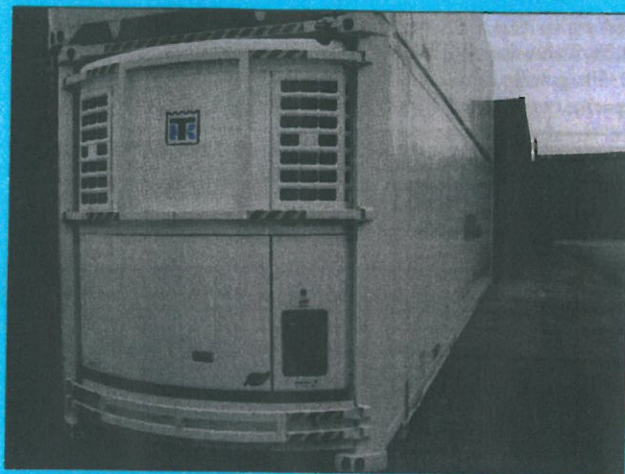


Unit45 launches self-sufficient rail reefer



Rotterdam-based Unit45 BV has introduced a new diesel-electric, 45ft high cube, palletwide reefer container developed specifically with rail use in mind.

"Many road haulage companies [in Europe] are looking to use rail for part of the logistics chain," said Jan Koolen, managing director of Unit45. "This isn't possible with a conventional electric reefer because locomotives do not normally supply on-board power to the wagons they are hauling. As a result, we have introduced a reefer that has its own, in-built power supply."

Initial units, fitted with Carrier (Vector or Magic) and Thermo King (SL200 or SL400) machinery, have been built in China and early customers include ECS in the Netherlands and Spanish operator JSV. A number of units are also being added to Unit45's rental fleet. The company expects to build over 100 diesel-electric units this year.

With an internal length of 13.275m, the new design can accommodate 33 1.2m x 0.8m europallets on the floor - the same as a 13.6m trailer - or 66 lightly loaded pallets stacked one above the other using a specially-developed double-stack system with its own loading ramp.

Unit45's diesel-electric reefer can operate for up to 5 days at -25degC

The diesel-electric reefers are around 500kg-600kg heavier than a standard all-electric design and cost around US\$1,500 more to buy. In addition, at US\$12,000-14,600, the more complex cooling unit is more expensive than an all-electric machine. Interestingly, however, a chassis and diesel-electric reefer should still work out less expensive than a 13.6m refrigerated road trailer with which it is designed to compete, Koolen said.

With the improvement in the reliability of diesel generators, maintenance costs for the new units should not vary greatly from those of conventional electric equipment, he added.

"Not only can the new intermodal reefers compete with dedicated road tractor/trailer sets in terms of capacity, they also hold 200 litres of diesel fuel, which allows them to operate continuously at temperatures down to -25degC for up to five days and thereby compete on a like-for-like basis." This makes the reefer unit ideal for inland transportation via rail and inland waterways, where there is no electricity available," Koolen said. □



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