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# Trucking and shipping shortages pile on the pressure

**Global trucking and shipping costs will stay high for some time, warns Stolt Tank Containers.**

Changing trade patterns, increased volatility in supply chains and a currently low delivery book for ships are all pushing up industry prices, the global tank operator predicts.

Tight ocean freight capacity is likely to continue for the foreseeable future as major economies begin to recover thanks to the vaccine rollout, while globally, trucking is facing driver shortages as they migrated into other services during the pandemic.

Commenting on the market Michael Kramer, president of Stolt Tank Containers, said: "The last time our industry saw conditions even close to resembling the current market was prior to the financial crisis of 2008. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that the conditions we face today are unprecedented in nature, with multiple issues occurring simultaneously."

In addition to the pandemic there have been several other unexpected events to deal with recently, including the Texas freeze and the Suez Canal closure, both of which impacted short-term trade. When viewed globally, these multiple factors are acting together to create a very challenging market and the disruptions, shortages, and inefficient service from carriers have caused substantial increases in costs.

Kramer continued: "Along with rapidly rising ocean freight costs, other factors are also compounding the situation. Adding to the size of our fleet and hiring additional manpower to deal with the extra work generated by blank sailings and the subsequent rerouting of tanks and rising fuel prices all add to our costs.

"Unfortunately, like many logistics companies, producers, and even customers, we have no choice but to increase our prices to offset these cost increases and to ensure supply chain stability," he said.

"We have also increased our demurrage tariff rates and reduced free time included in our contracts. Forecasts indicate that the blank sailings, rolled bookings from carriers in all markets, port congestion and high demand, will continue well into the future and as a logistics provider we are not be able to absorb these, so they will be passed on to shippers," he went on to say.

Kramer believes that one advantage STC has is its strong long-term relationships with customers, ocean carriers and other vendors that are helping the operator move cargo.

"In dealing with the unprecedented conditions, we are working with both our customers and vendors in a collaborative fashion to minimise cost increases and to digitise as much activity as possible and increase transparency in other areas of the supply chain," he commented.

"We have made significant investments in digitalisation in recent years and have integrated our systems electronically with both shippers and vendors to reduce waste and inefficiencies so that we are able to keep related administrative costs low."

Customers understand that these rising expenses are something that are out of Stolt's control given the global freight and trucking markets, and that organisations are doing everything they can to limit cost increases, Kramer added.

"Our teams are continuing to work closely with customers and vendors to plan and forecast requirements accurately and in a cost-effective manner, remaining flexible and responsive to their quickly changing needs."

But despite the challenges, there are some opportunities ahead, he explained. "Despite the difficult markets, it's not all bad news for the industry. We are seeing incredibly strong demand across all geographies and sectors of the market as economies begin to rebound from the pandemic and consumer confidence improves," Kramer continued.

"This is driving our customers to restock and restart, or increase, production to full capacity. We are also seeing very strong growth in demand as cargo moves from unsustainable flexibags back into tank containers, because of both the global dry box shortage and a renewed focus on sustainable supply chains by customers.

"Our focus is to remain agile so that we can deal with all of the external factors impacting our customers' supply chains so we can continue to deliver the highest levels of service at the lowest possible cost to our customers while working to create additional efficiencies for the future," Kramer said.

**www.stolt-nielsen.com**

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# China draws up hazmat guide

**China is drafting its first national guidelines on transporting dangerous goods.**

China is drafting its first national guidelines on transporting dangerous goods.

The UK's National Chemical Emergency Centre (NCEC) said the Emergency Response Guideline for Transportation of Dangerous Goods has been created by a number of industry associations and organisations, including the China Petroleum and Chemical Industry Federation (CPCIF) and REACH24H, NCEC's partner in China.

The guideline is a series of recommended standards specifying the requirement for emergency response for transportation where dangerous goods are involved and will enable organisations to follow best practice to reduce the impact of these incidents.

The guidelines were approved by the State Administration for Market Regulation and the Standardisation Administration on 30 April and the full text of the guidance will be released shortly.

The standards will come into effect from 1 November 2021.

**https://the-ncec.com**

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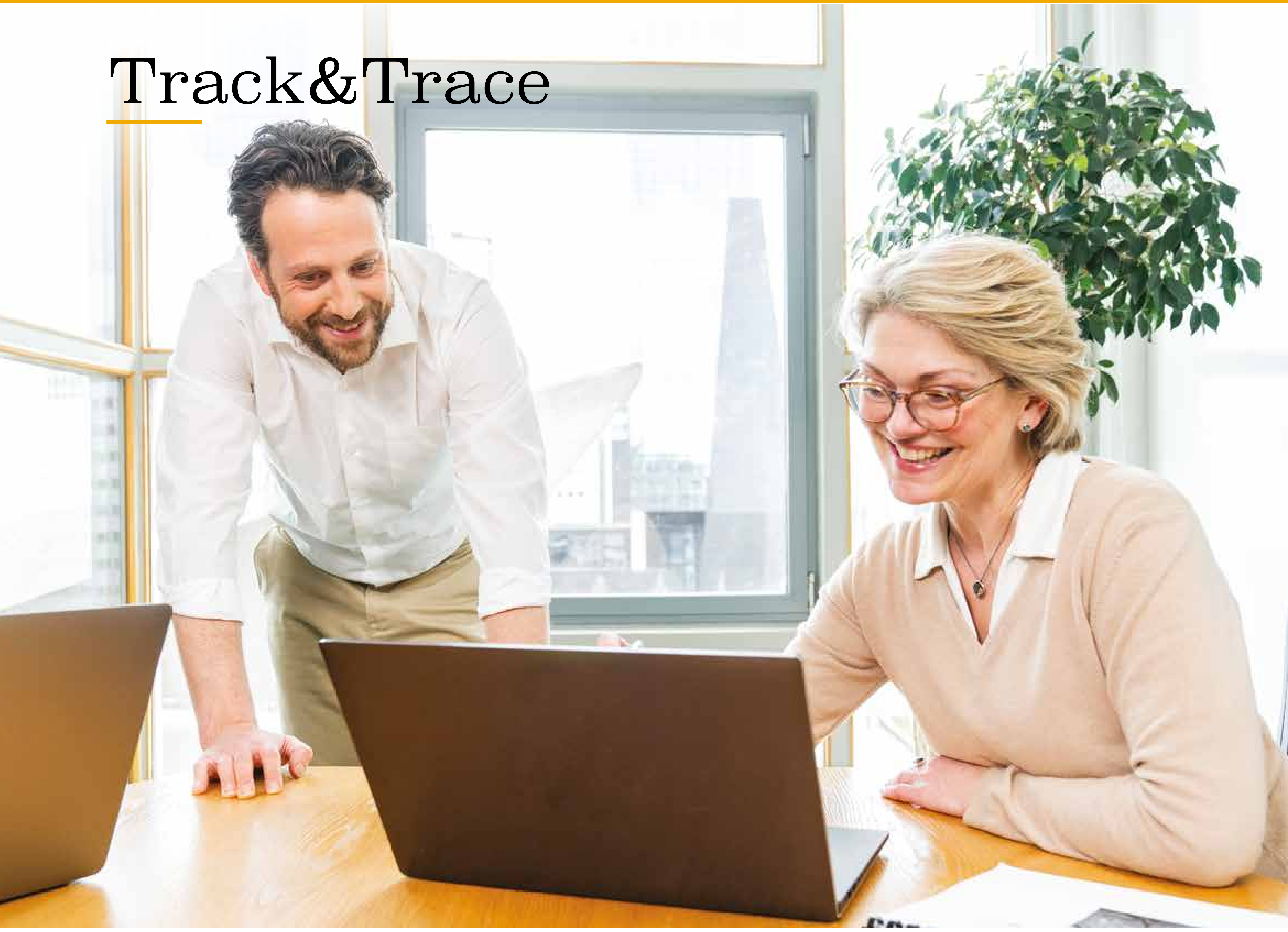

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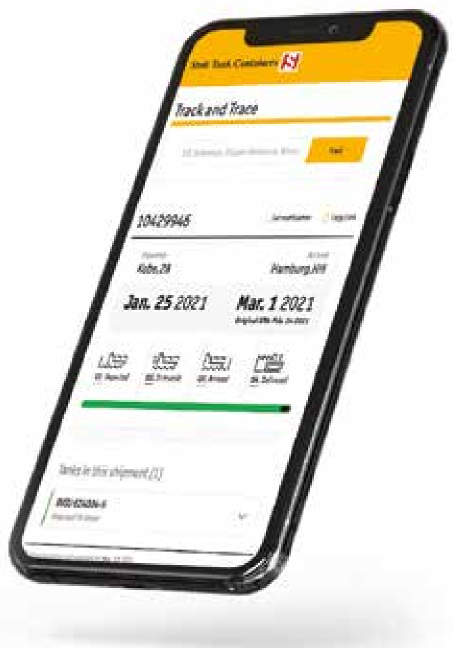


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Stolt Tank Containers

A large number of Hoyer's containers were brought into use at short notice in Brazil, Chile and Peru

# Hoyer ramps up oxygen supplies

**Several times in the past year, *Bulk Distributor* has reported on how bulk materials equipment – tank containers, IBCs, drums, etc – has been rapidly and efficiently deployed to ship vital materials needed in the battle against COVID-19.**

Lately, the attention has turned to oxygen. This common component of the air we breathe has become an even more valuable commodity during the pandemic. Ensuring reliable supplies of this essential gas is in many instances a matter of life and death.

Due to its international presence, Hoyer Group is making an important contribution to the infrastructural support for supplies to hospitals and medical establishments providing tank container equipment flexibly for worldwide use, and undertaking transport services.

Hoyer has many years of expertise in transporting and handling liquefied and compressed gases. Each product has specific demands in this respect – but high safety requirements all along the logistics chain are common to all of them, to guarantee consistent product quality and to protect people and the environment.

The pandemic's impacts show the importance of prompt provision of some of these products as worldwide demand for supplies of medical oxygen has increased rapidly. For the transport element, Hoyer is in close contact with its customers regarding supply and, for example, has given drivers in its European business product-specific training. This allows the logistics specialist to meet even supply peaks reliably and securely reliably and securely at short notice – with certified quality.

Time is a critical factor when delivering medical oxygen – and so is the worldwide availability of suitable equipment. Hoyer proved its flexibility in both respects: in only two days, the company's specialist team arranged the provision of three oxygen tank containers that were air freighted from Europe to South America. A large number of these containers were brought into use at short notice in Brazil, Chile and Peru. The company is also a strong, reliable partner in critical demand situations in Europe, and supported oxygen supplies to hospitals and medical establishments in countries including the Czech Republic, Serbia and Croatia by providing equipment and organising intermodal transport to Eastern Europe. Tank container deliveries to Southern Europe also allowed supplies to regions in Africa.

And for COVID-19 vaccines, among other things, there is a growing requirement for dry ice logistics. Hoyer carries out dry ice transport movements punctually, safely and securely in the whole of Europe.

Hoyer was able to reduce transport-related emissions to below 20 gms of CO2 per tonne-km for the first time

According to Anna Krüger, head of business development gas: "Dry ice is a highly volatile product and must be handled correspondingly quickly but safely. In this respect, we can rely on our many years of expertise and flexibility, and on our large network of drivers with product-specific training."

## Sustainable action

Since 2012 Hoyer has been responsible for publishing an annual Sustainability Report. In this, the logistics specialist declares key figures for the sustainability of the company's activities, thereby documenting among other things the success of its strategic efforts to reduce CO2 emissions and incident rates.

One of these initiatives is in expanding intermodal transport: this comprised a 79.5 percent share of the Hoyer's total journeys in the most recent evaluations, enabling a decrease in CO2 emissions. This reduction was supported by the use of Euro-6-compliant drive systems in more than 90 percent of the overall vehicle fleet being used.

Thanks to these two improvements, Hoyer achieved a new company record and was able to reduce transport-related emissions to below 20 gms of CO2 per tonne-km for the first time. The target to reduce transport-related CO2 emissions by 25 percent within 10 years is within reach, the firm says. Another long term target Hoyer is striving to achieve is the reduction of 'main incidents', ie, very serious incidents, by 50 percent in non-transport operations and by 25 percent in transport operations. These goals should be achieved by the end of 2020. Interim results are positive, Hoyer states.

Hoyer regularly reviews the standards by which it measures its performance as well as the scope and transparency of its reporting as part of its quality management. Hence, the logistics company is now taking the consistent step of widening the scope of measures published in the Sustainability Report to include CO2 emissions arising through the use of energy in the company's non-transport activities worldwide, eg, in cleaning operations, depots and storage facilities.

The previous, internationally recognised McKinnon method for collecting key figures has been replaced by the GLEC framework (Global Logistics Emission Council). This method is more complex, more sophisticated and more detailed – and can therefore more accurately calculate the individual emissions performance of the group's activities. This change also paves the way for ISO-50001 certification which Hoyer aims to achieve in Europe by 2022, and for all other global operations by 2025.

As Mark Binns, head of group SHEQ and sustainable management makes clear: "Hoyer has not only an interest but also an obligation to contribute towards creating and using a sustainable future." This obligation is also made clear through the company's realignment to the United Nation's 'Sustainable Development Goals', eight points of which have been laid down as its own targets. As well as climate protection and economic growth, these goals also include combating poverty, the promotion of education and an obligation to responsible consumption.

**www.hoyer-group.com**

# Tanks up and away

**Albatross Tank-Leasing has been supplying oxygen cryo-containers to customers in India to support the transport and supply of medical-grade liquid oxygen to various hospitals.**

A further surge in **COVID**-19 infections in India has wreaked havoc on the country's health system with shortages of oxygen reported as a major debilitating factor in treating patients.

Over the past year Albatross has shifted focus onto expanding its cryo fleet to provide customers the needed equipment to support them during the current supply bottlenecks. The leasing company's T75 20ft tanks are approved for the transport of the most common cryo gases.

The Indian Air Force flew some of the first tanks into India. In other regions of the world, heavy lift air freight has been called in to ship tanks rapidly to areas of need.

Heavy air freight carrier Volga-Dnepr Airlines also provided lift for some Albatross units. The carrier operated three charter flights to India from China, Ireland and Germany during May.

Over 200 tonnes of vital medical equipment containing oxygen storing containers, concentrators and cryogenic containers were delivered on-board heavy lift planes to various parts of India.

Ekaterina Andreeva, commercial director, said: "With the situation in India worsening we started getting charter requests transport ISO tanks. Together with a team of experts from various departments and powered by competence in dangerous goods transport we were able to advise our customers on loading, packaging, and conditions of the tanks. Working in tandem with our long-standing customers, Chapman Freeborn, Maersk Special Project Logistic team and Air Charter Service India, we organised charter flights within the shortest timeframes in line with biosafety requirements and completed another humanitarian mission."

The airline operates a fleet of ramp freighters capable of transporting up to 12 20ft ISO tanks aboard Antonov An-124 aircraft and three 20ft tanks aboard the Ilyushin 76 plane, with planes being self-sufficient in terms of loading and offloading procedures.


The Indian Air Force flew some Albatross tanks into India


Volga-Dnepr Airlines operated three charter flights carrying tank containers to India during May

# Van den Bosch takes over Tankspeed

**In April, Van den Bosch took over the activities of Tankspeed Logistics, based in Newport, UK.**

The acquisition strengthens Van den Bosch its position in intermodal transport of dry bulk products in Europe.

Tankspeed Logistics was founded in 2005 as Tankspeed-Fraikin by Mitzi Walker and Manfred Fraikin. Since 2015, all shares have been owned by managing director Mitzi Walker, with the company operating under the name Tankspeed Logistics. The core business consists of transporting dry bulk products for the chemical industry, such as PVC powder and minerals. These activities take place within the UK and between the Benelux and the UK.

In recent years, Van den Bosch has invested in expanding its dry bulk activities in Europe, particularly in pressurised silo containers. Tankspeed Logistics also focuses on this specific segment. "With the acquisition of Tankspeed Logistics, we are strengthening our position as the market leader in transport with pressurised silo containers in Europe and are committed to developing our business further in the UK," said Barry Gruijters, operations director dry bulk at Van den Bosch.

Tankspeed's activities will carry on under Van den Bosch's wing. The takeover expands the fleet with various 30ft and 40ft pressurised silo containers. As commercial manager, Mitzi Walker will remain closely involved in the operation.

Gruijters explained: "Tankspeed Logistics is known for its high-quality service provision. Mitzi Walker's network and experience will be of great significance to the continued success and further development of the activities. With Mitzi on board, we have every confidence in the realisation of our growth ambitions in the UK market."

Walker said Tankspeed's customers will benefit from the network, capacity and expertise of a logistics multinational. "I am delighted to be working with Van den Bosch to optimise our strengths and experience," she said. "Tankspeed Logistics and Van den Bosch have been working together for a number of years. I have seen how Van den Bosch has grown its business, especially in the UK, and have seen impressive innovations in the bulk sector. I envisage a prosperous and ongoing relationship with customers and suppliers, while supporting the ongoing development to grow our business."

Meanwhile, in Van den Bosch's silo trailer business, Barry Gruijters has developed a technology to keep condensation out of a trailer and prevent the growth of bacteria and germs.

Working with Ants Technology & Consulting, a


*The takeover of Tankspeed expands Van den Bosch's fleet with various 30ft and 40ft pressurised silo containers*

high-quality air dryer improves the air quality in the trailer. The device is equipped with an active carbon filter which means that incoming air is filtered to render it of better quality than the outside air which is still present in the trailer from the loading process.

Gruijters explained: "The system sucks in outside air, filters and dries this air and then blows it into the trailer. The unfiltered and potentially moist air in the trailer is discharged. In this way, we improve the air quality in the trailer and prevent condensation. This reduces the risk of residual loading and prevents the growth of bacteria or germs."

The first trailer is now fitted with the air dryer and ready for the test phase. A lot of attention has been paid to hygiene and food safety (such as preventing protruding parts and unevenness) and to the use of food-grade materials. The trailer is also equipped with sensors. "Among other things

*Van den Bosch's air drier sucks in outside air, filters and dries it and then blows it into the trailer preventing condensation and the growth of bacteria*

these measure the moisture value of the incoming and outgoing air and are connected to a data logger with which we can analyse the data during and after testing," said Gruijters. The air dryer is active during transport and also operates when parked (if connected to power).

It is used for transporting dry bulk goods for the food industry. "You want to keep hygroscopic products such as milk powder and flour completely dry to guarantee product quality and functionality," continues Gruijters. "With the development of this air dryer, we are raising the standard in the market. This type of system is currently only used for the dedicated transport of flour. But our design has a much broader application and focuses not only on drying, but also on air quality. This gives us the advantage in the area of food safety."

The test trailer has now been put into service and is used for transporting flour. Following this test period, the air dryer will be further developed in consultation with interested parties.

**www.vandenbosch.com**

# More storage for Talke

**Alfred Talke is creating extra storage capacity for more than 1,000 hazardous material containers at its terminal in Hürth, near Cologne.**

The investment marks the beginning of a comprehensive renewal and expansion programme for the chemical logistics hub at Talke headquarters.

The terminal in Hürth is designed for the storage of a total of 18,000 tons of hazardous substances. "With the structural expansion of our terminal, we are opening up an area for the storage of empty, uncleaned containers on our approximately 150,000 sqm site," explained project manager Oliver Baumgartner.

Talke is providing almost 300 additional storage spaces for hazardous substances in the existing container terminal, so that it can now store over 1,000 hazardous material containers.

"Our chemical logistics hub at Hürth is designed for a particularly wide range of hazardous substances," said Holger Papendick, business unit manager logistics Germany. "Combined with the geographical location including a connection to the European rail network and the additional logistical services, it offers our customers competitive advantages."

The Hürth terminal fulfils the requirements for many hazardous material storage classes. Value-added services include heating, cleaning, repair and inspection of containers as well as the filling of liquid or solid chemicals into other containers. A separate container tilting platform is available for filling solids from containers, for example. Talke can fill liquid products directly on site using EX-protected and encapsulated semi-automatic and fully automatic filling systems in commercially available small containers and store them temporarily.

**www.talke.com**


*VTG Tanktainer has been on the ground in Turkey for over 20 years*

# VTG's Turkish expansion

**VTG is repositioning itself on the Turkish market, bundling all the business activities of VTG Rail Europe, VTG Rail Logistics and VTG Tanktainer under the aegis of the group's Turkish subsidiary VTG Nakliyat.**

From May, business operations are led jointly by Sinemis Özden, managing director VTG Nakliyat, and Zoltán Potvorszki, head of region south eastern Europe VTG Rail Logistics. "In the future, we will be able to offer integrated rail, container and multimodal project logistics as well as customs handling and asset hire services in Turkey and the surrounding region – locally and all from a single source," said Potvorszki.

VTG Nakliyat has played an active role in providing leasing and rail logistics services since 2015. It now plans to intensify collaboration with existing partners and to expand its range of services around rail, container and multimodal transport. To this end, two local offices will be opened on the Bosphorus: one on the European side (with a focus on rail transport) and another on the Asian side (with a focus on tanktainers). Both will develop new, customer-centric products and services for these markets.

VTG Tanktainer, too, has been on the ground in Turkey for over 20 years. In-depth market expertise has established it as one of the region's market leaders for the transport of liquids in tanktainers and flexitanks.

"Having VTG Nakliyat offices in Istanbul's Pendik and Haikali districts puts us right where our customers are," added Joachim Goldenbaum, deputy head of European sales VTG Tanktainer. "Operating in immediate proximity to our long-standing logistical partners, we want to bundle the VTG service portfolio in order to develop the Turkish market further."

The Turkish market harbours tremendous potential and holds out attractive prospects for VTG, in part due to its geographical location on the New Silk Road. Freight traffic has grown strongly here in recent years. "We see huge potential in this region, especially for rail and multimodal transport," Özden commented. "By pooling VTG's expertise under the aegis of VTG Nakliyat, we will be better placed to respond to customers' needs in this highly promising market environment."

**www.vtg.com**

*Direct shipping route from Dumai can cut the export route from three days to 22 hours*

# Legend opens in Europe

**One of the largest Asian tank container operators Legend Logistics Group recently established a foothold in Europe, with the opening of a branch office in Papendrecht, the Netherlands.**

Legend, which has its headquarters in Singapore, is an integrated specialised logistics provider for heavy haulage, bulk liquid, dry commodities, perishable products and oversized cargoes.

Since its founding in 2012, Legend has been growing steadily and has been recently awarded with an Excellence Growth Award at the ASEAN Business Awards 2020 in Vietnam.

With this expansion in the Netherlands and the continuous growth of its tank container fleet, Legend Logistics Group is looking to exploit opportunities in Europe to strengthen its global network.

The operator says it brings added value to the market with its network in Asia and Oceania, supported by its own container depots, warehouses, truck fleet and purpose-built vessels.

The European branch will be headed by Ruben Hofland, who has been in the industry for more than 10 years and previously managed a local office of a tank container lessor.

**www.legendlogisticsltd.com**

# Innovative logistics in Sumatra

**Den Hartogh Asia-Pacific recently facilitated requests from customers in Dumai, Indonesia to open up international ISO tank shipping routes.**

The tank operator shipped out a batch of 19 tanks, via a barge, to Port Klang, Malaysia for onward transhipment to various global destinations.

Before this direct shipping route existed, Dumai oleochemical refineries had to send their cargoes by land for international export through neighbouring ports in Sumatra. Delivery of goods to Port Klang via such ports takes three days of travel. However, if it is via Dumai Port, it is estimated to take only 22 hours.

"This Dumai ISO tank export solution will significantly increase operational efficiency and cost competitiveness of our Dumai-based oleochemical customers," said Edrick Wee, commercial manager of Den Hartogh Southeast Asia.

In the words of the local port authority, Pelindo 1 Dumai: "This container export service is a business innovation to answer the needs of service users."

Back in its home country of the Netherlands, the first 50-tonne electric truck has been put into use. Den Hartogh uses this truck in Rotterdam's chemical cluster to ship polyols and MDI for chemicals firm Huntsman.

The initiative is part of a joint initiative, with supported from the DKTI 2 demonstration programme of the Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management. This is the very first electric truck of this size to drive in the Netherlands and it is an important step in reducing CO2 emissions. The implementation in the chemical cluster is a result of co-operation between Huntsman, Breytner, HN Post & Zonen, Den Hartogh Logistics, Agility and Port of Rotterdam.

Joep Aerts, business unit director of Den Hartogh, commented: "We are excited that we actually have an electric truck driving with chemicals. We see the sustainability journey as a Den Hartogh journey, but also as an industry one, so we are very happy that we can start this project with the consortium. We have a long relation with Huntsman in co-operating on innovation and this is a very good next step."

Huntsman's Rotterdam & Wilton supply chain manager Leen Wendels added: "As a company, we are always looking for sustainable improvements in our freight transport, such as transport by train and inland shipping, together with our extensive network of logistics service providers. This joint trial with the electric truck is a new exciting example; a promising initiative that could potentially mean a major turnaround in CO2 emission."

No fewer than 16 parties are partnering in the electric truck project.

**www.denhartogh.com**


*Den Hartogh uses this electric truck in Rotterdam's chemical cluster to ship polyols and MDI for Huntsman*

# Seaco sees a bright future

**There was a time when things did not move fast in the world of tank container leasing.**

But the past year has certainly witnessed big changes. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the global economy in very short order, but this resulted in perhaps an unexpected demand fillip for tanks as pandemic-related raw materials desperately needed to be shipped quickly from source to end users.

Speaking to *Bulk Distributor*, John Bannister, vice president tanks & reefers at global lessor Seaco, says that at the outset of the pandemic there was obviously a lot of caution in the market due to the uncertainty of where it would all lead. However, "once there was more clarity, we saw demand increase mainly for storage purposes because products could not be moved or had to be moved in limited quantities, but plants kept producing," he comments.

Now markets have started to open, and manufacturing pick up, Seaco is starting to see a rebound and demand for tanks increasing again. This demand has also been driven by the current shortage in shipping capacity and high freight costs which have put pressure on normal supply chains and the ability to position equipment to demand locations in a cost effective and timely manner.

"The outcome is that it appears to be driving demand to on-hire additional equipment," Bannister says. "We have seen additional enquires for one-off shipments mainly for pandemic-related products like ethanol, but in general on hires have come from all customer segments. Moreover, demand has come from all regions."


*Now markets have started to open, and manufacturing pick up, Seaco is starting to see a rebound and demand for tanks increasing again*

## Digitalisation drive

Like businesses all over the world, the pandemic has accelerated the pace of digitalisation, as many employees started working from home and distancing measures obliged stakeholders to reduce – or even obviate – the degree of face-to-face interaction.


*John Bannister – the tank leasing market has moved on considerably from the days of just leasing a tank, to one where customers are now looking for customised solutions, technical support, a deeper knowledge base and global coverage*

As a global business, Seaco had already incorporated a number of technologies to support its global operations well before the onset of COVID-19 and these technologies made the transition to remote working quite seamless, thankfully allowing the company to maintain its business activities while keeping people safe. This included the company's approach to ensuring its people could continue to develop their skills.

"Prior to the present pandemic, we took a blended approach to training, including some online, but mainly face to face programmes," Bannister explains. "The company views ongoing training of its personnel as a critical element of its working rhythm so by July 2020 we embarked on a very comprehensive online training platform which covered every training need of the company and more. This allowed for this very important programme to continue through these difficult times. Looking ahead in the changing world of work, we are pleased to have begun such an initiative on the ground floor as the pandemic has generated a massive leap forward for online training and we are well prepared to progress the continuous development of our employees," he adds.

## M&A

It may or may not be coincidental with the pandemic, but the past year has seen a flurry of mergers and acquisitions (M&As) in the tank leasing sector.

Bannister believes that underlying trends have encouraged this rather than being specifically due to the current stressed economic situation. "While there will always be a place in the tank market for niche players, to compete effectively in the wider market you do need a critical mass to be competitive," he says. "It would appear that the recent M&A activity is partly to achieve economies of scale. In addition, while over the past few years the tank leasing market has been in a lull, there are signs that it is improving and offers growth opportunities in a sector that is very scalable, which could be why there are a number of new players entering into the market."

## What next?

Seaco has continued to add equipment to its fleet to cover the phasing out of older units and keep pace with the current market demand for standard T11 tanks. As at 1 January 2021 this fleet stood at 43,000 units. And the leasing company has increased its focus and growth on the more specialised sectors of the market adding new temperature-controlled, lined and customer-specified tank designs. "In addition," Bannister points out, "we have diversified further to add 20ft and 40ft cryogenic tanks to our fleet."

Bannister remains upbeat on the near-term prospects for the tank sector, generally. "We see the market remaining positive for the rest of this year," he says, "and with the drive for more eco-friendly and safe transport solutions for hazardous products the growth in the tank sector should continue for the next two to three years. In addition, we also see material costs continuing to rise, which should drive tank prices upwards and this in turn should have a positive impact on leasing rates."

However, it will be important for tank lessors to broaden their service offering, he insists. Just renting tanks out for a given period is not likely to be a sustainable business model. "It is interesting to note that the tank leasing market has moved on considerably from the days of just leasing a tank, to one where customers are now looking for customised solutions, technical support, a deeper knowledge base and global coverage from leasing companies supplying the units," he comments. "We see this as a big opportunity for Seaco and have developed tank centres of excellence in key locations to provide this service and support."

All this points to the growing importance of scale and a global operational footprint; factors that Seaco already has in place.

**www.seacoglobal.com**


*To compete effectively in the wider market you need a critical mass*

# Wascosa wagons for HVLE

**Forty-five brand new Eamnos wagons built at Greenbrier in Poland were handed over on time to Havelländische Eisenbahn (HVLE) on 15 March.**

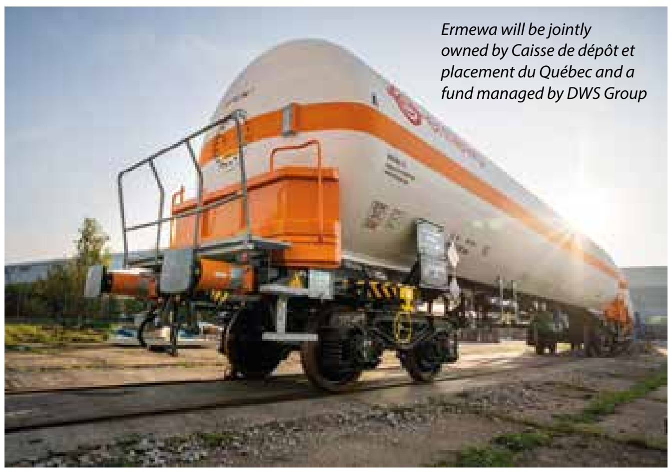
The colourful blue and orange wagons leased by Wascosa were handed over in Wustermark, near Berlin.

HVLE, which will be using the Eamnos primarily for transporting building materials, is delighted with the wagons. Ludolf Kerkeling, member of the HVLE board of directors, commented: "Not only are the wagons impressive with regard to their appearance, but also in terms of their quality. That's a key reason why we work with Wascosa."

Peter Balzer, managing director of Wascosa, added: "As the fourth largest lessor of freight wagons, Wascosa will continue its vigorous investment strategy to develop an even broader wagon portfolio which now includes virtually all relevant wagon types.

"We are convinced that the critical size of a wagon lessor is shifting ever upwards. Qualitative and quantitative growth is therefore essential, together with the ability to complete our transformation into a digitalised railway world."

**www.wascosa.ch**



*Ermewa will be jointly owned by Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec and a fund managed by DWS Group*

# Ermewa to be sold

**France's state-owned rail operator SNCF is set to sell its equipment leasing business Ermewa, which includes the tank container leasing businesses Eurotainer and Raffles.**

If the sale goes ahead Ermewa will be jointly owned by two fund-management groups Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (CDPQ) and a fund managed by DWS Group.

Jean-Pierre Farandou, chairman and CEO of SNCF, said the planned sale of Ermewa is in line with the SNCF group's strategy to become a leader in sustainable mobility for passengers and goods, with a core rail business and two strategic assets, Keolis and Geodis.

"This operation would also accelerate the group's debt reduction and pursue the objective of maintaining its financial trajectory, while backing Ermewa with long-term partners, able to ensure the sustainability of the company's activity, which would remain a commercial partner of SNCF," he said.

Ermewa posted annual revenues of €489 million and EBITDA of €271 million in 2020. The subsidiary employs 1,200 people managing a fleet of just over 100,000 assets, comprising 40,000 rail cars in Ermewa, 49,500 tank containers in Eurotainer and 16,000 tank containers under Raffles.

As at 31 December 2020, CDPQ's net assets totalled CA$ 365.5 billion, while DWS has €793 billion of assets under management.

CDPQ holds a 45 percent stake in various port facilities in partnership with Dubai's DP World and 26.7 percent of Port of Brisbane, Australia. It also has an investment in Indian logistics firm TVS Logistics Services.

**www.ermewa.com**

# Arcus folds Gem tanks under Peacock's wing

**Just two months after its acquisition of Peacock Group, Arcus Infrastructure Partners announced its second foray into the tank container leasing market.**

Through Peacock Group Holdings, the entity is buying a portfolio of 9,000 tanks from Gem Containers Limited as well as associated operating and financial leases.

The acquired fleet consists of a variety of tank container types, early in their asset life cycle, with solid long term leases to reputable clients. The addition of the Gem assets was concluded following exclusive negotiations with the sellers and will boost Peacock's total fleet to some 16,500 tank containers, resulting in Peacock moving into the top six tank container lessors globally.

Combining the fleet of Gem assets with Peacock leads to a reduction in average asset age, while increasing the average remaining contract term and offering various operational synergies.

Nicola Palmer, the Arcus Partner responsible for the Peacock acquisition, commented: "The addition of the Gem tank containers to Peacock's fleet fits exactly with our ambition to create scale in this growing market and strengthen Peacock's strong market position and further diversity its customer base."

*The addition of the Gem assets will boost Peacock's total fleet to some 16,500 tank containers*

Gem was founded in 2012 by former Multistar executive Heidi Sommerville and rapidly built a significant fleet of tanks. In 2017, the company received a capital injection from asset management firm Crestline Investors.

**https://peacockcontainer.com**

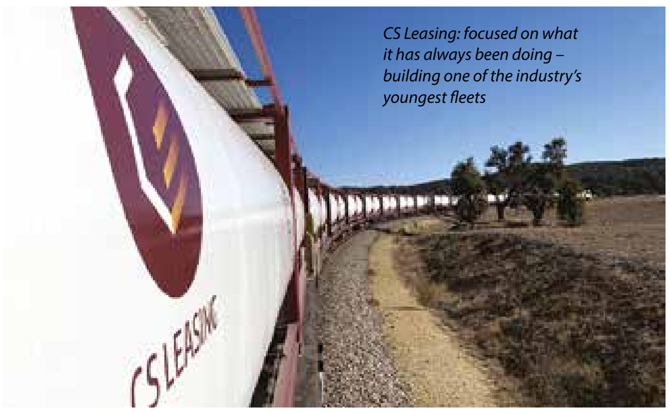
# CS Leasing on course for more global growth

**Since it was founded six years ago, CS Leasing has risen swiftly up the ranks to become the fifth largest ISO tank container lessor in the world, according to the 2021 Global Fleet Report from ITCO.**

The US-headquartered company has been growing fast year-on-year both with regards to fleet size and global footprint and despite the global pandemic, says that 2020 was no exception. After an initial slowdown in the first part of 2020 as the world consolidated, borders locked down and international trade slumped, demand sprang back in Q3 and Q4 and CS Leasing entered 2021 with over 18,000 tanks.

As of spring 2021, the company's tank container fleet stands at just over 20,000 units with a similar number of dry freight specials and a strong pipeline of orders for the remainder of 2021. Its dry freight specials are used mainly in the Australian mining logistics industry, but CS Leasing notes that "while we have grown the fleet in Australia, we have also started to expand into other markets".

However, the pandemic has not been without challenges that linger into 2021, requiring careful management. "Tank prices and lead times have gone up, leaving some leasing companies with minimal newbuild inventories," says CS Leasing. "As with all asset types, repositioning costs have increased greatly, putting pressure on inventories in key regions such as Europe and the US Gulf. We continue to work with our customers to provide a pipeline of new equipment coming into both these core locations."



*CS Leasing: focused on what it has always been doing – building one of the industry's youngest fleets*

Another impact of the pandemic, of course, was the pivot to working from home. As a young company designed from the ground up in 2015/2016, CS Leasing says that its systems and procedures were already digitalised, and the company's teams around the globe were used to working remotely. "When the work from home requirements came in, both our back office and marketing teams continued to work effectively to support our customers," says the lessor. "However, we have greatly missed face to face contact with our customers and vendors and the collaboration and innovation we get when we all meet as a team. We definitely look forward to the world opening up again!"

Digitalisation is part and parcel of modern business operations and CS Leasing is no exception. "We are always looking for ways to improve our systems so we can be more efficient internally and better support all our stakeholders and customers. Our website has evolved over time to provide more support to our customers and all our employees have live fleet information available on any device they chose, allowing for quick decision making and improved customer service," says the company.

The tank container leasing sector – like so many others – has witnessed increased consolidation in recent years. "The tank container leasing sector is currently seen as a good investment and we welcome the engagement of great companies such as GATX and ARCUS which illustrates the value of our industry and the critical role we play in global supply chains," says CS Leasing. "It's good that customers have a choice of quality leasing companies to work with, creating healthy competition, which is good for all industry players."

While there have been a lot of changes in the tank leasing sector, "we are pleased to say that we are still the same," says CS Leasing. "We are not absorbing new fleets and working with new ownership structures but instead remain totally focused on what we have always been doing – building one of the industry's youngest fleets of tanks and dry freight specials, only commissioning high specification equipment – all our tanks, for instance, have 4.6mm shells and top-quality ancillaries – and investing for the long-term growth of our business and partnerships."

Equipment is of course only one dimension. "While we are growing the fleet, we are also expanding our global network," says the company. "We have hired some new experienced operations resources in the US and are actively looking for more salespeople in Europe and Asia to join our team. We strive to create an innovative culture that provides autonomy where it's needed, with a transparent, flat management team to speed up decisions and ensure we remain reactive to the market and our customers' needs. Our fundamental philosophy is to provide a global network with local expert support."

Access to capital is also crucial. Over the past few months, CS Leasing has expanded and strengthened its relationship with the company's bank group, which consists of five banks with deep experience in the container industry. "This provides us with a solid foundation for further growth, allowing us to continue to support current and new customers and other projects as they present themselves. In every dimension, we are building for the long term," concludes the company.

**www.cslintermodal.com**



## GATX posts lower income

**GATX posted 2021 first quarter net income of US$36.5 million or $1.02 per share. This compared with $47.2 million or $1.33 per share in the first quarter of 2020.**

"Conditions in the North American railcar leasing market are consistent with our outlook coming into the year," said Brian A Kenney, president and CEO. "GATX's fleet utilisation decreased slightly to 97.8 percent and our renewal success rate was 77.7 percent for the quarter. While absolute lease rates for many car types modestly increased from the prior quarter, pressure on revenue remains given the continuing high number of idle cars industrywide. The first-quarter renewal lease rate change of GATX's Lease Price Index was negative 18.1 percent, primarily due to energy-related car types."

Kenney added that GATX continues to identify opportunities in the current environment to grow its asset base in North America.

"Our commercial team has successfully placed with customers nearly all cars expected to be delivered in 2021 under our supply agreements as well as over 1,000 additional cars outside of the supply agreements that will deliver by mid-2022," he said.

Rail International performed as expected. GATX Rail Europe maintained high fleet utilisation of 98.2 percent at quarter-end and continues to experience small increases in renewal lease rates. Despite a recent resurgence of COVID-19 in Europe and India, demand for railcars remains stable as the firm continues to grow and diversify our fleets in both regions.

Rail North America reported segment profit of $65.7 million in the first quarter, compared to $72 million in the first quarter of 2020. Lower division profit was primarily a result of lower gains on asset dispositions and lower lease revenue, partially offset by lower maintenance expense.

Fleet utilisation was 97.8 percent at the end of the first quarter, compared to 98.1 percent at the end of the prior quarter.

**www.gatx.com**

# Orbcomm wins two down under

**Internet of Things (IoT) supplier Orbcomm, which is to be acquired by GI Partners, has picked up orders in recent months from two Australian logistics firms.**

Booth Transport, a national freight and logistics service provider, is using Orbcomm asset tracking solutions to monitor its fleet of ISO tanks, road tankers and chassis. Orbcomm's solutions provide wireless connectivity through its hardware and a single, unified cloud-based analytics platform for optimal fleet management across different asset types.

The technology firm's asset monitoring solution features a high-sensitivity solar panel and includes some units with a wired temperature sensor to gain complete visibility and control over a mixed fleet. Orbcomm enables Booth to monitor the temperature of dairy products in its ISO tanks, and track its road tankers distributing wine and chassis transporting containers throughout the Australian continent. The logistics company can access live and scheduled status updates whether the assets are in transit or in the yard, so the company always knows where its assets are located and if they are empty or loaded, so improving turn times and yard management while saving drivers time and fuel.

Orbcomm's telematics solution also provides Booth with the ability to see precise data to schedule asset maintenance, inspections and time elapsed for increased utilisation and performance.

"We're excited to work with Booth Transport, Australia's top bulk food, container transport and logistics provider, to help its gain critical in-transit visibility and improve the productivity of its diverse fleet," said Christian Allred, Orbcomm's senior vice president and general manager of global sales. "With our triple-play offering, customers like Booth can leverage the Orbcomm platform to streamline how it manages multiple asset types, reduce the complexity of operations while taking advantage of deep data insights to help the business run smarter."

"We needed a fully integrated telematics solution with flexible APIs to manage our mixed fleet," said Mitchell Booth for Booth Transport. "Orbcomm's powerful platform creates an intelligent logistics environment that enables us to track and monitor multiple asset classes seamlessly through one comprehensive view.

"Our investment in this powerful IoT technology is already benefiting our bottom line by generating significant efficiencies, improving the safety and compliance of our fleet and enhancing service to our customers, which is our top priority."

*Orbcomm enables Booth to monitor the temperature of dairy products in its ISO tanks and track road tankers distributing wine*

The Orbcomm devices can be installed externally in about 10 minutes, even when the asset is loaded, making Booth's deployments quick and efficient with minimal disruption to operations. Booth is in the process of installing the asset tracking solutions at its 10 depots throughout Australia and expects to explore Orbcomm's other IoT products as part of its efforts to expand their deployment later this year.

*McColl's Transport is Australia's largest independent bulk liquid carrier of milk, food and bulk chemicals*

## McColl's

The second contract win is with McColl's Transport, Australia's largest independent bulk liquid carrier of milk, food and bulk chemicals. Orbcomm is providing its asset tracking solutions to monitor ISO tanks throughout the continent.

McColl's is also using Orbcomm's telematics solution with the ability to track unpowered assets being transported by chassis and rail to improve utilisation and productivity, streamline operations and expedite product delivery.

Like Booth, McColl's can monitor and control the temperature of liquids in its ISO tanks and monitor when the tanks are being pumped.

"Our commitment to technology innovation has been an integral part of McColl's growth and scalability for more than 60 years," said Peter Shearer, general manager for McColl's, "and Orbcomm's leading IoT technology is the best choice for helping us take our business to the next level of productivity and efficiency. "By improving visibility of the location and status of our ISO tanks and building greater efficiencies into our operations, we can uphold our long-time reputation for reliable service, world-class compliance and stringent safety standards."

"It's a great testament to the value and high performance of Orbcomm's asset tracking solutions to be selected by McColl's Transport, Australia's leading tanker transporter, as its telematics provider," added Christian Allred.

In April GI Partners, a US-based investor in data infrastructure businesses, announced it is buying Orbcomm for US$1.1 billion, including net debt.

The finance outfit said it will support Orbcomm's momentum in the industrial IoT market by increasing investment in sales, marketing and technology innovation to accelerate the company's growth and global expansion, as well as providing added flexibility as a privately-held company.

**www.orbcomm.com**

# Tracking IBCs

**Industrial packaging firm Greif has launched real time tracking technology for composite IBCs in its drive to help customers increase performance, reduce costs and improve their carbon footprint.**

Developed in conjunction with French specialist in IoT monitoring solutions, Nanolike, the GCUBE Connect smart packaging technology provides real time tracking information about a user's IBC. A customer-based dashboard displays in real-time where an IBC is located, the level of the filled product and the environmental temperature.

"The combination of real time geolocation and filled product level data enhances the proactive information that an IBC can provide to fillers," said Luca Bettoni, EMEA IBC and plastic product manager at Greif.

**www.nanolike.com**

# Barton opts for Microlise

**UK fuel distributor Barton Petroleum has deployed the Microlise Fleet Performance solution to improve safety and driver performance and deliver greater efficiency across its fleet.**

The Microlise fleet tracking and utilisation solution will improve the fleet's real-time visibility and routing efficiency, enhance driver and customer communication and support better driving performance and safer, more compliant practices.

Detailed driver performance data across a range of behaviours that impact on safety, emissions, fuel usage and miles per gallon (MPG) including speeding, engine idling, gear operation, over-revving, harsh braking, use of cruise control and coasting as well as a dashboard with live performance indicators will support improved team performance.

According to Howard Marriott, Barton's group transport manager: "By partnering with Microlise, and using this integrated solution, we are ensuring that we equip our fleet with a best-in-class safety, compliance and fleet management solution that will deliver a quantifiable ROI."

**www.microlise.com**

# Bulkio cuts empty miles

**For years, logistics service provider Van den Bosch has been offering transport orders to more than 800 bulk carriers via its online platform FreightMatch.**

Supported by this experience, FreightMatch is now ready to continue independently as a digital platform. This big step is accompanied by a change of name to Bulkio. The platform went live on 14 April and since that moment anyone can offer bulk shipments via Bulkio.

Bulk carriers drive up to 40 percent of the total distance with an empty trailer, which is a waste, according to Bulkio. That is why the platform matches those empty miles to available bulk transports by making smart use of data. The platform takes into account the specific requirements that apply to bulk transport so that carriers drive more full miles and shippers have shipments carried out at a more favourable rate.

"This platform is specifically designed for bulk transport," said Pirke van den Elsen, managing director. "It offers benefits in a broad sense. It not only simplifies administration and payment, Bulkio is also an empty miles broker. For carriers, we actively search for the match between an empty trailer and an available shipment. This ultimately leads to higher transport revenues for carriers. For shippers we offer a full guarantee that the shipment will be executed."

At the moment 25,000 shipments are placed on the market every year, Van den Elsen added. "The fact that other parties are now able to post bulk shipments – in addition to Van den Bosch – will accelerate growth. The technology behind the Bulkio platform is designed for this. Thanks to the support of 80 parameters, advanced algorithms and smart sensors, the team can quickly find the right matches."

Van den Elsen believes shippers will increasingly distribute their transports via


*Bulkio matches empty miles to available bulk transports by making smart use of data*

platforms in the future. "The success for Van den Bosch proves the potential benefits for other shippers. By making smart use of technology, we build a large community of carriers and shippers that we can bring together. That is how we reduce the number of empty miles for carriers and the transport costs for shippers."

**www.bulkio.com**

# Digital transformation – a clear-cut case

*Data analytics and visualisation help unshackle a company from the grind of data collection and static reporting*

**More than ever, companies in the logistics and distribution sectors are being told that they need to prioritise digital transformation to adapt. Yet in a fast changing world many find the idea somewhat daunting.**

This should not be a surprise. For all the promises of technology, there are just as many buzzwords and contradictory pieces of advice. This has discouraged many companies from pursuing digital technologies, despite the benefits.

Epicor, which provides cloud solutions particularly for distribution and supply chain operators, has developed a playbook* to guide firms through the necessary steps of implementing a digital transformation strategy.

The playbook points out that only 27 percent of organisations today have a comprehensive digital transformation roadmap in place. Looking ahead to 2022, however, that number is expected to jump to 75 percent.

Companies that have successfully achieved this transformation – and realised the benefits – have taken practical steps that others can also take.

Epicor aims to help clearly define and break down digital transformation to set out these steps, where to start, and how to begin with practical initiatives.

The playbook identifies four scenarios ripe for digital help:

- You know digital technology can improve your business, but you don't know where to start.
- You'd like to go digital but can't imagine how it's possible with limited time, people, and resources.
- You've heard about digital transformation but it all just seems overwhelming and theoretical.
- Your customers and employees are asking for digital ways to buy from and collaborate with you.

## Simple definition

Digital transformation has been so heavily covered recently that it is easy to forget what it means – and what it doesn't. A simple definition is: digital transformation is the act of integrating digital technologies to replace older processes and technologies to create new value, ultimately driving quantifiable impacts on business.

However, it is necessary to drill down into this definition. 'Digital technologies' refers to any enabling digital technology – not just artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, or the Internet of Things (IoT). Other digital technologies that are already known and proven, such as business intelligence, e-commerce, cloud, and document management are also critical parts of the digital transformation journey.

'New value' can be defined along a spectrum: improvements, innovations or transformations. Improvements make the core business more efficient. Innovations are the acts of creating net new offerings. Transformations involve disrupting the status quo in your industry or supply chain.

Digital transformation doesn't have to imply turning your business upside down, using new and unknown technologies, or going 'digital' simply for the sake of it without a proper approach.

Finally, 'quantifiable impacts' means any good digital transformation must deliver strategic value in ways that can be measured and monitored. To qualify as a valuable and worthy digital transformation effort, a business should be able to point to the quantifiable impacts that an initiative will have on the operations of the business and/or the ability to compete better in current market or new markets.

Epicor lays out six key reasons digital transformation is needed today.

**1: Exceed changing customer expectations**

As a new generation of 'digital natives' enter the market, these customers expect experiences that enable seamless discovering, buying, and interacting with a company throughout the lifecycle. If outdated experiences are getting in the way of satisfying and delighting these customers, digital transformation can help improve lead generation, sales cycles, closing rates, repeat business, customer satisfaction, and customer support costs.

**2: Attract and retain high-quality talent**

Just like the new generation of customers are entering the market, so too is a new generation of digital native employees and talent. Your people want the best digital tools to do their work easily and with more productivity, in addition to learning new digital technologies to keep their skills up to date. In this light, digital transformation is an investment in people as much as it is in technology.

**3: Leverage new technological possibilities**

How many things might you be doing in your business just because 'that's the way it's always been done'? False constraints like analogue processes might be holding back your team and business from growing and changing. New technological possibilities can unlock time and value by challenging orthodoxies about how your business works.

**4: Thwart new types of competitor**

Just like Netflix disrupted the distribution channels of video rentals, all industries are susceptible to new entrants that configure as a digital business from the outset. The things they often lack in start-up mode, however, are customers and data – things you likely have. Take a proactive approach to be the disruptor – instead of getting disrupted – by using digital to transform your business, but also your industry before competitors do.

**5: Adapt and thrive in a remote world**

Seemingly overnight, COVID-19 forced businesses, employees, and consumers to re-imagine their operations in a remote world. The adoption of remote-related technologies has no doubt changed the industry permanently, presenting new challenges and opportunities that digital can address.

**6: Build agility and resilience**

There's no denying that the pace and volatility you face today seem only to be increasing. Digital technologies make your business more agile and resilient by sensing change sooner, making change and business pivots easier, and being able to monitor progress better and with more precision.

So having outlined the case for digital transformation, what technologies are available?

**Cloud technology.** Using cloud-based software makes services and applications available to users on-demand via online servers, as opposed to being provided from a company's on-premises servers. For example, when an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system is built on and delivered via the cloud, the digital journey is accelerated because a business can run and grow without having to worry about key issues that haunt on-premises deployed systems, like cumbersome customisations, a server refresh, or threat of ransomware.

Cloud technology enables a business to track reduced operational costs as integrated data from operations can help identify and address inefficiencies faster and with greater precision.

It can also mean decreased security costs, as with cloud solutions, the system vendor makes security its top priority, allowing your team to focus on growth. Concomitantly, it frees the IT department from the burden of administering a database, operating systems, or applications, and eliminates the need for hardware – and the risk, maintenance and upgrades that come along with it – as a business scales and grows.

**Enterprise content management.** Enterprise content management (ECM) makes managing business documents easier, faster, and with greater consistency and control. Documents and files that used to be unstructured are now stored centrally and made available to employees and customers.

This improves productivity with faster, easier document discovery and management. Customer and supplier experience is enhanced through providing quick access to information.

Moreover, streamlining document discovery and critical information needed for decision-making results in reduced errors.

**Data analytics & visualisation.** Data analytics and visualisation unshackle a team from the grind of data collection and static reporting. This technology, which can be fed directly from the ERP, brings numbers to life through dynamic reporting and compelling visualisations that help users pay proactive attention to revenue, expenses, and other KPIs that matter.

With real-time analytics delivered digitally, businesses can stay connected to their revenue and performance numbers and be able to make informed decisions promptly.

**Smart shipping.** Smart shipping technology enables a business to process shipping transactions faster and more efficiently, critical when the pace of order fulfilment is growing.

When shipping integrates with the ERP, details are automatically pulled in, shared with carriers via the web, and estimated for freight charges and tracking information. All of this automatically appears in the ERP system in real-time, letting the user process any shipment using any licensed carrier all from the same screen.

Epicor says businesses will see a significant reduction in errors associated with manually taking data from the carrier to the ERP system. And – if integrated – all this triggers automated invoicing of freight charges. The most significant business outcome smart shipping delivers is the ability for employees to handle enquiries from customers anxiously awaiting deliveries.

**Electronic data interchange.** Electronic data interchange (EDI) is a set of standards that defines common formats for information to be exchanged electronically between two organisations that do business together – or 'trading partners'. It allows companies to speak the same language electronically and communicate more efficiently to be digitally connected.

EDI has long been used by container owners communicating with cleaning depots, for example. It eliminates paper-based process and manual processing – and the inefficiencies that come with it – by automating the electronic flow of information in packets of formatted data. It has become a global standard for information exchange between trading partners.

## Three lenses

But digital transformation is not just about technology. There are two other critical factors for success: people and strategy. The intersection of 'three lenses' – people, strategy, and capabilities – forms the sweet spot for unlocking new value and growth for a business. These lenses are inspired by design thinking, an approach to tackling business opportunities by integrating the needs of people, the possibilities of technology and capabilities of your business, and the strategic goals of that business.

## People

For any new digital initiative to succeed, it must be adopted and used by people. When it comes to customers, this means asking: what are the pain points or unmet needs customers might have when it comes to interacting with or purchasing from a business?

Often, prioritising these areas for the first digital initiatives with the largest impact provides momentum for continuing the digital journey.

Employees and partners can also benefit. For example, manual data entry tasks are burdensome and time consuming for employees. Targeting these areas with digital solutions has the added benefit of – over and above improving productivity – attracting and retaining digital natives and learning-hungry talent.

## Strategy

One key is understanding how the costs of implementing and maintaining digital technology will compare to the benefits it will deliver. Prioritising initiatives that generate the most value – either cost savings or revenue optimisation – will create the most bang for your buck. Luckily, many digital technologies come with favourable cost factors, such as decreased maintenance, lower overheads, and reduced need for hardware. This makes the business case for digital technologies easier to make.

The other factor to consider is whether the digital initiative drives the overall business strategy with greater speed, impact, or sustainability. If, for example, a key pillar of the company's strategy is to increase market share, this can be a helpful decision-making criteria.

## Capabilities

Of course, for digital technologies to work inside your business, they need to be able to perform the capabilities imagined. This applies to the technical feasibility of a digital solution, but also your organisation's capacity to be able to sponsor, support and lead.

Looking behind the scenes of successful digital transformation initiatives one notices key patterns in how the business provided the capacity to ensure the project was successful and smooth in its implementation.

These include things like making a senior team member accountable for leading the initiative, ensuring other key team members are given supporting and consultative responsibilities, and identifying clear lines of communication concerning reporting and maintenance.

In summary, digital transformation doesn't have to be an overwhelming, abstract concept – it is rather a step by step process that involves understanding how the three lenses interact. By harnessing the resources at your disposal and buying into a compelling case for digitisation, the digital roadmap for any business can be rendered much clearer.

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**Digital Transformation: A Playbook for Distributors*

**www.epicor.com/BDebook**

# Dinges opts for Inform's TOS

**Dinges Logistics has selected Inform's Intermodal TOS to replace an existing system at its Grünstadt container terminal.**

Based in Aachen, Germany, Informa has been in the optimisation business for 50 years and serves a wide span of logistics industries including ports, maritime, and intermodal terminals with both add-on optimisation modules as well as TOS solutions.

"When we set out to replace our existing system, we wanted to select a proven software vendor in the intermodal TOS market that would allow us not only to improve our transparency but also our efficiency," said Ingo Dinges, owner of Dinges Logistics.

"As part of our selection process, we were able to see the impact of Inform's Intermodal TOS in live operations; the solution was the clear leader after seeing it in place and speaking with the operations team at the terminal."

Timo Mayer, site manager and project leader at Dinges added: "When we engaged with Inform throughout the selection process, we always had a clear vision that they were looking at the long-term impact of their solution on our terminal and they were understanding our needs very well; it was clear that it would be a partnership, that we weren't simply buying a piece of software."

"We had a strong focus on covering all aspects of our service offering with a single software solution to improve transparency while also reducing service times and we see digitalisation as a key element in achieving these outcomes," said Mayer.

The TOS replacement project is now under deployment and is slated to go live in the fourth quarter of this year. It will build on Inform's existing footprint of intermodal terminal operators running their proven Intermodal TOS including KTL and Samskip in Germany.

"Our Intermodal TOS was developed over many years leveraging our knowledge of the container and intermodal industries combined with our optimisation expertise," commented Dr Eva Savelsberg, SVP of Inform's Logistics division.

"The TOS benefits from many of the add-on algorithms that the container terminal is probably used to hearing in conjunction with the name Inform which truly makes it one of the most powerful intermodal TOS options on the market."

The Grünstadt Container Terminal is an important intermodal facility located in the Rhein-Neckar region close to Ludwigshafen/Mannheim, Germany providing storage places for loaded and empty containers, serviced storage slots, and regular shuttle services. Moreover, Dinges is an important one-stop-shopping solution for the industry in the region for all services including cleaning, workshop activities, heating and cooling as trucking services, as well as other services all under a single provider.

*The TOS replacement project is now under deployment and is slated to go live in the fourth quarter of this year*

Dr Savelsberg continued: "Dinges Logistics' Grünstadt Terminal is our smallest Intermodal TOS deployment to date and it reflects the work that the team has done to make the solution scalable and nimble allowing any sized terminal to benefit from digitalisation and optimisation."

**www.inform-software.com**
**https://dinges-logistics.de**

*Dinges is an important one-stop-shopping solution for the industry in the region*

# Van Moer expands Zwijndrecht site

**Van Moer Logistics is investing a total of €2.8 million in its Seveso site in Zwijndrecht, Belgium.**

All the works will be completed and operational by summer this year.

Back in 2004, Van Moer started cleaning tank containers and bulk trailers in Melsele. But it was only in 2008, when the head office in Zwijndrecht opened, that the company expanded the services for bulk and tank logistics. Since then, Van Moer has been operating its own cleaning, heating, repair and storage department.

The cleaning plant is being renovated and expanded, resulting in improved capacity for five chemical, one food, and two bulk lines. Additionally, a circulation unit for cleaning (synthetic) resins and latex is being installed.

Thanks to the new scrubbers, it will be possible to clean other product groups such as meth, acrylates, aliphatic and aromatic esters, aldehydes, aromatics, alkenes, halogenated hydrocarbon, and inorganic substances.

Heating will have additional connections through a capacity increase of an extra 40 fixed positions. Additional fall protection allows for safe sample collection. Until now, tanks were heated by hot water, steam, or electricity. But this will soon be supplemented by high-pressure steam (up to 7 bar at 160degC).

*Demand from the chemicals sector is increasing, especially in the field of value-added logistics, according to Van Moer*

The heating of ADR and non-ADR products in drums, IBCs or other packaging has also become possible with the development of an on-site hot box installation.

The workshop for container repairs is being expanded to guarantee extra capacity. Total storage capacity is being increased to a total of 5,750 tanks (full and empty).

The bulk & tank container logistics department offers a comprehensive range of services for the industry under one roof, transport being one of them. The specialised fleet for bulk and tank containers already comprises 70 vehicles, with 15 additional vehicles joining the fleet.

The logistics group has also invested in a new drumming installation. This installation repackages the contents of tank containers into IBCs and drums. But with the new set-up, the opposite process is possible.

Depending on volumes, about 30 jobs will be created in Zwijndrecht, both for transport and depot activities.

Van Moer primarily wants to respond to the needs of the chemicals sector, a logical step as the Zwijndrecht terminal is located within the Antwerp chemical cluster.

"Demand from the chemicals sector is increasing, especially in the field of value-added logistics," said Jo Van Moer. "More and more players are outsourcing their logistics activities to specialised service providers. This way, the manufacturer can focus on its production processes. Thanks to this outsourcing, we can relieve our partners of their logistics challenges while seeking alternatives to organise their processes more efficiently and sustainably."

**www.vanmoer.com**

# Texas Tank expands in Dallas

**Texas Tank Works (TTW) is now providing chemical and kosher tank washes at its newly opened facility in Hillsboro, Texas.**

The new location south of Dallas/Fort Worth complements its Colorado City facility in West Texas. The Hillsboro depot can clean tank trailers, ISO tank containers, roll off boxes, frac tanks and IBCs, and also provides trailer inspection and repair services.

The company's four-bay facility in Colorado City serves the West Texas chemical and oilfield market. Based on the success of that location TTW broke ground on the second location in March 2020.

The Hillsboro facility opened in November 2020 with five bays for chemical tank and IBC cleaning, kosher cleaning, trailer inspections and trailer repair. Normal hours are 7am to 5pm Monday through Friday, with appointments available for afterhours or weekend needs.

Both locations include large, secure yards with plenty of room to store tankers. The company also offers customers a drop-and-swap programme for tank washes, IBCs, tank inspections and repairs.

Vat systems for tank cleaning include stainless steel hot water tanks, stainless detergent tanks, stainless cold water tanks and, where applicable, stainless recirculating tanks. High-volume, high-pressure steam, water, detergents and other cleaning compounds are delivered to each bay through 40hp high-volume pumps and Gamajet 8 spinners rated at 200psi.

**www.texastankworks.com**

# GroClean NSF approved

**Gröninger Cleaning Systems has received approval from NSF regarding the use of Gröninger's own cleaning chemicals (GroClean) in food grade applications.**

The NSF approval certifies that the chemical products appearing on the listing conform to the requirements of the NSF Non-food Compound Registration Programme. With this certification GroClean Alkaline, GroClean Acidic, GroClean Solv and GroClean Steril are now recognised as complying with the highest global standards of food safety in cleaning. The certificates will be of significant value in food auditing processes.

**www.groninger.eu**

# Keeping track

**Businesses using pallets, cages, trolleys, stillages and other forms of returnable industrial packaging for customer deliveries or internal transport are often faced with significant, regular expenditure to replace items lost during the course of business.**

The typical level of returnable industrial packages lost annually to the industry is on average 10 percent and the cost of an individual piece of equipment can range up to several thousand pounds.

The loss of one or two cages, stillages or trollies is easily written off. However, losing one or two assets a week, from multiple depots or sites quickly amounts to a significant operational cost often of tens of thousands of pounds each year in replacements.

In most cases these missing assets are rarely lost and often attributable to an absence of an effective asset management tracking system.

Through its internet-of-things, tracking solutions and asset management expertise, TracLogik has developed a low-cost, multi-technology solution to track and manage reusable packaging and transport assets such as distribution cages. The solution is designed to reduce asset loss and improve operational efficiencies.

Working in partnership with several logistics businesses, TracLogik has developed a suite of flexible solutions that can be tailored to overcome these challenges.

Businesses have generally been tackling these challenges with a combination of manual, labour intensive systems. Keeping track of thousands of assets with poorly developed, disparate systems that are rarely updated with data from manual counts means that the data is always out-of-date – typically the assets have already moved in the time between counting the asset and entering the information into the system.

While a manual system may identify a significant operational cost these processes are rarely able to identify the reasons for the asset loss.

## Cost-benefit

Operators within these sectors are of course acutely aware of the scale of the problem and the ongoing costs associated with the continued loss of these assets.

Frustratingly, up until now, tracking solutions have primarily relied on deploying GPS based devices that have not offered a financially attractive proposition. Further operational issues with battery life and the inability of a GPS based tracking device to help locate packaging assets while within a depot, warehouse or other indoor facility have meant that GPS by itself is not a viable solution.

Other systems such as RFID or barcoding often rely on manual intervention, which can be subject to human error and process fatigue, especially when third parties are asked to contribute to the tracking procedure. They also often lack the ability to acquire location data once the asset is in transit.

*TracLogik's Sigfox GPS solution enables the tracking of assets outside the closed environment of a depot, warehouse or distribution facility*

## Bluetooth Low Energy

The good news is that in addition to GPS tracking, there are other technologies used in the asset tracking sphere; namely WiFi, Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) and Sigfox GPS. In a defined area, like a campus, manufacturing facility or hospital complex, these technologies are highly effective.

Tracking tags, attached to each tracked asset combine with an overlay network of receivers can give real-time location information and, where required, telemetry data.

TracLogik's low cost Sigfox GPS solution enables the tracking of assets outside the closed environment of a depot, warehouse or distribution facility where historically tracking devices could not communicate without the expense of cellular network connectivity extremely limiting battery life.

TracLogik combines GPS and BLE into a highly effective and versatile industrial packaging tracking solution to harness the strengths of both technologies.

By deploying TracLogik's integrated GPS – Bluetooth receivers in vehicles, the system can provide a live position for assets tracked by Bluetooth, almost anywhere in the world. This gives full visibility of transport assets through the production facility, to the distribution centre, onto vehicles and at delivered locations.

The TracLogik System enables users to visualise the delivery of assets to partner facilities in real-time. If required, the system can be extended quickly and cost effectively to provide coverage at the partner facility using Bluetooth with optional 3G/4G cellular communication should other connectivity for the devices be unavailable.

The TracLogik solution effectively combines a broad spectrum of tracking technologies, including GPS, WiFi, BLE, RFID and low power wide area networks such as Sigfox and Lora.

The ideal solution for a client may incorporate several different technologies, however TracLogik's cloud-based software hides this complexity behind a concise intuitive user interface. Users are presented with a list of assets and a list of locations. The software is then tailored to enable users to answer the questions that are important such as: Which assets are present at which location? Which assets were scheduled to arrive at a location but have not? How many assets are going to be present in this location at 2pm?

The result is that the packaging asset tracking system, which was installed based on a business case that predicted a payback period based around the reduction in the loss of assets, is now also a valuable business tool for transport managers planning their next deliveries showing available capacity, throughput and being a source of asset-optimisation and rotation time reduction.

**www.traclogik.co.uk**

# Mauser expands in Italy

**Mauser Packaging Solutions is expanding in Italy having bought Global Tank Srl via its NCG-Maider joint venture.**

Founded in 2008 Global Tank is a family owned business that has been active in the reconditioning of industrial packaging for more than 12 years and is located in Magnago, close to Milan.

Michael Steubing, president of Mauser's international packaging, commented: "This acquisition expands on our footprint in Italy and will allow us to serve better our customer base for collections and supply of reconditioned packaging. The unification of both company's strengths and synergies will prove to be a great benefit for our partners and customers."

Now with three reconditioning locations, Villastellone (close to Turin), Mira (close to Venice) and Magnago, all three sites are equipped with state of the art wash lines for reconditioning IBC, HDPE and steel drums, as well as the recycling of HDPE plastics. The production of new IBC and plastic packaging including Infinity drums and IBCs will continue from sites in Grezzago and Fonzaso. Reconditioning operations will carry on under the leadership of managing director reconditioning Federico Corsinotti and Laura Lorenzi regional operations manager South Europe.

Alfonso Albanese and Carmela Cecere, former owners of Global Tank, will join Mauser's management team. José Da Fonseca will lead the joined sales team in Italy for new and reconditioned packaging.

"We are confident that the strengths of both companies are a great benefit for both partners and our customers. This unification will maximise our advantage in the market as we share best practices and know how. We are very proud to expand our presence in the Italian market and for even better servicing of our customers," said Alfonso Albanese, former owners of Global Tank.

**www.mauserpackaging.com**

# Handling TiO2

**Spiroflow is taking steps to advise its customers on its range of conveying solutions that are suited to the safe handling and containment of titanium dioxide (TiO2) powder.**

The move comes as a result of legislative changes made by the European Commission in February 2020, in classifying titanium dioxide as a suspected carcinogen (cat 2) by inhalation. The regulation becomes official on 1 October 2021, meaning that businesses handling TiO2 will need to upgrade the containment of their processes so that operators are protected. Even products containing as little as 1 percent TiO2 will need to be included.

TiO2 is an inert inorganic compound that is used as a white pigment in many industrial applications. These applications include the manufacture of paints, coatings, printing inks and wall coverings where TiO2 plays a critical role in providing essential product properties: whiteness, covering power, brightness, stability and durability of colour that cannot be achieved with other raw materials. TiO2 is also used in many other consumer products such as foods, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics.

Handling TiO2 in a production environment can be problematic, particularly in conveying, where due to its cohesive properties, equipment such as screw conveyors can stall and ultimately fail. Dust and containment is also a major consideration.

Spiroflow regularly provides solutions for handling TiO2 through either its flexible screw or aero-mechanical conveyors. A flexible screw conveyor, having only one moving part – the spiral – makes it ideal for conveying TiO2. The pro-screw in the tube will move round in a spiral formation, the flat-leading edge and closer gap tolerance between the tube and the screw both assisting in reducing the product residue and smearing in the conveying tube, thereby limiting halts in production.

Spiroflow's aero-mechanical conveyor creates an airstream which moves the product up the tubes along with high-speed discs and a rope. TiO2 is conveyed in the air stream created by the rope and discs in the tube where the product is handled gently. This conveyor is a great choice for conveying TiO2 because any dust created during conveying will be all contained within the conveyor itself. This conveyor is contained, runs quietly and with minimal energy, which also makes it a superior choice for conveying larger volumes of TiO2.

"As material handling specialists, we have always understood the need to test materials and to offer a proven solution to the customer," said Jeannette Carter, a regional sales manager at Spiroflow with a NEBOSH National General Certificate in Occupational Health and Safety.


*Spiroflow regularly provides solutions for handling TiO2*

"With many years of experience, we've trialled and developed products to ensure the smooth running of difficult cohesive materials such as titanium dioxide, resulting in us developing our flexible screw conveyor, which prevents the smearing and potential build-up of material in the conveying tube. Typically, we'd still select the aero-mechanical conveyor when presented with applications, but use the pro-screw in a steel tube as a metering device to offer a guaranteed solution. Containment in delivery, either from a bulk bag or sack tip, is a major consideration and one we handle on a daily basis."

**www.spiroflow.com**

# TransContainer teams up for more flexi shipments

**In Russia, PJSC TransContainer continues to develop flexitank transport. Most recently, the multimodal transport company signed a co-operation agreement with packaging materials firm Europack and agribusiness Blago Group.**

Under the agreement, the parties will develop export transport of Blago's products using TransContainer boxes and platforms.

The Memorandum was signed at the TransRussia 2021 exhibition by the president of TransContainer Alexander Isurin, first deputy general director of Blago Dmitry Fosman and Europack chairman Valery Rudyuk.

"We are already co-operating with Europack on the export of oils in flexitanks from the Volga region, Siberia and the Far East to mills in Asia-Pacific," said Isurin. "The new agreement will make it possible to use the accumulated experience from transporting Blago products."

Blago's Fosman noted that the support of TransContainer and Europack will allow Blago to increase the volume of shipments primarily to China, a strategic region for the shipper, but one which poses many challenges for rail logistics.

"Over the past two years, we have successfully increased the volume of deliveries of products to China, from 14,000 tons in 2019 to 71,000 tonnes in 2020," he said. "An important event in this direction will be the dispatch of a container train with our products to Chongqing in the near future. The new overland route will reduce cargo delivery time. Travel time will be only 18-20 days, and it will also allow us to do without the sea leg. With the beginning of this new stage of our co-operation, we will be able to develop logistics to this region even more actively, as well as plan an increase in the volume of supplies to other Asian countries, and in the future to Europe."

*Under the agreement, TransContainer will ship Blago's products to wider export markets*

For Europack, Rudyuk sees the strategic co-operation and planning allowing the company to provide Blago with optimal rates for freight forwarding and provide empty container equipment for any volume of vegetable oils in Europack flexitanks for export.

"This applies to both the production sites of the company located in Siberia and in other regions of Russia," he commented. "In the context of instability and problems in the logistics market caused by the pandemic, the incident in the Suez Canal, strengthening the partnership between the three companies is especially significant and will allow the Russian manufacturer to increase the efficiency of its activities through the joint logistics service."

Back in February TransContainer organized a 'flexi-train' to export oils from Tatarstan.

Working with Russia's major rail carrier RZD, the train carried mineral and rapeseed oils in flexitanks from the Republic of Tatarstan to Novorossiysk port for onward shipment to Turkey, Israel and China.

This was the first regular flexi-train of the company loaded with cargo from several regions. The train, consisting of 58 units of 20 ft containers from Tatarstan, Mordovia and Udmurtia, was dispatched from Nizhnekamsk station on 16 February. In three days the train arrived at Novorossiysk port on the Black Sea, after which the cargo was carried by sea. The plan is to dispatch one to two trains a month.

"Foreign partners are showing growing interest in Russian products which is inspiring the search for the best logistics solutions," commented Aleksey Bulytov, director of TransContainer. "Multilayered leak-proof flexitank of 20 tons is the most in-demand packaging ensuring profitability and serviceability as a result of doing away with unnecessary handling operations and it also eliminates external effects on the cargo during transport."

In April 2020 the company together with Ruscon launched a service carrying mineral oils in flexitanks from Volgograd to Turkish ports, via Novorossiysk.

**www.trcont.com**

# PBLA 2nd virtual event a success

**The Premier Buk Liquids Alliance (PBLA) held its second Virtual Network conference over a three-day period from 18-20 May.**

PBLA says the response from the global membership was "extremely satisfying" given the time restraints of logistics operators these days, not to mention 'Zoom fatigue' experienced by so many.

"We are proud to have hosted 50 participants who are PBLA members and sponsors representing 40 countries," PBLA said.

This time, in response to popular demand, the meeting schedule was open 24 hours a day for the full three days allowing existing and new members plus sponsors and guest applicants from the 17 different time zones involved, to connect and continue strengthening their global presence within the largest bulk liquids alliance in the world.

PBLA members and sponsors engaged in 600 individual pre-booked meetings with each other.

Apart from these meetings, attendees had the privilege of participating two hours a day (each day at a different time to accommodate for different times zones) in a more informal gathering in the PBLA social lounge where they could meet among themselves and visit and talk to sponsors and partners such as: Bulk Distributor (PBLA media partner); FlexitankFinder.com which operates the first B2B global digital platform exclusively serving the bulk container packaging industry, with their suppliers; OEC Liquid Logistics Solutions, the main event sponsor and founder member in the USA; and global waste management company Veolia with whom PBLA was able to discuss and lay the foundations for a road map on recovery and recycling of flexitanks and accessories around the world.

"This is now seen as paramount to ensure our sustainability goals are achieved in order to lead the way in setting circular economy standards in our specific industry," said PBLA.


*PBLA second virtual conference hosted 50 member participants and sponsors representing 40 countries*

Alliance president Jason Wright said: "Once again, we succeeded in bringing our existing and new members closer together within the PBLA family of bulk liquid specialists that now cover over 50 countries, making us the largest liquid logistics network in the world. The collaborative and dedicated culture of these bulk liquid professionals has been continuously nurtured to ensure momentum is maintained throughout the pandemic and we are thrilled with the commitment shown by members. All our participants congratulated us on the user-friendly meeting platform used and I couldn't ask for much more in these testing times.

"The PBLA has come a long way since it started nearly three years ago with the aim of uniting hidden champions in the bulk liquid logistics industry empowering them to become global players in the international market in a fast-growing sector like the flexitank and ISO tank industry. The union of these in-house experts around the world is what gives this unique alliance its strength and service offering."

The PBLA is now planning its next physical network meeting for the first quarter of 2022.

Meanwhile, PBLA plans to host member and partner workshops to push forward on its sustainability and recycling processes to lead the way in this domain.

It has also just opened an associate membership offering for bulk liquid commodity traders, brokers, and distributors so that these players can obtain competitive services and offers for shipping their bulk liquid products with its members.

The PBLA now covers 52 countries and is on track to be in 60 countries by the end of 2021.

**www.pblalliance.com #pblalliance**

# Hillebrand takes stake in VignoblExport

**Hillebrand has bought a majority shareholding in VignoblExport, a service provider in small quantity logistics of alcoholic beverages.**

The France-based company provides a world-class service, supported by proprietary digital solutions, to both businesses and consumers worldwide, said Hillebrand. The specialist beverage forwarder holds an option to acquire the remaining shares in the company.

"VignoblExport enables Hillebrand to strengthen its small quantity logistics business, as well as accelerate our e-commerce activities," said Cees van Gent, CEO and chairman of the executive board of Hillebrand.

"VignoblExport's presence in main wine exporting countries, coupled with its unique service offering and advanced digital solutions to facilitate the shipment of small quantity orders for wines and other alcoholic beverages, makes it a perfect fit with the Hillebrand network and scope of services," van Gent added.

Hillebrand already offers small quantity logistics services to the alcoholic beverages industry. However, VignoblExport's strong market reputation, large customer base and service capabilities will strengthen Hillebrand's current offering and allow it to service end-consumers directly. With Hillebrand as new majority owner, VignoblExport is able to expand its operations to other countries by leveraging the extensive global Hillebrand network. Both companies will employ their expertise and resources to expand the business on a global scale.

**https://hillebrand.com**

# Hupac wants new focus on north-south corridor

**The chances of shifting more traffic to combined transport have never been better, according to Switzerland-based rail operator Hupac.**

However, sufficient capacities must be created on the entire north-south corridor for the expected traffic volumes, said Hupac chairman Hans-Jörg Bertschi in the company's annual business review. "This requires corridor-wide thinking and action, initiated in particular by Switzerland," he commented.

Bertschi said there is an urgent need to increase capacity in the Rhine valley south of Mannheim. Hupac supports the concept of a continuous double track and electrification of the Wörth-Lauterbourg-Strasbourg line well before 2030, creating a path on the left bank of the Rhine through north-east France bypassing the Mannheim-Basel line via Rastatt. That section of the major north-south corridor was the scene of severe disruption in 2017 when work on a tunnel led to a collapsed sink hole that closed the line for almost two months.

A four-track expansion on the right bank of the Rhine will not be completed until after 2040, but that is too late for the modal shift, explained Bertschi. Equally important is the prompt improvement of the power supply on the Bellinzona-Luino-Gallarate and Domodossola-Novara/Gallarate lines so that all trains can run at 2,000 tonnes in future.

On top of that Hupac says there is an urgent need for action to increase train lengths. Both Germany and the Netherlands have yet to upgrade their railway infrastructures to standard train lengths of 740m. This would be a win-win situation both for combined transport operators as well as for network operators: with more payload per train and less train path required in the network, the operator says.

In the medium term, capacity must be further increased in order to cope with rising demand on the north-south corridor. The upgrade of the Zeebrugge/Antwerp-Metz-Strasbourg-Basel axis to the standard parameters of the Rhine-Alpine corridor should provide an efficient alternative for volumes from/to Belgium as of 2030.

## Further measures

The current regulatory framework conditions are the basis for Switzerland's modal shift success. They have enabled a 70 percent rail market share in Alpine transit and made the country a pioneer of modal shift policy in Europe, Hupac believes.

In order to continue shifting market shares from road to rail in the future, it is now necessary to update and supplement the measures. From Hupac's point of view, important starting points are, in particular, a reduction of train path prices to the level of other countries of the Rhine-Alpine corridor as a measure of climate policy, and maintaining reduced charges for emission-free trucks, so that other external costs such as noise, congestion, accident risk, etc, are correctly reflected.

*Incentives are needed for the conversion of semi-trailer fleets to exclusively craneable equipment*

Incentives are also needed for the medium-term conversion of semi-trailer fleets on long-distance transalpine road transport through Switzerland to exclusively crane-capable equipment, allowing trailers to be picked up by a crane and placed on rail rolling stock. Every semi-trailer should be technically capable of using the combined transport option created by the investment in the four-metre corridor to Italy, Hupac says. An initiative of this kind would trigger a push for innovation on the part of manufacturers to overcome existing inefficiencies in the weight and production costs of trailers. Other countries such as Germany also support the conversion of fleets to craneable semi-trailers.

More broadly, in the international context the various stakeholders need to overcome national thinking even more consistently and adopt a corridor perspective focusing on freight transport requirements.

Measures that would greatly improve the performance of rail freight and thus increase the chances of modal shift include securing freight transport capacities through international network utilisation planning at corridor level, integrated operational management on the entire corridor, including planning of construction works through international co-ordination, and giving priority to freight traffic over long distances in the event of operational disruptions and breakdowns.

On the whole, Hupac expects further significant growth in combined transport in the coming years. In addition to Switzerland's active modal shift policy, the European Green Deal now also sets ambitious targets. By 2050, greenhouse gas emissions in the transport sector are to be reduced by 90 percent, and rail freight transport could double. Combined transport with its linking of different modes of transport will play a central role in low-emission, socially sustainable freight transport in the future, the company believes.

Already, Hupac Intermodal's network saves 1.2 million tonnes of $CO_2$ per year compared to pure road transport. The strategy that Hupac adopts for improving its environmental footprint includes low-emission terminal equipment, energy-efficient buildings and digital tools for process optimisation along the value chain.

Initial tests with battery-electric powered mobile cranes are in the pipeline. Further opportunities for climate-neutral terminal operation could open up with 'green hydrogen'.

"Combined transport will be able to realise the first emission-free transport chains before 2030, and net zero will be our goal by 2050," Bertschi explained.

## Results

Last year, Hupac transported just over 1 million road consignments, or 1.9 million TEU, by rail. This corresponds to a slight decrease of 0.9 percent compared with the previous year. The main influencing factors were the slump in maritime traffic from overseas and the economic slowdown in Europe as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic in the first half of the year. Traffic demand recovered in the second semester and reached the previous year's level by the end of the year.

The consequences of the pandemic were particularly evident in transalpine traffic through Switzerland. Demand fell noticeably in the period from April to June; nevertheless, Hupac maintained its network and thus made an important contribution to securing the logistics of vital goods.

"In spring 2020, intermodal supply chains became an anchor of stability for logistics," explained Michail Stahlhut, CEO of Hupac Group. "We responded to traffic declines on a weekly basis of -40 percent with network stability."

In the second half of the year, volumes returned to the previous year's level. However, with a total transalpine volume of 538,104 road consignments (-2.3 percent), the gap of the crisis months could not be fully compensated.

Non-transalpine traffic closed the year with a small growth of 0.5 percent to 434,033 road consignments. While traffic to eastern and south-eastern Europe developed positively, other segments such as maritime hinterland traffic from North Sea ports were more strongly characterised by COVID effects.

At CHF597 million, the group's annual revenue was 2.3 percent below the previous year. The significant traffic declines and losses of the second quarter could not be offset over the course of the year, although the volume curve showed a continuous upward trend from the third quarter until the end of 2020. However, the load factor had fallen so sharply in the spring that the negative financial results of this period led to the first negative group result in the company's history on a full-year basis.

In the first four months of 2021, however, Hupac recorded a traffic growth of around 10 percent. This was due to strong demand for intermodal transport services. The current focus is on trailer transport in Swiss Alpine transit, which for the first time will have a real alternative by rail thanks to the four-metre corridor opened at the end of 2020. For this sector, Hupac operates a network with 150 roundtrips a week on routes to northern Italy and a further 10 roundtrips on gateway routes to southern Italy.

Other focal points on network development are Pordenone in north-east Italy, Singen with new connections to Munich, and Zeebrugge as a hub for traffic to the UK, Italy, Spain and Poland. The Benelux-southeast Europe axis with numerous destinations in Austria, Hungary, Romania and Turkey is showing pleasing growth, which Hupac is supporting with frequency increases. In maritime hinterland transport, the consequences of the Suez Canal blockade continue to be felt. Nevertheless, ERS Railways subsidiary has been able to increase departures on single south German routes.

By the end of the year, Hupac expects a single-digit percentage growth in traffic and a positive business result. After the pandemic-related decline in 2020, there will be a surge in investments this year. In March, construction started at the Brwinow terminal near Warsaw, Poland. The Piacenza and Milano Smistamento terminals will follow in the summer; commissioning is planned for 2023.

**www.hupac.com**

# Braskem to develop Sing hub

**Latin America's largest petrochemical company Braskem has entered into a partnership with global logistics player AP Moller-Maersk and PSA Corporation to open a new logistics hub in Singapore.**

The agreement will enable Braskem to supply its customers in Asia with regular access to its portfolio of polymer products.

After Braskem's first polyethylene vessel entered into Port of Singapore earlier this year, this latest development reinforces the company's presence as a local player in Asia. Singapore had already served as the headquarters of Braskem's Asian operations for over 10 years through a regional commercial office, but the addition of a logistics hub allows it to account for growing demand from markets such as China, India, Japan, Indonesia and Thailand.

The partnership will see it manage the hub's operations and focus on global logistics and multi-carrier 'hub-in-transit' services in Singapore. Braskem made the decision to invest in the partnership and jointly develop solutions that give the region's markets increased access to critical products like sustainable packaging.

This development comes off the back of Braskem's existing partnership with PSA, whose Forward Hubbing Scheme allows Braskem to use PSA Singapore – the world's largest container transhipment hub – as a regional distribution focal point. This offers it the fastest lead time to market and comprehensive access to PSA Singapore's inventory details.

"Our growth strategy is fully based on innovation and sustainable development. Strong and consistent presence in a powerhouse like


Singapore creates unique opportunities to become agile and consistent at the same time," commented Roger Marchioni, director of Braskem Asia.

**www.singaporepsa.com**

# Oiltanking, Operail join hands

**Tank storage firm Oiltanking has signed a partnership for transporting chemicals by rail on the Vainikkala-Kotka route in Finland.**

The partners agreed that Operail Finland will be responsible for the rail transport of chemicals to Oiltanking's terminal facilities in Kotka and other logistical services at the terminal. The annual freight volume of the new co-operation is estimated to exceed 1 million tons. Due to their proximity to the Russian border the Kotka terminal and Oiltanking's facilities in Hamina are considered gateways to and from Russia. They mainly serve as hubs for Russian chemical flows; various products enter via rail, are stored in heatable and insulated tanks and forwarded via truck or vessels.

"With Oiltanking's experience in providing safe, efficient and reliable services in the field of tank storage logistics and Operail's track record in offering customised and flexible transport services, we look forward to building a successful long term partnership," said Merja Porkka, terminal manager Mussalo for Oiltanking Finland. "Over the past months, both teams have worked intensely to ensure a smooth transition of rail transport services to our new partner Operail without any disruption with our customers."

"We are very pleased to be part of this exciting co-operation and to pursue our shared goal of growth," added Tero Kähkönen, operations manager at Oiltanking Finland. "Both companies have placed great emphasis on ensuring that the highest safety and environmental standards for the transport of fuels and chemicals are met, and safety trainings and audits are regularly conducted."

Paul Lukka, chairman Operail Finland, called the partnership another significant milestone in the short history of the group's Finnish operations. "We are moving forward with giant leaps in Finland and executing our strategy as planned. We are grateful to Oiltanking Finland for the trust they have placed in us, and we will do our best to meet their expectations," said Lukka.

Operail Finland, a subsidiary of international transport and logistics company Operail, started operations in November 2020.

**www.oiltanking.com**
**www.operail.com**

*The annual freight volume of the Oiltanking-Operail co-operation is estimated to exceed 1 million tons*

# Samskip adds extra ship

**Samskip has responded to growing demand for its recently launched weekly container service between Dublin and Amsterdam by introducing a larger, faster ship and adding a call at Port of Waterford.**

The expansion comes less than five months after the debut of Amsterdam as a service separate from Samskip's Rotterdam-Ireland links.

"We have experienced strong uptake for the direct route into Amsterdam's network of rail, road and barge connections to major EU markets," said Thijs Goumans, head of Ireland trade at Samskip. "As anticipated, customers linking to Ireland have been eager to avoid the post-Brexit hassles of UK distribution. Waterford can expect the same seamless connections."

The service upgrade sees the introduction of the 750TEU capacity container ship Edith.

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## Events

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

**UKIFDA Expo 2021**
7-8 July 2021
Liverpool, UK
**https://ukifda.org**

**Intermodal Asia**
20-22 July 2021
Shanghai, China
**www.intermodal-asia.com**

**Multimodal**
19-21 October 2021
NEC, Birmingham, UK
**www.multimodal.org.uk**

**Intermodal Europe**
26-28 October 2021
Amsterdam, Netherlands
**www.intermodal-events.com**

**World Bulk Wine Exhibition**
22-23 November 2021
Amsterdam, Netherlands
**www.worldbulkwine.com**


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# P&O, DFDS reach space charter agreement

**Both the main ferry operators across the English Channel have reached an agreement to make freight space on their Dover-Calais ships available to one another so as to maintain customer service levels on the route and ensure its continued resilience.**

Under the space charter agreement freight drivers can arrive at either Port of Dover or Port of Calais and board the next available sailing, irrespective of whether the ferry is operated by P&O or DFDS.

David Stretch, chief executive of P&O Ferries, said: "After the pandemic, during which we did everything we could to keep essential goods moving at a time of national crisis, the best way to ensure that we can continue to run vital freight services on Dover-Calais is to build on our relationship with DFDS and enter this space charter agreement.

"It will ensure the continued resilience of the principal UK-EU trade route on which thousands of businesses and millions of consumers rely. It will also maintain service levels for our customers by reducing the time drivers spend waiting at the ports, giving them access to a departure every 36 minutes and reducing gate-to-gate journey times by an estimated 30 minutes."

The Dover Strait is the single busiest route for trade between Britain and the EU. The agreement – which starts this summer – covers all eight ships on Dover-Calais including the P&O-owned Spirit of Britain, Spirit of France, Pride of Canterbury, Pride of Kent and Pride of Burgundy and the DFDS-owned Cote des Flandres, Cote des Dunes and Calais Seaways.

*Freight drivers can arrive at Dover or Calais and board the next available sailing, irrespective of whether the ferry is operated by P&O or DFDS*

# UP to build new grain transload terminal

**US rail operator Union Pacific is building a state-of-the-art grain transload facility within its Global IV intermodal terminal in Joliet, Illinois, that will reduce supply-chain costs for agricultural producers and processors.**

The Union Pacific Global IV Transload facility will be managed by JCT, which is a 50/50 joint venture between Consolidated Grain and Barge Co and Gavilon Grain, LLC.

The facility will be open to all Midwest agricultural producers and processors, expanding connection opportunities to both empty containers and Union Pacific's West Coast port terminal network. Regional producers and processors will be able to transport product by truck to Global IV, where it will be transloaded into intermodal containers for shipment by rail to West Coast ports, then loaded onto ocean carriers and shipped to overseas markets. The programme will offer greater access to containers for exporters and faster turnaround times for ocean carriers and their containers. Estimated completion is the fourth quarter this year. Once fully operational, the terminal will have the capacity to process 50,000 containers a year.

"This facility will support the regional agriculture economy by providing reduced supply chain costs and efficient loading support for exporting grain products, whole grains and oilseeds," said Kari Kirchhoefer, Union Pacific vice president – marketing and sales premium. "By co-locating on site at G4, we are creating greater efficiencies within the supply chain."

**www.up.com**

# New-gen ship in Southampton

**The first in a new generation of container ships which are among the most environmentally friendly ever built arrived in May at DP World's container terminal at Southampton, UK.**

HMM Nuri is the first of eight 16,000 TEU class mega-ships to be deployed on the Asia and North Europe tradelane with leading edge technology to improve environmental performance. It follows the arrival of HMM Algeciras, the world's largest container ship, at DP World London Gateway last year.

Ernst Schulze, chief executive of DP World in the UK, said: "At DP World we believe in protecting our people and our planet through world-class safety and environmental standards and are therefore delighted to welcome HMM Nuri to DP World Southampton, the second largest container port in the country.

"At over 30 percent, Southampton has the highest proportion of containers moved by rail in the UK and the emphasis on rail at both our UK ports takes 300,000 trucks off the roads each year, bringing significant environmental benefits. We will continue to play our full part in helping the UK Government to meet its target of delivering the Net Zero 2050 policy."

For HMM, managing director Peter Livey commented: "The delivery of this vessel marks another milestone in our fleet expansion plans targeting one million TEU in capacity by 2022. This new class of ship is equipped with smart ship technology which connects them to HMM's Fleet Control Centre in Busan, Korea where vessel performance, location, fuel consumption, weather, and cargo information can be monitored in real-time, and via digital-twinning technology offers an option for remote control and inspection works."

The ships are built as LNG-ready, and, due to the latest energy efficient technologies employed, will exceed the IMO's EEDI (Energy Efficiency Design Indicator) by 52 percent.

"Climate change is a defining issue of our time, and HMM shares a vision of a shipping industry that is a responsible part of sustainable supply chains and that supports clean oceans, healthy port communities, and global climate goals," Livey added. "This is why, exceeding all current regulatory requirements, HMM has set the goal of reducing CO2 emissions in our container fleet in 2030 by 70 percent (cf.2008), and achieving net zero carbon emissions across our entire fleet by 2050."

HMM Nuri's port rotation includes Busan, Shanghai, Ningbo, Yantian, Singapore, Suez Canal, Rotterdam, Hamburg, Antwerp, Southampton, Suez Canal, Yantian, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Busan. The ship has arrived on its maiden voyage this week in Southampton where it discharged UK imports and loaded exports bound for the Far East.



## Oikos statutory consultation for Canvey Island

**Oikos is to begin a programme of statutory consultation for the proposed Oikos Marine South Side Development (OMSSD), at its facility on Canvey Island, UK.**

It said the OMSSD project forms part of an ongoing investment programme to upgrade and enhance Oikos' operations, to ensure it can continue to set "industry-leading safety and environmental standards".

It added: "It will also enable us to future-proof, and to play a vital role in the transition to sustainable biofuels, that will be important as the UK prepares to become net-zero in the coming decades."

To support the programme, it has developed a digital engagement room, which will enable local people to access information about the project and provide feedback in one convenient location.

It will also be holding a series of online public Q&A sessions.

## Rotterdam throughput recovers

**Rotterdam saw throughput recover in the second half of 2020.**

The recovery limited the decline in annual goods volumes for the year as a whole to 6.9 percent by comparison with the previous year. The strong operating result has put the Port of Rotterdam Authority in a good position to implement an ambitious investment agenda in the years to come. That will have a major impact on employment, sustainability and society, the port said.

Throughput of liquid bulk was 192 million tonnes (2019: 211.2 million tonnes). The throughput of crude oil in Rotterdam declined due to less demand for oil products. For example, demand for kerosene collapsed as air traffic came to a virtual standstill because of the pandemic. Refineries responded to falling demand by producing less and reducing capacity utilisation. In the case of oil products, the decrease was mainly attributable to lower throughput of fuel oil and diesel. Stricter international regulations relating to emissions also led to a sharp drop in demand for high-sulphur fuel oil.

One bright spot was the rise in throughput of other liquid bulk. In this group, there was strong performance in biofuels and particularly biodiesel. That led to a strengthening of the position of Rotterdam as a hub for this product.