



The port of Zeebrugge is a project partner in the Interreg IV B North Sea Region project 'Food Port'. With a complete repertory of specialized handling and storage facilities the port is presenting itself as a true 'food hub'.

KOEN HEINEN

Zeebrugge is

The project 'Food Port' aims to develop practical solutions that will benefit the efficiency and sustainability of the logistics chains of various food clusters in the North Sea Region. The Provinciale Ontwikkelingsmaatschappij (POM) West-Vlaanderen (Provincial Development Agency West Flanders), the lead partner in this project, is now charting the flows of food products in the North Sea Region.

As a project partner, Zeebrugge boasts considerable experience in handling and storing (fresh) food products. The port has about 900,000 m³ of temperature controlled storage, of which 345,000

m³ of freezers, 270,000 m³ of refrigerated storage and 287,000 m³ of storage capacity at positive temperatures. Together, the various port terminals, CHZ, APMT and ZIP, have 1,200 reefer plugs at their disposal.

One of the specialized facilities is Flanders Cold Centre, which handles amongst other things fruit juices, vegetables, meat and fish. This center also provides cross docking of refrigerated and deep-frozen products. It has 132,000 m³ of temperature controlled storage at its disposal and about the same volume of freezer storage. 20,000 m³ are available for non-temperature controlled storage.



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The port of Zeebrugge is growing into a hub for (fresh) food products.

has 32 million liters of tank storage at its disposal, spread over 16 tanks of 2 million liters each, two freezer rooms with a total capacity of 40,000 m³ and three refrigerated rooms with a capacity of 60,000 m³.

The company Zeebrugge Food Logistics is specialized in transshipment of refrigerated and deep-frozen food. It has freezer storage capacity at -22°C for 12,000 pallets in mobile shelves on a 6,000 m² surface. 24,000 m³ are available for refrigerated storage and storage at positive temperatures. Their activities include order picking, value added logistics, stripping and stuffing containers, cross docking, etc.

As one of Europe's main fishing harbors, Zeebrugge has the 'European Fish Centre' in the inner harbor, i.e. an extensive facilities complex for supply, trade and processing of fresh fish. Space is provided for the construction of a new auction market with sufficient loading docks, reception refrigerators, refrigerated storage, etc.

The Flemish fish auction (both Zeebrugge and Ostend) brings 17 million tons of fish to the hammer annually. With a 10,000 m² surface, the Zeebrugge fish auc-

7,650 m³ and non-food up to 1,500 m³. In Belgium, Marine Harvest processes 20,000 tons of fish annually. Worldwide, this number runs up to 425,000 tons. Per year, about 150 containers are transported through the port of Zeebrugge.

Other fish wholesale traders include Zeevisgroothandel André, Pittman Seafood and Vichiunai Europe. Furthermore, the port has a number of fish smokehouses.

To anticipate the handling of fresh products, the port's various container terminals have a total amount of 1,200 plugs for reefer containers. 250 of these are to be found at CHZ, 780 at APMT and the remaining 170 at ZIP. Additionally, the Zeebrugge Breakbulk Terminal has 10,675 m² of refrigerated warehouses, a sugar warehouse and an unloading facility. The terminal handles about 100,000 tons of potatoes annually.

Apart from fresh fruit, vegetables and fish, the port of Zeebrugge also stores large quantities of green coffee for distribution. Seabridge's installations have a storage capacity of 450,000 coffee bags, which equals 40% of the annual consumption in Belgium. The company applies new tech-

Unfolding as a 'food' hub

In the port, Belgian New Fruit Wharf has 152,300 m³ of refrigerated storage space and 254,200 m³ for storage at positive temperatures. It mainly handles exotic fruit, such as kiwis, bananas, pineapples and lychees, but potatoes and fresh vegetables as well. Last year alone, some 120,000 tons of kiwis have been handled. Consequently, the installations comprise a kiwi packing station of New Zealand's Zespri.

In the port, fruit juice producer Tropicana has a packing plant for fresh juices. There, 232 million liters of fruit juice are handled annually, of which circa 90% is exported to the UK. The facility

has 1,000 m² of storage at a temperature of 0°C and 5,000 m² at 4°C. 4,000 m² are available for the development of food processing or logistics. In addition, 15,000 m² for fish processing are being leased to various enterprises.

The port also boasts numerous fish wholesale traders, including Marine Harvest, the world's largest seafood company with activities including processing and packaging of fresh and deep-frozen fish and smoked and breaded products, package labeling, logistics and distribution. The total in-house freezer capacity amounts to 31,800 m³ or 7,355 pallets. The refrigerated storage adds up to

nologies for sorting, drying, mixing and packaging coffee beans. The installations can be enhanced with the addition of another 10 ha.

Finally, the port comprises a number of companies specialized in storing plant-based agricultural commodities for both human consumption and animal feeding, such as oats and oleaginous seeds (Borlix), molasses and vegetable oils (Tate & Lyle).

A number of port companies are available for transshipment of these goods, such as Seaport Shipping and Trading (mainly agricultural bulk), Minne Port Services (cereals, fodder and rice) and a host of transport companies.