

Climate-controlled transport of fresh produce

Eurofresh Coldstore in Neuenkirchen-Vörden is highly satisfied with the results of the first six months.

The firm Eurofresh from Neuenkirchen-Vörden that offers a complete package of services covering all aspects of refrigerated and frozen logistics finds that its warehouse expansion in Neuenkirchen makes it a partner of the meat-processing industry and hence also a specialist for climate-controlled transportation.

Von Reinhard Schönfeld

The German firm Eurofresh Logistics GmbH is part of the Dutch HSF Logistics Group and has been operating a new frozen store in Neuenkirchen-Vörden since January this year. It can store and handle both fresh foods and frozen pallets here.

Cold store at the development stage

In its high-rack storage system, the company uses automated sliding racks. Eight mobile rack vehicles are used. The rack system was supplied and assembled by the Belgian firm Nv Storax Benelux SA from Waremm (Borgworm). Two fixed racks at a height of five levels and 16 racks on eight mobile carriages are used. Operation is carried out by remote control from the lift truck. Consequently, only one aisle is needed for the entire store. With the aid of this space-saving technology, the logistics specialists boost energy efficiency in the frozen store. Thicker sandwich panels than those specified have been used in the roof elements and the outside walls.

With these energy-saving construction measures, Eurofresh is making an important contribution to environmental protection. Coordination and the construction supervision were carried out by the construction group Wam & van Duren Bouwgroup from Winterswijk in the Netherlands. The new store at the Neuenkirchen-Vörden site was inaugurated at the beginning of January 2010.

Not just fresh foods but also frozen foods can be taken into storage, handled and conveyed at the EC-recognised cold store. It

is mainly meat products on H1-pallets that are taken into storage. Goods can also be stored on Euro-pallets or on disposable and industrial pallets. The new warehouse has a capacity of 2700 pallets. The new cold store also has capacities for shock freezing. In this way mainly fresh meat products are frozen. Eurofresh works chiefly for abattoirs and dressing plants, as well as for the meat-processing industry. It takes above all pork, beef and poultrymeat into storage. As Neuenkirchen-Vörden is located at the heart of Germany's meat industry in the "South Oldenburg" area, customers are within direct reach of the plant.

Expansion of the vehicle fleet

Within the context of this expansion, Eurofresh also expanded its vehicle fleet by ten new partition-wall semi-trailers. The semi-trailers have tubular tracks, a partition wall and two evaporators. With these special semi-trailers, the company is able to carry fresh and frozen foods at the same time on just one vehicle. Tractor units and semi-trailers as well as trucks and trailers built by MAN and DAF are in daily use. The refrigerating superstructures on the



An automated sliding rack is operated over five levels on two fixed racks with 16 racks on mobile carriages via remote control from the lift truck.

vehicles come almost exclusively from the firm Schmitz Cargobull in Altenberge. The special features are the partition-wall semi-trailers that can be operated with two different temperatures at the same time, covering a temperature range from -25 °C to +25 °C. Eurofresh can transport frozen products e.g. in the forward chamber at a temperature of -23 °C and fresh meat products in the second chamber at +2 °C.

These partition-wall semi-trailers were developed jointly with Schmitz Cargobull. There are also special cooling combinations for transporting palletised goods and suspended meat products, as well as collective and

complete loads for fresh and frozen goods.

Meat is the core competence

As a specialist for climate-controlled transportation, Eurofresh sees itself as a partner of its customers and through the expansion in Neuenkirchen aims to offer a complete package of services covering all aspects of refrigerated and frozen logistics.

The core area of competence of the services offered by Eurofresh and the HSF Group lies in the meat processing industry. The group provides warehousing and handling facilities for pallets, as well as facilities for suspended meat, empties rental, administration and cleaning, order picking, cross docking and tracking and tracing in EC-recognised cold stores. It can service the entire chain. Eurofresh is one of the few companies in Germany that picks, handles and conveys fresh hanging meat products in consignment and piece sizes.

It services the whole of Western Europe, Poland and Scandinavia through its network consisting of the Dutch branches in Winterswijk and Nijmegen, Neuenkirchen-Vörden in Germany, Celje in Slovenia and Great Blakenham in the United Kingdom.

Over 500 modern reefer vehicles carry frozen and fresh produce seven days a week to and from the individual regions. All the vehicles are monitored and steered using a GPRS system. With the aid of this fleet steering the scheduling officers are able to provide customers with precise information about delivery



Frozen pallets can be handled in the new warehouse too.

times, exchanged empties or any irregularities at any time. A closed cooling chain during transport and handling is guaranteed throughout the entire route from the consignor to the consignee. The data are recorded and documented in the vehicles with special temperature recorders.

The company prides itself on its constant monitoring of all work processes and the corresponding hygiene in accordance with HACCP criteria. Thanks to its special flexibility, punctuality and reliability in merchandise conveyance, the HSF Group enables its customers to concentrate on their core competences of production and sales without any worries. For example, all vehicles are equipped with temperature recorders. The vehicles are cleaned and disinfected before and after each transport operation. There is a washing line for external washing of the vehicles and a washing hall for interior cleaning and disinfecting of the superstructures directly in Neuenkirchen-Vörden. All drivers and staff are coached in the latest hygiene directives and regulations once a year.

Sustainability and ecology

The HSF Group gained the Lean and Green Award 2010 on the basis of its CO₂ Emission Programme. Alongside the savings that have been realised in the meantime, the Group attaches great importance to a specific programme for further emission and cost reductions, with the Eurofresh logistic specialists targeting cooperation with their customers on this point too.

They aim to offer customers added value as regards environmental awareness, cost-manage-



The partition wall semi-trailers are cleaned and disinfected before and after each transport operation.

ment and sustainability.

The programme "Environmentally friendly logistics" supports leading companies in the field of environmentally sound merchandise logistics. The programme was initiated by Connekt, an independent network of industry and lawmakers in the Netherlands working on permanent improvements in mobility. Consignors, forwarders and municipal authorities are organised together in this network, pursuing the goal of reducing CO₂ emissions by at least 20% in 2012. At the same time they plan to improve profitability.

Lean and Green aims to stimulate firms to achieve growth on the premise of sustainability. Further information on this is available on the Internet at: www.duurzamelogistiek.nl.

The Lean & Green Award was presented on the basis of specifications fixing the specific CO₂ goals for 2012 to 2015 and stating critical performance indicators. If companies and/or local authorities demonstrably realise the Lean and Green goals, they qualify for the Lean and Green Label.

Using the "HSF CO₂ emissions programme", the Group offers its customers delivery plans intended to show where the advantages can be created in

the performance capability of transportation in order to save both CO₂ emissions and costs. In this way ecology and economics can join forces – for a better return for customers and a lower burden on the environment.

Summary

Eurofresh is more than satisfied with the warehouse revenues of the first six months. It has already been able to move 9,000 pallets. This means that stocks have already been moved three times.

The logistic experts in South Oldenburg also report new enquiries and new areas of business. For example, fish and dairy products are now also frozen, stored and conveyed.

The targeted 15 to 20% increase in sales in the transport sector has regrettably not yet been realised completely. This was due above all to the poor transport volume of pork products in the middle of summer this year.

However, it can be established that the investment has been more than worthwhile and the company is on the right track at the right time. While sales and hence transport of pork and beef products fluctuate strongly viewed over the whole year, this trend does not apply for the poultrymeat segment and frozen products. Consequently with the commissioning of the new cold store the company has been able to handle the slow summer months better.

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