

Mainland is vital to Dutch intermodal innovator's success

Apily named after the 45-foot pallet side containers it developed and patented, the Dutch intermodal innovator UNIT45 relies on high-quality production out of China to conform to strict European regulations.

"We produce absolutely everything in China. They do the job very well for us and we have remained loyal to them since 2002," said managing director Jan Koolen who, along with partners, pioneered the Geest corner casting technology that maintains the internal dimensions of a 45-foot container while complying with EC 96/53 which banned trucks longer than 16.5 metres.

UNIT45 is the only company of its kind specialising in dry, bulker, reefer and curtain-sided units. The company supplies 60 per cent of all containers of this type in Europe to Samskip Multimodal Container Logistics, ECS, 2XL, Eucon, Transfennica, BG Freight, Finnlines and Acciona.

"UNIT45 is a market leader because of our innovations," Mr Koolen said. Research and development from Rotterdam produce containers that are



**Jan Koolen,
managing
director**

600kg lighter than the competition with the use of high-strength steel on the eight corner castings and understructure.

The company works closely with the University of Vlaardingen and suppliers in China on new dual-compartment and diesel-electrical reefer units.

The firm is also notable for using eco-friendly and lightweight bamboo as flooring, green-lin and Thermo-King cooling units which reduce diesel consumption.

In co-operation with the Chinese third party quality control company Coverall, UNIT45 ensures that its containers made by four mainland suppliers maintain superior European standards under the EC 96/53 directive.

By setting the standard for container transport by road, rail or sea UNIT45 also stands to capitalise on royalties on its patents.

"Ultimately the goal is to develop and innovate container units which can compete with the traditional road transport trailer market."