



COOLCHAINASSOCIATION

## World cut flower congress (Amsterdam 5-7 Sept)

The event was predominately focused on business issues and solutions of the movement of cut flowers from across the world. Over the 2 day conference a number of speakers and panelists were invited to deliver their presentations with an interactive experience.

The largest retailer in the UK (Tesco) was invited to the congress to deliver their “managing the quality and sourcing of cut flowers” presentation. This was delivered by Tesco technical manager - David May (Hons).

David explained that up to 30% of their flowers were received in poor condition due to negligence in the cool chain. David’s presentation was informative and very indicative about the perception retailers perceive the suppliers handle “cool chain” products in the food industry.

I met with David at the conference and proposed I deliver a presentation about the CCA’s objectives in the perishable and temperature sensitive industry at his corporate offices. I felt this was necessary after the Director of logistics for Air France/KLM delivered a damning verdict of the problems with maintaining the cool chain process through Cargo. Regrettably, the speaker had no answers to the problem and would only emphasize that it is somebody else’s problem! You could sense the dissatisfaction within the audience that Airlines were not prepared or focused on how to resolve the unbroken cool chain process. I intercepted at this point and explained that our Airline (bmi) was focusing on the cool chain process through our involvement with the CCA (cool chain association) as opposed to other carriers who have this negative attitude.

### Technology

Although technology will play a big part on how the industry must change, it will also focus the Airline industry on the challenges we face with our suppliers in the future. With “radio frequency identification (RFID) tags” now becoming an every day part of our lives, they will soon appear in our industry.

The message was reinforced by various suppliers at the congress on how to help perishable producers, and their trading partners, gain insight into how the quality of a perishable has been maintained throughout the cool chain. They explained how tags will give retailers information, via the tag, about how their perishables will confirm if the product has remained in a certain temperature throughout its journey. The tags will also inform the shelf life data including high and low temperature thresholds.

It was felt that retailers would force the industry to change as they will offset their losses by investing in the tags and challenging all parties across the cool chain process to invest in RFID portals or handheld readers as perishables pass through a warehouse.

Tampa Cargo was also present at the congress and spoke a few words about their involvement with the CCA and how they intend to be the first carrier to be certified.

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