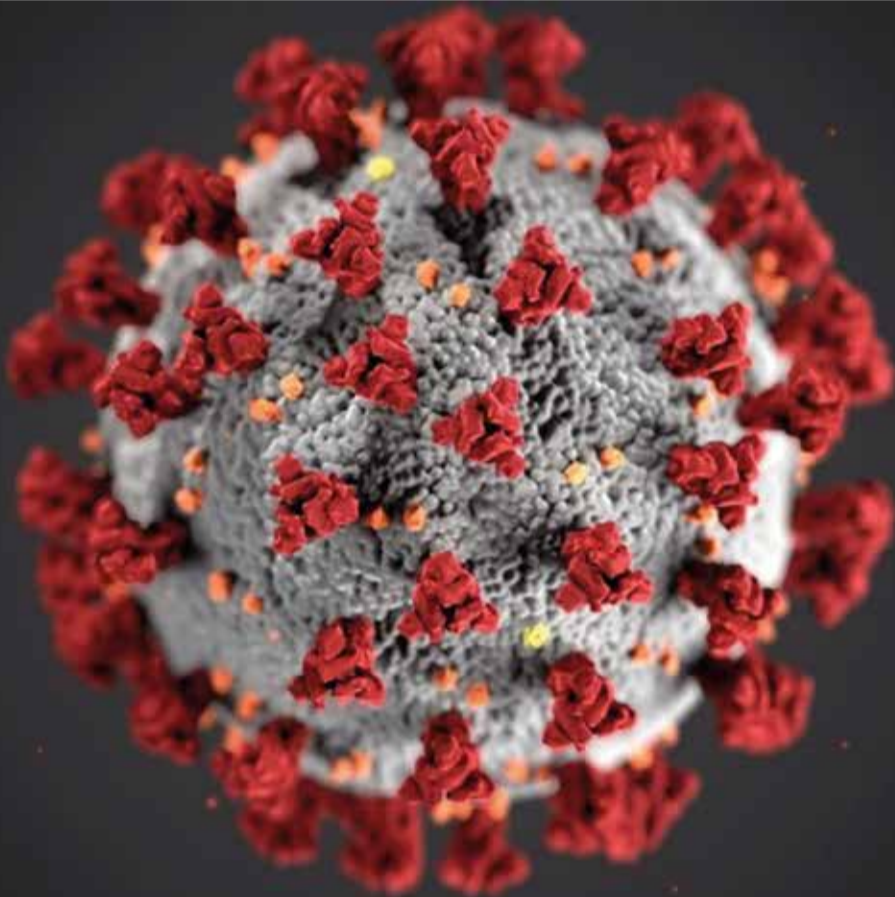


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COVID-19 SPECIAL

IN THIS ISSUE

COVID-19	1
Bulk Liners & Flexitanks	3
Industrial Packaging	5
Tank Containers	8
Dry Bulk Transport	11
Equipment Leasing	12
Logistics	13
Ports, Storage, Warehousing	19

FEATURES IN THE NEXT ISSUE

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A crisis for the world, a headache for logistics

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Along with all businesses, logistics is grappling with the Covid-19 pandemic and the likely ramifications for the world economy.

Governments in many countries are set to print money in order to stave off a drastic contraction in their economies. The longer term issues for the world economy certainly look bleak, but right now the logistics industry is focused on providing as much help as it can to maintain the integrity of essential supply chains.

The **European Flexible Intermediate Bulk Container Association (EFIBCA)** and **Eurojute** requested international and regional bodies, such as the European Commission and all European governments and regulators, to recognise flexible and plastic industrial packaging manufacturers as 'essential' when drafting orders for lockdown, border closures and transport restrictions.

EFIBCA and Eurojute said their members make essential industrial flexible/plastic packaging products, *Continued on page 2* →



EFIBCA and Eurojute want industrial packaging to be designated 'essential'

→Continued from page 1 including FIBCs, container liners, shipping sacks, and other packaging for vital industries such as pharmaceuticals, food and agriculture, chemicals and oil & gas.

"Disruptions in the availability of these goods would cause significant hardships to consumers across all geographies that depend on steady and stable supplies," the associations said. "To provide greater certainty and clarity for our businesses and employees, we ask for clear exclusion of our members' manufacturing operations from lockdown orders, restrictive transport measures or border closures."

FIBC production in the EU is very limited and imports are the real source of units. Thus, they added that FIBCs should be considered as priority products when crossing borders either from countries outside the EU or within the EU.

Difficulties with transport by truck between EU countries have already been experienced, so both associations asked for refraining from any further potential restrictions to the transport of these goods including keeping alternatives such as rail and ship transport open.

They also pointed out that, with the exception of France and Belgium, the national country measures and announcements so far on important (ie, 'system-relevant') economic sectors do not seem to mention packaging, although it is "indispensable for the supply of safe food, protective equipment, medicines and other vital supplies".

The food industry heavily relies on FIBCs for the safe packaging, storage and transport of goods. Agriculture, being one of the key industries in the EU, will also be severely disrupted if FIBCs are not available for their needs.

Member companies are currently under particular pressure, having to struggle with the sickness rate of the workforce and problems in the supply of raw materials.

"Our members are concerned that further measures could endanger vital supply chains, including in the food, pharmaceutical and oil & gas industries, if they no longer have sufficient access to plastic packaging," the associations argued.

Cefic response

An open letter to European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen from the **European Chemical Industry Council** (Cefic) outlined suggestions from its logistics experts to allow easier and faster transport of essential goods throughout Europe.

It pointed out that its members are responsible for, among other things, providing disinfectants to medical suppliers for hospitals, active pharmaceutical ingredients to pharma producers, plastic resins for medical equipment and polypropylene fibres for mouthmasks, ensuring chemical supplies required for treating waste water and producing drinking water arrive where they need to, and transporting industrial waste to treatment centres, so plants can remain operational.

It called for Europe and EU wide solutions as the chemical industry normally delivers business to business just in time. "Our stocks are on wheels or rails as there is limited storage at sites and through distributors. To be able to keep supplies running in Europe to deliver what is needed, we all should focus on keeping transport of goods open in Europe," Cefic said.

The trade body called for designated priority ('green') lanes for freight transport and waiving current weekend and holiday truck driving bans, as implemented in a number of Member States,



Intermodal could help greatly as there is minimal people-to-people contact

simplified and harmonised border crossing checking procedures allowing digital solutions with English as a common language, temporary suspension of cabotage regulations to avoid further loss of truck and driver capacity, and the review and easing of driving and resting times without compromising safety.

Cefic also argued that shifting capacity freed up by reduced passenger train operations to freight rail would help significantly as it is substantially free of people-to-people contact, particularly for long-distance cross border shipments.

Financial support to shippers making more use of intermodal rail transport, for example, would allow them to avoid road haulage, despite the higher costs of rail.

On the rails

With Italy on the front line of the pandemic in its earliest days in Europe, several freight associations also wrote an open letter calling for more support for intermodal transport.

In addition to a number of Italian trade bodies, the letter was also signed by the European Shippers' Council, the European Rail Freight Association, and the International Union for Road-Rail Combined Transport.

It stated that rail transport moves large quantities of goods over long distances, with fixed and monitorable routes, and with a limited use of staff that can be easily controlled from a health point of view.

In Italy, the volume of goods transported by rail amounts to 97 million tonnes a year, including 60 million in intermodal road/rail transport.

Logistics companies had already started shifting a significant amount of freight to rail in order to reduce the mobility of drivers across Europe, it went on. This happens especially in the north-south corridor for traffic to/from Italy. In rail transport a train crew, with just two people, moves 40 semi-trailers, while a transshipment terminal that handles 20 pairs of trains daily, uses 60 railway staff to move goods that would otherwise require 800 truck drivers.

These factors make it a relative certainty that the opportunities for contagion are reduced to a minimum, the letter stated.

So, if intermodal rail transport is vital for the economy and supplies, it must be supported and guaranteed with specific aids and measures, including clear and transparent communication at institutional level, "avoiding counterproductive alarmism", avoiding any "blocking" of

rail transport, further digitalisation and administrative simplification, including the speeding up of the authorisation processes of railway customs corridors, and deferral of expected payments due to lack of liquidity.

Container supply

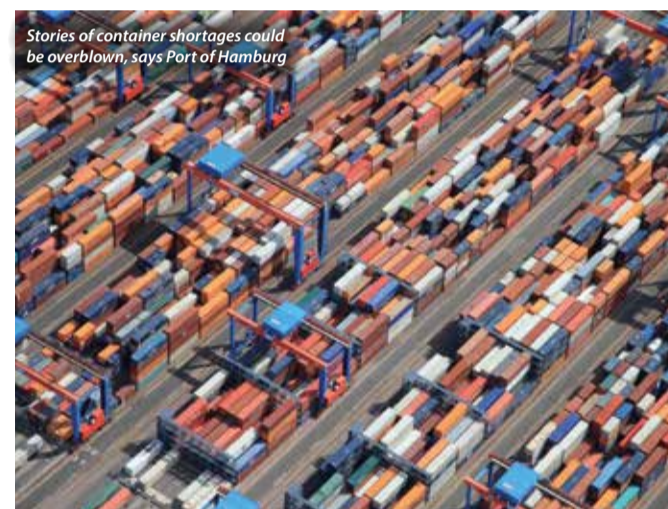
Meanwhile, **Port of Hamburg** refuted media reports of a scarcity of containers.

Reports of bottlenecks in the supply of empty containers generally referred to the Container Availability Index (CAx) published by the firm xChange, said Port of Hamburg Marketing (HHM).

"Since the supply of empty containers is crucial for port customers in trade, industry, and transportation, HHM conducted a flash poll asking shipping lines about the current situation. The results showed that shipping lines see no appreciable scarcity of equipment in Hamburg or other German seaports. Furthermore, they are not expecting any shortages to arise," a spokesman for HHM said.

The shipping lines mentioned several factors that provide for a stable supply of empty equipment. Most shipping companies plan their disposition of empty boxes about three to four weeks in advance. Generally, they take advantage of markets with an oversupply, such as the USA, Great Britain, and Israel, as the source for empty containers in Hamburg or other Northern European ports. Direct shipping of empties from China is rare and has not been necessary recently.

Axel Mattern, HHM CEO, said: "With the recovery of the Chinese



Stories of container shortages could be overblown, says Port of Hamburg

economy, which is already making itself noticeable, shipping, cargo handling, and seaport-hinterland transport in China will be heading back toward normal operations. In view of a slowing economy in Europe, we do not expect to see shortages in the supply of empty containers in Hamburg or the hinterland."

Mattern pointed out that individual shipping lines might run into temporary bottlenecks in supply if short-term imbalances between the flows of import and export containers occur. Scarcity can thus occasionally result from fluctuating supply and demand in inland areas. Depots in the hinterland play an important role in supplying the market with empty equipment for shippers in various regions.

Ports

Responding to the UK government's new emergency laws, the **British Ports Association** (BPA) said that keeping the UK's global gateways open for trade should be a priority.

Chief executive Richard Ballantyne said UK ports facilitate 95 percent of the country's trade and are instrumental in ensuring the country is fed and resourced.

"Half of the UK's food is imported and it is critical to keep our ports open so that shops, public services, and businesses are supplied with what the country needs," he stated.

The new laws enable the Home Secretary to request that port and airport operators temporarily close and suspend operations if Border Force staff shortages result in a real and significant threat to the UK's border security.

Ballantyne said the BPA had spoken with counterparts in Italy where the ports remained open and was learning from their experiences.

Port of Antwerp said that despite strict containment measures announced by the Belgian government the port was identified as an essential sector and gateway for the supply of Belgium and a large part of Europe.

"The Port of Antwerp is essential for the supply of the whole of Belgium and a large part of Europe," the port authority said. "It is therefore crucial that it continues to operate. That is why we set up a COVID-19 Taskforce. This cross-border and cross-sector working group maps out the entire chain of operation of the entire port."

The taskforce meets on a weekly basis and the frequency will be increased if necessary.

The port said it is still 100 percent operational. As of end-March there was sufficient manpower to handle cargo and drivers drive off and on without too much delay. Should there be too few employees available, various chain partners have a fall-back scenario to keep the flow of goods running.

The port said the logistics chain remained robust and was absorbing market peaks well. However, Antwerp insisted it was important that borders in Europe remained open for all forms of goods transport.

Force majeure

Insurance mutual TT Club has warned that all sectors of the logistics industry will be put under pressure by customers and suppliers to help mitigate potential issues, losses and liabilities.

As the global economy slows, governments prioritise specific supplies, consumer spending decreases and personnel shortages become more prevalent numerous scenarios will affect port, terminal and warehouse operators as well as carriers across all modes, forwarders and logistics companies.

"Fundamentally there is a need to communicate; to have an open dialogue with customers and suppliers and a good understanding of fast-changing controls and regulations imposed by local, national and even international authorities," commented Peregrine Storrs-Fox, TT Club's risk management director.

"The physical movement of cargo is understandably experiencing delays due to cancelled ship sailings, shortage of air freight capacity and land border checks and these disruptions to the norm will cause friction between the various links in the chain. An understanding of 'what is going on' by participants in the chain will serve to ease such friction."

Where contractual relationships are in place, the supplier is generally obligated to explore all reasonable options to mitigate a potential loss arising in circumstances such as presented by this coronavirus outbreak, the club said. But Storrs-Fox added: "Any party seeking in the event of a future dispute to rely on a 'force majeure' defence may well face the burden of evidencing that they took all reasonable steps to mitigate the loss."

Depending on the individual stakeholder responsibilities, there

are a number of proactive risk mitigation strategies that can be considered. Keeping well informed and maintaining open channels of communication with the national or local authorities relevant to the business obligations will be key, both to compliance with additional requirements and service to customers – even recognising that such obligations may be in another part of the world and possibly managed through a partner.

Established 'crisis management' plans will be relevant for the circumstances faced, even if the scale and scope of the current disruption was not envisaged. Such frameworks will, however, help in identifying vulnerabilities that may impact the ability to fulfil usual obligations or carry out standard business requirements. The specifics of this virus – such as exposure through contact with surfaces – necessitates consideration of additional protection and training for staff and will almost certainly make usual personnel and site security procedures more complex.

TT Club is also building a dedicated page of available materials on its website in order to share good practice findings from around the globe. But among all the strain of responding to the immediate crisis, the Club urges stakeholders to maintain as much normal rigour as possible in their internal systems and processes, in sound safety practices and in robust physical and cyber security.

Storrs-Fox concluded: "Such standard business 'hygiene' retains lasting significance, alongside the much heightened health hygiene to which we are all responding."

www.ttclub.com

Eceplast - 25 and going strong

Eceplast is a world class manufacturer of linerbags for containers and other industrial packaging materials for bulk and bulky goods.

*Established in Italy in 1995, mainly serving the chemical and automotive industries, Eceplast was founded by Giuseppe Altobelli. As the company this year celebrates its 25th anniversary, Bulk Distributor spoke to **Giuseppe Altobelli** about Eceplast's background, development and future.*

BD. Tell us about the foundation of the company back in 1995? What were the circumstances and market opportunities that you saw which you believed would make the company successful?

GA. Back in 1995, when the internet was in diapers and Google was not yet founded, globalisation was more an argument for a conference than a daily experience.

Eceplast was born just in this transitioning era. Indeed the Italian market was clearly demanding an alternative to linerbags since at that time they were all made in the UK or the US. At that time I was employed at a former state-owned company



L-r: Alessandro Altobelli, Vito Altobelli, Nicola Altobelli and Giuseppe Altobelli

(Enichem) in a management position with 20 years technical experience in industrial packaging for the chemical industry. The same customers that we were serving with 25kg plastic sacks were all of a sudden demanding linerbags. I thought that with the right technology, which I personally developed, I could have the right answer for the market, and that's how we started.

How did the company go on to develop following its foundation?

It may sound romantic, or simply impossible right now, but all began from our home garage where with my sons and my wife, we manufactured the first few samples and later we moved into our first 'plant', renting 900 sqm including office and warehouse for raw materials and finished goods,

joined by a few workers (pioneers) from southern Italy to work with multinational companies.

We concentrated our initial efforts in manufacturing linerbags with top loading spouts for 30ft bulk containers leveraging on the patented round welding machine that was making a huge quality difference with existing competitors in terms of performance, durability and reliability on top of a very competitive price. The right mix of technical and commercial elements was just a great propeller for our international expansion which for the first five years was just unstoppable. But the world changed completely in 2000 when China entered the WTO and our competitors moved their production sites to the Far East low-cost country.

Today, it is more important than ever for companies to display their 'sustainability credentials', particularly those operating in the plastics industry. What does Eceplast do in this regard to convince customers that your products and services are sustainable?

Leading by example, this is what I've always believed and put into practice at Eceplast.

On the sustainability topic, we believe that despite all sorts of formal certifications which almost everyone today can show, we need to take tangible actions, so we submitted a voluntary pledge to the European Commission Plastic Strategy back in November 2018: To collect and recycle 100 percent of the linerbags we sell in the European territory by 2025!

It's a big challenge which foresaw the redesign of the linerbag *Continued on page 4 →*

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→Continued from page 3 (Green Liner project – 100 percent PE) and an even stronger co-operation with our customers to collect and sort the linerbags once used. The entire industry is now willing to make an extra effort for a better future, so we are proud to offer our contribution to a more sustainable future avoiding the dispersion of plastic into the environment. The Green Liner project includes a free of charge service of collection of the used linerbags in all Europe.

In recent years you have developed the Barless Safety System which has now obtained significant international patents, eg, EU, USA, China. It would be good to understand how successful this product has been?

The Barless liner project started back in 2014 from the idea of developing a more competitive, total-cost effective solution to enter the market of 20ft and 40ft linerbags for sea containers where we only had a marginal quota.

By doing the R&D process in co-operation with the Polytechnic University of Bari, we realised that there was an incredible lack of standardisation of

the steel bars commonly used to secure the bulkhead area: apart from some IMO guidelines and ECTA code of practice, no one could prescribe the number of bars, the material, the thickness, the size, the single use, which of course brings a lot of uncertainty and risks for the operators.

So, we decided to develop something that was easy to use, universal, safe and competitive: the BSS (Barless Safety System). This is also why we are now licensing the model to our competitors to set the Barless liner as a safety standard for the industry and not to speculate on that!

What are your future plans now for the business?

Eceplast sticks to its vision: to develop a more sustainable future towards innovation. We have learnt from the past that developing and introducing innovations in our industry is a daily job but with a long term view and commitment; so we have to insist and give continuity to our projects, Barless and Green Liners are already on the market but there are a number of new projects ready to come that will shortly be announced!

How do you intend to mark the company's 25th anniversary?

At Eceplast we are intimately linked to our community; already from our company name - chosen because 'AECAE' (ECE) was the name of the Roman colony existing where Troia, in the province of Foggia, is now. We believe that our strength today also comes from our roots and cultural heritage, and we should duly 'give back' to our community.

That's why we are going to support the University of Foggia in a study that analyses the impact of SMEs on the community at a time of globalisation. So, not linerbags, but the social impact of an SME manufacturing linerbags in a peripheral region.



The Barless Safety System was developed to address the lack of standardisation about steel bars used to secure the bulkhead area



PBLA says Valencia is the right place for its European HQ given its importance as the Mediterranean's largest container port and large volume of flexitank shipments

New members for PBLA

The Premier Bulk Liquids Alliance (PBLA) says it continues to grow around the world.

Even in these difficult times for the industry the association added new members in Europe, Middle East and Asia during the first quarter of 2020, fulfilling its business plan.

Jason Wright has been named president and is based in Valencia, Spain in PBLA's newly acquired office. "This now gives the PBLA its first European office to complement the one already in Ontario, Canada. We believe Valencia is the right place to have our European HQ given its importance not

only as the Mediterranean's largest container port but also its enormous volume in terms of flexitank shipments exported," said Wright.

However, because of the Covid-19 outbreak PBLA had to postpone its second global event which was due to be held in Dubai in June. The event is now tentatively scheduled for end October or beginning November in the same location.

Updated information will be posted on the PBLA's LinkedIn page.

#pbla2020dubai

COA members sign up for CQC

The Container Owners Association says a total of 27 flexitank members have now engaged in the Flexitank COA Quality Compliance (CQC) scheme, undergoing independent audits and tests to achieve the COA quality compliance.

The FQML list of CQC companies is available on-line and is used by shipping lines within the scope of their risk assessment process.

In addition, as part of its promotion of

environmental management, including the recycling of used flexitanks, ISO 14001 environmental management is included in the audits to achieve CQC status.

The COA is compiling an on-line list of recycling facilities equipped to handle flexitanks. Members are requested to contribute to the list by notifying the technical secretary.

www.containerownersassociation.org



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Actual photograph taken during testing by American Rail Road Association

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FIBCs: Food-grade FIBCs | Pharma-grade FIBCs | UN Bags
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Spiroflow aids densification

As milk and dairy products are dried for supply chain convenience, powder aeration typically results in poor densification during bulk bag filling, creating instability of bags in storage.

In recognising this, Spiroflow has developed a Cone Table Elite (CTE) bulk bag filler.

Unlike other fillers, the CTE bulk bag filler features the company's patented cone table densification system which densifies material in the bag, increases bag stability and bulk bag filling throughput to an unmatched rate of 30-40+ bags per hour. By increasing the amount of product in a bag, both storage and shipping costs can be substantially reduced.

The hang-weighing CTE system, which gives a weighing accuracy of +/- 1-2lbs, consists of a truncated pyramid welded on a frame with two integral electro-mechanical vibrators. The moveable carriage assembly raises and lowers, placing the bottom of the bulk bag into contact with the cone table, which forces ingredients into the bottom corners of the bulk bag during filling.

When the bulk bag is properly stretched and the material is deaerated with a flattened angle of repose, the result is a very safe and stable bag that can be safely double or triple stacked within the filler itself. This allows end users to maximise operator productivity and minimise storage and warehousing costs. The CTE bulk bag filler can fill lined or unlined bags, with or without an outlet spout, and can be filled with or without pallets.

Business award

Spiroflow also won the coveted Medium Business of the Year award at the recent Red Rose Awards 2020 - a showcase of excellence for Lancashire



Spiroflow's CTE bulk bag filler features the cone table densification system which densifies material in the bag, increases bag stability and bulk bag filling throughput

(UK) based businesses and the largest event of its kind in the country.

The company received its award at a prize-giving ceremony at Blackpool's Winter Gardens on 12 March.

In winning the accolade, Spiroflow was able to demonstrate its achievements in terms of maintaining and growing its operations. Key to the success over the years is attributed to the firm's workforce. Supported by highly experienced

personnel, a new generation of young individuals with fresh ideas is taking the business forward with new challenges and ongoing success.

Spiroflow was also successful in proving that it has robust strategies in place that take account of opportunities and threats and that it was investing and developing new products, services, techniques, skills and processes to meet changing demands.

Commenting on the achievement, Spiroflow's James Podevyn said: "This really is a fantastic

triumph for the company and we are rightly proud to be part of the Lancashire business community. Spiroflow is a modern company, which never stands still; we are constantly innovating and exploring ways of doing better. This award is testament to the hard work and dedication of our employees, without whom our ongoing commercial success would be impossible."

www.spiroflow.com



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Flexicon Tip-Tite Tipper discharges hazardous bulk materials from small and large drums automatically and dust-free, maximising worker safety



New Hazmat drum tipper

Flexicon's new Tip-Tite drum tipper transfers hazardous bulk material from small and large drums into downstream processing equipment or storage vessels automatically and dust-free, maximising worker safety.

The unit accommodates drums up to 200 litres measuring up to 880mm in height, with an outside diameter up to 610mm and weighing up to 325kg. A discharge cone adapter allows dumping of smaller drums measuring 400mm in height and 300mm in diameter.

The tipper is mounted on an elevated base frame to accommodate an integral powered roller conveyor matched to the elevation of plant roller conveyors.

It features dual hydraulic cylinders that work in tandem to raise and seat the container rim against the discharge cone, and then tip the container to an angle of 45deg, 60deg or 90deg with a motion-dampening feature.

At full rotation, the discharge cone seals against the inlet of the receiving vessel, creating a dust-tight connection and allowing controlled, dust-free discharge through a pneumatically-actuated slide gate valve.

An optional pneumatically-actuated vibrator on the discharge cone promotes complete evacuation of non-free-flowing materials. Stainless steel material contact surfaces and galvanised carbon steel framework resist corrosive materials.

High capacity filling

In another launch, a new sanitary bulk bag filling system from Flexicon features dual Swing-Down fillers fed by high capacity weigh hoppers, achieving fill rates of up to 40 bulk bags per hour.

The patented filler design simultaneously lowers and pivots each fill head into a vertically-oriented position that places the inflatable spout connection collar, inflator button, and four bag loop latches within reach of an operator standing on the plant floor.

This significantly increases the safety and speed of connecting bulk bags, as the operator can connect each bag loop and the bag spout without having to stand on a ladder or reach over equipment to secure the bag.

Bagging rates are further increased by drastically reducing the time needed to load material into the bag. Whereas conventional fillers are typically mounted on load cells, allowing a PLC to open and close a valve or start and stop a conveyor to slowly fill the bag by weight, the new system employs dual gain-in-weight hoppers positioned above the bulk bag fillers. This allows pre-weighed material to descend into the bag at extremely high rates, and saves additional time by refilling the weigh hopper while the full bag is being removed and an empty bag is being connected.

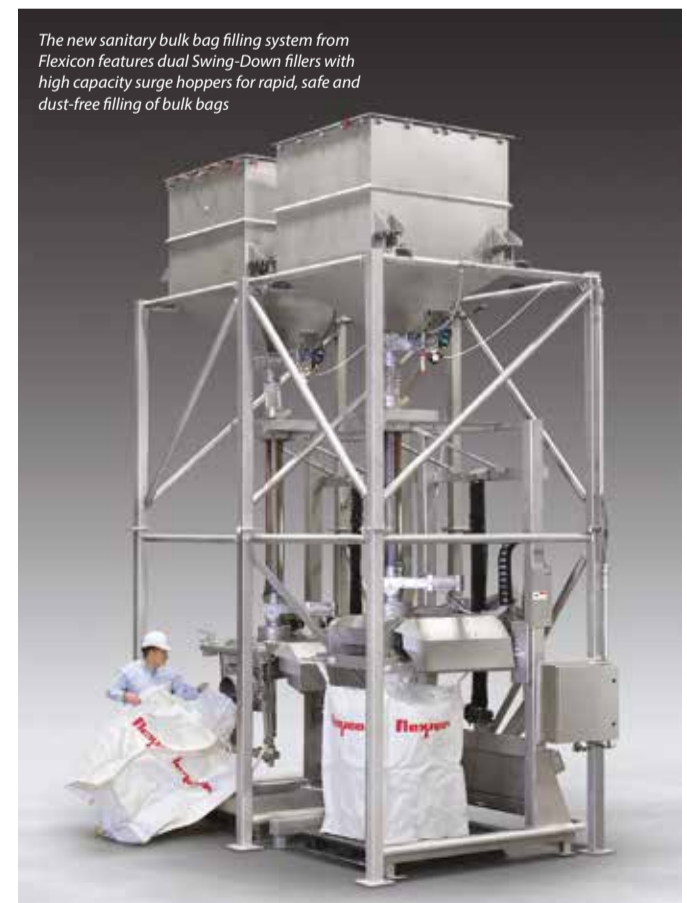
Once the inflator button is pressed and the collar secures the bag spout, filling operations are automatic: the fill head raises and returns to horizontal orientation; a dedicated blower fills the bag with air which removes creases in the bag, allowing the material to fill corners to create a stable bag; the surge hopper's roller gate valve opens; pre-weighed material fills the bag; the valve closes; the inlet seal deflates and the bag loop latches release, allowing a forklift to remove the filled, palletised bag.

Ports on each filler are vented to a dust collection system to prevent displaced air and dust from escaping into the plant environment.

While a bag is being filled and then forklifted on one side, an operator can connect an empty bag on the opposite side, maximising output. Widened base frames allow filling of portable totes in addition to bulk bags.

The all-stainless steel system is finished to sanitary standards and equipped with a corrosion-resistant, water-tight and dust-tight controls enclosure, allowing wash-down.

www.flexicon.co.uk



The new sanitary bulk bag filling system from Flexicon features dual Swing-Down fillers with high capacity surge hoppers for rapid, safe and dust-free filling of bulk bags

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www.redefiningsustainability.com



Making the circular economy go round and round

As Mauser Packaging Solutions (MPS) covers the whole lifecycle of industrial packaging with collection, reconditioning and recycling, used packaging material is collected, recycled and given back to the market.

For more than 25 years, the circular concept has been the core of MPS's innovation strategy. From the first IBC full plastic pallets made of recycled plastic via the establishment of a worldwide network for the retrieval and processing of empty industrial packaging to the extensive range of packaging made from recycled plastic.

Recently, MPS has launched major updates to its Infinity Series product line which represents all kind

of plastic industrial packaging types containing high quality PCR material, called Recolene by Mauser.

MPS developed the Infinity-Series many years ago for plastic drums and introduced it successfully to the market. The Infinity-Series marks the use of post-consumer-resin (PCR) up to 100 percent in monolayer technology. Originally, the Infinity Series featured one of the first UN-certified, monolayer, plastic drums made from 100 percent recycled resin. Over the years, the series grew in terms of product portfolio, technology (mono-, 2- and 3-layer products) and eminently in terms of volumes.

Recycled material

The Infinity product line capitalises on MPS's ability to collect, recondition, reuse, and recycle industrial packaging in-house. This closed loop system gives packaging new life, while reducing its environmental impact.

The latest developments were designed to promote a circular economy and provide customers with environmentally favourable packaging for transporting hazardous and non-hazardous goods. The expanded line now includes a multilayer IBC and additional plastic drum options.



Infinity IBC

The Infinity IBC features an innovative 2-layer bottle which contains up to 40 percent recycled resin and has a reduced carbon footprint of up to 25 percent. High quality recycled resin is generated from empty, used IBCs and featured in the outer layer of the IBC bottle. The Infinity IBC can be used with all types of pallet. At this time, it is only available in Europe.

Plastic drums

New 2 and 3-layer, UN-certified open head drums are available in 120–220 litre sizes. The drums incorporate between 40 and 75 percent recycled resin and have a reduced carbon footprint of up to 45 percent. At this time, the multi-layer open

Mauser's Infinity Series was introduced more than 10 years ago and featured one of the first UN-certified, monolayer, plastic drums made from 100 percent recycled resin

top drums are available in Europe and 1-layer open and tight head drums and 3-layer tight head drums are available in Europe and the US.

The Infinity Series is one of the most comprehensive portfolios of UN-certified industrial packaging made from recycled resin (PCR), says Mauser. With the largest network of reconditioning facilities, MPS says it is committed to thinking circular and delivering sustainable solutions that are good for the environment and for customers business.

www.mauserpackaging.com



Luxme's Food Grade MiniLux Automatic Bag Slitter is an all-in-one conveying, slitting, emptying, dust filtering and empty bag compaction unit

Eliminating dust and cutting costs

In response to industry demands for an enclosed, hygienic, dust-free solution for opening bags of bulk foods, Luxme International has launched an automated, food-grade bag slitter.

The firm claims that the machine is set to make manual bag dump stations redundant.

The Food Grade MiniLux Automatic Bag Slitter has a sanitary design including multiple access points for easy cleaning to ensure allergens and pathogens do not make their way into the food chain and also features a number of components approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ensure the safe processing of food products.

Capable of opening up to six 25kg bags a minute, including plastic and kraft paper bags with or without multi-ply plastic inner liners, it is suited for automatic opening of bulk foods such as dairy products, infant formulas, spices, cake mix, cocoa powder, etc.

An all-in-one conveying, slitting, emptying, integral dust filtering and empty bag compaction unit, the MiniLux improves operator health and safety, reduces the risk of cross contamination and cuts waste.

Occupational asthma – often caused by workers inhaling dusts – is one of the most common work-related lung diseases, accounting for 33 percent of European food industry compensation cases. By containing dust emissions, the MiniLux

helps to safeguard workers handling bulk foods, the company says.

Operators must also be aware of the dangers of allergen cross contamination, particularly as segregating the processes that handle raw ingredients might not be possible for small and medium-sized producers. With its ability to control dust emissions and provide good accessibility to machinery components that are in contact with dust particles, Luxme says the MiniLux is an invaluable weapon in the fight against cross contamination.

In addition, automating the bag opening and emptying operation reduces costs and waste. The optional upgrade of a recovery tumbler – which opens, rotates and tumbles empty bags numerous times to release any remaining product – makes the MiniLux more cost effective, ensuring 99.9 percent efficiency dependent on the free-flowing characteristics of the product.

Navam Jagan, president of Luxme International, stated: "The prevalence of dust emissions at manual bag opening stations intensifies the health and safety risks in the area, as well as contamination and waste, so it is essential that bag slitter manufacturers work with upstream and downstream equipment suppliers to provide innovative new solutions, such as the Food Grade MiniLux Automatic Bag Slitter, to tackle these issues."

www.luxme.com



The MiniLux comes with a number of FDA-approved components for the safe and sanitary handling of bulk food products

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Delivering Advantages

The global tank fleet grew by nearly 8 percent to 652,350 units worldwide in 2019



Global tank fleet surpasses 650,000

The global tank container fleet had reached 652,350 units worldwide by 1 January 2020, according to the eighth ITCO annual tank container fleet survey.

This represented a year-on-year growth of 7.88 percent on the figure of 604,700 on 1 January 2019, slower than the 11 percent growth rate during 2018.

Reflecting the downturn in trading conditions experienced by many sectors of the container shipping industry, the number of tank containers produced last year was also lower than in 2018. In 2019, a total of 54,650 tank containers were built, compared to 59,700 in 2018, a decrease of some 5,000 units over the previous year.

The survey shows how, numerically, the industry continues to be dominated on a global level by a relatively small number of major tank container operators and leasing companies. The top 10

operators account for over 235,000 tanks representing over 56 percent of the global operators' fleet of 381,700 units. The top 10 leasing companies account for 240,000 tanks, about 80 percent of the total leasing fleet of 305,615. (For more on the leasing sector, see the Equipment Leasing feature in this issue, p12.)

Commenting on the results of the survey, ITCO president Reg Lee noted: "While the increase in tank container production in 2019 was lower than the previous year, the market has continued to expand – due to a large extent to the continued successful conversion of certain cargoes – previously shipped in drums or transported in chemical tankers – to tank containers. In addition, China continued to see significant growth in the use of tank containers for domestic transport of bulk liquids, while inter-Asia – especially South-East Asia – tank container operations continue to develop strongly."

Lee added that last year the majority of new tanks were purchased by leasing companies – mainly to provide equipment to tank container operators. "As more leasing company tank containers become available, the industry has seen the growth in the number of 3PLs and 4PLs entering the market," he said. "These companies often have little - or no - accredited infrastructure to support their growing fleet of tanks, which we can assume they have taken on because of the low lease rates on offer, and on a shorter lease period."

This is evidenced by a slight fall back in the level of concentration among operators. In the previous survey, the top 10 operators accounted for 59 percent of the global operators' fleet, against 56

percent for the latest survey.

The survey highlights the production figures of the seven biggest tank manufacturers: CIMC, NT Tank, Welfit Oddy, Singamas, JJAP, CRRC and CXIC. These seven built 93 percent of the global total of 54,650 new units in 2019, and of this figure about half were manufactured by CIMC - 27,000.

Another notable figure is the output of new market entrant JJAP Tank which produced 3,310 units last year.

Looking to the future of the industry, Reg Lee continued: "While the main aim of this survey is to meet the data and information requirements of a wide range of stakeholders, ITCO has another reason for publishing it. ITCO is aware that one of the most important issues facing the tank container industry is how to ensure the successful development and education of a new generation of personnel (management and staff) entering this sector of the shipping industry. All out members face the challenge of recruiting staff who can participate in the development of their businesses, introduce new ideas and technology, and ensure the long-term future of their companies."

"It is an important aspect of ITCO's role as an organisation representing the interests of its members to create an environment which can attract a new generation of professionals. Within this, ITCO has a responsibility to support its members with the tools to provide training and education."

www.itco.org

CIMC snaps up UBH engineers

China's CIMC Tank has moved quickly to employ former executives of UBH International.

UBH, the UK's only remaining tank container manufacturer, went into administration in December. Now, CIMC is establishing a UK-based engineering and customer support centre with a focus on intermodal tanks.

The centre will be jointly managed by Alex McGonagle (engineering) and Mike Himbury (R&D), supported by Alex Edwards, Phil Brookfield and Martyn Wood, all formerly with UBH.

CIMC Tank has had close ties with UBH for 20 years. The global tank builder has also bought all UBH's intellectual property together with the trade name.

CIMC stated that the core UBH technical team will bring together

key global industry know-how and experience accumulated over the past 30 years, which will enhance CIMC's position in the global tank market in areas including capacity, quality, flexibility, technical expertise and customer service.

Ji Guoxiang, CIMC Tank's general manager said he was pleased to welcome the UBH technical team on board, and believed that the company's business platform will provide the team better support and opportunities for them to grow and realise themselves.

"Likewise, the team will also reinforce CIMC Tank's leading position, and, more importantly, synergy will be generated to serve customers with more professional and timely services," he said.

www.cimctank.com



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Suttons inks extended Belgian beer deal

Duvel Moortgat is one of Belgium's most celebrated family breweries.

Along with a portfolio of European brands, the company has in recent years expanded into the booming craft beer market in the United States and now owns Brewery Ommegang (Cooperstown, New York), Boulevard (Kansas City, Missouri) and Firestone Walker (Paso Robles, California).

The American division of global supply chain specialist Suttons has been working with Brewery Ommegang since 2017, importing Ommegang Pale Sour and Rosetta from sister brewery Liefmans in Belgium to Cooperstown. Now Suttons International has agreed a new deal with Duvel USA, the American subsidiary of Duvel Moortgat, under which the fleet of Duvel branded tank containers is being expanded from three to seven units.

"This is a growing market for Suttons and this latest expansion of the Duvel USA fleet proves we are delivering a quality service to our customers," said Steve Lonsdale, Suttons regional director for the Americas. "It also shows the flexibility of our fleet and our ability to move a wide range of products safely around the world.

"We recognise the opportunities in this sector and have a specialised beer tank fleet in the US available for customers."

Doug Campbell, president and general manager of Brewery Ommegang added: "Suttons has been a great partner to us. The flexibility, reliability, and customer service have been critically important enablers to our bringing some of our most important products to market."

In the past year, there has been a demand for Suttons' services around the world which has seen the refurbishment of more than 120 tank containers of its existing international tank container fleet.

AdBlue deal

Back in the UK Suttons Tankers has won a new five-year contract with leading AdBlue producer Yara, for the delivery of the company's Air1 branded bulk AdBlue.

Suttons will transport the clear non-toxic liquid across the country from sites in Scunthorpe, Immingham, Tilbury, Widnes and Gretna.

AdBlue is a diesel exhaust fluid used in vehicles with selective catalytic reduction (SCR) technology to reduce harmful gases being released into the atmosphere.

Suttons Tankers managing director Michael Cundy said the group already had a strong relationship with Yara and was look forward to delivering further efficiencies for the business.

"The innovations and efficiencies of Suttons' UK wide depot network and an ability to respond quickly to Yara's future needs were instrumental in helping us secure this significant new contract for our tanker division," he said.

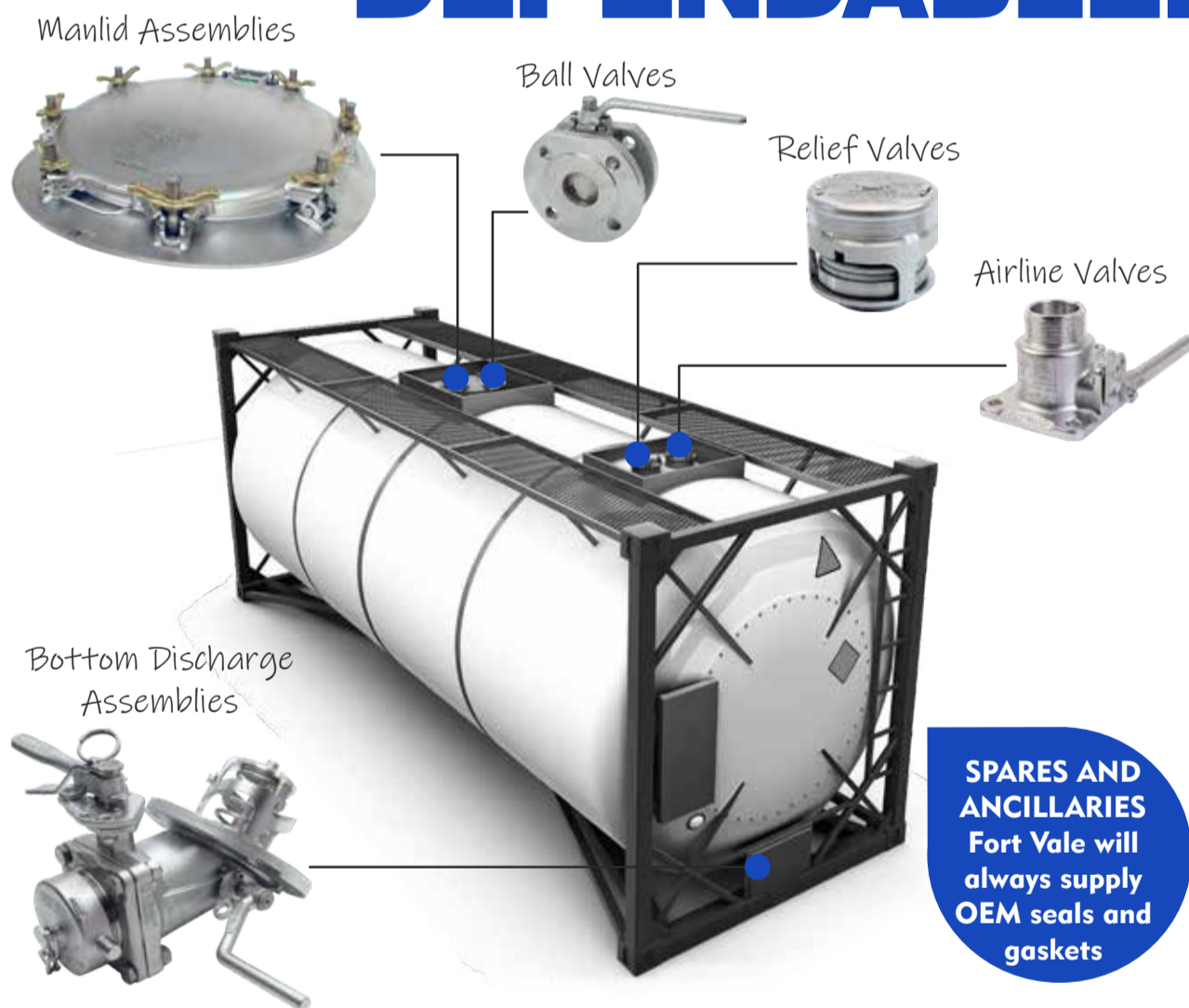
Paul Norman, UK & Ireland manager for the Air1 business at Yara, commented: "As the largest AdBlue manufacturer with a worldwide presence, we needed a partner that is able to deliver a safe and reliable service for our market leading Air1 product.

"This latest partnership with Suttons sees a reduction in mileage for our fleet. This not only reduces cost, but also improves customer service which is a key focus of ours. It also has a positive impact on our carbon footprint."

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The new 40ft pressurised silo containers include the protection outlet box



Van den Bosch takes next step in food safety

Van den Bosch has bought 200 new 40ft pressurised containers for transporting dry bulk products for the food industry.

The new silo containers are equipped with a protection outlet box, a technical innovation which is claimed to be unique in intermodal bulk transport.

"With the purchase of these new containers, Van den Bosch takes the next step in the area of food

safety and quality," stated Barry Gruijters, operations director dry bulk at the logistics company. "The technical specifications have been defined in close co-operation with clients and suppliers and a number of these are unique within the intermodal transport of food products."

The importance of food safety and quality are captured in every detail of the new containers, the company added. In every aspect special attention

was given in terms of the usage of certain materials, cleanability and the safety of the product during transport or interim storage.

"Our customers are looking for a high level of food quality and safety," Gruijters explained. "That is why we at Van den Bosch combine the use of these new high quality containers with full insight into the transport and the history of the container via our recently launched customer portal FreightInsight."

The protection outlet box offers full protection of the butterfly valve and outlet (the blind cap included). Both are in direct contact with the product. The box not only protects against unpleasant dirt, but also prevents contamination of the box, improves sealing and ensures that the load unit is less sensitive to sabotage. Gruijters added: "Our customers are very enthusiastic about these new containers. Thanks to the unique combination of specifications, we are taking food safety and quality in intermodal bulk logistics to a higher level."

The new 40ft silos are manufactured by LAG, located in Bree, Belgium.

Sweden acquisition

Van den Bosch is also strengthening its position in Northern Europe by taking over Swedish transport company Willis Larsson Transport AB.

Family-owned Willis Larsson was founded in Lidköping, Sweden, in 1961. The company has acquired a strong position in the intermodal transport of dry bulk goods. With its own modern fleet of trucks and 40ft pressurised containers, Willis Larsson serves Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Poland, Benelux, Germany, Austria and the UK.

The acquisition will result in an expansion of Van Den Bosch's dry bulk logistics activities, which will grow to more than 1,400 modern silo trailers and containers.

Rico Daandels, CEO of Van den Bosch, commented: "The acquisition of Willis Larsson represents the next step in our international growth strategy. As a logistics co-ordinator, Van den Bosch wants to become the top European player in bulk logistics. With the use of data and the right equipment, we can provide intermodal solutions for our customers – both in the field of dry and liquid bulk transport for the food and chemical industry. "By taking over Willis Larsson, we will strengthen our network in the Nordics and expand our position in transport with pressurised containers. I'm pleased that CEO Sverker Larsson and his team will continue to be part of the company after the takeover and add their experience to the Van den Bosch organisation."

Larsson added that joining Van den Bosch will connect Willis Larsson with a more extensive European transport network and gives the firm access to the knowledge and experience of modern data systems.

"We have noticed that digital solutions have become increasingly important for our clients. The strong reputation of Van den Bosch ensures that we can continue to be a high quality partner in the future, both to our employees and our customers. Moreover, Van den Bosch will also bring its expertise in the field of liquid bulk transport to the Nordics, which will result in an extension of our activities."

www.vandenbosch.com

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Signing of the agreement by Sverker Larsson and Rico Daandels



Bulkmatic acquisition of Paris Transport will create additional capacity in the Central Illinois and Indianapolis markets

Bulkmatic acquires Paris

Bulkmatic, one of America's biggest dry bulk transporters, is buying Paris Transport Inc and has already started operations at the latter's terminal and warehouse in Paris, Illinois.

The acquisition will create additional capacity and improved service for Bulkmatic customers in the Central Illinois and Indianapolis markets, a statement read.

Customers of Paris Transport will have continuity in management as the Paris management team is staying on and will continue to run the new Bulkmatic operations. Shippers in the region will have access to additional capacity through the larger Bulkmatic terminal network.

"The two organisations have a similar customer focus and our networks match up very well. We believe this combination will improve service to PTI's long standing customers by tapping into Bulkmatic's regional capacity," said Doug Smittkamp, vice president of Paris Transport Inc.

Paris Transport has a long history of operating in the Central Illinois and Indiana markets allowing Bulkmatic to expand operations in the region. The purchased business includes dry bulk tank and dry van trucking, a tank wash, and a 50,000 sq ft, food grade warehouse.

"Bulkmatic has always thought very highly of Paris Transport. This is a great opportunity for us to leverage the benefits of market density to improve service to new and existing regional customers," said Jeff Bingham, vice president of sales at Bulkmatic.

Bulkmatic operates a fleet of over 500 tractors and 1,300 pneumatic dry bulk trailers located at terminals around America.

www.bulkmatic.com

Abbey wins Ineos bulk polymer contract

Bulk road tanker operator Abbey Logistics Group has been awarded a distribution contract for polymer distribution from Ineos Olefins & Polymers UK's Grangemouth site in Scotland.

Abbey sees continued growth in the polymers sector following continued investment in its bulk transport fleet, equipment and added value services, including bag to bulk facilities and warehousing.

In this latest development, Abbey will take responsibility for transport planning and delivery services for Ineos O&P. Polymer product will be loaded at the dedicated facility in Grangemouth for delivery by road to customers within the UK.

Bulk polymer transport has been a growing area for Abbey Logistics over the past three years with a number of significant contract awards. The company has also invested in added value services to

provide customers with solutions that fit their distribution models.

Recent developments include increased space at Abbey's warehousing facility close to Liverpool Port, and reformatting services where Abbey takes delivery of either bag in box containers or bulk bags before reformatting into bulk tankers for onward distribution through their own network.

Abbey's business development director Mike Ellis said: "Similar to food grade products, polymers require strict handling procedures to be in place to ensure product integrity and no contamination.

"Abbey's long and successful background in food grade logistics enables us to control the strict standards of hygiene required for transporting polymer products for our customers.

www.abbeylogisticsgroup.com



Bulk polymer transport has been a growing area for Abbey Logistics over the past three years

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Strong partnerships behind Gem's success

With a fleet now of 10,000 units, Gem is ranked as the eighth largest global lessor, according to the ITCO 2020 Tank Container Fleet survey.

Gem's young fleet comprises a range of T11 and T14 specifications (including baffled, swap-body and super-insulation designs) and includes ISOPA standard equipment, tank containers fitted with refrigeration and heating facilities and more specialist T75 cryogenic equipment.

In parallel with the growth of the fleet, Gem has invested in developing systems and resources to broaden the service platform to serve its widening customer base. The integration of Gem and Tankway's operations over the past year has extended the value proposition to customers with a wider range of products, support services and increased flexibility.

Gem attributes its growth and success to the strong partnerships that it shares with key stakeholders pursuing a service strategy in a market which is becoming increasingly commoditised.

At this unprecedented time in the industry, Gem firmly believes that business is about being agile, flexible and resilient, but perhaps above all, it is about being personable and in tune with customer needs.

The lessor remains committed to the industry for the long term. Seeing beyond the current market challenges, the company has positioned itself for the future represented in an updated brand image. Gem has also launch a more modern identity which symbolises progress and innovation to meet changing demands while building on the brand's history and inherent personality.

www.gemcontainers.com

Niermann joins Albatross

Fredrik Niermann has joined Albatross Tank-Leasing as marketing and sales manager.

With longstanding experience in the chemical logistics industry, extensive technical and operational knowledge, Niermann main's area of responsibility will be the Strategic Move fleet management system which offers, in addition to tank container leasing, a digital platform for round trip supervision including the technical support and control of the dedicated tank.

This year Albatross will continue to increase its diversified tank fleet whereby the rental of tanks can be combined with a customer specific service package.

<https://albatross-tanks.de>



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CS Leasing grew its fleet by some 50 percent

Lessors tank up

Leasing companies were responsible for the majority of new tank containers purchased in 2019, according to the latest ITCO fleet survey.

This was mainly to serve the equipment requirements of tank container operators.

The report identifies 37 leasing companies representing 305,615 tanks. The 10 biggest lessors accounted for 242,984 tanks, about 79.5 percent of the total leasing fleet. The top three companies accounted for 154,500 tanks, or 50.5 percent, compared with 54 percent last year.

Exsif grew its fleet substantially, from 48,000 to 64,000. Among the other big leasing companies, growth was more modest, in the region of 500 to 1,000 additional units.

However, there were notable expansions at two medium sized lessors. CS Leasing grew its fleet by some 50 percent from just over 10,000 tanks to 15,500, while Peacock Container saw its fleet rise from 3,900 to 6,250.

LESSOR	HQ	FLEET
Exsif Worldwide	USA	64,000
Eurotainer	France	48,500
Seaco Global	Singapore	42,000
Trifleet Leasing	Netherlands	17,784
CS Leasing	USA	15,500
Raffles Lease	Singapore	15,100
Triton International	USA	12,500
GEM Containers	UK	9,800
Albatross Tank Leasing	China	9,500
TWS Tankcontainer	Germany	8,300
NRS Group	Japan	7,000
Peacock Container	Netherlands	6,250
International Equipment	USA	6,000
Multistar Leasing	South Africa	5,173
Matlack Leasing	USA	2,500
Modalis	France	2,500
MCM Management	Switzerland	1,700
GRP Multilogistics	Switzerland	1,600
Unitas Container Leasing	Bermuda	1,600
Combipass	France	1,500
Noble Container Leasing	Hong Kong	1,300
Tristar Engineering	Switzerland	1,100
<i>(all figures as at 1 January 2020)</i>		
TOTAL		305,615

Eurotainer marks 50 years

Eurotainer has been celebrating 50 years of operation.

In 1969 the brand of Eurotainer was first established with the goal of becoming the worldwide leader in tank container leasing. The company has had many achievements over the years and many milestones.

In 1979, the lessor opened a USA office in the World Trade Center, New York City. By 1984, the fleet had grown to 3,000 tank containers. Six years later, Eurotainer expanded into the Asia Pacific market with the opening of an office in Singapore.

Over the following decade, and powered by the global growth of the tank container industry Eurotainer's fleet had reaches 19,000. In 2004, a representative office was opened in Shanghai, China; followed years later by an office in Tianjin.

There followed a move into Russia with an office in St Petersburg to serve clients in Russia and the Baltic States. Next came an office in Brisbane, Australia to expand the business in Australia, New Zealand & the Pacific Islands.

Continuing into the southern hemisphere an office opened in Sao Paulo, Brazil in 2013 to provide South American clients a higher level of customer service.

By 2016 continued market demand and growth had driven the Eurotainer fleet to 30,000 tank containers. The fleet was then boosted further in 2018, with the acquisition of Taylor Minster Leasing, such that by 2019 the fleet had grown to 48,000 tank containers and small portable tanks serving nearly 1,000 clients through the firm's team of professionals in France, Netherlands, Germany, Russia, USA, Brazil, China, Singapore, Japan and Australia.

www.eurotainer.com



ForFarmers' helps Sedamyl close the loop

As part of its production process, wheat processor Sedamyl UK generates hundreds of tonnes of non-core product remnants each day.

With a busy production schedule, it is important that its co-product partner ForFarmers collects this valuable material daily. But regular, reliable collection is only part of the service. A commitment to innovation saw ForFarmers develop a highly nutritious and sought-after animal feed product from Sedamyl's residual volumes. Not only is this delivering increased commercial returns for Sedamyl, it is also contributing to Britain's growing closed-loop food chain.

ForFarmers collects, blends and trades over half a million tonnes of co-products each year from UK food and drink producers and has been in co-product partnership with Sedamyl UK since 2012.

Based in Selby, Yorkshire, Sedamyl UK is an agribusiness that processes wheat to manufacture a range of products for the human food and drink industry, including alcohol, starch and gluten. Co-products of its operation include feed wheat and syrup, which have an intrinsic value as animal feed. These must be collected from site several times each day in order for the company to meet its rigorous production schedule.

"It is essential that our co-products are collected promptly throughout the day, as our production process is continuous," explains Ramona Maccagno, logistics manager for Sedamyl UK. "And although the volumes we produce are consistent – up to 10,000 tonnes each month – there can be slight changes to our production which alter this."

With over 100 years of co-product experience, the ForFarmers team are able to handle Sedamyl's demands. Product managers, production and logistical staff liaise daily with Sedamyl to plan collection times. "We provide ForFarmers with a production forecast a week in advance," says Maccagno. "They then create a collection schedule, which is reviewed daily by both sides."

As well as helping Sedamyl UK to continue uninterrupted manufacture of its core products, these co-products also bring an additional revenue stream, thanks to their intrinsic value as animal feed. The ForFarmers sales and trading teams strive to achieve the most competitive rates for their customers' co-product volumes in the open market, selling to a network of farmers across the UK. In the case of Sedamyl, however, they spotted an additional opportunity to increase these commercial returns even further.

"We felt that by blending Sedamyl's two co-product streams of feed wheat and syrup, we could potentially meet our farmers' demand for a ruminants feed that offered a higher nutritional value and an increased lifespan than what was already available," states Neil McInnes, purchasing manager UK at ForFarmers.

"We made the proposal to Sedamyl and explained that if they were keen to explore this possibility further, we would work with them to determine the potential commercial value. They agreed to jointly fund a new mixing station, so we commissioned the R&D experts at our in-house Nutrition Innovation Centre to analyse the composition



Ramona Maccagno, logistics manager for Sedamyl UK

of the co-products. Early signs were favourable, so we continued with the product development, working hard to achieve the optimal, balanced blend of materials at our mill and using additives to increase the feed's shelf-life. We presented Sedamyl with the finished product – SelcoPlus – just six months later," McInnes adds.

Farmers' favourite

A highly palatable moist feed, SelcoPlus is high in energy and protein content and contains moderate amounts of starch and sugar, making it especially suitable when used in grass silage-based rations for dairy cows. A high-performance feed, it is designed to boost milk yield and quality and, once ensiled, will store for many months.

"SelcoPlus proved an instant hit," McInnes confirms. "Unique to ForFarmers, the brand is now firmly established in the market, attracting a loyal customer base who purchase it year-round. It has it filled the gap for a highly nutritious, long-lasting, premium ruminants feed; also helping to close the loop by boosting milk production."

Not only that, but it has also increased commercial returns for Sedamyl, which is delighted with the success of the project. "Not



Above: Sedamyl's co-products have an intrinsic value as animal feed
Left: ForFarmers collects 10,000 tonnes of co-products from Sedamyl UK's Selby site each month, including feed wheat and syrup



content merely to sell our two co-products separately on the open market, ForFarmers came up with the idea of blending them together to create a brand-new, highly nutritious and financially lucrative offering," says Maccagno.

"Although we contributed to the development of the project, ForFarmers shouldered a lot of the risk; researching, developing, producing and marketing the product.

Their belief paid off as it has been popular since it launched, creating an additional revenue stream for us. We are delighted with the increased returns that SelcoPlus has delivered."

Along with Sedamyl, ForFarmers works with a wide range of brewers and food producers across the UK, collecting, trading and blending their co-products into premium animal feed for British farmers, providing the optimal closed-loop sustainable food chain solution.

www.forfarmers.co.uk

Sedamyl UK's site in Selby



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Swain expands tipper fleet with Eurobulk acquisition

One of the UK's leading bulk haulage operators Eurobulk Ltd has been bought by distribution company Swain Group.

Swain, which is based in Rochester, Kent, acquired the entire shareholding of Eurobulk, which includes the company's assets, vehicles and business.

Eurobulk will continue to be run as a separate company, managed by its existing directors, while Swain will provide capital to finance the company's growth, as well as the wider benefits of being part of a larger logistics group.

Andrew Miller, Eurobulk's managing director, said: "The sale of the business has not been taken lightly, but we have always understood the importance of growth and a proper succession plan. The support of Swain will be hugely beneficial to the long term success

of Eurobulk, its customers and its staff."

Matthew Deer, managing director at Swain Group, added: "Eurobulk represents a new venture for Swain as we expand into the agricultural and industrial bulk materials sector. This is a very specialised area within the transport industry, so it was important for Swain to find an outstanding business with which to develop in this market.

"The opportunity to acquire such a well-managed, efficient company is a rare occurrence, so we are delighted to be bringing them on board. The Eurobulk operation will now complement our existing bulk operations, further strengthening our position in the UK and Europe."

The group made its tenth acquisition during 2018 with Express Freight Services, while in 2017 it acquired Jeffrey's Haulage, a

general haulage and Tautliner operation.

The company also bolstered its special projects division in 2015 with the purchase of air and rail-side construction logistics specialist, Gatwick Plant, complementing the 2014 purchase of heavy haulage and plant movement company Hallett Silbermann.

All companies continue to operate under their individual brands and remain synonymous with high quality operations in their respective fields.

www.rswain.com



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www.itco.org

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Elemica buys Eyefreight

Digital supply network Elemica has bought Eyefreight, a multimodal SaaS transportation management solutions (TMS) provider.

The combination creates a global logistics and supply chain network. Together, TMS clients can take advantage of Elemica's global end to end supply chain network while providing Elemica clients with the ability to incorporate transport management capabilities into their supply chains quickly.

"Of all the SaaS TMS solutions on the market, Eyefreight's stands out because it was built to be implemented rapidly, to address all modes, and to meet the needs of shippers with operations all over the globe," said Rich Katz, Elemica's CEO. "This acquisition is part of our long term strategy to provide the most comprehensive end to end supply chain platform available in the market by combining the best SaaS applications with our core digital supply network."

Eyefreight CEO Gert Jan Jansen op de Haar added: "Eyefreight's clients want to accelerate their use of our TMS solution with fast-access to a network of connected carriers and forwarders. Our clients and the market will benefit from the synergies we create in combining Elemica's digital supply network for supply chain automation with our level 5 TMS solution, creating a unique opportunity to analyse, acquire, and access transport capacity."

The addition of the TMS with the Elemica network will provide a single platform for multinational shipment optimisation, freight settlement, and execution. These new abilities will profit from an extensive and connected network of carriers and logistics service providers for better multimodal visibility and business intelligence.

Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

www.elemica.com

Odfjell says its China terminals continued to operate as normal



Odfjell posts \$8m for Q4

Odfjell Terminals generated EBITDA of US\$8 million in 4Q 19, up from \$6 mill in the previous quarter.

This was primarily a reflection of increased tank lease and service revenues in the US and Dalian, China. Houston, in particular, has been earmarked for more investment in capacity and improvements.

However, the net result was a loss of \$0.2 million against a profit of 13.2 million in 3Q 19. Adjusted for depreciation of excess values net of deferred tax and an impairment of \$0.7 million, the net result was \$2.2 million in 4Q 19. The reduced result was mostly driven by a \$14 million gain on the sale of the Jiangyin, China terminal in the third quarter.

With respect to the corona virus outbreak in China, the two terminals there were at time of writing, operating as normal. The terminals are located in the Northeastern part of the country, which had been less affected by the virus.

Total average available capacity decreased slightly by 11,723 cbm to 1.47 million cbm. This reflected Korea carrying out periodic maintenance

on some of its tanks, while the US was executing customer outfitting of one of its tanks at the Charleston terminal.

Total capital expenditure amounted to \$2.0 million, of which \$1.3 million was for maintenance and \$0.7 mill was for expansion and improvements. Over the past months, Odfjell has been working with its JV partners in the US and Antwerp to develop strategies to improve and grow its terminals. This will involve initiatives to modernise and automate them, as well as expanding capacity on the existing land banks.

Projected capital expenditure for 2020-2022 is \$64 million, of which \$32 million is growth related capex and \$32 million related to maintenance capex. All projected capex is expected to be fully funded through operating cash flow and local debt financing in the respective JVs.

As a part of Lindsay Goldberg's exit from Asia, Odfjell SE may consider tagging along on a sale of its ownership in terminals in China.

www.odfjell.com

Flexibility key to Vesta Antwerp expansion

Vesta Terminals is expanding its subsidiary Vesta Terminal Antwerp NV with 150,000 cbm for storage of (bio) jet fuel, gasoil or diesel. This will bring the total capacity at the Antwerp facility to almost 950,000 cbm.

Michiel Flier, managing director Vesta Terminals Antwerp and Flushing, told STM that the tanks and all infrastructure will be built over the next couple of years and that Vesta expects to be able to take into service the new capacity during the course of 2022.

The expansion consists of five new tanks of 30,000 cbm each. Dedicated pipeline systems for (bio) jet fuel will be built to ensure product quality requirements. The capacity will be connected to the jetties and the CEPS pipeline system, connecting the terminal to most major airports in West and North-West Europe. To ensure that stringent quality requirements for jet fuel are met, the investment is compliant with the latest health, safety and environmental standards and includes investments in water draw-off and (multiple) filtering systems, additivation and round pumping systems.

"The tanks will be suitable for jet fuel and diesel, allowing customers the flexibility to choose to put all tanks into jet fuel or diesel service, or several tanks in one, and others in the second," explained Flier. "This approach allows for maximum use of

opportunities in different market structures."

The pipeline infrastructure is completely segregated with jet fuel handled through a dedicated pipeline network.

The terminal is a make and breakbulk location for liquid fuels (biofuels and petroleum products) and can handle product tankers up to 160,000 dwt.

"European jet fuel supply has been under increasing pressure due to growing demand and logistical constraints," Flier explained, "so more storage capacity is needed to meet this demand. This is particularly the case with some local and regional airports that are growing strongly, yet face constraints in their fuel supply."

In addition to this latest expansion, Vesta has invested heavily in making the terminal more and more flexible in recent years. "We have added biofuels infrastructure, a new barge berth, and are now working on upgrading 195,000 cbm capacity at the terminal to make it suitable for light ends and distillates storage - again with a choice for the customer to switch products in different market circumstances.

Vesta Terminals is a 50/50 partnership between Mercuria Energy Asset Management BV, Geneva and Sinomart KTS Development, of Hong Kong.

www.vestaterminals.com

Advertisers Index

CTW Cleaning	8
Dacro	3
Fort Vale Engineering	9
Eceplast	5
GEM	11
Lohia	7
Mauser-Werke	6
MIMU	12
Rishi	4
Scully Signal	1
TWS	13

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Events

Revised dates for some events relevant to Bulk Distributor readers that were correct as we went to press.

transport logistic china

16-18 June 2020
Shanghai, China
www.transportlogistic-china.com
NB. There will be no ITCO Tank Village at this event as the organisation has now withdrawn citing the Covid-19 pandemic

Intermodal Asia

14-16 July 2020
Shanghai, China
www.intermodal-asia.com

LogiChem

8-10 September 2020
Rotterdam, Netherlands
www.logichem.com

ECOTRANS 2020

First Conference in Russia dedicated to ISO tanks and environment
17 September 2020
Moscow, Russia
www.ecotrans-moscow.com



Vesta's expansion consists of five new tanks of 30,000 cbm each

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Talke opens new Hürth warehouse

Chemical logistics company Talke has created additional storage capacities for pallets with materials designated as storage class 11 to 13.

The commissioning of a new depot with three sections at the company's headquarters in Hürth, near Cologne, Germany has provided some 9,200 additional storage units.

"The commissioning of this warehouse is a clear commitment to our headquarters in Hürth," said group managing director Alfred Talke. "It is a first step towards expanding our capacities here in the Rhineland. Further steps are currently in preparation".

The storage facilities were built some time ago



The Hürth storage facilities were built some time ago but are only now being used by Talke

but are only now being used by Talke. They are designed for single-batch storage of materials designated as storage classes 11 to 13 as well as

the strictest water hazard class 3. The compact shuttle storage facility with special carrier systems allows optimal processing times to be achieved with the simultaneous deployment of up to eight employees in two picking zones with a total of 12 loading ramps. State-of-the-art detection and extinguishing equipment, including sprinklers within the rows and tiers of storage racks, offers optimal protection against fire.

The facility will be used to store the kind of products that are used, for example, in pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, in pesticides, in fire-resistant and scratchproof glass, in semiconductor technology and in the production of cat litter.



Positive Vopak results

Vopak posted full year EBITDA of €830 million, €96 million up on 2018.

The company said the result reflected good aggregate business - including new asset - performance of €37 million, positive currency translation effects of €14 million and positive IFRS 16 effects of €45 million.

The occupancy rate of 84 percent (2018: 86%) reflected IMO 2020 capacity conversions during the year and ongoing market conditions at oil hub terminals.

A full year EBIT of €539 million (2018: €463 million) increased by €76 million, including good performance from new assets, partly offset by hub terminals in Europe and Singapore, positive currency translation of €11 million, lower depreciation (from terminals classified as held for sale) of €22 million and positive IFRS 16 effects of €13 million.

Return on capital employed increased to 12.4 percent from 11.6 percent, leading to a significant increase of 24 percent in net profit attributable to shareholders to €358 million. Earnings per share rose to €2.80 (2018: €2.27).

In the fourth quarter, new capacity was delivered from projects in Brazil, Mexico, Panama and Singapore.

Chairman and CEO Eelco Hoekstra said 2019 was a successful year for Vopak.

"We executed our strategy, realised strong EBITDA and significantly increased earnings per share," he commented. "Over the years 2017-2019, we have been transforming our portfolio through €700 million divestments and €1 billion investments in new growth projects. We successfully divested almost 5 million cbm of oil capacity, mainly in Europe, and bolstered our hub positions. We prepared our oil hub terminals for IMO 2020 and expanded storage capacity in future growth markets.

"In 2019, we expanded our LNG business in Pakistan and Colombia and started the construction of new industrial terminals in China and the US. Our portfolio is well-positioned for future developments. As part of our new energies focus, we made our first investments in hydrogen and solar.

"Delivery of our digital strategy has progressed well. We continued the roll-out of our new cloud-based system for our terminals, as part of broader efforts to develop our digital architecture. Growing Vopak's digital capabilities and using data are key to our short-term performance and long-term value creation, as well as to our position as the leading independent tank storage company.

www.vopak.com

Magellan sells marine terminals to Buckeye

Magellan Midstream Partners is to sell three marine terminals to Buckeye Partners, LP for US\$250 million and will approve a \$750 million unit buyback.

The terminals are in New Haven, Connecticut; Wilmington, Delaware; and Marrero, Louisiana.

Michael Mears, CEO of Magellan, said his company "remains focused on capital discipline and managing our business for the long term".

He added: "Optimisation of our asset portfolio, including divestiture of facilities outside our strategic footprint, is an important element to maximise unitholder value and our strong financial position."

He went on to thank "all employees supporting these facilities through the years and during this time of transition".

Subject to regulatory approvals, the sale is expected to close by the end of the first quarter or early in the second quarter of 2020.

As part of its fourth-quarter 2019 earnings release, the partnership intends to provide 2020 financial guidance, but said in a statement that it does not expect the terminals sale to have a material impact on its future financial results.

Elsewhere, the partnership announced its board of directors has authorised the repurchase of up to \$750 million of common units throughout the course of 2022.

Magellan said it "intends to purchase its common units from time-to-time through a variety of methods, including open market purchases and negotiated transactions, all in compliance with the rules of the Securities and Exchange Commission and other applicable legal requirements".

Mears said: "We intend to utilise opportunistically additional tools, including the unit repurchase programme announced today as well as potential special distributions, to accomplish our core goal of maximising value for our investors."

He added that factors including the partnership's expected expansion capital spending needs, alternative investment opportunities, excess cash available, legal and regulatory requirements, market conditions and the trading price of its common units, will all affect the timing, price and actual number of common units repurchased.

www.magellanlp.com



BEST's reefer related services will reduce in/out transport costs and related CO2 emissions, the terminal operator says

BEST sets up reeferland

With the aim of continuing its strategy in the Mediterranean in the supply of reefer container services, Hutchison Ports BEST has obtained the approval from Barcelona Port Authority to provide a range of value-added services to reefers.

Thanks to the authorisation, BEST's customers have the option of pre-inspection services for their refrigerated containers (PTIs) and, if necessary, to have such containers repaired within the terminal's facilities.

As such, BEST says it can offer an integral and complete service from connection and disconnection, to monitoring, or personalised attention to super reefers, to all kinds of additional services, such as PTI, cleaning, tuning, repair and maintenance.

The full coverage of reefer related services will reduce the in/out transport costs and related CO2 emissions, the terminal operator said.

All this comes on top of a recent increase in storage capacity and connection points from

1,600 to 2,750.

Guillermo Belcastro, CEO of Hutchison Ports BEST expected that the reefer capacity expansion and the full services approach will expand the current efficiency enjoyed by the firm's customers.

Currently, BEST has 11 super post-panamax quay cranes, capable of operating the largest ships in the world, 54 automated cranes (ASC), two cranes in the railway terminal and 32 shuttle carriers to operate a terminal that occupies 80ha and 1,500m of quay with a depth of 16.5m.

Since its official opening in September 2012, BEST has achieved a vessel operating rate (VOR) of more than 220 movements per hour and a sustained average productivity of more than 40 movements per hour per crane, one of the highest in the world.

It is the first semi-automatic terminal developed by Hutchison Ports Group. The railway installation has eight mixed-gauge tracks (Iberian and UIC), connecting BEST with different points in Spain and southern France.