

## Mid-Atlantic Juice Concentrate Imports Hub

The Port of Wilmington has a well-deserved reputation as the nation's number one port for fruit and produce imports, with over 1.4 million tons of fruit and vegetables arriving by vessel every year. Wilmington also happens to be a leading gateway port and distribution hub for imports of chilled and frozen juice concentrates from Brazil, Argentina, Belize and Costa Rica. This year, the port handled over 100,000 tons of imported orange, apple and pear juice concentrate used to supply juice manufacturers and processors throughout the United States.

The Port has become an attractive port for juice imports from Central and

South America due in part to its strategic location in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast region enabling advantageous distribution to juice processors throughout the East Coast. Another important advantage for Wilmington as a port is its specialization in the handling of refrigerated cargo, using dockside refrigerated warehouses to receive and store the cargo prior to distribution. The Port of Wilmington owns and operates the nation's largest dockside cold storage facility and is a site for one of the world's largest bulk orange juice storage facilities.

Citrosuco North America is the Port's largest importer and marketer of orange juice concentrate, handling

nearly 60,000 tons of Brazilian orange juice concentrate in 2001. Citrosuco Paulista of Brazil ships liquid bulk orange juice concentrate in its own reefer bulk tanker vessels. It can deliver more than 3,200,000 gallons of juice in one voyage. Citrosuco North America has been at the Port of Wilmington since 1984. It operates the largest concentrated juice terminal storage facility in North America with a total storage capacity of almost 6 million gallons. Citrosuco operates a fleet of four tanker vessels that call in Wilmington eight to 10 times per year to discharge juice concentrate.

When Citrosuco's vessel calls in Wilmington, the juice is pumped from the vessel to their cold storage tank facility at the Port of Wilmington. The juice is stored at Citrosuco's bulk terminal until it is distributed by special insulated tank trucks to major orange juice processing plants in the U.S. and Canada. There it is converted into drinkable orange juice. Among Citrosuco's customers in the U.S. are leading juice companies such as Tropicana, Cumberland Farms, and HyPoint.

Another leading orange juice importer, Premier Juices, has been shipping orange juice concentrate through the Port since 1998 and handling the juice through their port-based bulk juice transfer facility, Bulk Services, Inc. The drums and bins of frozen concentrated orange juice are carried to Wilmington from Belize by conven-



Belize orange juice concentrate is transferred from bins into climate controlled storage tanks and later into insulated tanker trucks at Bulk Services' unique conversion facility at the Port's warehouse.



or 60-gallon drums and, upon arrival in Wilmington, is stored at the Port's climate controlled refrigerated warehouse facility.

Last year, the apple crop in Argentina was very good and most of it was sold fresh which created a temporary shortage in the apple juice market. In recent months, Port officials indicate an increase in the distribution of apple juice through the Port aims to offset this high demand for apple juice concentrate.

Citrusuco's reefer bulk tanker vessels deliver Brazilian orange concentrate to Wilmington, where it is stored in Citrusuco's temperature controlled storage facility prior to distribution to juice processors throughout the East Coast.

tional reefer operator Seatrade as well as by container operators Dole Ocean Liner Service and Great White Fleet, Chiquita's shipping line.

The imported juice from Belize is shipped in bins or drums, which are more suitable for smaller juice exporters and receivers. Bulk Services operates a unique operation for conversion of juice concentrates stored in drums and bins moving it directly to insulated bulk tank trucks or to its interim 6-tank cold storage facility located at the Port. The bulk transfer process from bin and drum to bulk can also maximize the loading and distribution of juice, delivering up to 14 bins in one tank truck as opposed to up to 12 bins in a conventional trailer truck.

Currently, Bulk Services operates at 90 percent of their handling capacity. The company is hoping to expand their operation and delivery capacity and may lease additional storage space from the Port in 2002. Bulk Services expects to handle nearly 35-40 million

pounds of solid juice concentrate in the next year. Bulk Services' customers include large juice processors as well as small dairy customers throughout the East Coast.

In addition to orange juice concentrate, the Port also receives shipments of Argentine apple and pear juice concentrate. Jugos Del Sur and Jugos S.A. of Argentina are two of the leading exporters, shippers and marketers of Argentine apple and pear juice concentrate and juice essences in the U.S. East Coast. The Argentine apple and pear juice concentrate is sold and delivered to juice manufacturers and processors throughout the Eastern U.S. and Canada, where it is typically blended with U.S.A.-produced concentrate to achieve the highest quality product.

The Argentine juice concentrate is shipped to Wilmington on reefer vessels operated by Lauritzen-Cool Reefer Lines, the world's largest owner and operator of conventional reefer vessels. The juice is shipped in 300-gallon bins

Customers and juice importers praise the Port of Wilmington for its customer-oriented, accommodating and efficient service. "The Port of Wilmington is a very efficient organization from top to bottom and, most particularly, at the every day staff level handling the daily delivery activity and distribution of the freight. In addition, not only have I found the Port to be more flexible than other ports throughout the U.S., I am also very pleased with its continuing efforts to improve its operations and services," noted James F. Phelan, president of Amerimark Enterprises, Inc., a major apple and pear juice importer using the Port. Phelan has been utilizing the Port of Wilmington for over 15 years as the Northeast port of entry for Amerimark's Argentine juice imports.

The Port of Wilmington is committed to developing and expanding its handling, storage and distribution of juice concentrate imports as well as continuing to accommodate the special needs of the juice shippers and importers.