



News



Mastering the Cold at IM Logistics

IM Logistics' new cold store facility is in a prime position just a few minutes from Heathrow's Terminal 5, so it comes as no surprise that the company is paying a premium price for every square foot of its premises. Space optimisation was therefore high on the agenda in the planning stages, and the combination of push back racking and two Aisle-Masters has enabled the company to achieve maximum storage density in the warehouse.

IM Logistics was set up on the basis of the fact that there is a distinct lack of frozen food storage facilities in the area. "The nearest are either in Reading or Hemel Hempstead," says Rajen Rawal, Director "and following our successful working partnership with Montana Bakery at this very convenient location we realised that we could branch out to fulfil the growing demand for this service."

Darren Carson of Linde South East advised IM Logistics on the materials handling aspects of its operation, where he was tasked with finding forklifts that were not only able to cope with the demanding conditions of operating in temperatures of -25 °C but which could also ensure the best possible pallet density in the 1,000m² cold store. Rajen had already looked at articulated trucks and after an evaluation of brands on the market both parties agreed that the Aisle-Master would best suit his requirements.

The Aisle-Master's proven track record of reliability fitted with IM Logistics' philosophy of looking at overall long term benefits rather than just the initial purchase price: "We visited other sites which are using Aisle-Masters, including a cold store, and were impressed with the fact that they are still going strong after years of operation. As we plan on doubling the size of our facility in the next two years we want equipment in place that offers longevity and the ability to cope with whatever workload we throw at it."

"We are very pleased with how things have worked out," says Rajen. "The costs incurred per ft² in cold stores make space saving absolutely crucial, and with a top racking height of 8.5m we can accommodate just over 1,000 pallet spaces. We are moving a total of 800 pallets a week in and out at the moment and thanks to the excellent advice from Linde and the quality of the trucks we are well placed to move up a gear in the next few months when we take delivery of our own fleet of HGV's and take on more customers."

The trucks are on a five year contract hire agreement with Linde which includes service and maintenance. Darren Carson: "When we supply specialist equipment it is crucial that we fulfill customer requirements but it is also of paramount importance that we have the right truck from a dealer's point of view. We have assessed Aisle-Master as the best articulated brand when it comes to quality, maintenance and dependability. The Linde service department is very appreciative of the five year warranty, and was also full of praise for the free training carried out for our team of engineers by Aisle-Master's Mark Buffham at the Camberley depot."



Following six years of tried and tested operation in cold stores across the world Aisle-Master has developed the cold store cab to maximise labour efficiency in this harsh environment. Drivers would need to have regular breaks every twenty minutes or so were it not for the benefits of the fully enclosed heated cab, which keeps them warm throughout the whole of their shift time. Other features include heated cab windows, allocated areas within the cab for the use of a bar code scanner and low energy LED work lights as standard. Low temperatures can have an adverse effect on battery performance but Aisle-Master's designers have counteracted this by fitting a powerful 930 amp battery which easily copes with IM's 5am to 5pm shifts. Battery changeover using a pallet trucks at the rear of the vehicle is quick and easy.

Fresh from the freezer

The new Aisle-Master cold store truck



Aisle-Masters can work in aisles of just 1.75m, have capacities of up to 2.5 tonnes, lift heights of up to 12.5 metres, with a choice of AC electric or LPG power. A parts warranty of 5 years or 5,000 hours now offers even more peace of mind for users and underlines the extreme reliability of the range.