

Cold Storage Construction Heats Up Amid Pandemic

Whether it is COVID-19 vaccines or fresh and frozen foods on their way to restaurants, grocery stores or direct to consumers, there is a growing volume of items that need to be kept at a cool or freezing temperature. Before the pandemic, demand for cold storage facilities, driven by consumer habits that have seen a shift from shopping in brick-and-mortar stores to ordering online for home delivery, was on the rise in the USA. The pandemic simply accelerated that trend.

And it's not just new demand that is driving the cold storage construction market. A September 2020 report from real estate services and investment management firm JLL estimated that more than 78% of the cold storage building supply at that time was built before 2000. The outdated designs used in many of those facilities do not have the space necessary for modern logistics and racking and are not as energy efficient as their newer counterparts so customers are eyeing replacement facilities.

Among newer projects, the type of facility is changing somewhat. In addition to large regional facilities, owners and developers are building micro-fulfillment centers, said Matt Hirsch, president of Primus Builders. While these smaller structures further reduce the distance between the product and the end customer, they aren't replacing regional ones.

Part of the latest demand is space for COVID-19 vaccine, which has different requirements depending on the manufacturer. The Moderna vaccine arrives frozen between -13 degrees and 5 degrees F and must be kept at that temperature range until the expiration date. Once thawed, it can be kept for 30 days at between 36 and 46 degrees.

The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, however, arrives frozen at a

temperature range of between -112 and -76 degrees and, if it is to remain frozen, must be stored in a facility able to maintain that range or remain for a limited time in the special shipping container. Before mixing, the vaccine can be kept for up to five days at between 36 and 46 degrees. Once mixed, the vaccine must be used within six hours, all the while kept at temperatures between 35 and 77 degrees.

Pfizer announced that it had submitted new data to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration showing that the vaccine could also be stored safely for up to two weeks at temperatures between -13 degrees and 5 degrees. Pfizer has proposed this information be included in an update to its vaccine's prescribing information.

Contractors in the sector are finding that there is plenty of demand. According to a report from commercial real estate and investment services firm CBRE, the market can support 100 million square feet of new construction through 2024. To that end, there have been several new cold storage projects announced in recent months. CBRE has announced the development of a 700,000-square-foot, climate-controlled warehouse to service the sixth busiest cargo airport in the world, Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport in Anchorage, Alaska, USA. When complete, the building will include cold and warm storage space, quick cargo, general warehouse space, logistics services and auxiliary office space. Despite the many projects in development, cold storage contractors are facing a range of challenges getting projects to the finish line. They include increased competition, labor shortage, shorter schedules, and delivery delays. Despite new challenges, the situation that most cold storage construction companies find themselves in is a good one.

(Source: constructiondive.com)

Italy launches Mega Food Park and Food Processing Unit in India

On April 17, Italy launched its first-ever mega food park and food processing unit in India. The pilot project 'The Mega Food Park' was launched virtually with the signing of a Letter of Intent (LOI). The virtual launch was attended by the Ambassador of India to Italy, Neena Malhotra and the Ambassador of Italy to India, Vincenzo de Luca. The LOI is between Fanidhar Mega Food Park, Gujarat and Italian Trade Agency, Mumbai on the exchange of advanced technologies, expertise and education programme in the Food Processing Sector of India.

The Mega Food Park project is the first Indian-Italian food park project as an initiative in the food-processing field. As stated by the countries at the Summit between two countries last year in November, the food processing unit is a pillar of the partnership between Italy and India. It intends to promote agricultural and industrial growth of the two countries, and focus on the research and development of new and enhanced technologies in these very sectors.

As per a statement by the Italian government, the project offers ground to Italy to explore opportunities in the Indian market. It is promoted by the Italian Embassy in New Delhi and ICE Office in Mumbai in India. It involves FederUnacoma (Italian Agricultural Machinery Federation of Manufacturers) and Emilia Romagna Region, SACE, ANIMA (Italian Association representing companies in the metalworking sector).

Since 2008, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries has been executing the Mega Food Park Scheme (MFPS) to create opportunities in the agriculture sector and modern infrastructure for the food processing industries. The scheme is now under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY). It aims at creating a value chain from the farms to the markets. The scheme ensures an increase in farmers' income, creation of employment opportunities in the rural sector, reduction in wastage, and increase in value addition.

(Source: jagranjosh)