Busy carrier
Tanktransport Thys uses state-of-art fleet to meet food demand across northern Europe

By Jean-Marc Bernard

Since 1974, if you’ve eaten a potato chip in Belgium, spread margarine on a piece of bread in The Netherlands, or put mayonnaise on a turkey sandwich in Germany, there’s a good chance that either the finished product or one of its ingredients was transported at some point in the production chain by a Tanktransport Thys NV tractor-trailer rig.

Tanktransport Thys was founded in Antwerp, Belgium, 40 years ago by Walter Thys. Acquired by his son Frank Thys in 1997, the company has grown to become one of the leading transporters of liquid food products in the Western European countries of Belgium, The Netherlands, Luxembourg, Germany, Denmark, and Switzerland.

By focusing on the core values of "quality, punctuality, and safety,” Tanktransport Thys has built a customer base that consists of some of the leading European food manufacturers, for whom Thys transports liquid food products such as vegetable oils and fats, glycerines, brewer’s yeast, fruit juice aromas, demineralized water, and wines.

Tanktransport Thys and Cleaning Thys NV—are ISO 22000:2005 certified, GMP (Good Manufacturing Practices) certified, kosher approved, and the fleet is a registered carrier of Class 3 animal waste.

Green fleet

One reason customers choose Tanktransport Thys is because they see it as an environmentally responsible tank truck carrier, according to Sven Beesaert, fleet manager for Tanktransport Thys. To that end, the carrier earned the Lean and Green award in Europe in 2013 for its strategy to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 20% over five years.

Elements of the Lean and Green effort include Eco driving training for drivers, avoiding empty miles through the use of jumbo tank trailers, increased payload through tare weight reductions in tank trailers. On the tractor side, the carrier is now buying Euro 6 trucks and is specifying them for optimized rolling resistance with automatic tire inflation systems and lower rolling resistance tires from Michelin. The fleet maintenance program now requires more frequent alignment checks of vehicles.

During 2014 and 2015, the company is participating in a project called “Powering Logistics 2020” that will give the company an opportunity to research and test alternative fuels for heavy-duty transport in the future. The project is supported by the Flanders Institute for Logistics, Flemish government, and the Agency for innovation by Science and Technology.

Facilitating the delivery of both raw materials and finished end products for Tanktransport Thys is a fleet of late-model tractors and road tankers.

“Our fleet currently has 54 tractor units and 80 tankers,” says Sven Beesaert, Fleet Manager for Tanktransport Thys. “Our fleet of stainless-steel road tankers is comprised of single-compartment tankers, several three-compartment trailers, and 20 jumbo road tankers that can carry around 60,000 liters (15,850 gallons).”

However, making a delivery is not as easy as loading the tanker and hitting the road. In Europe, there are a multitude of regulations that govern the trucking industry. One of the most critical is the European Commission legislation known as "Euro X" that regulates the amount of diesel exhaust a truck can emit, as well as its overall weight. In January 2014, the latest legislation—Euro 6, which was introduced in 2007—went into full effect and mandated that all new trucks and buses must be equipped with a Euro 6-certified engine.

Tanktransport Thys has met the edicts of the Euro 6 legislation by purchasing a number of new Volvo trucks that will replace old Scania models that it had been using. Currently, half of the tractor fleet is meeting Euro 6 requirements, and the total will climb to 70% in 2015.

The new Volvo FH 460 cabover tractors are specified with Transics touch-screen on-board computers. Safety systems include an alcohol testing device that drivers must put in their mouths to ensure they do not drink alcohol. The new trucks also have automatic tire inflation systems and lower rolling resistance tires from Michelin.

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Tanktransport Thys... commercial manager for Humblet Hydraulics, Kontich, Belgium. “The vane compressors require a pressure-line filter because there is the possibility that particles of the vanes will break off and get into the tank, which is not allowed when hauling products for the food industry.”

Additional concerns for Tanktransport Thys were the weight of the vane compressors and pressure-line filters, the cost of the pressure-line filter, which could be as high as €1,000 ($1,360), and the noise level of the vane compressors, which could make early-morning or late-night deliveries problematic.

“In our industry, the weight of the truck is really important so we can get as much as possible in payload into the tanker,” Beeusaert says. “Because of that, we had begun reducing the fuel capacity of the trucks to gain some weight. The sterile pressure-line filter is quite expensive, and adds five to 10 kilograms (11 to 22 pounds) of weight. The noise of the compressors is also important because we have to unload at night or early in the morning, and if we get noise complaints from neighboring companies they can forbid us from unloading at certain times, which is an operational disadvantage.” (Continued on page 30)

Keeping the fleet clean and hygienic

As one of the leading transporters of liquid food products in Western Europe, Tanktransport Thys knows how important it is to keep the foodgrade tank trailers as hygienic as possible.

That’s why the company launched Cleaning Thys NV, a subsidiary based in Merksem, Belgium, that uses state-of-the-art technology to thoroughly clean tankers that handle food products.

The Cleaning Thys facility is a two-bay sanitary tank wash operation that is computer controlled so that it fully conforms to the latest Hazardous Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) standards for cleanliness. The HACCP regulation has been designed to be a systematic preventive approach to food safety from a biological, chemical and physical hazards standpoint during the production process.

To best meet the tenets of HACCP regulation, Cleaning Thys features an automatic cleaning system that has been designed to also clean the pressure line and delivery pipes, while it is also able to disinfect and seal the tankers. It can perform kosher cleaning, if necessary, through the use of a steamer to clean and dry the road tankers.

When determining which pumps to use at the facility, Cleaning Thys turned to Gröninger Cleaning Systems, Schiedam, The Netherlands. Gröninger is a specialist in fabricating high-pressure cleaning systems and equipment and, as such, was quick to recommend air-operated double-diaphragm (AODD) pumps from Wilden, Grand Terrace CA, a member of Dover Corporation’s Pump Solutions Group (PSG).

Specifically, Cleaning Thys uses four aluminum Wilden Advanced Series A.025 (6.4 mm/0.25”) AODD Pumps for chemical-dosing applications and a PVDF A.025 pump for general fluid-transfer applications.
Mouvex, Auvergne, France, which was founded in 1906, is a leading manufacturer of positive displacement pumps and compressors for the transfer of liquids or dry-bulk products. In 2008, Mouvex became a founding member of the Dover Corporation’s Pump Solutions Group (PSG), Oakbrook Terrace IL. Specific to the Tanktransport Thys fleet, De Herdt, who joined Humblet Hydraulics in 2010, recommended the Mouvex B200 Series Flow Control Screw Compressor.

“I knew the opportunity was there for them to use the B200 and in 2011 they changed to the B200 compressors,” says De Herdt. “The first order was for 14 B200s that were installed on their Scania trucks. In 2013, we got a new order for 35 B200s for their new Volvos. We have installed 30 of them on the Volvos, with five more scheduled for installation early next year.”

The B200 screw compressors meet the needs of Tanktransport Thys because they feature a robust, rugged design and have been enhanced with special protectants on the screws and body that allows them to be used with a broader range of food products. Because their flow is optimized, they can deliver operational efficiencies that vane compressors are incapable of providing. In addition, most exterior components are constructed of stainless steel, including the flanges and hose.

The result is a screw compressor that requires no prop shaft, drive shaft or mounting bracket, while being compatible with standard power takeoffs (PTO). Operationally, the B200s deliver increased safety due to no rotating shafts, faster unloading times, higher flow rates, and reduced maintenance.

For Tanktransport Thys, the B200 screw compressors check all of the right boxes: lower weight, filter-less operation, and reduced noise. “We were quickly convinced of the benefits of the B200 and started investing in them,” Beusaert says. “They are very light in comparison to the competition, with a benefit of 50 to 60 kilograms (110 to 130 pounds). That’s a big plus because finding 50 kilograms on a truck is not easy. With the B200s, there is no wear on the screws, so we don’t have any particles in the product, and we don’t need an additional sterile filter, which is quite expensive, and we also don’t have to worry about the weight of the filter or maintaining them, either. Also, the noise level is a lot less than the vane compressors.”

Tanktransport Thys has been so impressed with the performance of the B200 screw compressors that it will recommend that a B200 be installed on trucks that are owned by any contractors it uses.

Tank trailers
Stainless steel, tri-axle tank trailers are supplied by Burg-Hobur and Van Hoel NV. Standard equipment on the insulated tank trailers includes in-transit heat, remote temperature monitoring, and a sealable discharge valve box at the rear.

In addition to the 60,000-liter (15,850-gallon) units, the fleet operates three compartment trailers with a 36,000-liter (9,500-gallon) capacity, and single-compartment trailers that hold 35,000 liters (9,246 gallons).

The equipment helps ensure that Tanktransport Thys continues to maintain its well-established reputation for meeting the on-time needs of its customers. In addition, the company meets those customer expectations with a safe, environmentally friendly fleet.

Jean-Marc Bernard is a Regional Manager in Southern Europe for Energy & Transport for Mouvex and Pump Solutions Group (PSG). He can be reached at +31 1 55 39 0740 or Jean-Marc.Bernard@psgdover.com. Headquartered in Auxerre, France, Mouvex is a leading manufacturer of positive displacement pumps and compressors for the transfer of liquids in many applications worldwide, and is a member of Dover Corporation’s Pump Solutions Group (PSG), Oakbrook Terrace IL. PSG is comprised of several leading pump brands, including Abaque, Almatec, Blackmer, Ebsray, Finder, Griswold, Maag, Mouvex, Neptune, Quattroflow, and Wilden.