The Cold Facts

Winter 2004

Beef...It's What's for Dinner!

It's been years since anyone even considered building a grassroots beef slaughter and processing facility, but one is going up right now, in Mississippi. RSC is delighted to report that the RSC team is working hard right now to get this plant up and operating. Curt Arden has taken up residence in Mississippi to project manage the job and Wes Cox is the capable superintendent who is also on site. We'll keep you updated as the project progresses.

Ugh, Ozone Depletion: Did You Know...?

The ozone depletion problem with which we've all become familiar is affecting our industry in a way many had not anticipated. The fluids used in newer cars and our homes have changed. They may also have changed in your plant, unless you are lucky enough to use ammonia. But there is another application for some of these fluids that we generally don't think of—they're used heavily in the manufacture of insulated panels. These or chemicals like them are required as a blowing agent or foam expander.

Insulated panels are formed from two sheets of metal; each piece makes up a side, with expanded foam in between. As both pieces of sheet metal move through the continuous manufacturing line, the foam is injected into the cavity formed by the sheets. The blowing agent is the part of the formula that makes the foam expand—it puts all those little holes in the foam. It's the combination of these holes and the foam itself that create the outstanding insulating quality of modern insulated panels. The blowing agent typically used by insulated panel manufacturers was HCFC 141b.

As of January 1, 2003, the federal government, via the EPA, has mandated that production of HCFC 141b be halted. As soon as this was announced, insulated panel manufacturers rushed to find a replacement chemical. Among the obvious choices were hydrocarbons like pentane or HCFC 22. Since the pentane-based products seemed to do an adequate job and were cheap and readily available by comparison, some manufacturers elected this option.

What we have learned, however, is that hydrocarbons or pentane-based products don't provide as high an insulating value as HCFC 141b or HCFC 22; the difference is approximately 15%. This means that the cost to refrigerate your facility could increase if you use these products.

For more information on this issue, please contact your RSC representative. They are prepared to help you find the most economical, long-term solution for your plant's needs.

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Cold Storage Door Replacement Or Repair

Industrial quality cold storage doors can have a life expectancy of 10-20 years or more if properly maintained. One concern is always the moving parts. Wear of these components will affect the life expectancy and performance of your doors. These parts are typically budgeted as part of the building's maintenance, or should be. The cost of poor maintenance results in a loss in the doors' useful life as well as an increase in energy use. When the doors don't function properly there's a need for additional refrigeration. Frequently, these costs go unnoticed.

There is also the question: "Are your current doors best suited for your application?" The wrong door may hinder your productivity. So, anytime you change product flow or your operation, a review of the door choice is in order. For example, the wrong door may seriously impede traffic flow or material handling, negatively affecting your bottom line.

In addition to watching the mechanical drive and other moving parts, a thorough inspection of the gaskets, seals and closing mechanism should be done on a regular basis.

In freezer applications, inoperable heaters or broken seals or gaskets, can cause frost or ice build-up, a key problem leading to accidents. Also, these failures can cause a deterioration of the thermal integrity of the door and frame. Without attention, frost can build up around the header of the door, inhibiting the operation of the chain, belt or hydraulic drives.

In a cooler application, broken seals or gaskets can result in moisture build-up on the floors, resulting in the possibility of accident or injury. It may also create an issue of mildew and similar problems.

There are numerous different door configurations, each unique and each designed to meet a particular need. The area, product, trucks, space layout and work flow must always be considered when making a final choice. The selection process is never easy because industrial cold storage doors come in many styles. Power-operated doors also have many options, such as floor loops, motion detectors, or pull cords combined with a time delay closure. Familiar doors styles used in our industry are bi-parting, sliding, hinged, fast fold, vertical lift and bi-folding. As a matter of information, a manufacturer of typical new, quality doors will provide a warranty of five years on the door leaves or panels, and 2-7 years on other parts.

With energy and operating costs an ongoing concern for processing plants and cold storage warehouses, the right door in a location will save you money.

RSC has been installing, repairing and servicing these heavy duty doors for more than 40 years. Please take a look around your facility. If you notice damage to a door, or the doorframe, chances are you're losing performance and reducing the door's life. RSC can help. Please contact your RSC representative.

—by Mike Donnelly

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