

## GLOBAL OUTLOOK



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The reefer (refrigerated) freighting sector, of vital importance to the meat import and export industry, has traditionally 'enjoyed' more stable rates than that of its larger and more volatile 'sister' – the dry cargo container sector. But that might all be about to change.

"If the brave don't lead, the meek won't follow," is how one shipping expert described the recent decision by Maersk Line, the world's largest container shipping firm, to substantially ramp up reefer freight rates.

Maersk Line's CEO has said the hike represents a 30% increase in prices globally and argued that, over the last seven years, reefer rates had not been able to cover increases in inflation or bunker (fuel) costs. He added that between now and 2015, the industry would also need to invest \$3.5bn in new equipment.

The real indication of true intent might be his confirmation that Maersk would risk market share to make this happen, adding that this step was absolutely necessary.

Shippers, logistics companies and ocean carriers seem to agree that this action will be followed by other carriers on selected routes, as lines grappled with poor returns in the sector. One expert recently commented that reefer rates on some routes were now so low, they had fallen below those of 'dry boxes', which require significantly less maintenance and support.

However, there is also a good deal of agreement that any rate rises should be accompanied by a corresponding increase in services levels, which many feel have slid away over the last few years.

Whether all of the increases stick is another matter. Major shippers have confirmed that discussions had been held with Maersk reefer executives over recent weeks, with the final rate, negotiated likely to be lower than Maersk is looking for. But they also predicted smaller shippers would find it harder to achieve any sort of negotiated discount.

# Still time to enter the 2013 processing awards

There is still time to be in with a chance of winning a top title at the Meat & Poultry Processing Awards in Manchester next year. Entries are still open for all seven categories as the awards move into their fourth year.

The event, which takes place at the Hilton Manchester Deansgate Hotel on 21 March 2013, is organised by MTJ and seeks to recognise excellence across the meat and poultry processing sectors.

Ed Bedington, editor of *MTJ*, said: "There's still time for companies to get their entries into the awards, and it's a great opportunity to take a critical look at your business, evaluate your operations and be in with a chance of taking home a top prize."

The event gives companies the chance to enter across seven categories:

- Environmental Initiative of the Year
- Export Initiative of the Year
- Plant Manager of the Year
- Small Processing Business of the Year
- Processing Business of the Year
- Supply Chain Initiative of the Year
- Young Processor of the Year.

## MEAT & POULTRY PROCESSING AWARDS 2013

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The deadline for entries is 23 November, and the awards are being sponsored by Bizerba, Eblex, the

Meat Training Council and Reiser UK. The after-dinner casino is sponsored by Systems Integration.

Rob Stephens, managing director of Systems Integration, said: "Systems Integration is proud to sponsor the Meat & Poultry Processing Awards."

"Many of our management team have worked in the meat industry and the sector forms our core customer base.

"We are looking forward to catching up with guests and hope that they enjoy the casino."

The event is once again being supported by all the major industry bodies – the Association of Independent Meat Suppliers, the British Poultry Council, the British Meat Processors Association, the International Meat Trade Association, the Provision Trade Federation and the Scottish Association of Meat Wholesalers.

■ For more details on the awards, and entry forms, contact Rebecca George on 01293 610422, or email her on [Rebecca.George@wrmb.com](mailto:Rebecca.George@wrmb.com).

## Asda heads up turkey accolades

Asda swept the board at the recent British Turkey Awards and left with the title of Retailer of the Year for the third year running.

The retailer took three titles on the night, but judges singled it out for praise for its extensive range of everyday turkey portions, which catered for all kinds of consumers.

Asda was handed the Retailer of the Year trophy by ex-London Wasps rugby star Pete Scrivener, and Nicola Rye, chair of the British Turkey Federation's Publicity & Marketing Committee, in front of more than 240 guests and VIPs at The Savoy, London. Former Olympic rowing champion Sir Matthew Pinsent hosted the awards.

Winners of the 10 categories were announced from 79 entries, ranging from Coronation turkey breast chunks, a turkey wellington and chilli turkey burgers to 14 different whole roasted turkeys.

Rye said: "Figures show consumption of British turkey is in



growth. This is down to the excellent quality and the wide range of items produced, and the essential support of the retailers. These awards give recognition to all the hard work within the industry."

The evening also raised more than £14,000 for the children's medical charity Sparks, and Dravet Syndrome UK. The full list of winners was:

- Best Meal Solution: Asda Chilli Turkey Burgers
- Best Innovative Product: Morrisons Hand Prepared Turkey Wellington
- Best Catering Product: Lincs Turkeys Lincolnshire Free Range Thigh Roll
- Best Ready-to-eat Product: Bernard

Matthews Farms Coronation Turkey Breast Chunks

- Best Christmas Convenience Product: Jamie Oliver's 'My Tastiest Turkey Box'
- Best Christmas Traditional Product: Asda Basted Whole Turkey
- Best Christmas Premium Product: Jimmy's Farmers Range - Free Range Rustic Bronze Turkey
- British Turkey Blogger Recipe of the Year: Marie Rayner – The English Kitchen. [Blogspot.co.uk](http://Blogspot.co.uk) – Parmesan Crusted Turkey Steaks with a Tomato and Peppadew Relish
- British Turkey Student Chef of the Year: Starter course – Thai-style turkey kofta, turkey crackling, green papaya salad, honey yogurt & deep-fried tortellini by Antonia Morosi and Laura Hogger from Westminster Kingsway Catering College, London; main course – stuffed and rolled turkey breast served with a honey parsnip purée and a turkey quail scotch egg by Kathryn Bash, Colchester Institute, Essex
- Retailer of the Year: Asda.