

What NST learnt from 750 tank cleaning operations



NICLAS KAPPELIN (NST): Each vessel performs an average of 60 voyages per year

HOW REPETITIVE, CONSECUTIVE VOYAGES IMPACT CARGO TANK COATINGS

from the cargo tank configuration/coating.

NST's operations department monitors the coating condition of all vessels: on a monthly basis it receives a full coating report on each vessel from crews to assess suitability for the customers' products. The company has operated vessels with MarineLine for nine years and has 12 MarineLine-coated vessels in the fleet. This means that the company has data on 750 cleaning operations across the tankers. North Sea Tankers managing director Niclas Kappelin says the operations department reports an impressive record for tank cleaning results, both in terms of quality of the end result and the speed of tank preparations/cleaning.

"The characteristics of the coating suit our trade very well," Mr Kappelin explains. "A well maintained and monitored MarineLine coating, with its very smooth surface, helps NST gain a quick turnaround time in port, and provides effective cleaning from the wide range of products we transport. The glossy surface further eliminates sources of contamination possibilities that other coatings exhibit where last cargoes can become trapped inside pores in the coating," Mr Kappelin says.

"Rub your knuckles on the coating's surface and you will feel how smooth it is. There are simply no texture constraints that can be felt from the surface," Mr Kappelin says. The lack of surface pores supports quicker cleaning times and better cleaning quality, and there are no heat-curing constraints that restrict repetitive voyage patterns with the same product, he adds.

"Many of our COA (contract of affreightment) volumes consisting of sensitive products would have to be restricted from stowage in tanks with other

types of coatings. This does not happen with MarineLine," Mr Kappelin explains. Mr Kappelin also reports positive experiences – and no scheduling constraints – when transporting ethanol in different grades around Europe, a trade characterised by repetitive, consecutive voyage patterns.

"There is a perception that there is no difference between MarineLine-coated tanks and stainless steel tanks when it comes to cargo accessibility, and that basically all cargo volumes NST carries can be loaded on either stainless steel or MarineLine-coated ships. Also the Northwest European chemical market is accustomed to stainless steel tankers. "But our long-term trading experience is that MarineLine is a reliable alternative to stainless steel tanks and our contract customers are trusting NST's ability to provide MarineLine-coated tanks for the products we regularly carry," Mr Kappelin says. Shipbrokers in regular contact with NST will vouch that there are no operational constraints deriving from our vessels' tank coating condition, Mr Kappelin adds.

As a tanker owner NST has found that MarineLine-coated tonnage is a viable alternative to stainless steel tanks, which provides a better long-term investment return on the vessels. NST has recorded improved cleaning, ventilation and drying time with MarineLine vessels.

Mr Kappelin says that NST will now only specify MarineLine coating for its cargo tanks, adding that there are new projects in place where MarineLine will be a strategic part of the company's investment. NST's oldest MarineLine-coated vessel in service was built in 2005 and today, 11 years later, the coating condition in all tanks is still "good to perfect." [TST](#)

North Sea Tankers (NST) was formed in 2007 in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. The company operates a fleet of sophisticated chemical vessels, ranging between 5,000 and 8,000 dwt, and trading in Northwest Europe. These tankers carry hundreds of different grades of chemicals and petroleum products between European ports for major oil companies and larger chemical producers. An extremely demanding trade, each vessel in the fleet performs an average of 60 voyages per year, with short voyage patterns. Cargo tank layout, the right pump configuration, and the proper cargo tank coating and condition are key to maximising fleet utilisation and minimising delays. A particular requirement is being able to load any type of product on these vessels, in any sequence, without imposed constraints