or the 'Péroliens' as they affectionately call themselves. They apply themselves every day to provide customers with the best quality and service.

BIP Perolo has existed for over a 100 years now and survived WWII and different economic crisis. What does this tell us about the company? That it managed successfully to adapt to an ever changing environment. Therefore, although no-one knows what the future might bring, BIP Perolo says can guarantee that it will be ready for it.

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Swisscom and Nexxiot advance strategic partnership

Nexxiot and Swisscom are deepening their relationship to deliver Swiss data services to clients around the globe.

Both companies are working more closely to deliver data driven supply chain intelligence to worldwide customers. Since its founding in 2015 at ETH Zurich, Nexxiot has been recognised as a pioneer in industrial and enterprise internet of things (IoT). Throughout this time Swisscom has a partner providing data connectivity to transmit data from Nexxiot devices to the Nexxiot Connect Cloud Platform for the cargo transport industry. From here, Nexxiot creates big data analytics tools and critical insights to improve supply chain processes.

Swisscom's EVP, head of connected business solutions, Friederike Hoffmann said: "Swisscom is excited to move forward with Nexxiot to deliver the benefits from IoT, one of the most advanced technologies to monitor constantly moving trains and cargo in some of the most remote places in the world. The Nexxiot team successfully scaled its business using Swisscom's global connectivity services, demonstrating trust and commitment in Swisscom's global IoT connectivity with its 5G-readiness and strong focus on reliability and security."

Nexxiot's CEO Stefan Kalmund is leading the expansion of the Swiss industrial IoT company. "It's exciting that clients trust us to equip their supply chain assets with our zero-maintenance hardware," he said. "This opens the door to creating and delivering huge value for fleet

operators and cargo owners who require data to improve their transparency around mileage, to increase the reliability of cargo arrival times and at the same time reach their sustainability targets."

Nexxiot monitors mobile assets like rail freight wagons and tank containers, with over a billion individual messages having now been sent from Nexxiot sensors to the Nexxiot platform using Swisscom connectivity. These messages originate from over 160 individual countries via more than 450 Swisscom roaming partners.

"While others are talking about 'Big Data', it's been Nexxiot's daily reality for a long time now. New customers have recently engaged in North America, Eastern Europe and beyond," added Kalmund.

Nexxiot has been able to innovate in the complex field of B2B IoT because Switzerland attracts some of the best data science and computer engineering skills in the world, especially with Zurich's lifestyle benefits, tech hubs, universities and culture of quality.

Creating business value may start with great ideas and a radical approach but to deliver meaningful action and favourable outcomes, a combination of analytics, AI, and machine learning must be integrated and deployed. Creativity needs to be mixed with business domain knowledge and a cutting-edge approach to data science to extract the value and differentiate services from competitors.

Nexxiot's partnership with Swisscom will focus on providing connectivity and supporting the



Marianna Levto is taking over as convenor of the ISO working group 'AEI for containers and container related equipment'

company's outreach into new markets through joint communications and a unified IoT strategy.

Kalmund added: "Addressing topics like managing data around international borders where connectivity providers are switched over, can add significant complexity and therefore needs careful management. The important thing is that our customers get seamless visibility and intelligence on performance critical topics like delays and transport interruptions. This means they can rely on us and our world class algorithms for the processed data they need to manage all their business activities and critical events in the supply chain."

Meanwhile, Marianna Levto, expert for global digital standards at Nexxiot, has been elected convenor of the ISO Technical Committee 104/SC 04/WG 2. Levto will take over the position in the working group 'AEI for containers and container related equipment'. In this function, she represents the 17 member states of the working group for the next three years and is committed to establishing practicable worldwide standards for the container market to embrace the digital age.

"In 2019 I was invited to ISO to develop standards for the industry," Levto commented. "I am very proud now to take over the lead of the working group. My mission over the next three years will be to work together with industry experts and representatives from other companies to define sustainable standards for the entire



Friederike Hoffmann, Swisscom's EVP, head of connected business solutions, is pleased to be working more closely with Nexxiot to provide IoT B2B solutions for the freight transport industry

logistic sector.

"During the current COVID-19 crisis, we have again been reminded of how important reliable supply chains are in our interconnected age," she continued. "Our task will be to find out how container equipment and especially digital equipment can support faster, safer and more dependable transport."

Levto has led some of the most complex proof-of-concepts between the rail cargo and the shipping industry in the Middle East, Russia and Far East.

Besides her role in ISO, Levto, a native of Israel, is also active in numerous other standardisation organizations, like ITCO, Container Owners Association, EPCA and several UN bodies.

Stefan Kalmund added that standards will bridge the demands from various technology providers, as open and inclusive standards will ensure that the market is not flooded with incompatible technology.

"The main focus is on interoperability across different transport modes, and we are proud that Marianna as one of our leaders, will take-over the role for this group. Digital container equipment must function perfectly on the ocean as well as on rail and road in order to provide the services our clients require," Kalmund said.

www.nexxiot.com



Even in remote places, Nexxiot monitors supply chain assets and cargo using Swisscom connectivity. Pic: Gerd Altmann, Pixabay

Portbase, TradeLens to enhance NWE trade lanes

As part of its digital initiative Portbase has completed the first phase of connecting with TradeLens, a platform for trade digitisation underpinned by blockchain technology.

The location of Dutch ports as gateway to Northwest Europe, as well as the size of the Portbase community and the coverage of its Port Community System combined with the global network on TradeLens will create opportunities for users to reduce administrative costs, increase efficiency, and contribute to openness and transparency in logistics.

The collaboration between Portbase and TradeLens creates a connection between the Dutch ports and a global system of carriers, ports and terminals, and inland providers. Its position in the Dutch ports allows Portbase to play an important role in bringing transparency to supply chains by providing connected parties with a single point of contact in those ports. Through Portbase, government notifications and declarations are regulated, and Portbase's existing networks have good geographical coverage for fast and efficient transport to and from the hinterland. As a Port Community System, Portbase

ties logistics chains through trust, connectivity and the availability of data. At all times the data is controlled and managed by the data owner while it remains easily accessible to authorised parties.

In this first phase, Portbase will send Customs clearance (hold and release) messages for all Maersk containers to TradeLens. Collaboration between Maersk, TradeLens and Portbase provides enhanced digital offerings for shippers within

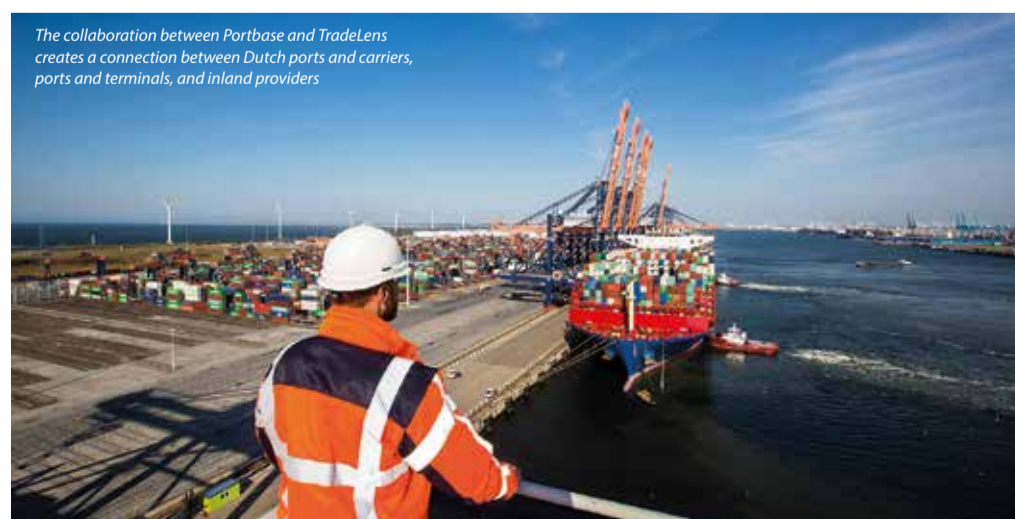
Northwest Europe. In return, Portbase will receive data back from the TradeLens platform (eg, information about transport and Customs milestones for shipments that are imported, exported or transhipped via the ports). Data will be available in the Port Community System for community members that have legitimate, permissioned access to the platform and can use data about each container to enhance their own

operations.

"By connecting with the TradeLens platform, Portbase creates a connection between our community and the global system," said Portbase managing director Iwan van der Wolf. "It allows all players in the logistics chain to share data with each other easily, quickly and securely, irrespective of their mutual relationship, enhancing trade for everyone involved. Thereby Portbase acts as a datahub for global trade via the Dutch ports and facilitates the connection to regional networks in Northwest Europe."

"The connection between Portbase and TradeLens will allow the already well-developed ecosystem around Dutch ports and the global network on TradeLens to reap the mutual benefits of exchanging data with each other," said Nicolas Buhmann, senior commercial manager network development, GTD Solution Inc. "Portbase and TradeLens are united in their vision of digitising trade in a way that customers on both sides can look forward to the enhanced offering resulting from this collaboration."

www.portbase.com
www.tradelens.com



The collaboration between Portbase and TradeLens creates a connection between Dutch ports and carriers, ports and terminals, and inland providers

Orbcomm wins product award

Orbcomm's next generation, solar-powered GT 1200 series of trailer tracking devices has received a 2020 IoT Evolution Product of the Year Award from IoT Evolution World, a leading web site covering IoT technologies.

The company launched its GT 1100 in 2013. Hundreds of thousands of devices later, Orbcomm followed up with the GT 1200 series, which includes an enhanced, high-sensitivity solar panel that charges up to 20 times faster than its predecessor even without direct sunlight, resulting in up to three times more messages per day for increased asset utilisation.

The compact devices are ruggedised to withstand extreme conditions, require no battery changes for up to 10 years and include built-in tamper and impact detection. The GT 1200 series also can easily be configured with Orbcomm's integrated cargo sensor and other wireless sensors. With a new streamlined design, the devices can be installed externally on all cargo asset types in about 10 minutes, even when the asset is full, making customer deployments quick and efficient with minimal disruption to their operations.

Orbcomm's GT 1200 series includes an enhanced, high-sensitivity solar panel that charges up to 20 times faster



"Orbcomm continues to lead the industrial IoT market with breakthrough innovation that enhances and expands our product and solution portfolio, which is validated by winning the IoT Evolution Product of the Year Award," said Craig Malone, executive vice president of product development. "With expanded support for wireless sensors, an improved solar panel and faster field installation, the GT 1200 series is the industry's top choice for trailer tracking, offering

incremental benefits to our transport customers looking to streamline their fleet operations, gain efficiencies and manage their business remotely in today's stay-at-home economy."

"The solutions selected for the IoT Evolution Product of Year Award reflect the diverse range of innovation driving the multi-billion dollar IoT market today. I congratulate Orbcomm for their innovative work and superior contribution to the rapidly evolving IoT industry," said Rich Tehrani, CEO of TMC, a co-publisher of IoT Evolution.

Orbcomm has also introduced a new generation analytics and reporting platform, which offers enhanced features, including advanced data insights and a dynamic user interface. It provides customers with a single, unified view of all their transport asset types using a single sign-on.

The cloud-based Orbcomm Platform was designed to address the industry's evolving requirements for greater processing power, data bandwidth and scalability in a 5G IoT system.

The Orbcomm Platform offers the ability for customers to track, monitor and control all of their transport assets in one place – from reefers, dry trailers and trucks to chassis and dry and refrigerated containers on the road, rail and at sea. The platform also includes a driver management component to enable workflow management, performance, communications and safety compliance with the Electronic Logging Device (ELD) Mandate, US FMCSA Hours of Service (HOS) and Canadian working hours rules.

The platform can accommodate any size of operation whether the customer has one or 100,000-plus assets. It also integrates with sensors for fuel, doors, cargo, temperature and more for unparalleled visibility.

Using Orbcomm's flexible APIs and extensive integrations, the open platform can deliver enhanced asset data to customers' existing third-party or proprietary enterprise systems to facilitate optimal fleet management. In addition, customers can access increased data and use the platform's advanced analytics to gain valuable insights about their assets' performance, including benchmarks, historic trends and comparisons among asset types, enabling faster, more informed business decisions.

Multiple modes of communication are supported, leveraging Orbcomm's experience providing a broad portfolio of satellite, cellular and dual-mode IoT connectivity. The platform's capacity has been expanded to process more than 100,000 messages per second, which is an increase of over 1,000 times in message throughput over legacy systems. With the increased processing capability, customers can continue to expand their deployments, access a higher level of visibility and enable more sophisticated solutions in a 5G, sensor-enabled IoT system, the company claims.

"Orbcomm has been a long-time technology leader and innovator in the industrial IoT market, and the Orbcomm Platform encapsulates our ability to understand and execute on the advanced features and functionality our customers need to be successful, competitive and prepared for a 5G, sensor-enabled IoT system," said Marc Eisenberg, Orbcomm's CEO. "The Orbcomm Platform provides fleet customers with a complete view across all their assets, deep data insights, faster response time, greater capacity, as well as more real-time visibility – all in one place, from one provider, with one sign-on."

In developing the new platform, Orbcomm also focused on incorporating self-service configurability and control to enable advanced permissioning, role allocation and authority levels, helping customers improve data security, reduce business risk and extend data access throughout the organisation. With the platform's modern, intuitive and easy-to-use interface, customers can unlock relevant data for every user in the organisation and customise the data they need to see through a higher level of personalised usability, including preferences, saved searches, scheduled reports, workspaces, widgets, and data filters.

www.orbcomm.com

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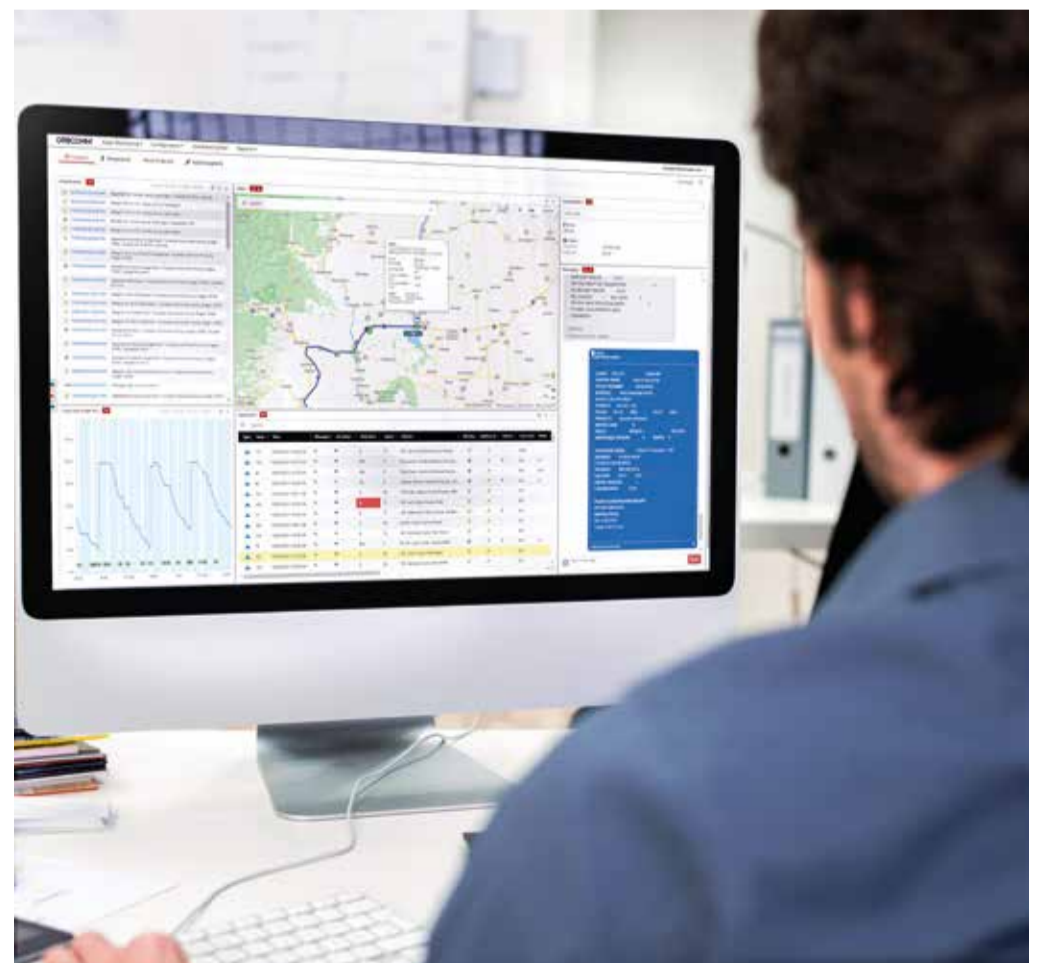
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Bulk Distributor's monthly email newsletter is one of the most widely read in the industry.

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Bulk Distributor is also on Twitter (@bulkdistributor) and LinkedIn



The Orbcomm Platform offers the ability to track, monitor and control all transport assets in one place

Clarifying drivers' hours regs

UK independent transport consultant Mister Tacho Ltd has clarified the position regarding WTD (Working Time Directive) regulations and highlighted the benefits of using reliable compliance software to keep operators on the right side of the law.

Managing director Frank O'Keeffe advised that failures to comply with legislation regarding drivers' hours and WTD can have serious implications for transport businesses, including fines and the suspension of operator licences. He emphasised the pandemic does not provide an excuse for non-compliance and desk-top audits by the DVSA hugely increased during lockdown.

O'Keeffe explained: "There is a lot of confusion about tachograph rules and breaks in driving. For example, the difference between the permitted 4.5 hours of actual driving and the WTD, which states after six hours 'work' you must have a break of at least 30 minutes – if working between six and nine hours, or 45 minutes if working for more than 9 hours."

He went on to stress that driving regulations always take priority, therefore, if you drive for a combined total of 4.5 hours you must take a 45-minute break – even if you have not been working for six hours. However, he added that if drivers have been doing other work for three hours, in addition to driving for three hours, then they must take a 30-minute break.

Although, according to O'Keeffe, the rules are straightforward, operators can often misinterpret or inadvertently contravene their meaning and as such, can place themselves in breach of the law and open to serious consequences.

Consequently, regardless of any exceptional circumstances caused by Covid-19, not downloading within the prescribed limits or failing to analyse the data regularly and thoroughly can lead to fines, O Licence suspension or even prison.

"This is where effective downloading technology, robust software and ongoing data analysis can combine to ensure compliance and peace of mind for any O Licence holder," said O'Keeffe. "Mister Tacho is a long-standing re-seller of TruTac's compliance control software products and with many years' close working relationship with the DVSA and Traffic Commissioners, we are well placed to provide bespoke tacho analysis and associated regulatory advice to keep operators compliant at all times."

TruTac's cloud-based compliance software is designed to help fleet operators manage their legal obligations, while eliminating paperwork and reducing administration costs. Its TruControl software contains an integrated suite of transport compliance tools. One of these is TruDriver, which provides drivers and managers information on tachograph records, infringements, compliance and working time.

"For our part," added O'Keeffe "in addition to supplying the requisite TruTac software products, we offer a one-to-one service which takes care of bedding-in the system. We provide monthly tacho analysis reports, assurance against random DVSA inspections and handling individual driver infringements, whereby an explanatory letter is handed to 'offending' drivers, with full details regarding their individual situation. Our full-service offering includes downloading driver cards and vehicles each month for our clients and analysing the results. We provide a one stop shop to deliver compliance peace of mind."

Should any operator or employee require representation at a public inquiry or court hearing, Mister Tacho will attend to ensure their position is fully explained within the scope and confines of whichever regulation may have been contravened.

"This part of the service is invaluable to operators who may be uncertain of their legal position," O'Keeffe said. "In maintaining operator compliance, the only acceptable standard is excellence. Using TruTac's software combined with analysis and guidance from Mister Tacho, transport businesses are guaranteed the most effective method of O Licence protection."



Frank O'Keeffe - there is a lot of confusion about tachograph rules and breaks in driving

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Teletrac Navman launches AI-based platform

Teletrac Navman's newly-launched TN360 delivers telematics functionalities in real-time, providing businesses with simplified, smart, predictive and actionable insights, the supplier claims.

"The digital transformation of mobile asset and fleet management has only just begun," said Jens Meggers, president of Teletrac Navman. "Artificial intelligence (AI), scalable cloud technology, real-time computer vision sensors and easy-to-use smart data analysis are completely changing the telematics market. We are at a pivotal step in the industry, digitising vertical industries unlike any time before."

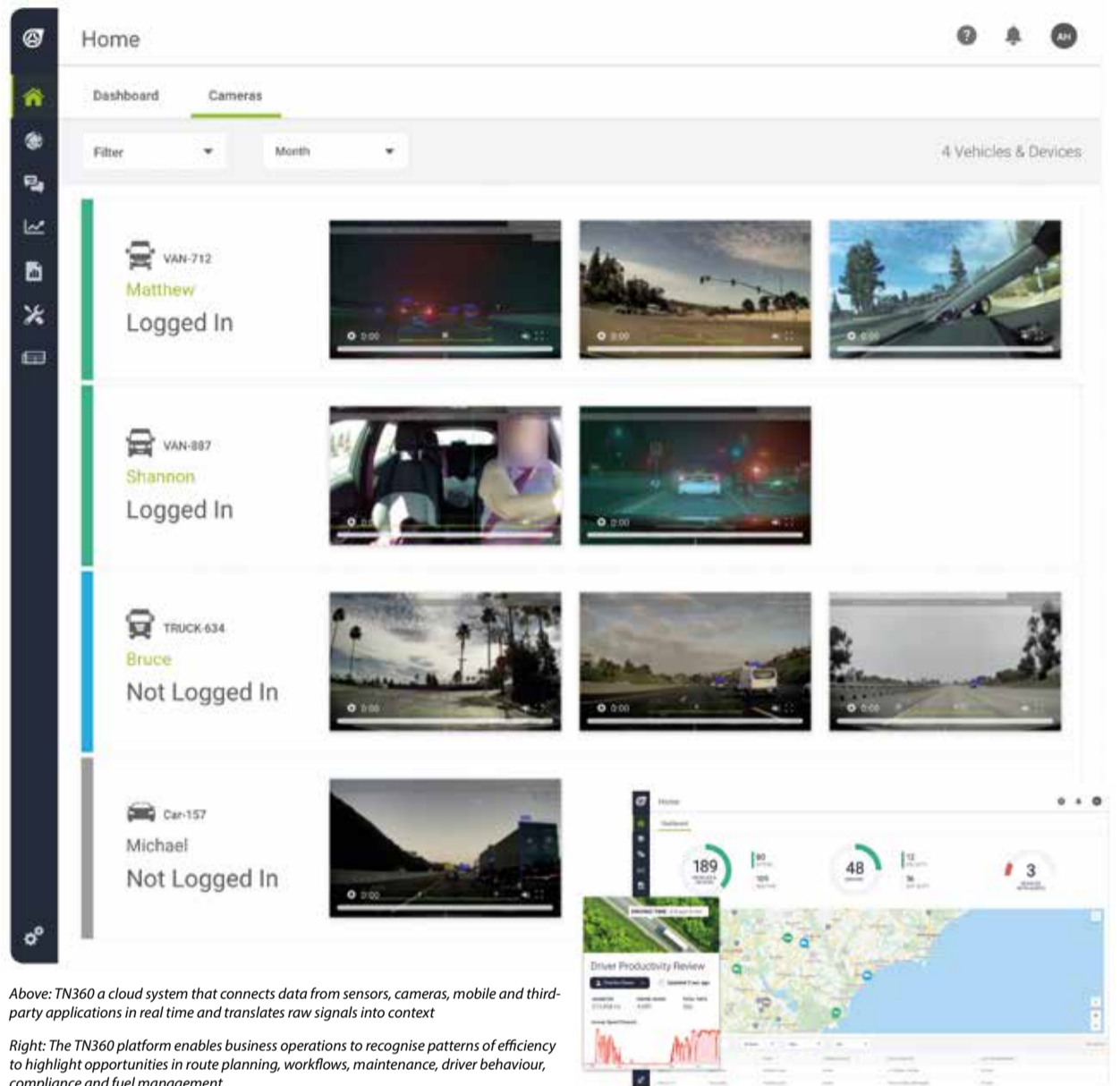
Traditional telematics systems rely mostly on GPS and motion sensors as they collect a narrow set of data-points, centred on location, diagnostics and routing. These systems process linear calculations and produce important but limited feedback. TN360 uses a scalable cloud system that connects data from sensors, cameras, mobile and third-party applications in real time and translates raw signals into context.

Telematics platforms of previous generations – designed to eliminate paper-based reporting and processes – required users to spend an excessive amount of time analysing digital reports to identify opportunities for improvement. However, TN360 removes that analysis period for users. It allows managers to take corrective action as soon as impactful outliers occur. The platform enables business operations to recognise patterns of efficiency to highlight opportunities in areas like route planning, logistic workflows, maintenance, driver behaviour, compliance and fuel management. It also has the ability to integrate with cameras to give fleets the complete picture. Users can quickly receive business intelligence metrics simply by asking a question of TN360's smart AI engine with voice-command technology – eliminating the challenge of traditional data analytics.

"Our goal is – and always has been – to simplify mobile asset and fleet management for our customers," said Andrew Rossington, vice president of technology Teletrac Navman. "We built TN360 with an AI-first approach on the latest technology stack. We use this technology to process the masses of data collected and turn this into real answers. The platform converts data into decisions."

Richard Lilwall, vice president and managing director at Teletrac Navman UK, added: "TN360 marks a significant and progressive step for us as a business with the ability to transform fleet operations and deliver much more meaningful outcomes."

www.teletracnavman.co.uk



Above: TN360 a cloud system that connects data from sensors, cameras, mobile and third-party applications in real time and translates raw signals into context

Right: The TN360 platform enables business operations to recognise patterns of efficiency to highlight opportunities in route planning, workflows, maintenance, driver behaviour, compliance and fuel management

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Nice dry, acid finish

Yalumba Winery converted to bulk bag discharging of granular tartaric acid

In 1849, Yalumba Family Winemakers, Australia's oldest family-owned winery, began an unbroken record of success that speaks to its exceptional products and multigenerational knack for business.

Today's wine business is global and highly competitive, requiring successful wineries to respond not only to consumer preferences but also to unforeseeable fluctuations in the supply and market price of key ingredients. Such was the case in 2018, when Yalumba's managers learned that tartaric acid would double in price.

In response, they switched from purchasing tartaric acid as a liquid, to purchasing it in granular form supplied in 1 tonne bulk bags, requiring the installation of a bulk bag discharger with integral flexible screw conveyor.

Tartaric acid enables vintners to adjust and maintain the pH of grape juice as it is transformed into wine. At the correct pH, bacteria cease to grow, allowing the yeast to ferment the sugars while keeping the wine fresh, lively and colourful. "It's a matter of getting that balance just right," says Luke Wilson, Yalumba's senior process engineer. But at twice the price, tartaric acid threatened to impact the production budget significantly.

Yalumba's supplier also offered a granular product in 15kg bags, but manual dumping posed occupational health and safety concerns. "It's labour-intensive to mix into the wine," Wilson says. "You've got an operator cutting open and emptying bags of 15 kilos. We purchase in the order of 100 tonnes of tartaric acid, and that makes a lot of bags to carry and mix by hand."

However, in granular form it was less costly, especially when purchased in 1 tonne bulk bags, prompting Wilson to research a bulk bag discharger to handle the material.

Among his prime concerns was the equipment manufacturer's experience at handling tartaric acid, and the ability of the equipment to operate with minimal human intervention.

Speed of delivery was also paramount, as the equipment needed to be operational prior to the harvest and crushing of grapes. "We need it when we crush the grapes because we want to make all our pH adjustments early to give maximum protection to the wine," Wilson explains.

Yalumba specified a Bulk-Out bulk bag discharger with an integral flexible screw conveyor from Flexicon Corporation Australia. The system was delivered and installed within eight weeks of order confirmation, allowing the winery to mix tartaric acid granules with water prior to the grape-crushing phase of the process.

Transferring contents

The Bulk-Out discharger is a BFF model equipped with a removable bag lifting frame used to forklift full bags from the plant floor into the discharger frame.

The flexible screw conveyor, Model 1450, is able to transfer tartaric acid 3m at a 48-degree incline at rates to 4.25 cbm per hour. All product-contact surfaces of the discharger and the conveyor are of 304 stainless steel with the exception of the polymer conveyor tube.

A forklift positions the lifting frame above a full bulk bag on the plant floor, allowing an operator to connect four bag straps to corresponding Z-Clip bag strap holders. The frame with suspended bag is then forklifted onto spring-loaded Pop-Top bag extension devices atop the frame posts. A full bag compresses the springs, designed to stretch the bag progressively upwards as it lightens to compensate for elongation, promoting material flow through the bag spout.

To unload a bag, an operator pulls the bag spout into a hopper intake chute equipped with a side access door, sealing ring, and filter sock to contain dust. Untying the spout's drawstring allows material to fill a 110 litre capacity floor hopper with side wall angles engineered to promote flow into the charging adapter of the flexible screw conveyor.

"From an operations point of view, loading the discharger is quite



Above: Operator secures bag to the lifting frame with Z-Clip bag strap holders, and then loads the frame and bag onto the main discharger frame



Left: Tartaric acid gravity feeds from the bulk bag into the hopper and is transported by the flexible screw conveyor into the mixing tank

simple," Wilson says, and the steady feed of tartaric acid mixes quickly and easily in the 2,000 litre tank aided by an agitator. "We don't require anything fancy and can mix a bulk bag in under an hour, which for us was important. We were able to exceed our production requirements."

At the conveyor's inlet is a capacitive proximity level switch with a food-grade Teflon shield, connected via a touchscreen PLC to a delay-off evacuation timer. Once the conveyor is started, it runs until the bulk bag is empty, stopping automatically after the level of tartaric acid falls below the low-level switch, and the delay-off time



Operator pulls the bag spout into the bulk bag interface chute and unties the drawstring. A sealing ring, dust-tight door and filter sock contain dust

period has elapsed. This ensures that the full contents of the bulk bag are loaded into the mixing tank to achieve the desired 50-50 ratio of tartaric acid and water.

Flow promotion is achieved by the combined actions of the spring-loaded bag extension posts, and by Flow-Flexer bag activators that raise and lower opposite bottom edges of the bag with increasingly longer strokes as the bag lightens, raising the bag bottom into a steep 'V' shape free of dead spots. "There's not really anything left in the bags at the end," Wilson observes.

The acid remains stable in the tank once it's mixed with water. "It's not going to fall out of solution or become microbially unstable," Wilson says. The vintner then transfers the solution to crushed grapes as needed in the same manner as with tartaric acid previously purchased in liquid form.

"Our business is making wine," Wilson notes. "We're not experts in powder handling and conveying, and because we were on a really tight timeframe, we relied on the expertise of the guys from Flexicon. The system is quite simple. It just works."

www.flexicon.com
www.yalumba.com



Tartaric acid helps adjust and maintain the pH of grape juice as it is transformed into wine

Bulk wine show to open doors

The 12th World Bulk Wine Exhibition is scheduled to take place on 23-24 November 2020, at Amsterdam RAI, Netherlands.

The WBWE provides an opportunity to discover and purchase a wide range of wines in bulk and in bag-in-box.

The wine sector is witnessing a revolution thanks to the opportunities offered by new packaging, a greater environmental awareness and strong demand for private labels.

Sustainability is the fair's driving force. WBWE has been

committed to a more environmentally-friendly and sustainable wine industry. As a result of this effort the Vine Research & Innovation WBWE has been developed; it is a meeting point within the fair in order to create synergies between all those companies that share the WBWE's philosophy in favour of the circular economy, environment, innovation and research for a more sustainable sector.

www.worldbulkwine.com

LC Packaging joins PREVENT Waste Alliance

To contribute to minimising waste and maximising the reuse of resources on a global scale, LC Packaging GmbH (LC Packaging's Germany-based affiliate) recently became an official member of the PREVENT Waste Alliance.

LC Packaging wants to contribute to conserving resources and closing loops for packaging in close partnership with other members from the private sector, public institutions, academia and more.

The PREVENT Waste Alliance wants to contribute to minimising waste, eliminating pollutants and maximising the reuse of resources worldwide. Members work together for waste prevention, collection, and recycling as well as the increased uptake of secondary resources in low- and middle-income countries. The focus is on waste from plastic packaging and single use products.

Initiated under the patronage of German Development Minister Gerd Müller, the alliance was launched in May 2019. It serves as a platform for exchange and international co-operation.

Organisations from the private sector, academia, civil society and public institutions jointly engage to create our circular economy.

LC Packaging says it wants to pass on the company to the next generation without limiting the choices they have to make or the resources available. Looking forward, a five-year sustainability plan, LC Packaging's Sustainability Vision 2022, was created and several initiatives were launched.

Together with Starlinger, the manufacturer and distributor of flexible packaging solutions developed 'circular packaging' for FIBCs, made from recycled polypropylene (PP) fabric, while in Bangladesh, LC Packaging's production facility Dutch-Bangla Pack (DBPL) upcycles its process waste through the GreenBANGLA initiative. The



LC Packaging implemented digital salary payments to help female Bangladeshi employees gain control of their finances

initiative is officially recognised by the UN Global Compact of which LC Packaging is a proud member.

The company's Bangladesh production facility has been SA 8000 recertified. DBPL is one of only four manufacturers in Bangladesh in possession of the certification. SA 8000 is an international auditable certification standard that monitors whether companies apply socially acceptable practices in the workplace. It is the highest level of accreditation achievable. DBPL first obtained the SA 8000 certificate in 2012.

The packaging manufacturer also boasts how its production facility differs from many other factories due to its working conditions with above average living wage salaries and regular training programmes for continuous development of employees.

Employees have full-time access to day care,

emergency on-site medical care and have a health insurance. Health care trainings are organised by the medical support provider to make employees more conscious about their health and a special fair price market shop is placed on the factory premises. LC Packaging recently implemented digital salary payments to help female Bangladeshi employees gain control of their finances.



Female dorms at Dutch-Bangla Pack. LC Packaging emphasises the superior working conditions at its production facility

With this system, every DBPL employee has been assigned a bank account to which their salaries are directly deposited. Additionally, all employees have been supplied with a chequebook and bankcard, allowing them to cash out their wages at their own convenience or to directly transfer funds to pay their bills. The bankcards can also be used for payments at the on-site fair priced supermarket; the Happy Shop.

Apart from transparency and control over their expenditure and savings, these digital payments give employees access to formal financial services, such as insurances and loans, which will give them more control over their own finances.

The expectation is that moving to digital wage payments will contribute to the further economic empowerment of female employees, by giving them greater control over how their money will be spent.

Bangladesh has witnessed steady economic growth over the past decade and is gradually moving towards middle income status. That does not take away from the fact that – like many other countries – it is a patriarchal society in which women remain subordinate to men. However, women make up over half of the world's population and the majority of the world's poor. It is therefore important, and it makes sense, to address women and their economic empowerment and contribution when trying to reduce poverty and further the economic development of Bangladesh.

As a final step, an ATM booth has been installed right outside the gate of the DBPL production facility. Employees can use their bankcards for withdrawing and depositing money from this booth.

www.lcpackaging.com

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DP World London Gateway (left) and Port of Tilbury plan submit a joint bid to establish a freeport on the Thames Estuary

A freeport on the Thames?

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Events

The following event dates were correct at time of going to press

EPCA Annual Meeting

The 54th EPCA annual meeting will now be held in a virtual format on the same dates.

5-7 October 2020

www.epca.eu

PBLA Annual Meeting (VIRTUAL)

w/c 19 October 2020

www.pblalliance.com

World Bulk Wine

23-24 November 2020

Amsterdam, Netherlands

www.worldbulkwine.com

Annual GPCA Forum

7-9 December 2020

Dubai, UAE

<https://gpcaforum.net/>

Interpack

25 February - 3 March 2021

Messe Düsseldorf, Germany

www.interpack.com

Intermodal Asia

16-18 March 2021

Shanghai, China

www.intermodal-asia.com

Multimodal

23-25 March 2021

NEC, Birmingham, UK

www.multimodal.org.uk

A brand new freeport could soon take shape on the outskirts of the British capital London.

Two of the UK's largest port businesses - Forth Ports Group and DP World - are forming a partnership which will submit a joint freeport bid incorporating the Port of Tilbury and DP World London Gateway.

As part of the commitment to this joint bid, the partnership has appointed consultancy Vivid Economics which will provide expert advice and economic analysis during the process.

The partnership brings together the complementary strengths of the two major ports on the Thames. Together the two businesses make Thurrock one of the UK's strongest port and distribution clusters.

Both operations in Tilbury and at London Gateway have the scale, global connectivity and the ability to expand and develop land as the market demands. The digitally-connected multi-site free trade zone will focus on clean growth while seeking to act as an innovation hub across a range of sectors.

The Thurrock economy was worth £4 billion in 2018 and has experienced robust population growth over the past decade. While the area lags behind the surrounding region in wages, skills and employment, the opportunities unlocked by a joint freeport will create significant employment opportunities.

Current unemployment rates in the area are above the national average at 4.6 percent: up to 36,000 direct and indirect jobs could be created at London Gateway alone, once the site is fully built out. Thurrock's local economy is already benefitting from port-focused development at Tilbury and London Gateway, with projects at both supporting Thurrock council's employment objective.

Port of Tilbury is the largest multi-purpose port serving the South East and is the UK's fastest-growing port. It is a national export hub surrounded by high-value industrial clusters that would be boosted by freeport status. Using the port's experience of operating a freeport in the recent past (Tilbury held freeport status until 2012), streamlining Customs processes and developing new terminals, the port is committed to bid for a designation in Thurrock. The port invested £1 billion from 2012-20, which has seen it double the size of its business in the past 10 years and is projected to double the volume of cargo across the quay (from 16 million to 32 million tonnes) and increase direct employment (from 3,500 to 12,000 jobs).

DP World London Gateway is the UK's newest container port, with Dubai-based DP World Group having invested over £1.5 billion to develop a deepsea container port and logistics park. The port can handle the largest containers vessels, and

boasts 9.25 million sq ft of modern warehousing space. DP World will draw on the group's experience in setting up and operating the Middle East's most important free trade zone at Jebel Ali in Dubai and will implement a secure set of Customs and operating processes to ensure port users can take advantage of the full range of Customs and financial incentives to offer in order to attract new investment to the UK.

Details of the bid will be developed with Vivid over the coming months with a policy statement by the UK Government expected to be published this autumn. The timescale for submission of a bid is expected to be towards the end of 2020/early 2021.

Commenting on the announcement: Charles Hammond, chief executive of Forth Ports (owner of Port of Tilbury), said: "I am looking forward to working with the team at London Gateway on this submission for freeport status. Thurrock is at the heart of the port industry in the South East and the development hub of the Thames estuary. This joint bid brings together our complementary strengths which will create a strong, export-focused case for a freeport designation. Our appointment of Vivid Economics clearly demonstrates our commitment to creating a compelling submission later this year. Like London Gateway, at Tilbury we have a robust network of international connections, streamlined customs systems and developable land close to key markets. In May this year, we opened the UK's largest unaccompanied freight ferry terminal at Tilbury2, further strengthening our location to support existing and new business opportunities"

Ernst Schulze DP World UK CEO commented: "We believe a freeport on the Thames will ensure that the UK continues to be an attractive destination for inward investment, and that bringing London Gateway within a freeport will help lower the total cost of trade to the benefit of UK industry and retailers and ensure resilience in the overall supply chain. Working with Forth Ports will enable us to create the most sustainable, strategically located, trade enabling centre of excellence in the UK, whilst allowing us to support the development of local industry and create high skilled employment for the local area."

James Patterson-Waterston, head of cities and infrastructure at Vivid Economics, added: "We are excited to apply our knowledge from working in trade and investment across the world to further develop a dynamic and globally competitive freeport in the inner Thames Estuary. Given the substantial trade passing through Thurrock ports currently, this area is clearly a strong candidate for the new wave of ambitious and strategic freeports in the UK."

www.forthports.co.uk
www.tilbury2.co.uk

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Pandemic hits Rotterdam results

Throughput at Port of Rotterdam reached 218.9 million tonnes in the first six months of this year, 9.1 percent less than in the first half of 2019.

The economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic was the primary factor explaining the decrease in volume. Yet, despite the disruptive impact of the pandemic on the economy, production and logistics, Rotterdam remained 100 percent operational.

Port CEO Allard Castelein said it should come as no surprise that throughput volumes in the past six months were considerably lower than in the same period last year.

"On the positive side, the throughput volumes in the second quarter turned out to be better than initially expected," he said. "Nevertheless, it is not in Rotterdam's nature to sit back and watch. That is why the port authority has conducted a review to determine which public-private investment projects can be accelerated. In that way, the government and the port can team up to further the sustainability of the economy, while giving it a kick-start at the same time."

There is considerable uncertainty about how long the recession will last and when recovery will begin, the port noted. The recovery of the world economy depends very much on whether there will be a



Rotterdam's container throughput was 7 percent in TEU terms

second wave of virus infections. And another factor is whether the EU and the UK will manage to conclude a post-Brexit trade agreement in the coming months. A cautious recovery of the economy is expected in the rest of the year. As a result, volumes in the port will not decline further but there will probably be no full

recovery. The total throughput volume for the whole of 2020 is therefore currently expected to be significantly lower than in 2019.

Container throughput was only 3.3 percent down on 2019 (in tonnes, 7 percent in TEU). That is 2.5 million tonnes less cargo. Shipping companies cancelled up to 20 percent of all their services in May and June. The decline in throughput was nevertheless less pronounced due to the increased call sizes of vessels at Rotterdam. The number of empty containers was considerably lower than in the same period last year because imports of containers from Asia have fallen while exports have actually risen.

Liquid bulk throughput amounted to 99.8 million tonnes. That was approximately 10 million tonnes less than in the first half of 2019, a fall of more than 9 percent. Liquid bulk accounts for 46 percent of throughput in Rotterdam. Mineral oil products fell sharply (-22 percent). In the case of crude oil, the fall was only slight (-4 percent) while LNG actually increased slightly (+2.6 percent). Throughput of other liquid bulk in the first half matched the level of last year.

The fall in mineral oil products related mainly to fuel oil. Crude oil declined primarily because of falling demand. As a result, some large refineries were operating at lower capacity than usual.

The pandemic led to a further drop in the gas price, making it appealing to use LNG from the North Sea and Atlantic Ocean for power production in Europe.

www.portofrotterdam.com

New terminal for Egypt

A new container terminal is to be developed in Egypt with a total estimated investment of US\$730 million.

Terminal operator Hutchison Ports has signed a long-term agreement with the Egyptian Navy for the development and operation of the container terminal in Abu Qir. The new terminal, to be located inside the Abu Qir Naval Base, has a concession period of 38 years and the first phase is expected to start operations in 2022.

Eric Ip, Hutchison's group managing director, said: "We have been investing in Egypt since 2005, and it has always been an important market to us justified by the country's growing population and economy that are fuelling container trade."

"We are honoured with the trust from the Egyptian government and are excited with this project, which is designed to have a draft of 18m and capable of handling mega vessels."

The project will be funded primarily by the joint investment of the two partners in phases, with handling capacity of 2 million TEU on completion.

It will have a total quay length of 1,200m and a 60ha terminal yard, plus an additional 100ha of land exclusively reserved for yard expansion.

The greenfield project will be connected to a new two-way highway, linking it to Alexandria as well as to the national road network to Cairo and other major cities in Egypt.

IPP raises seed oil capacity

Russian port operator Novorossiysk Commercial Sea Port (NCSPP) Group announced that its subsidiary IPP LLC has commissioned a third tank with a commodity weight of 8,000 tons, which enabled the company to expand its tank battery for the transshipment of seed oil up to 16,000 tons.

In the first half of 2020, 272,500 tons of seed oil were handled at IPP. The peak volume of transshipment was seen in March, amounting to 76,900 tons.

In July, IPP installed a system comprising two areas for draining seed oils from tankers at a rate of 1,000 tons a day (or 50 trucks).

The terminal is actively increasing its production capacity. IPP expects to put into operation a further tank for seed oils with a commodity weight of 8,000 tons in early 2021.



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