

Scottish firm Campbells uses Ryder's transportation expertise. Below: ensuring correct refrigeration is a challenge



independent temperature record that allows us to measure the box temperature while transporting goods. This means we can ensure everything is chilled to the right temperature while on the move."

Ensuring correct refrigeration of meat during transit is a big challenge particularly as the product can be exposed to a number of different storage environments. Deviations in optimum temperature conditions can lead to spoilage and may also result in costly replacement transport and, more importantly, damage to a company's reputation, which in turn could have a negative impact on business levels.

As a result, temperature monitoring is essential and, fortunately, technology can help ensure product is maintained at the correct temperature and problems avoided. One such system from Silvertree Engineering, features a wireless monitoring and alarm device, which cuts out the need for manual checks in the supply chain. The company's IceSpy System5 carries out checks at one-minute, 10-minute and hourly intervals, and automatically records temperatures, humidity and door event readings from each vehicle refrigeration unit. As soon as

the vehicle returns to the depot, data is automatically downloaded to the IceSpy system. The company claims the installation of the system in Asda's chilled distribution depots provided data that enabled site managers to dramatically increase energy efficiency and maintain quality storage conditions.

Another way for companies in the meat trade to reduce both costs and workloads is to outsource their logistics.

Getting products from a warehouse, factory or processing facility to a customer's premises on a timely and cost-effective basis is a prerequisite to the success of any business running a transport and delivery operation. Vehicle breakdowns, unreliable drivers and ineffective unloading equipment will not be tolerated by customers for very long before it starts to have an adverse effect on the company's standing, reputation and, ultimately, its bottom line.

Ryder is one company seeing a growing trend in the meat sector. This logistical solutions provider has an ongoing programme whereby it conducts audits of the transport operations of a wide range of manufacturers, processors, wholesalers and retailers. It says that in

## GET THE RIGHT PARTNER

Given the immediate, shelf-life nature of the meat industry, the specific requirements with regard to shipping, importing and exporting are pretty simple – speed and reliability, writes Rob Shelley, CEO of Maritime Cargo Services.

Ensuring that necessary speed and reliability, however, is not so straightforward and is not something for the uninitiated. It's vital that meat importers and exporters work closely with the right experienced freight forwarding partner to ensure smooth running of their operations, as it's beset with potential pitfalls.

Firstly, of course, you want to avoid unnecessary demurrage, 'plug in' (utility charges for refrigerated container units) and quay rent. The need to get your containers off the quayside and into the local supply chain just as fast and efficiently is paramount if you are to remain cost-effective and, ultimately, competitive in what is a cut-throat industry that operates with extremely tight margins.

Of course, getting your load off the ship is just the first part of the equation – and you're not even out of the port. You will need a team of experts to manage the increasingly complex and stringent Customs, port health and CVED (Common Veterinary Entry Documentation) validation and communications to ensure your goods can be released for free circulation. All of these areas are highly involved in themselves, so ensure that your freight forwarding partner is well versed in such matters.

Aside from the legal and health issues you have to manage, you will also have to ensure that, from a physical perspective, you have the necessary resources to load and manage distribution. That means you need to be utilising systems that accurately handle the 'track and trace' and delivery element of the consignment. Your freight forwarding partner needs to have 'real time' knowledge of where your consignment is, even before it reaches the port, and exactly when it is due. That means that the expensive resource involved in unloading and handling goods is not waiting around for arrival and are in the right place at precisely the right time. And then resource and transportation needs to be ready to ensure timely and cost effective on-bound distribution in the 'local loop.'

Effective freight forwarders should be able to offer meat shippers online, 'real-time' management and control of shipments; something that has proved to be an enormous benefit to meat importers and exporters and something that is probably one of their most important considerations today.

For instance, we call our innovative online freight management and tracking system, MOATS. We struggled to find an 'off the shelf' tracking system that could cope with our customers' exacting demands, so we made the decision to invest the time and money in creating our own bespoke system, which is a genuine, 'one-stop-shop solution'.

MOATS was designed to encompass absolutely all of the customer's relevant shipping information. Our team inputs all the relevant data (including Bill of Lading and container numbers, vessel, port and cargo details, estimated time of shipping, ETA and delivery depots, dates and times, free-time agreements and so on) and carefully monitors changes on a daily basis. Any adjustments (such as ETA) are immediately filtered into a log book and instantly available online to the client. The result is a fast, flexible and multi-faceted online system supplying real-time information safely and securely whenever it is required.

Finally, this is the sort of functionality and insight that your freight forwarder should offer as part and parcel of their service levels and, of course, free of charge.

Working with the right partner can ensure all of these issues are being reliably and effectively handled, leaving you free to concentrate on successfully managing your business.