

THE COLD CHAIN IN THE AGE OF COVID

Operators around the world
reflect on the pandemic's impact.

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About the Cover

A warehouse freezer is sanitized to keep team members safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. To read the experiences of temperature-controlled facility operators around the world, and the changes in operating procedures and best practices implemented in the face of an unprecedented global health disaster, see the article on page 12. (Photo courtesy of Comfrio.)

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Strong and Nimble: The Cold Chain and Covid

ONE OF THE KEYS TO BUSINESS SUCCESS IS BUILDING OPERATIONAL STRENGTH WHILE REMAINING NIMBLE TO RESPOND TO A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT." THOSE WORDS, WRITTEN A YEAR AGO BY FORMER IARW CHAIR DOUG HARRISON, COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE PRESCIENT.

In this issue of COLD FACTS, warehouse operators, HR professionals, industry suppliers, asset and non-asset-based transportation companies, and design/build contractors around the world describe what remaining nimble, in the midst of an unprecedented worldwide health disaster, looks like from the ground.

Operations have been readjusted, decisions made in a moment have become standard procedure, relationships have been re-examined and new ones forged. In the face of a global pandemic and the fear that spreads, companies have made the distinction between team and family inconsequential. They became the purveyors of culture, purpose, trust and psychological and emotional safety for the company family.

And repeatedly, industry professionals point to one tool that is leading through the crisis – and will have a vastly expanded role in post-COVID Standard Operating Procedures – transparent communication with all levels of the company.

These conversations complement the results of a GCCA survey conducted through mid-May that captures qualitative data from all types of association members.

Given the global pandemic required an immediate and dramatic shift in work as companies remapped supply chains, pivoted product lines and transformed to partial work-from-home organizations, the outlook on future trends has shifted.

The GCCA members surveyed indicate the percentage of employees working remotely has increased to nearly 20 percent of the workforce during the pandemic. They expect more than 10 percent of the workforce will continue to telework permanently.

About three quarters of members surveyed believe the pandemic will increase the growth of e-commerce/direct to consumer delivery of chilled and/or frozen product. Even stronger demand for data and predictive analytics is expected in the future, and the surveyed are optimistic that the growth rate will be even more significant because of the pandemic.

On the other hand, 73 percent of respondents believe global trade opportunities will either decrease or remain the same relative to pre-COVID expectations.

This early qualitative data on the impact and challenges of the pandemic on the cold chain industry confirms the four areas of the Strategic Plan that GCCA is prioritizing – workforce innovation, global advocacy, market intelligence and research and industry promotion – remain of the highest relevance since COVID-19.

The GCCA will continue to play a pivotal role in optimizing opportunity and removing barriers to growth, now and post-COVID. And I, for one, remain extremely optimistic that when the virus subsides, many of our new ways of working will remain, and we will be the better for it. 🍷



RON BUFORD
IARW CHAIR

COLDFACTS

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The **World Food Logistics Organization (WFLO)**, which delivers education and research to the industry and empowers economic development by strengthening the global cold chain.

The **International Refrigerated Transportation Association (IRTA)**, which cultivates, fosters and develops commercial and trade relations between all those engaged in the transportation and logistics of temperature-controlled commodities.

The **Controlled Environment Building Association (CEBA)** represents the design and construction industry specializing in temperature-controlled facilities that prioritize product safety best practices. We are the source for best practices of building and maintaining the thermal envelope.

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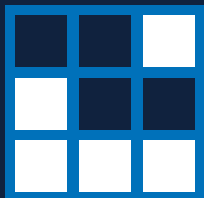
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OSHA COMPLIANCE DURING COVID-19

Enforcement, inspection and recordability policies impacted.

By Lowell Randel

As the cold chain continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important for members to understand the actions and policies of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) related to the coronavirus. This article outlines recently announced policies related to enforcement discretion, inspection policies and COVID-19 recordability.

Enforcement Discretion

On April 16, 2020, OSHA issued a memorandum providing guidance on enforcement discretion during the pandemic. In the document, OSHA stated that it understands that some employers may face difficulties complying with OSHA standards due to the ongoing health emergency. Widespread business closures, restrictions on travel, limitations on group sizes, facility visitor prohibitions and stay-at-home or shelter-in-place requirements may limit the availability of employees, consultants or contractors who normally provide training, auditing, equipment inspections, testing and other essential safety and industrial hygiene services.

Business closures and other restrictions and limitations may also preclude employee

participation in training even when trainers are available.

As a result, OSHA is directing inspectors to assess an employer's efforts to comply with standards that require annual or recurring audits, reviews, training or assessments.

Inspectors should evaluate whether the employer made good faith efforts to comply with applicable OSHA standards and, in situations where compliance was not possible, to ensure that employees were not exposed to hazards from tasks, processes or equipment for which they were not prepared or trained.

In assessing good faith efforts, OSHA will evaluate whether the employer thoroughly explored all options to comply with the applicable standards and considered any interim alternative protections implemented

or provided to protect employees. OSHA will also examine whether the employer takes steps to reschedule the required activity as soon as possible.

It is important for GCCA members to document their efforts to comply. Absent any evidence of good faith efforts, OSHA may issue citations. However, where an employer can demonstrate that it has made attempts to comply in good faith, inspectors shall take such efforts into strong consideration in determining whether to cite a violation.

It is critical that facilities be able to provide documentation regarding efforts made to comply and reasons why compliance was not possible due to COVID-19. OSHA will develop a program to conduct monitoring inspections from a randomized sampling of cases where violations were noted but not cited.

Inspection Policies

On May 19, 2020, OSHA issued an Updated Interim Enforcement Response Plan for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The response plan outlines the agency's approach to inspections during the pandemic. As parts of the country are reopening at different rates, OSHA will take into account the current virus status in a given region as it conducts inspections.

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In geographic areas where community spread of COVID-19 has significantly decreased, OSHA will return to pre-COVID inspection procedures except that:

- OSHA will continue to prioritize COVID-19 cases.
- OSHA will utilize non-formal phone/fax investigations or rapid response investigations when necessary to assure effective and efficient use of resources to address COVID-19-related events.
- Inspectors will utilize the appropriate precautions and personal protective equipment (PPE) when performing inspections related to COVID-19.

In geographic areas experiencing either sustained elevated community transmission or a resurgence in community transmission of COVID-19, ADs (Area Directors) will exercise their discretion, including consideration of available resources, to:

- Continue prioritizing COVID-19 fatalities and imminent danger exposures for inspection. Particular attention for on-site inspections will be given to high-risk workplaces, such as hospitals and other healthcare providers treating patients with COVID-19, as well as workplaces with high numbers of complaints or known COVID-19 cases.
- Where resources are insufficient to allow for on-site inspections, the inspections for these types of reported events will be initiated remotely with an expectation that an on-site component will be performed if/when resources become available to do so.
- Where limitations on resources are such that neither an on-site nor remote inspection is possible, OSHA will investigate these types of reported events using a rapid response investigation (RRI) to identify any hazards, provide abatement assistance, and confirm abatement.
- OSHA will develop a program to conduct monitoring inspections from a randomized sampling of fatality or imminent danger cases where inspections were not conducted due to resource limitations.

- Utilize non-formal phone/fax investigation instead of an on-site inspection in industries where doing so can address the relevant hazard.
- Ensure that CSHOs (Certified Safety and Health Official) utilize the appropriate precautions and PPE to protect against potential exposures to COVID-19.

Recording COVID-19 Cases

On May 19, 2020, OSHA issued Revised Enforcement Guidance for Recording Cases of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). It is important for GCCA members to understand OSHA policy for reporting COVID cases among employees.

Under OSHA recordkeeping requirements, COVID-19 is a recordable illness. However, OSHA has recognized the nature of the disease and community spread makes it very difficult to determine whether a COVID-19 illness is work-related, especially when an employee has experienced potential exposure both in and out of the workplace. In light of these considerations, OSHA is exercising enforcement discretion and is only requiring employers to report COVID-19 illnesses if certain work-relatedness determinations can be met.

In determining whether an employer has complied with this obligation and made a reasonable determination of work-relatedness, inspectors will assess the reasonableness of the employer's investigation into work-relatedness. The OSHA guidance states that employers should not be expected to undertake extensive medical inquiries, given employee privacy concerns and most employers' lack of expertise in this area. It is sufficient in most circumstances for the employer, when it learns of an employee's COVID-19 illness, (1) to ask the employee how he believes he contracted the COVID-19 illness; (2) while respecting employee privacy, discuss with the employee his work and out-of-work activities that may have led to the COVID-19 illness; and (3) review the employee's work environment for potential SARS-CoV-2 exposure.

OSHA has suggested that the following evidence may weigh in favor of, or against, work-relatedness:

- An employee's COVID-19 illness is likely work-related if it is contracted shortly after lengthy, close exposure to a particular customer or coworker who has a confirmed case of COVID-19 and there is no alternative explanation.
- An employee's COVID-19 illness is likely work-related if his job duties include having frequent, close exposure to the general public in a locality with ongoing community transmission and there is no alternative explanation.
- An employee's COVID-19 illness is likely not work-related if she is the only worker to contract COVID-19 in her vicinity and her job duties do not include having frequent contact with the general public, regardless of the rate of community spread.
- An employee's COVID-19 illness is likely not work-related if he, outside the workplace, closely and frequently associates with someone (e.g., a family member, significant other or close friend) who, (1) has COVID-19; (2) is not a coworker; and (3) exposes the employee during the period in which the individual is likely infectious.

If an employer conducts a reasonable and good faith inquiry examining these factors and cannot determine whether it is more likely than not that exposure in the workplace played a causal role with respect to a particular case of COVID-19, the employer does not need to record that COVID-19 illness.

Additional resources to assist members with OSHA compliance during the pandemic, including protocols for social distancing and sanitation, can be found on the GCCA Coronavirus webportal at: www.gcca.org/resources/responding-coronavirus. @

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A team member disinfects equipment in a temperature-controlled warehouse in Brazil. (Photo courtesy of Comfrio.)

THE COLD CHAIN IN THE AGE OF COVID

Operators around the world reflect on the pandemic's impact.

The pandemic has created many challenges that businesses are responding to and working through. To help understand the ripple effect of COVID-19 on the cold chain industry as the pandemic sprints across the hemispheres, the global cold chain industry surveyed all its member companies around the world.

Warehouses everywhere report the crisis has reshaped and adjusted their operations.

Not surprisingly, the most frequently cited challenges were supply chain disruptions, care of employees and creating a safe work

environment, and access to personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies.

How the companies have responded to the crisis is consistent with the top challenges with a focus on people, a safe workplace,

maintaining business continuity and work-force morale.

To understand more specifically the impact, and subsequent challenges and solutions, COLD FACTS connected with temperature-controlled warehouse managers in different regions of the world for their first-hand accounts of operating in the age of COVID.

State of the Industry

The experiences of cold storage warehouse operators in February through May of this year depended, to a great degree, on where they were located on the planet.

In the beginning, in China, the challenge for cold chain facilities was simply to stay open as local authorities ordered all businesses shuttered, explains Justin Chan, Partner and General Manager of VX Cold Chain Logistics.

“We first had to implement all the required safety measures in a matter of days to ensure our staff, and our clients’ staff on site, were operating with proper protection and operating in compliance with preventative measures,” Chan says. “Then we had to engage the local authorities to demonstrate we were following the enhanced health and safety standards.”

In the United States, some cities and states staggered under case numbers higher than experienced by entire continents. Refrigerated warehouses were designated essential services and never closed.

“The biggest challenge has been providing a safe work environment for our employees while maintaining good customer service and managing through labor issues,” notes Ken Johnson, Executive Vice President, Warehousing Group at U.S. company RLS Logistics. “Our customers are dealing with the same issues as we are, which is then affecting their inventory levels.”

“One of the biggest concerns was ensuring we had ample amounts of appropriate PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and we had the proper cleaning procedures in place,” says Matt Reed, General Manager of US Cold Storage Minooka. “As recommendations were changed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it created some challenges in adjusting procedures and staffing with those recommendations in mind.”

After the United States, Brazil is the second most affected nation by COVID-19.

“Our biggest challenge has been to contain panic, especially when someone in the company goes on medical leave, regardless of the reason,” says Manoel Honorio, Operational Manager at Brazilian company Friozem.

Sidney Catania, President of Comfrio, also located in Brazil, operates in four different business segments, each one impacted in a different way. “Food service is suffering the most because of social isolation restrictions. On the other hand, the food industry suffers from insatiable demand and consequently, we have a hard time meeting this demand. Our teams make daily adjustments.”



A team member's temperature is checked prior to the beginning of his shift. (Photo courtesy of Comfrio.)

Australia and New Zealand have been relatively fortunate and combined, have had fewer than 10,000 cases of COVID-19 as of mid-June. But in March and April, media coverage of a pandemic that appeared to be running rampant in parts of the United States and some European countries did little to allay fear.

“We had panic buying in both countries resulting in production volumes spiking up by 50 percent, so initially, it was a challenge to meet the daily demands of our retail customers,” reports Tom Kennedy, General Manager of Americold’s facility in Murarrie, Australia.

Denmark was one of the first European countries to announce a lockdown on March 11, and was the first in Europe to reopen schools, daycare centers and smaller businesses. “This was only possible because citizens and companies acted with the same determination so the virus declined very fast,” explains Niels Lundgaard-Svenstrup, Co-Owner of Danish company Husky.

He points out that both Denmark and Norway employed the same early, pre-emptive shutdown and the two countries have agreed to open their common border by mid-June. However, the border with Sweden, a country that chose not to shut down and eventually saw a rise in cases, remains closed.

Best Practices and Operational Shifts

Changes brought on by the pandemic have been both micro and macro.

“The simplest methods are the best,” Kennedy believes. “Rostering the movement of staff in and out of facilities and lunch rooms to ensure social distancing, regular deep cleaning including sterilization of common areas, equipment and touch points, and more hand sanitation stations throughout the

facility. These simple and effective principals and weekly communication from senior leadership has made our team confident to work each day in our facilities and the mood is high.”

“The most significant changes to our operations center around protecting the front line from the virus while keeping our essential functions running,” notes Mauricio Barrera, Chairman of Qualianz in Mexico. “We have become very strict about protocols including regular body temperature measurement, identification of symptoms, tracing of suspicious cases, sanitation of spaces, and even drills on procedures should an employee test positive. So far, we have been fortunate in terms of containing any spread among our people.”

“To ensure we maintain social distancing, we’ve staggered shifts and breaks and we’re holding pre-shift meetings in smaller groups,” says Stephen Draper, Regional Vice President – Southeast for Americold. “We’re monitoring areas where associates or visitors may line up – like the time clocks and driver check in areas – and reminding people to stay 6 feet apart. We’ve added a lot of signage and marked out spots on the floor and postponed all large-scale meetings including local town halls and roundtables.”

“Very early on we arranged to have an outside provider come to the site and complete weekly deep cleaning,” Reed explains. “We were also able to find a sanitizing fogging agent and apply it to common areas weekly and both these new practices have truly helped us protect our employees and maintain normal operations.”

“Most of our non-essential operations staff are working from home and we are utilizing video conferencing for our meetings,” Johnson says. “Outside visitors are not allowed onto our campuses unless necessary and travel within

our company has become almost non-existent, unless done by car. And, we no longer allow truck drivers on our docks for safety reasons.”

Johnson adds these changes have altered how they do business tremendously. “I suspect most, if not all, of these will remain in place for the short term and some will be permanent.”

“Frequent communication during a time of global uncertainty has also been an important best practice,” Draper points out. “We’ve provided regular updates to our leaders through a variety of methods – operational briefing calls, email updates, a repository of resources and protocols – so they can communicate clearly with their teams and answer questions. Materials have been provided in multiple languages to meet the needs of our diverse and global audience. We’ve also provided updates to our customers and worked with them to ensure they received the support they needed.”

Creative Solutions

“During the epidemic period, before entering the territory of Wuhan, a seal was put on the driver’s cab and the driver stayed in the cab, without con-

tact with the outside world,” Chan explains. “After the truck returned from Wuhan, the cab was unsealed. This way the drivers could avoid isolation after each trip.”

“Documents from truck drivers are now being delivered either behind screened windows or via mail before the driver arrives, minimizing the risk of an infection” says Lundgaard-Svenstrup. “The loading and unloading that truck drivers previously did is now being handled by warehouse employees. That’s required additional training for these employees to ensure the task is done properly and without delay.”

Fulfillment processes are driven by labor that typically stand shoulder to shoulder on a production line. “Our team recognized the issue of social distancing and built plastic barriers placed between each worker,” Johnson offers. “It helped keep any virus transmissions down to a minimum.”

Henry Ha, CEO of Metcold in China, shares that his company established a new Emergency Spending Account in its operating budget to cover potential expenses

resulting from emergencies and other unforeseen major disruptive events.

Catania reports Comfrio brought in doctors to address their teams about how to protect themselves from the virus and how to stay mentally healthy.

“We have installed thermal cameras to capture and record the body temperature of individuals as they enter our facilities,” Kennedy notes. “Once inside the facility, we’ve used floor decals as a visual reminder of social distancing practices.”

“At the onset of COVID-19, we established a global hotline and task force to address any questions or issues, and it’s been heavily utilized,” Draper says. “Providing guidance, support and protocols through that one point of contact has enabled our leadership teams to rapidly meet the needs of our customers and our associates.”

“Our CEO and leadership team implemented a 30-minute daily alignment call every morning before the workday to not only talk through priorities and hurdles, but to transmit key messages across functions and organiza-



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tional levels,” Barrera explains. “These sessions have been so useful that we’ll likely keep them once the situation improves. We’ve also rolled out group chats with all operational leaders to enable an immediate flow of information.”

New Partnerships

Gustavo Labate, Operations Director of Superfrio, reports his company has formed new relationships with social action groups that assist those most affected by the pandemic in Brazil, like the elderly in nursing homes.

Friozem has partnered with local communities to donate grocery items and masks. “It strengthens our ties to the community and is well regarded by the employees, most of whom call the community home,” Honorio explains.

“E-commerce is experiencing a spurt of growth due to changes in consumer spending habits and more new online retail enterprises have become our partners while the original fresh-commerce business volume has grown rapidly as well,” notes Chan.

“We have a much closer relationship with the local health department and our local office of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and also our competition,” Johnson says. “Working with our competition has never been something we regarded as a negative and in this instance, we have had many conversations to help them or ask for help with inventory build from our customers. We are all in the same boat and if we work together to satisfy a customer need, than we have succeeded.”

“We’ve welcomed new customers and helped them work through the disruptions in their supply chain and worked with our existing customers to navigate these new conditions,” Barrera says. “But we also acquired new companies and underwent a renaming and rebranding. So in the midst of the pandemic, our team is integrating operations and streamlining processes.”

Looking Ahead

“Looking ahead, a big part of our changes will probably come from the importance we assign to FaceTime,” Barrera says. “We’ve been bringing in young leadership and were already on a trend to modernize our SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) that are compatible with our new normalcy – video conferencing, work from home policies, results-oriented rather than clocking in the time – and now I only see this speeding up.”



Team members demonstrating distancing markers at their refrigerated warehouse facility in Australia. (Photo courtesy of Americold.)

“I believe social distancing and home office work created an additional need for spontaneous integration – communicating with and motivating the team daily,” says Labate. “Showing employees they are part of a great team of people who share their experiences and have the same problems are factors that made the difference and will continue to be needed.”

“The biggest surprise about the pandemic has been the magnitude of the shift in consumer habits that resulted in the rapid growth of fresh food e-commerce sales,” reflects Ha. “In many cities in China, shopping for groceries online and ordering food delivery on an app have become the norm of daily life. We wish we

had more spare capacity that could be dedicated to serve this growing demand.”

“We all think we understand the importance that communication has in our business but often, applying that communication was very incipient,” says Honorio. “This pandemic made us put a magnifying glass on this communication and today we maintain a daily channel, exchanging information and involving everyone in our collective struggle.”

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WORKPLACE CHANGES

*COVID-19 demonstrates how quickly
GCCA members adapt to changes.*

By Sheryl S. Jackson

Cold storage industry HR professionals and managers face a myriad of challenges in normal times. When a global pandemic is added into the mix and cold storage employees are deemed essential – the challenges expand to include situations that most people in the industry had never encountered.

Team members practicing social distancing in Canada. (Photo courtesy of Trenton Cold Storage.)

The initial reaction to shelter-in-place directives was a fear of the unknown, says Lori Cogit, Vice President of Human Resources at RLS Logistics, which is based in New Jersey, but has six locations in multiple states. “Because our employees were deemed essential, we immediately had to begin sharing information about how we were following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines and what processes we were putting into place to protect employee health,” she says. “This was critical to reassure employees that it was safe for them to come to work.”

Constantly changing information and guidelines that differed from state to state did present a problem in the early weeks, admits Cogit. “Rules were still being written as more information about the virus was discovered, but we communicated with employees constantly as we updated plans because we did not want people to panic.”

Temperature Checks

RLS Logistics purchased infrared thermometers to check staff and visitor temperatures before they entered facilities, says Cogit. “I’m glad we invested in thermometers early because I know they became more difficult to find as more companies began checking temperatures.” Initially, managers and supervisors checked employee and visitor temperatures, but a few weeks later, RLS hired a healthcare testing facility to read temperatures and conduct symptom screenings. “This change was well-received by employees who were reassured that the screenings would minimize their risk,” she adds.

In the warehouses, masks were worn by employees at all times, new pathways were established in the facilities to minimize contact between people, and breakroom access was reduced to a few people at one time.

If an employee did report symptoms, they were tested and sent home. If the test was positive for COVID-19, virtual meetings were held with the employee to identify other staff members with whom they were in contact –

less than 6 feet for more than 10 minutes – so those people could be screened for symptoms, quarantined and tested if needed, says Cogit.

At Nor-Am Cold Storage, which is headquartered in Iowa, employee and visitor temperatures are monitored via thermal cameras at entryways, says Ashley Albers, Human Resources Manager. Information is monitored by supervisors, but real-time screenshots of employees with higher than normal temperatures are sent to HR and managers. “We find the employee and take a second temperature reading to doublecheck the initial result,” she says. “While the cameras do a good job, there are false reports due to employees coming in after being outside in the sun or employees wearing black hats that hold heat,” she says. “These cameras were worth the investment because I believe monitoring employees temperatures and making sure they stay home if they are ill will be the new standard for the future.”

Sanitizing

RLS Logistics also changed its time clock process. Although sanitizing wipes were provided at the time clock and employees were asked to wipe the surface before and after clocking in, a new touchless process that allowed employees to clock in via their own mobile device was implemented.

“Our payroll provider had always offered this service but we had not considered using it before COVID-19,” says Cogit. The application’s geo-fencing technology allows employees to check in when they are at the site of their employment, with parameters established by the employer. “We did have to explain that we were not tracking employees or collecting other data on them,” she explains. “Once they realized that the application did not invade their privacy, everyone appreciated the ease of checking in.”

Although PPE and disinfecting supplies were difficult to find, Marie Sullivan, Vice President of Human Resources for Trenton Cold Storage in Trenton, Ontario, in Canada, points out that the conference calls and

resources provided by GCCA were helpful in identifying sources and staying up-to-date on new information. “We were able to obtain the PPE and supplies we needed for all of our facilities, but we decided to maintain a centralized inventory,” says Sullivan. “We had the space in one warehouse to handle the inventory and distribution and found that we were able to manage it more easily from one location.”

Some of the new processes to minimize exposure to the virus included routine cleaning of all high-touch areas in the facilities every two hours, says Sullivan. “We also ask drivers to submit paperwork electronically if possible, and we limit the number of contractors and suppliers who enter the facilities,” she says. Shift meetings have been moved out of lunchrooms to allow space to social distance.

At Antwerp Cold Stores in Beveren, Belgium, workers disinfect their equipment and machines every hour or after every operation, says Ben Van Wolput, Managing Director. “From day one, all workers have used masks, gloves and disinfecting hand gel, which is made available to everyone, and employees have to wash and disinfect their hands on a regular basis or after every operation.”

Contact between people is minimized by allowing only one worker inside a container or truck during the unloading or loading operations, says Van Wolput. “Because this limitation might slow operations, management has shown their ‘hands-on’ mentality and helped at all levels in the company to get work done on time – including loading containers, unloading trucks, manipulating pallets, doing surveys, labelling cartons and taking samples,” he says. “This has improved workflow and supported business from new customers.”

The Big Picture

Remaining sensitive to employees’ concerns outside the work environment was also important in all companies, which meant allowing people to take leave if they had underlying medical conditions or if they were



(Photo courtesy of Trenton Cold Storage.)

caring for elderly family members or children, who were now out of school during the day.

Stockhabo in Mouscron, Belgium, took an innovative approach to childcare issues. “From week 12 onwards, we assumed that most absences at work were not due directly to sickness of the employees but rather a fear of this new, unknown disease on one hand and problems with childcare on the other hand,” says Pieter Sinnesael, Operations Manager. “Due to the closing of the schools, a lot of staff with young children found themselves confronted with the absence of childcare during the daytime.”

The company organized a daycare for employees’ children at the cold storage company’s main site, so employees could continue working, he adds.

At Frigometro, two of the four facilities in Columbia are located far from most employees’ homes so the company provided multiple private vans to transport people to

work, which means employees do not have to use public transportation, says Veronica Diaz, HR Representative for the company. “The majority of the employees live around the same areas so we have four different points in each city where they can meet according to which one is closer for them.” The company transports about 100 people per day and assumes all the costs, she says.

“We do have meat processing plants as customers and they have experienced slowdowns due to the effects of lockdowns in restaurants and hotels,” says Diaz. “These slowdowns end up affecting us because we have employees working specifically in packing chicken and there is not enough product to keep all the employees working, which generates significant loss of income and high workforce cost in our operations.”

Diaz does point out that some meat processing plants are exploring new markets and exporting products to other countries, which

helps Frigometro balance some of the loss generated by other customers that depend 100 percent on the local market.

“We also saw a slowdown with some of our meat packing customers so we have those employees handling some downtime projects that we might not normally do at this time of year,” says Albers.

In addition to the additional deep cleaning of equipment and extra surface sanitization, projects such as painting, cycle counting and inventory control have kept employees working, Albers says.

Remote Work

One of the most unexpected results of work-at-home requirements was the need for office-based employees to work remotely, says Sullivan. “We all came to work one morning and by the end of the day, we were preparing to work remotely the next,” she says. “We had never considered having any employees work from home, so we had no policies or processes in place to provide the equipment or technology.”

Although there was some scrambling by employees and the IT staff to get people set up to work from home, within a couple of days everything was going smoothly, Sullivan says. “We have 35 people working remotely from the main office and four people who come into the office.”

Although a remote workforce is new to the company, Sullivan reports results have been excellent, with remote departments functioning well. “Finance is able to complete month end reports and customer service is able to provide seamless service to our customers,” she says. “Our IT department has also been able to move forward with a new WMS system installation.”

Trenton Cold Storage is also one of many companies that have offered additional pay to employees. “We provided appreciation pay in the amount of \$2 per hour to all team members who were leaving the security of their home and coming to work as essential workers,” she says. “Overall, our team morale is high, as people feel we are doing all we can to keep them and their families safe.”

As cold storage companies implement appreciation pay, lunches, t-shirts and other perks to keep employees motivated and make



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IRTA is the temperature-controlled transportation and logistics industry's association.



CEBA is the association for experts in the design and construction of temperature-controlled facilities.



WFLO develops education and research for the industry and provides cold chain advisory services that empower economic development and strengthen the global cold chain.

sure they know how valuable they are, there are still some job openings created by those who need to stay home to care for family members or those who have medical conditions that place them at risk.

While some companies have held off hiring new employees due to social distancing restraints and a lack of virtual onboarding and training programs, RLS Logistics has continued to fill positions through a temporary staffing agency as well as an in-house recruiter.

“We created fillable PDF documents to use for onboarding and created a PowerPoint presentation that we use for a virtual orientation without missing any steps in the very important new hire experience,” says Cogit.

Remote work policies, enhanced use of technology for videoconference meetings and social gatherings, virtual onboarding and

training, and a greater awareness of maintaining a healthy workplace are lessons cited by cold storage HR leaders as lessons learned during COVID-19 that will positively affect the workplace in the future.

One of those changes is an understanding that someone should not come to work sick, says Albers. “Our employees have always had the attitude that a few sniffles won’t keep them out of work, but there is a cultural shift now,” she says. “Everyone knows that we really don’t want people coming to work sick – we want healthy employees.” ☺

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TRAVELING THROUGH UNCHARTED TERRITORY

Cold chain logistics operators respond to COVID-19.

By Karen E. Thuermer

C OVID-19 has caused a logistical upheaval. When the virus hit, shipment delays and cancellations reverberated worldwide.

Robert Fay, President, Florida Freezer and Vice President, Seminole Gulf Railway, Bay Colony Railroad, GFA Rail Services, says, “We have felt the tremendous economic impact from loss of business across all of our companies. Hardest hit has been our restaurant, the rail freight traffic, and the warehouse client base focused on food service distribution.”

Don Durm, Vice President of Customer Solutions for Florida-based PLM Fleet, observed how in the United States, truck drivers, who were initially regarded heroes since they were the ones delivering the goods, were quickly avoided. Within weeks after the nation’s shutdown, receivers started to put protocols in place out of fear of infection that

might infect their employees. These included limited contact with drivers.

“In an abundance of caution, everyone is suspect of having the virus,” Durm says.

Worse, when a driver would catch COVID-19, others would call in sick for fear of catching the virus.

In Australia, logistics providers found their business in overdrive as citizens stocked up on two weeks of supplies, as mandated by many state governments.

“Our challenge was to enforce the draconian social distancing measures, while managing massive workloads never seen before the panic of the pandemic,” remarks Lyndon

Truck drivers must sign in and have their temperature checked upon arrival. (Photo courtesy of Don Watson Pty Ltd.)

Watson, CEO, of Don Watson Pty Ltd., in Victoria, Australia. “We needed to do all we could to get the food to the grocery store shelves and help settle the panic that was coming on. Our challenge was to move more stuff with fewer people. We commonly run 187,000-pound trucks out of many of our major cities every day. Sydney is limited to 150,000 pounds.”

Australia’s nationwide lockdown resulted in truck drivers being one of only a few professions that could cross state borders freely. “This meant drivers had to remain isolated outside of work hours,” Watson says. “Our drivers were routinely interacting with our own warehouse and 3PL staff from a different city every day. The likelihood of a cluster spreading through our supply chain was high.”

Netherlands-based Leen Menken Food-service Logistics faced decreased business because its customers who sell to caterers or restaurants have seen diminished revenues, but dramatic increases in orders from customers with online retail that sells direct to consumers at home.

To respond, Chris Menken, Project Manager, explains Leen Menken had to temporarily plan all orders in one delivery window instead of providing maximum three-hour windows. “This way, we could manage to scale up our delivery capacity and were able to provide the food to all the end customers that were bound to their houses due to the lockdown,” she says.

Menken expects that once the pandemic crisis is over, partially working from home will continue, as will more virtual meetings.

Creative Solutions

Companies have had to find alternatives or creative solutions to doing business during COVID-19. Fay explains that Florida Freezer has kept its overall business practices consistent to maintain service levels for its clients.

“Importantly, we continue to allow drivers into our facilities and allow them to use our restrooms and public areas,” he says. “However, we have amplified our cleaning and sanitizing procedures by increasing the documented frequency of cleaning and sanitizing high touch items, including but not limited to doorknobs, keypads, tablets, pens, and countertops.”



Bring Frigo provides instructions on personal hygiene for COVID-19. (Photo courtesy of Bring Frigo.)

The company has also transitioned to holding more virtual meetings with clients. “But given the physical nature of what we do, it is not practical to completely eliminate human interaction at our facilities and other companies’ facilities,” Fay adds. “Since the outbreak, we have implemented common sense practices, such as mandatory hand sanitizing upon entry to our facilities, practicing as best as possible social distancing, and encourage face covering while on site.”

Menken limits all external visits and meetings. Most office staff work from home.

“We have visualised walking routes and use signs to mark 1.5-meter distance,” she says. “Our drivers place the boxes on the doorstep, instead of handing them to the customer. Where people work closely together, we use plexiglass to separate them.”

The company has also set up a tent for additional space during breaks and created a new entrance to its building to separate people flow. New routines have also been implemented at its warehouses and terminals whereby drivers leave shipping documents in a hatchway and remain in their truck during

loading/unloading. Facilities are equipped with extra hand disinfectant and all staff are using more disposable gloves.

The first change made at Don Watson was to segregate different work groups to reduce the likelihood of cluster growth. “Many acts were tough, such as segregation rules leading to reduced access to amenities for truck drivers,” Watson says.

Truck drivers were limited to entering the company’s cold store staff amenities. Then drivers lost access to many roadhouses, as the government shut down dining services. As sparsely populated as Australia is, reductions in amenities hit linehaul drivers hard. “Many retailers, such as Australia’s Woolworths, are supplying visiting truck drivers with care packs, which include many pandemic-related supplies they may require,” Watson says.

Best Practices

Significantly impacting Sweden-based Bring Frigo’s operations has been reduced export volumes from the Nordic countries

(continued on page 26)

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- Warehouse and distribution real estate supporting essential businesses and online retailers better positioned to weather pandemic
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- Americans that were previously slow to embrace e-commerce shopping will leverage these services after the economy begins to reopen to maintain social distancing

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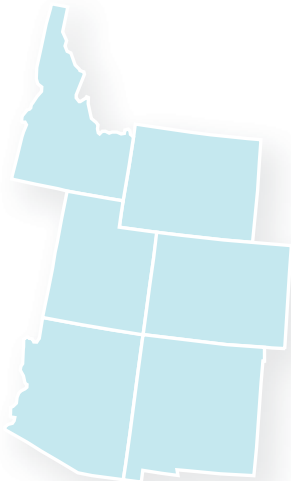
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Truck drivers were limited to entering the Don Watson cold store amenities. (Photo courtesy of Don Watson Pty Ltd.)

(continued from page 23)

and Sweden to Europe, its increase in retail volumes and decrease in hospitality and foodservice volumes. Early in the pandemic, Bring Frigo identified a need for an epidemic intelligence team to monitor information and measures and to take relevant actions.

“In February, we appointed a crisis management team that included representatives from all company functions, including CEO, to follow the development of COVID-19 and make decisions quickly,” says Maria Jönsson, leader of the team. “Our decisions and actions were based on the guidelines from the public health authorities and local risk assessments.”

The strategy was to provide employees with proactive and daily information from the crisis management team via its intranet and staff app. Weekly digital information meetings are also held by the company management team for Bring Frigo’s leaders and specialists. Changes implemented include allowing some employees, whose tasks allowed for it, to work from home; fewer physical meetings with some replaced by digital meetings; no physical

visits to customers or suppliers; no trips outside country; limited trips within country; and customers’ procurements processes for longer/larger contracts set on-hold.

“Our focus in sales is on more short-term or day-to-day business,” Jönsson says. “We have increased communication with our customers to make sure we keep them informed and updated about how we handle the situation and which measures are taken.”

PML has implemented best practices to make drivers more comfortable in staying safe. The company has introduced digital/touchless training that is available on their website to anyone. It covers hygiene, proper use of protective personal equipment (PPE) and sanitation. This allows drivers to be trained remotely on a computer or cell phone. Once the video is viewed, a proof of knowledge is required, and a certificate is issued.

Durm emphasizes that overall, the industry is utilizing PPE and sanitizing truck cabs more frequently with extra attention given to touch points within the cab. Hand sanitizer is also available for use. Temperature recording also has become the norm as a potential indication

of illness. It is not uncommon for a receiver to ask the driver to submit to a temperature check before entry to drop their load.

“Smart Cosmos, a digital innovation company, created a technology that allows a trucking company to digitally manage drivers’ symptoms/temperatures through tapping their cell phone to an NFC chip attached to the employees’ company identification,” Durm explains. “In this way, the transport company can manage this process instead of each receiver checking the temperature – something I am sure is uncomfortable for the driver and the guard at the gate.”

Some silver linings are evident with these changes. Menken explains, “Our last mile distribution has become more efficient during the crisis. This provides us with useful data and insights that we can use to further improve our last mile network in the future.”

Durm maintains that COVID-19 has accelerated digitalization technology through the supply chain resulting in less paperwork. “What was thought to be so important – that bill of lading – is now not so important for proof of delivery,” he says.

Companies also have moved to touchless interactions. PLM, for example, is executing a touchless inspection process that includes document signatures for the contracts on pick up of equipment – all without physical interaction.

Watson comments that while Australia has historically been behind in the touchless environment, the drive for such technology has enable the IT community to get a foothold with big retailers. “For the near-term, however, the paper office is still with us and administrative staff are still coming into work every day,” he says.

Future Considerations

Looking ahead, Jönsson expects Bring Frigo to increase use of internal and external digital meetings and implement less business travel. Already, she says, company officials are more openminded regarding flexible and quick solutions between functions/business areas. “We are better at making quick decisions, even with a lack of information and an uncertainty in the market/environment,” she adds.

Menken expects that once the pandemic crisis is over, working from home will continue as will virtual meetings.

Fay expects a continuation of wearing facemasks and disposable gloves. But he hopes truck drivers will not be shunned and barred from using restrooms and other public facilities.

Durm is concerned how the temperature-controlled supply chain channels will rebound from pre-Covid-19 restaurant versus grocery store spending levels. “Where the consumer spending occurs will likely determine the future of some cold chain businesses,” he says. “We are in uncharted territory.”

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Work groups at Don Watson are segregated to reduce the likelihood of a virus cluster. (Photo courtesy of Don Watson Pty Ltd.)



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Design/build firms seek solutions for pandemic modifications.

By Keith Loria

As the coronavirus pandemic spread throughout the world this spring, those in the cold chain industry experienced many of the same problems that other industries were facing, needing to keep workers safe, and developing a strategy to continue working in a post-COVID-19 world.

This obviously brought about many challenges and new ways of thinking about the work these companies do.

Brian King, Owner and President of A M King, notes given the impact COVID-19 has

had upon the food industry, the company is now evaluating how it can assist food processing and food distribution companies as they face the new challenge of keeping their workforce safe from the spread of this virus.

“We are developing solutions to reconfigure existing facilities to provide separation, distancing and operational modifications,” he says. “We are also working with clients in the design of new facilities to accommodate the workplace requirements now necessary to maintain the type of safe environment that was not a major consideration just a few weeks ago.”

Carsten Thorsen, CEO of CT-Technologies in Denmark, notes things have certainly been challenging, explaining several of its construction sites in Asia were closed due to local lockdowns, and being stuck at home meant not being able to travel and meet with clients and



Construction sites in Asia began to reopen in early June. (Photo courtesy of CT-Technologies.)

the majority of its work is considered essential, business hasn't been impacted greatly as most clients are keen to carry on.

"Pre-COVID, we were facing a challenging time, with a full order book and possible issues with lack of resources," he says. "The pandemic has actually evened out our workload, with some sites closing and others being pushed back."

Clift had been concerned about potential problems with cash flow, believing that some clients may use the crisis as an excuse to delay payments. He says even though this has occurred to some degree, other clients are desperate to keep sites going and have made prompt payment.

Michael Lynch, Vice President of Engineering for United States Cold Storage, oversees the construction projects when US Cold has new warehouses built and has seen several changes to operations.

The company had confirmed cases of COVID-19 among its employees, but was proactive in putting together a business continuity plan and working through ways of testing and monitoring to keep employees safe in its warehouses.

"Fortunately, it's been business as usual," Lynch says. "It's taken up a lot of time and resources in the procurement of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and facilitating a lot of protocols and procedures that we have in place of local management teams, who have done an exemplary job of managing this pandemic."

The company has been aided by receiving more than 50,000 masks through FEMA and installed temperature sensor devices at its warehouses early on. It also set up a clinic in its Pennsylvania facility so employees can get tested for the COVID-19 virus.

Adopting Best Practices

Prior to the pandemic, jobsite safety had a primary focus of keeping workers safe from physical injury. Now A M King's projects provide an equal level of attention to keeping its workforce safe from the spread of COVID-19.

"We start with training and communication among the project workforce," King says. "We ensure our workforce understands the newly developed best practices that must be implemented by every individual. Then we ensure that proper PPE and materials are available as

needed."

Clift notes operating procedures on-site have been largely determined by clients, as GPL Construction predominantly work on their sites. However, through building a culture of a combined and proactive approach to health and safety in the workplace, GPL has been able to implement changes to site procedures quickly and effectively.

"Keeping the size of our teams small and not having a regular turnover of staff have made implementing isolation on-site relatively easy," he says. "We have had to arrange separate toilet and washing facilities for our sole use on some sites, where there are concerns over the existing facilities, and we have had to make changes to sequencing of work to avoid other trades."

Martijn Baartmans, Director of B-Built BV in the Netherlands, notes the company has implemented new safety procedures at all of its sites to maintain a safe working environment. This includes improving sanitary facilities, updating working procedures and providing safe working distances and as much comfort as possible for site employees.

"It's about understanding the work we do, involving our staff in setting up the required guidelines and sharing our knowledge," he says. "It has to come from the inside as much as possible, and is a strict and directed top to bottom strategy."

Working globally, CT-Technologies has followed all individual country recommendations.

"The last couple of weeks, all staff have been back in our Danish office keeping distance, washing hands often and sanitizing using alcohol," Thorsen says. "Office cleaning has increased. Our office in BiH started with 50 percent of staff in one day and 50 percent the next day."

At US Cold, Lynch says they have implemented temperature monitoring for all employees and prohibited any type of travel since early on in the pandemic. Going forward, employees will only travel if considered, and with approval from company leadership.

"We've practiced social distancing and masks are required," he says. "Any visitor that comes on-site is required to fill out a questionnaire and affidavit, following CDC guidelines. We put in place weekly calls with our senior management team that includes

subsidiaries. Plus, a couple of the company's European suppliers closed their factories and shipping costs skyrocketed.

"We mainly have suppliers from Europe and a couple of our Italian and Spanish suppliers were closed for a couple of weeks," he says. "The main challenge has been a lack of containers for shipping our projects and also a lack of air freight for shipping urgent spare parts."

CT-Technologies is now focusing more on having local supply options instead of having to ship all products from Europe.

"We are having more web-based meetings to keep the international team together, but it's still very important to meet in person," Thorsen says.

GPL Construction in the United Kingdom is a specialty contractor working in the food industry either for the end-user directly or their nominated building contractor. Peter Clift, owner of the company, says that since

all warehouse general managers, so we can discuss pandemic changes, state re-openings and active cases. We also answer any questions they may have.”

On-Going Projects

While some cold storage design-build projects that had been started were halted, and others about to begin were put on hold, many companies still went forward with what was planned and already in the works.

“A M King has been fortunate as each of our projects was allowed to proceed,” King says. “We were also fortunate that we were able to respond by keeping every project moving forward, albeit in a different manner than before this crisis occurred. We started by working with our clients to understand and communicate their intentions for each of their projects and the protocols and modifications required on each individual project.”

Additionally, the company set up a channel of internal communication to address every new development during the crisis, and how, as an organization, it should respond to these developments. By over-communicating and facing every new challenge head-on, the company was able to develop solutions to maintain project productivity and project safety.

According to Thorsen, most of CT-Technologies’ construction sites in Indonesia, Philippines and Singapore have been closed by their respective governments. As of early June, things were starting to open and work was expected to begin again.

B-Built BV has seen a decrease in the company’s monthly revenues due to a significant “slow-down” on all projects, though it has not been a complete stop.

“We are being flexible and keeping a dialogue going with all stakeholders involved – clients, partners, subcontractors – and maintaining a common goal as much as possible,” Baartmans says. “We maintain our trust in the food business, that’s for sure, but perhaps with a slightly adjusted approach to create a broader view.”

Lessons Learned

With COVID-19 being an unprecedented virus, companies are figuring out how to best work and adapt to ensure people are safe and work can still get done.

“We have learned to expect the unexpected,” King says. “Those of us who have been in the design and construction industry for many years expect to face challenges such as recessions, labor shortages or shifting markets. But no one would have anticipated an event such as this to occur. It reminds us to be flexible, and to always be prepared to respond quickly to unexpected challenges.”

KEITH LORIA is an award-winning journalist who has been writing for major newspapers and magazines for close to 20 years, on topics as diverse as sports, business and technology.

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COVID-19 INSPIRES EDUCATION AND WEBINARS IN CENTRAL ASIA

This column features news about key projects of the World Food Logistics Organization (WFLO), a GCCA Core Partner, and its work with members, aid organizations and international development partners to help emerging economies and lower-income countries meet the challenges that arise when growing a safe and efficient global cold chain.

After being declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020, COVID-19 continued to tighten its grip on much of the world. In the weeks that followed, it became clear the global nature of travel and trade had already brought the virus to nearly every country. Sporting events, religious gatherings, and even birthday parties were not allowed in most places for many weeks. And, of course, international travel also became nearly impossible.

Stories of how people and organizations adapted and innovated through these challenges are coming to light. In one such example, World Food Logistics Organization (WFLO) technical expert Brian Beazer, had been scheduled to lead a training session in Central Asia on behalf of WFLO and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded Competitiveness, Trade, and Jobs (CTJ). With no international travel allowed and a clear need for education to strengthen the cold chain in Central Asia, especially during a global pandemic, WFLO quickly organized a series of free webinars to help stakeholders manage any disruptions in the food supply chain.

The pandemic also inspired the development of global resources by the GCCA for its members. Three webinars – a mix of live and pre-recorded sessions, all available on the GCCA YouTube channel – offered stakeholders an opportunity to learn from experts, as well as from one another. Together, the webinars have drawn more than 315 views as of late June.

In the first session, WFLO outlined best

practices to date based on the experiences of GCCA members in areas of the world already hard-hit by COVID-19. This pre-recorded educational session, posted in the Russian language, focused on market trends and the consumer.

In two live Q&A-style follow-up sessions, participants were increasingly concerned about business continuity in the event workers tested sick; how to maintain social distancing; cross-border issues; government interference and how to gain recognition as critical infrastructure.


These sessions offered participants an opportunity to interact directly with technical experts and to ask questions. The first was hosted by GCCA Consultant Richard Tracy and GCCA Regional Cold Chain Advisor Mumin Isamiddinov and the second live Q&A session featured a panel of regional experts, including Larisa Kislyakova (Tajikistan), Isamiddinov (Uzbekistan), Bakyt Dikanbaev (Kyrgyzstan) and Sanzhar Kerimbekov (Kazakhstan).

Amanda Brondy, Senior Director, International Projects for GCCA, reports that many of the questions in the second Q&A session were country-specific, likely owing to presenters' deep knowledge of specific Central Asian countries. Also, she observes that those who participated in the webinar were not accustomed to sharing information with others, and particularly not with others who may be a competitor. She says there was recognition, however,



that “coming together to address a common challenge is good for everybody.”

In addition to the WFLO-led webinars, GCCA has developed a “COVID-19 Rapid Response Guide” for members affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The guide, a compilation of resources shared by reputable government agencies and scientific institutions, aims to answer questions about the crisis. It is available from GCCA in multiple languages, including Portuguese, Spanish, Russian and English.

To learn more about WFLO efforts related to COVID-19 or to access the guide, please visit <https://www.gcca.org/resources/responding-coronavirus>. 

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COOL SOLUTIONS

SCIENTIFIC ANSWERS TO COLD CHAIN CHALLENGES

This column highlights a cold chain question and answer submitted through the GCCA Inquiry Service to the team of experts on the WFLO Scientific Advisory Council (SAC).

To get instant advice from a private, online community of over 4,000 cold chain professionals, simply post your inquiry in the GCCA Online Community. All GCCA Members and their employees can access the GCCA Online Community at community.gcca.org/home. There are active forums for Construction & Engineering, Government Affairs, and Third Party Logistics.

If you are not a GCCA member, or are unsure how to post in the GCCA Online Community, contact the GCCA Inquiry Service at www.gcca.org/inquiry. GCCA Members can also browse the full archive of inquiries and responses in the GCCA Inquiry Service Archive. Access to previous inquiries is restricted to members of GCCA core partner organizations.

Q: I am trying to get information on how different storage temperatures might affect surimi's shelf life. Surimi is fish (often pollock) that is minced to make a gelatinous paste that is then flavored, reformed into flakes, sticks, or other shapes, and colored. It is used as a crab substitute. The temperatures that we are considering for storage are -10°F, -14°F and -18°F.

A: The current shelf life of frozen surimi is two years (at 0°F) after manufacturing. However, the quality (particularly gel texture) decreases during the two-year frozen storage. The quality of low-grade surimi decreases much faster than that of high-grade surimi. Thus, there can be a significant gel texture reduction during 12 months of frozen storage, depending on the initial quality of the surimi.

If the surimi is stored below 0°F for 12 months at one cold storage facility without being moved during the storage period, there should not be a significant difference in quality. Temperature fluctuation during storage is the most significant factor affecting the texture quality.

The shelf-life of frozen products is dependent upon several factors such as initial product quality, proper packaging, proper handling of the product upon arrival at the warehouse (e.g. proper quick freezing of the product if, upon arrival, the product temperature is out of specifications), and no product temperature fluctuations during frozen storage.

In summary, if this is high quality surimi, and is properly handled and stored (no fluctuating temperatures, etc.), the shelf-life at 0°F is approximately two years. There will be an increase in shelf-life at -10°F and -14°F, but there are no data available to determine how much shelf-life will increase. Shelf-life at -18°F will be the longest, but the added costs of storage at -18°F will likely not justify such temperatures.

Answer provided by Dr. Michael Jahncke, WFLO Scientific Advisory Council Chairman, Virginia Seafood Agricultural Research & Extension Center and expert in the field of fish products. 📧



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SAC MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



DR. PATRICK BRECHT, PHD
President
PEB Commodities, Inc.

During his career of more than 40 years, Brecht has been actively involved with domestic and international handling, processing, storage and transportation of perishable products. He has extensive experience with storage and transportation best practices, temperature, humidity and atmosphere management, quality control, food safety, commodity storage requirements and product quality attributes.

Brecht has been the principal forensics consultant and expert involving losses to frozen foods including seafood and meat, fresh fruit and vegetables, fresh cut produce, chilled meat, pharmaceuticals, wine, beverages, hops and grains. He has offered consultation services, published numerous expert opinions and has been qualified as an expert/testified on multiple occasions in cases.


Brecht has served in executive capacities for multinational businesses involved with perishable products. Brecht was also a professor at Cornell University where he conducted postharvest research and taught Food Chemistry and Postharvest Biotechnology.

He has co-authored multiple publications and co-edited and authored the GCCA's "FDA Food Safety Modernization Act STF Final Rule Summary and User Guide," the Refrigerated Transportation Best Practices Guide and the FDA Food Safety Compliance guide.

Most recently, he co-authored a complete revision of the USDA Handbook 669 entitled "Protecting Perishable Foods during Transport by Truck and Rail" and a chapter in a textbook ("Postharvest Technology of Perishable Horticultural Commodities") entitled "Temperature-Controlled Transport for Air, Land, and Sea."

He has been a guest speaker on topics of food safety, quality, handling, storing, transporting and logistics at conferences in Australia, Asia, North America, Hawaii, England, Europe and Central/South America.

Brecht earned his Doctorate in plant physiology with emphasis in post-harvest biotechnology from University of California Davis.

Currently, he is President of PEB Commodities, Inc., an international service company that specializes in consultation, workshops and forensics. 



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Food Safety, Food Safety Regulations

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Logistics and Operations Management

Dr. Vicky Salin
Texas A&M University, Expertise:
Agriculture Economics

Dr. Subramaniam Sathivel
Louisiana State University, Expertise:
Frozen Food Quality

Dr. S. Paul Singh
Michigan State University, Expertise:
Packaging & Labeling

Dr. Donald Schaffner
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey,
Expertise: Microbiology

Brian Strouts
AIB International, Expertise:
Bakery Products

Dr. Charles White
Mississippi State University, Expertise:
Dairy Products

Dr. Elhadi Yahia
Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro,
México, Expertise: Tropical-Climate Fruit
& Produce

Joseph Slavin
Jos. Slavin & Associates, Expertise:
Fish Products

Dr. W. F. (Will) Stoecker
University of Illinois, Expertise:
Refrigeration Engineering

2020-2021 CALENDAR

JULY 28-29, 2020

GCCA Cold Chain Policy Forum
Virtual

AUGUST 24-26, 2020

**GCCA South Africa: Cold Store
Operations Short Course**
Virtual

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020

IARW-WFLO Convention
Virtual

SEPTEMBER 8-10, 2020

WFLO Latin America Institute - Año 1
Virtual

SEPTEMBER 15-17, 2020

WFLO Latin America Institute - Año 2
Virtual

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2020

GCCA Cold Chain Conference & Expo
Virtual

OCTOBER 7-9, 2020

WFLO Latin America Institute - Año 3
Virtual

OCTOBER 19-21, 2020

WFLO Institute Australia
Melbourne, Australia

NOVEMBER 10-12, 2020

40th CEBA Conference & Expo
Rancho Mirage, California, United States

NOVEMBER 23-25, 2020

**23rd GCCA European Cold Chain
Conference**
Rotterdam, Netherlands

DECEMBER 2020

**GCCA Brazil/ABI AF Cold Chain
Symposium**
Sao Paulo, Brazil

*All events are subject to change due to
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ASSOCIATION NEWS

NEWS ABOUT GCCA CORE PARTNERS

GCCA announces Matthew Ott, CAE, CMP, will lead the association as its new President and CEO, beginning June 1, 2020. Ott brings to GCCA extensive knowledge of the food supply chain and experience in trade association leadership through his nine years at the National Grocers Association (NGA), most recently serving as the executive vice president and chief operating officer as well as executive director of the NGA Foundation. Before joining NGA in 2011, Ott worked for the Independent Lubricant Manufacturers Association (ILMA) and the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).



GCCA has published the findings of research about the business impacts of the COVID-19 virus on companies comprising the global cold chain. The report provides critical data about some of the ripple effects globally on

social and economic activity of the cold chain industry. Access the report at <https://www.gcca.org/resources/2020-covid-19-cold-chain-business-impact-survey-summary>.



GCCA's annual Cold Chain Policy Forum will be held virtually, July 28-29, 2020. There will be speakers from agencies such as the EPA, USDA and OSHA. The event is complimentary for GCCA members. Visit <https://www.gcca.org/policymeeting> to learn more and to register.



GCCA's European Cold Chain Conference has been rescheduled to take place from November 23-25, 2020. It will take place at the Hilton Rotterdam, as originally planned.

GCCA has published the first-quarter Cold Chain Index (CCI) data. Labor was the largest share of expenses, at 46 percent of the total. Property rent or lease expenses represented nearly 35 percent of total expenses and electric power accounted for 10 percent. Download the spreadsheet to input your own numbers at <https://www.gcca.org/resources/gcca-cold-chain-index>.



Ron Buford, Premier Refrigerated Warehouse, was elected as the 2020-2021 Chairman of the **IARW** Board of Directors. Other new IARW officers elected for the coming year were Manuel C. Kabana from Friopuerto Investment, who will serve as Vice Chairman and Anthony M. Leo, RLS Logistics, who will serve as Treasurer. Andrew B. Janson, President, MTC Logistics, moves to the Immediate

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Past Chairman role. For the IARW-at-Large seat, coming on for a three-year term is Rich Burke, KPAC Cold Storage. Harry Halpert, MTC Logistics and Carlos Rodriguez, AGRO Merchants have both been re-elected. IARW regional representatives elected to the board for three-year terms are Scott Albers, Nor-Am Cold Storage (Heartland Region); Tom Brennan, Hall's Warehouse (North Atlantic Region); and Karen Reece, Eskimo Cold Storage (Southeastern Region).




Brian Beazer, WCS Logistics, was elected 2020-2021 Chairman of the **WFLO** Board of Governors. Other officers elected were Daniel Kaplan with Polaris Cold Storage and Rack Builders Inc., who will serve as Vice Chairman, and Greg Laurin with Conestoga Cold Storage, who will serve as Treasurer.

On February 29, 2020, the current Chairman of **WFLO**, Don Dick passed away unexpectedly. To honor Dick, his service to the association and passion for the industry, the WFLO Board of Governors and the association members approved to have the position of WFLO Immediate Past Chairman be in Dick's name for the coming year (2020-2021).



New nominees for the **WFLO** Board of Governors for three-year terms are Niels Lundgaard-Svenstrup, Coldstar, and Tom Poe, Crystal Distribution Services. The following board members have been re-elected for an additional three-year term: Adam Forste, Lineage Logistics, Arne Martinsen, Transmar Ltd., Mike Pokel, Midwest Refrigerated and Kirk Robertson, Terra Vista Capital.



The **WFLO** announces that Dr. Cody Gifford, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Animal Science at the University of Wyoming, has joined its Scientific Advisory Council (SAC) for a three-year term, occupying the open position on the committee focused on meat products. Gifford has expertise in human nutrition, meat science, meat safety, quality, processing, handling, storage and more. 



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Mock Plumbing & Mechanical, Inc.

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J&B Cold Storage

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Edenvale, Gauteng, South Africa

Reefer Cold Storage

Springfield Park, South Africa



IRTA MEMBERS

Atlantic AutoCold

New Brunswick, Canada

Ethekwini Cold Stores (Pty) Ltd

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COLD CHAIN INNOVATIONS

NEW ELECTRIC/SOLAR ENERGY SOLUTION FOR TRUs

Since the invention of the transport refrigeration unit (TRU) in 1935 revolutionized the temperature-controlled, over-the-road shipping business, not much has changed about the way it has been powered.

Today, the industry is transformed by new offerings leveraging alternative sources of power.

PLM, a leader in lease, rental and maintenance service for hybrid refrigeration transport equipment and GridMarket, an AI-powered clean energy project facilitator, have partnered to provide efficient, profitable energy solutions for refrigerated fleets, warehouses and distribution centers.

PLM is introducing the Advanced Energy Management (AEM), an all-electric transport TRU. Mike Marshall, Vice President of Sales at PLM says, "There is no diesel tank on the unit, it is powered 100 percent from electricity and solar with the capabilities of maintaining a full load of ice cream in a 53-foot trailer at minus 10° to minus 20° F."


With interest and advancements in electric cars and trucks, there is now a green solution for the TRU industry that governments and utilities are encouraging through incentive programs for energy infrastructure modernizations for facilities and TRU fleets.

GridMarket helps facility operators identify and maximize opportunities to reap the financial, resiliency and environmental benefits of distributed energy resources (DER). The GridMarket Platform recommends best-fit energy solutions and sources project partners through its managed marketplace of top-tier technology providers and financiers.

"Given high energy costs, large footprints and pressure to meet sustainability targets, both on-site and through supply chains, cold storage facilities are ideally positioned to benefit from DERs," notes Oisín O'Brien, GridMarket's Vice President of Analytics and Project Development.

"It is a daunting road to navigate the complexities of these incentive programs for fleets and facility infrastructure, available within a limited time-frame, so companies should consider doing this now," Marshall explains.

"The synergies created by combining fleet electrification with on-site generation made this PLM-GridMarket collaboration a natural partnership," adds O'Brien.

Need to reduce your cost of operation? PLM and GridMarket are offering a complimentary opportunity assessment summarizing anticipated economic value, carbon reduction and resiliency benefits from facility and fleet electrification. Contact PLM's Mike Marshall at mmarshall@plmfleet.com. 

Cold Chain Innovations, a column brought to you by Tippmann Innovation, features the latest technologies, cutting-edge solutions, and innovative practices that the cold chain industry has to offer. Featured in each issue of COLD FACTS Magazine, the Cold Chain Innovations section gives readers thought-provoking ways to optimize their supply chain and improve operational efficiencies. The information presented in the Cold Chain Innovation section is sourced from GCCA members. To feature your news, press releases or submit your idea for a future Cold Innovation article, contact James Rogers at jrogers@gcca.org or call 703.373.4300.

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MEMBER NEWS

NEWS FROM MEMBERS OF GCCA CORE PARTNERS

AMERICOLD confirmed it is building facilities in Plainville, Connecticut and Lancaster, Pennsylvania in the United States, in partnership with Ahold Delhaize USA. The facilities will serve only the grocery retail brands of Stop & Shop and Giant. The facilities will be fully automated, will add a combined 24 million cubic feet of cold storage space and each facility will add about 200 new jobs to the local economies.



BITZER, a member of the Global Cold Chain Alliance (CEBA and IARW), is a winner of a 2020 HVACR Trust Award. The results are based on a survey conducted by cci Dialog GmbH from Karlsruhe, Germany, that delivered a clear result in customer confidence in the area of condensing units

for BITZER as refrigeration and air-conditioning technology specialist. BITZER won this same award in 2017.



BURRIS LOGISTICS was recognized by meat subscription service ButcherBox with the 1st Quarter ButcherBox 2020 Recognition Award.



Nicholas-P. Pedneault, President and CEO of **CONGEBEC**, announced he has become the majority shareholder of the company he's been managing since 2015. Three members of his management team will join him as co-shareholders: Guy Clairmont, Vice-President of Finance; Richard Patenaude, Vice-

President of Sales and Operations; France Pomerleau, Vice-President of Human Capital, Regulatory Compliance and Communications.



HANSON LOGISTICS, a leader in temperature-controlled supply chain services, announced that Jim Thompson has joined the organization as Senior Director of Transportation.



J.B. HUNT Transport Services announced the launch of an electronic bill of lading to assist in social distancing. This feature will enable businesses and carriers to digitally sign bills of lading and receive signed proof

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MEMBER NEWS

NEWS FROM MEMBERS OF GCCA CORE PARTNERS

of delivery via email, which will eliminate the exchange of paper documents to allow for safer interactions. This new feature can be accessed via the Carrier 360 or J.B. Hunt Drive app.



Logistics service provider **KLOOSTERBOER** invested in an automated and sustainable reefer container terminal named Kloosterboer Containerterminal Vlissingen at its location in the Vlissingen Harbor in The Netherlands. It will initially have 1,020 reefer plugs. The container terminal will be operational by mid-2020, and the expectation is to process 250,000 TEU annually.

LINEAGE LOGISTICS announced it has acquired the assets of U.S. foodservice distributor Maines Paper & Food Service, Inc. Lineage acquired the last mile food service distribution assets of Maines, which primarily supports Burger King, Tim Hortons and Darden Restaurants.




MTC LOGISTICS (MTC) is investing approximately \$61 million at the Port of Mobile, Alabama, United States, by building the newest refrigerated cargo facility. The distribution center will be one of the largest of its kind in the Southeast. MTC will employ more than 60 workers when the facility opens the first part of 2021.

RACK BUILDERS announced that Daniel Kaplan has joined its Advisory Board. Kaplan recently retired after 31 years as a Partner at Cloverleaf Cold Storage. He is currently serving as Vice Chairman of the World Food Logistics Organization (WFLO).



RYAN COMPANIES announced Laura Graf has joined the company as its new Chief Legal Officer



VAPOR ARMOUR has hired Robert DeLuca, Andrew Winkle and Robert Buchheit as Regional Sales Representatives. 



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COOL PEOPLE

PROFILING INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE CONNECTED TO THE COLD CHAIN INDUSTRY



MATTHEW OTT

MATTHEW OTT, CAE, CMP, IS THE GLOBAL COLD CHAIN ASSOCIATION'S NEW PRESIDENT AND CEO, AS OF JUNE 1, 2020.

CF: What led you to a career in association management?

MATT OTT: It's in the blood. I am the third generation in my family to have a career in association management. My grandfather started an association management firm in Washington, D.C., and my mother followed in his footsteps. So, no surprise that with all the experience and familiarity I had growing up, that I would follow into a career in association management myself.

CF: You were at the National Grocers Association for almost a decade prior to joining GCCA. How did that prepare you for your new position?

MO: There are a lot of similarities between the two associations. Obviously, while on different ends, both represent industries in the food supply chain, and both are part of a coalition of associations within the food industry. They are also similar in the composition of their membership. Both NGA and GCCA have diversity in the type and size of companies as well as the ownership structure.



"I have made a career of ensuring that association members know their dues are supporting programs, services and advocacy efforts that help raise up the industry and the member companies and provide a tangible return at the end of the day."

Both are full partner organizations with four different groups of people and within those groups, a lot of diversity in what is perceived as value.

Most importantly, both organizations play significant roles in ensuring that people across the world have access to the safest, highest quality food and pharmaceuticals possible.

CF: What is your philosophy on growing and leading associations?

MO: Ultimately, it always comes back to member value. I have made a career of ensuring that association members know their dues are supporting programs, services and advocacy efforts that help raise up the industry and the member companies and provide a tangible return at the end of the day.

At GCCA, we will accomplish this by evaluating our existing member programs, services and events to ensure that they are providing extraordinary value and are helping to serve the needs of all of our member companies worldwide. We will be looking at ways that we can improve the value proposition from a global perspective, seeking to add to our list of partnerships and member companies worldwide with a goal of improving international connectivity. We will also continue our work on developing a world-class industry relations and member engagement plan that enhances the profile and tells the story of the vital work of GCCA's member companies.

CF: From what you have observed in your first few weeks, what do you see as one of the greatest opportunities for GCCA member companies?

MO: Ultimately, there is a lot of momentum for the GCCA to continue to develop education programs and services that will really help members and member companies operate more effectively and efficiently.

There is also an opportunity for cold chain companies to use the social equity gained over the last few months from their designation as essential companies/workers on the frontlines of the pandemic to draw further attention to the role our companies play providing access to safe, healthy, affordable food across the world.

CF: The word is out that you are a serious sports fan. When stadiums reopen post-COVID-19, which sport, team or player, would you most like to see?

MO: I'm a lifelong, very avid, Liverpool Football Club supporter so I would most like to be at the team stadium, Anfield, sitting in the Kop, as soon as things get back to normal. 🍷



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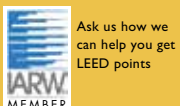
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