



Clugston Distribution

specialised logistics in the milling and grain sector

by David Heath, Head of Logistics, Clugston Distribution

It is well documented that millers and grain producers are under more pressure than ever to keep costs down and shorten delivery times for their customers.

The demands of powerful retailers and increasing global competition leave little margin for error, so choosing an efficient logistics service that can manage the added pressure is a key factor in running a successful operation.

As food supply chains grow longer, the complexity and unique pressures of food distribution requires specialist knowledge from logistics partners who possess a commitment to shorten delivery times and reduce costs.

Delivering under pressure

Everyday, Clugston Distribution delivers bulk ingredients to some of the country's best-known biscuit, cracker, cereal and cake and manufacturers alongside its deliveries of bread flour to the UK bakery industry, right across the UK.

Equipped with one of the largest specialised bulk powder haulage fleets in the UK, the company operates a dedicated service of 'Food Products Only' tankers, in line with the current hygiene and quality standards of the European food industry.

The use of specialist dry bulk tankers to transport loose materials such as flour, not only ensures excellent hygiene by avoiding the risk of contaminants, but the innovative new vehicle design also vastly reduces product loss through wastage.

State-of-the-art non-tipping tankers are now also available. These vehicles discharge air from both the tractor and customers' air connections, this is then filtrated and directed through a

controllable air-operated valve system to prevent flour holding up inside the tank and also to aid cleaning. The non-tipping tanker also boasts the advantage of being much safer to operate at sites where the discharge points that have a camber.

In addition, new technologies such as Vendor Management Inventory (VMI) systems, that are able to remotely monitor customers' bulk food sites, then coordinate deliveries using real time stock levels and tank usage information, alongside vehicle location data from satellite tracking systems provide an improved service to food manufacturers and suppliers; thus helping them to run an efficient service whilst keeping stocks low.

This can be an invaluable service for suppliers of ingredients where supply and demand fluctuates with a clear seasonal influence. Millers, for instance, find that demand drops over the summer months then, come the winter when comforting foods, like baked puddings return to favour, demand increases.

Dedicated food tankers

Investment in a vast array of new technology, along with the possession of a specialist fleet of dry bulk tankers dedicated to the food industry, Clugston Distribution Services has grown into one of the largest specialised bulk powder haulage fleets in the UK; providing their clients with a competitive edge.

In 2014 Clugston Distribution invested one million (UK) pounds in new dry bulk tractors and tankers to meet the requirements of the food industry. These form part of the company's 'food products only' fleet that ensures excellent hygiene and avoids the risk of contaminants.

Three further new replacement bulk flour tipping silo tankers have also been ordered from Feldbinder in 2016. The 60 cubic metre capacity vehicles have been purchased to replace three existing tankers on Clugston Distribution's expanded shared user flour and bulk dried food operations.

Clugston's inventory also includes an urban artic flour tanker that is capable of carrying a 20 tonne payload to customers with restricted access, which also forms part of the food grade fleet, along with two specialist food grade silo evacuation tanks that provide uplift and transfer services.

Working together

Clugston has a dedicated team of logistics professionals on board who work closely with C. Marston & Sons Ltd and has developed a level of understanding that can only be gained through a close working relationship over time, and according to James Marston, his company has "developed a strong working relationship with Clugston, their sector knowledge and ability to react to our customers constantly changing requirements has made them stand out against the competition."

"Clugston has grown with our business, its expertise in bulk flour haulage has ensured we have always been guaranteed excellent service from the company." Mr Marston also suggested that since his company outsourced their logistics to Clugston, they have enjoyed, "a host of benefits throughout the company," adding that, "One advantage is we are now able to dedicate more of our time and finances into offering a quality product for all our customers."

"We would definitely recommend Clugston, not only is the team very pro-reactive, it understands our business needs and

CASE STUDY - C. Marston & Sons Ltd

One of the millers that Clugston is currently working with is C. Marston & Sons Ltd. Marston's are an established family run flour milling and cereal processing company that has been doing business from its processing factory in Icklingham, Suffolk for over a century.

According to James Marston, operations manager at C. Marston & Sons Ltd., "The company operates 24 hours a day 365 days a year, providing a range of biscuit and bread making flours to a wide range of customers across the UK and Northern Europe." Mr Marston also added that, "Recently, our business has experienced rapid growth as we develop extensive national and international flour supply commitments to a wide variety of customers, due to this we needed to out source our bulk flour haulage operation to a professional operator."

"We were already aware of Clugston's specialisms in the food industry and how they offer a professional service in the bulk flour delivery market which meets the requirements of our customers," explained Mr Marston.

continues to offer us a quality service," added Mr Marston.

Getting it right

Logistics companies, equipped with the right technology and expertise, are able to manage the demanding process of ensuring that, no matter what the variations in demand, client's silos remain at an agreed level at all times; with the appropriate flours picked up and delivered to bakeries as and when required.

First class logistics is the essential link in the food supply chain if it offers quality, flexibility and integrity. Make sure that you choose a company that delivers on all three. ☺

www.clugston.co.uk/logistics