

Lamprecht's Pharma Logistics Day in the Basel region

Amongst pharma pros

It is always a privilege to hear experts expound on their field. The programme of lectures at conferences or fairs is frequently too dense or too fragmented, however. An SME from Basel showed up an alternative when addressing pharmaceutical transporters recently.

Staging a pharmaceuticals logistics day is not necessarily one of the classic core skills of a well-established freight forwarder, such as Switzerland's Lamprecht Pharma Logistics, which is headquartered outside Basel. The subsidiary of a family-managed firm, now run by the clan's fourth generation, did not do a bad job, however. The renowned speakers and 19 exhibitors in the starring roles left this participant – this much can be said – applauding gracefully.

transport services comprehensively certified by Swissmedic, the Swiss agency for therapeutic products.

Putting temperatures to the test

Pharmafreight was prepared to meet a challenge of a rather special kind. The forwarding company that specialises in temperature-controlled pharmaceutical transport services wanted to find out to what extent the temperature in the cargo hold changes in detail during transport. To this end the firm cooperated with Biomap, a provider of monitoring solutions for the life sciences industry, and an airfreight carrier.

Thus Etihad Cargo operated the necessary test flight on 23 January 2018, flying from a wintery United Kingdom to the United Arab Emirates in the Middle East. The aim was to carefully establish the freight's temperature.

Every consignment was equipped with four loggers that continuously transmitted data. The results even astonished experts such as Andy Hughes, Pharmafreight's commercial director, and Kane Edgeworth, Biomap's director. The temperature gradient in the aeroplane's cargo hold increased in particular after takeoff and landing.

"We registered differences of as much as 12°C between the various consignments," according to Hughes' report. The loads were not affected by this, for the only cargo loaded for this test were crisps from Marks & Spencer. Another test flight has been scheduled, with which the researchers plan to assess more data in depth through a comparative analysis.

Expanding markets

Fabian Eschenbach, who works for the company Va-q-tec, looked into some of the major trends currently dominating the industry in the field of using the right

packaging for pharmaceutical products. The market is growing significantly, as the supply chain is now well and truly globalised, legal requirements are increasing and more pharmaceutical goods need to be dispatched in temperature-controlled containers. Investment in the sector makes this clear, with the pharmaceuticals industry staking approximately USD 500 billion on the development of biopharmaceutical products – which almost all need to be transported at 2–8°C.

The great potential of the market can also be seen by its estimated growth of 65% – measured in expenditures – in the next few years, contrasted with transport cost increases of only about 52%. Supply has to be just right.

The UK company Va-q-tec's magic phrase is 'advance passive technology'. This includes many packaging solutions for temperature-controlled products, which can also be leased. "This service wasn't available yet when we launched the Va-q-tainer in 2004," Eschenbach remembers. Unorthodox solutions can help protect the environment. Eschenbach cites the fact that "deploying single-use packaging can sometimes be less resource-consuming than returning it."

Cargo theft hot spots

Stefan Surpitski of the USA's Sensitech corporation took his audience on a fascinating trip to the world of crime. He described the masters of the scene operating in Brazil and Mexico, who close down entire motorways and then make entire convoys disappear off the face of the earth, and talked about Eastern European amateurs whose dangerous manoeuvres see them jump from motorcycles onto lorries armed just with a bolt cutter.

High-value pharmaceutical products are sought-after by organised crime syndicates. Sensitech's supply chain intelligence centre has registered 4,198 incidents in Europe between January and September this year. Surpitski knows that "many a theft is not reported at all, however."

Security measures, such as digital technology enabling the monitoring and central steering of lorries, meticulous route planning, and careful training of drivers, are key. Analyses have shown that most danger lurks just after loading and on the first 200 km of a trip, which should be completed without any interruptions.

In short – Lamprecht Pharma Logistics' well-attended event offered participants a steep learning curve. *Christian Doepgen*



Photos: C. Doepgen/ITJ

Flashes of red – **Stefan Surpitski** on security hot spots. Full house – **Thomas Lamprecht** welcomes his guests (below).

In his witty opening talk host Thomas Lamprecht advised the participants, which included a number of his closest competitors, to "pay more attention to the speakers' talks as well as the exhibitors' presentations than to the facilities we have here."

This admonition was necessary because the event took place in a logistics centre in Pratteln (Switzerland) in which Lamprecht Pharma Logistics is based – one of the first Swiss enterprises to have its pharmaceutical