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(Left to right) Lee Hodgins – executive vice-president, corporate services; Peter Mühlenfeld – chief brand officer; Jackie Colville – chief financial officer; Frank Burdzy – president & CEO; Jeff Johnston – executive vice-president, business development & innovation; John Frierott – chief operations officer

FROM FEED TO FOOD

New Era for Champion Petfoods

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Merged Companies Now Offer Ammonia and HFC Based Refrigeration Service and Support



The announcement that Berg Chilling Systems' acquired Industrial Refrigerated Systems Ltd.(IRSL) generated an enthusiastic thumbs-up from customers and industry stakeholders. The acquisition combines the skills and expertise of two well-established companies that will now provide customers with a one stop shop for all their refrigeration equipment and service needs regardless of refrigerant type.

This is good news for many who are looking warily at future regulatory changes from the Canadian government that may influence their decisions about investment options for their refrigeration technologies. The acquisition means the merged companies now offer all types of refrigeration in the marketplace today and can objectively assess a customer's specific needs based on technical, regulatory, safety, operational and maintenance considerations and recommend an unbiased solution tailor-made to their specific business needs.

"There are some misconceptions in the marketplace about Freon and rumours that it is being phased out. This is not the case," says Berg President Don Berggren. "The government wants to put new regulations in place to phase down the use of some synthetic refrigerants if options of 1,500 GWP (global warming potential) or less are available, so Freon will be phased down to at or below the 1,500 level."

Although the proposed regulatory changes represent a minimal reduction, their development also prompted manufacturers to develop a new wave of synthetic refrigerants which are commercially available and have a GWP of 1,500 or less.

There are refrigerants available now that can substitute the likes of R-22, R-404A/R507, R-134a with solutions that are nontoxic and non-flammable, though suitable replacements for R-410A are still under development. Even though these drop-in replacements can be substituted now, they are more expensive than the existing refrigerants. Once the economics shift to become more favourable as production capacity of the new refrigerants ramp up, switching to them will make much better business sense.

Companies using both natural and synthetic refrigerant technologies are looking for ways to future-proof their operations so they can adapt to the new regulations or take advantage of these new refrigerants.

Berg can design equipment to operate with existing refrigerants of any type and be able to accommodate the newer refrigerants once they become cost-competitive. By designing flexibility into systems, the operator will be able to make the switch to newer refrigerants with little or no new capital investment once these refrigerants become commercially viable.

Berggren says existing Freon refrigeration equipment can be adapted to meet new regulatory emissions requirements by modifying the programs that regulate properties like temperature, pressure and flow rate. New installations can be designed to work with existing refrigerants and accommodate the new synthetics when they become more cost-competitive.

In food applications, many operators tend to opt for the Freon technology for a variety of reasons. The coming regulations — and rumours circulating about what those regulations might represent in terms of financial and technical risk — are creating an increased need for objective advice about the best long-term options.

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