

BULK CARGOES MINED, SEALED AND DELIVERED

Containerised bulk handling has taken its time to reach new markets.

John Bensalhia reports

The containerised bulk handling (CBH) method of storing and loading bulk cargo has been given a fresh lease of life with more ports today embracing the system.

CBH allows operators access to a complete handling package, reducing the risk of contamination of or pollution from the cargo. Containerised bulk products can be transferred from inland depots or farms directly to the port with loading completed with the aid of a rotating spreader, which loads the contents of the container directly into the ship's hold.

This is by no means a brand new innovation: as Garry Pinder, managing director of Intermodal Solutions Group – Pit To Ship Solutions, explains 'tipplers' have been around for over 30 years and Thyssenkrupp built the first ones in South Africa more than 30 years ago.

But while tipplers have been in existence for more than 30 years, recently they have given ports a considerable boost in fast, efficient container loading. "Modern tipplers have been in service for over seven years now and have been working in ports at locations such as Australia, Chile, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, Argentina (for grain) and South Africa to name a few," says Mr Pinder.

One innovation has seen lids designed to be opened inside the ship's hold, providing a dust free solution when a misting system is used.

SLOW SPREAD

While the CBH method of bulk handling has recently seen a renaissance, the uptake by European ports has been relatively slow. Discussing modern containerised bulk handling, Joel Shirriff, vice president and global practice lead, Terminals and Transportation, Ausenco, points out that some ports are wary of trying out a new approach.

On the Ausenco website, Mr Shirriff wrote: "In my experience, I have found that some clients' apprehension about 'trying something new' is a result of focusing solely on the new equipment and an uncertainty in how to implement this concept for their application. When presented with the bigger picture – the development of an integrated logistics solution that is optimised for geography, existing infrastructure, and specific commodity – they are more open to this approach."

Rīgas universālais termināls, for example, has found this method to be a hugely successful one for handling wood pellets on large dry bulk ships.

Atis Šulte, RUT trade and business development director, says that the main benefit of introducing this system is that of significant optimisation of terminal expenses and increase in performance. "Now, we can perform dry bulk handling operations involving a significantly smaller number of machinery and human resources. Savings on resources amount to almost 50%."

"By introducing containerised cargo handling, we have become more competitive and can better adjust to customer requirements," he continues. "Following the general tendency



in cargo carriage, dry bulk ships handled at our terminal are becoming even larger. By means of the new technology, we are able to ensure fast and effective loading of large ships. By applying the new technology, we are able to load dry bulk and containers at the same pier, using one portal-frame lift. It allows us to quickly organise our work in the terminal and quickly handle any type of ship."

■ Rīgas universālais termināls employs containerised bulk handling

SOUTH AFRICA OPTIONS

Transnet Port Terminals' decision to introduce the CBH system using the RAM Revolver has also paid dividends at South Africa's Port Elizabeth Container Terminal, which was the first of its kind in the country to use ship-to-shore cranes with RAM Revolver spreaders to load bulk ore carrying vessels.



■ Modern tipplers are used in ports in mineral-rich countries