

# Crown braves Merlog's **sub-zero operating conditions**

Merlog Foods, one of the largest wholesalers and distributors of frozen foods in South Africa, has developed the most advanced cold storage facility in the country and uses Goscor's Crown warehousing equipment as part of the process.



MERLOG OPERATIONS MANAGER, Malcolm

Fuller, says that Crown was chosen because of the superior quality of the machines combined with outstanding service from the Goscor Lift Truck Company (GLTC) team. "Over the years we have learnt that we can trust Crown equipment and that, in the event of something going wrong, Goscor's service team will attend to the problem quickly and efficiently," Fuller says.

Merlog runs its extensive operation out of two facilities, one in Cato Ridge just outside Durban, and the other in Heriotdale in Johannesburg. The Cato Ridge facility is Merlog Foods' brand new Head Office and distribution centre.

## Unique facility

This state-of-the-art freezer facility is an 11 300-pallet fully automated bulk cold store with an automatic storage and retrieval system (ASRS) and warehouse management system (WMS). "This is the only one of its kind in South Africa," says Fuller. "In essence it's a 'dark store' meaning there is no staff or equipment besides the one crane operating at -25°C in the bulk store."

He adds that Merlog is very proud of this achievement. "Many of our colleagues in this industry said it would never work. But it has, in a big way. It has improved stock accuracy, eliminated stock and racking damages, reduced working hours and, of course, significantly improved efficiencies," Fuller says.

He adds that this was accomplished through vision, a clear market understanding and setting goals and sticking to them. "We listen carefully to our clients and to what they need in order to provide them with the products and logistic solutions suitable for the market leaders that they are. And this facility enables us to do this as well as anyone in the world," Fuller says.

*In the Merlog state-of-the-art facility with some of the Crown units are (from left): Warren Newell (regional sales manager KZN), Malcolm Fuller (operations manager Merlog Foods) and Dale Rosewall (area sales manager inland-KZN).*

The Crown machines – which include an ESR 5000 cold store reach truck, five crown GPC low-level order pickers with platform lift, two WT3040-2.0 electric pallet trucks and two electric 1,8 tonne counter balanced forklifts – are used for shunting stock in receiving and dispatch and picking and replenishing in the picking store. The ESR 5000 reach truck series is a winner of multiple international awards for design and performance while the WT3000 series was recently awarded the prestigious British Industrial Truck Association (BITA) organised Design for Safety Award in the Industrial Vehicles category at the IMHX 2013 trade show.

## Good fit

Fuller says the Crown machines fit well into the operation, which is high-tech and an exceptional technological achievement. "Crown's design and performance are unsurpassed and the units certainly complement this state-of-the-art facility," he says.

GLTC MD Darryl Shafto says these Crown machines are popular both here and globally due to a combination of first-class design with superior operator comfort and exceptionally practical features. "Merlog has achieved something unique in the warehousing industry in South Africa and it's an important endorsement for our company that they chose Crown to work in their operation. We are proud to be a part of Merlog's successes," he concluded. •