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SPECIAL REPORT
SUPERSTORM SANDY

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As Butch Gardner hauls cranberries between two cold storage facilities on the Badger State Fruit Processing property in Pittsville, Wis., he gives the “thumbs-up” to plant manager Mark Konrardy for a job well done. Konrardy met three tough challenges for the construction of a new cold storage facility, built to house Badger’s 200 million pounds of cranberries with room to grow.

Gardner, owner of Badger State Fruit Processing, recently completed the 2012 cranberry harvest. Badger State’s 200 million pounds of cranberries represents about 52 percent of the world’s cranberries.

“Right now I grow, sell, and process cranberries for all of the buyers in the states—including the very biggest,” he says. With 1,100 acres of cranberries, Butch Gardner is Wisconsin’s largest independent grower. “Right now our cranberries are stored in our combined two cold storage buildings. With the new facility we’ll go past that as new acres are planned to meet world demand for cranberry products.”

The new cold storage facility had to be built to withstand many years of operation. Erected this past summer by Don Nikolai Construction, Marshfield, the galvanized steel building with IMP side-walls measures 300 x 600 feet. The vast majority of it is devoted to refrigerator and freezer rooms with docking areas. It also includes space for the production floor and packaging room.

During the planning phase, Gardner issued a directive to his plant manager, Mark Konrardy. “The owner challenged me to find a way to keep our operating costs on the new cold storage facility low while achieving demanding temperature control requirements,” explained Konrardy.

Insulated metal panels, architectural grade EPS insulation and efficient lighting all helped accomplish that goal.

The IMPs were manufactured and installed by a company called Midwest Cold Storage. “We wanted the biggest...
bang for our dollar,” Konrardy said of
the IMPs. Two other buildings on the
property, one built in 2003 and the other
in 2009, were built of the same steel and
IMP materials and had proven effective
and efficient in the long haul.

The choice of insulation, however,
took some additional research.

“Our choice to use Foam-Control
and Foam-Control Plus architectural
grade EPS insulation evolved out of my
research into materials that would meet
performance, cost, constructability and
environmental criteria. We wanted to
make sure it wouldn’t break down under-
ground—it has to hold up for years of
operation and not become damaged by
moisture.”

Nearly 2 million board feet of ACH
Foam Technologies’ Foam-Control flat
EPS roof insulation and over half a mil-
lion board feet of the manufacturer’s new
Foam-Control Plus+ architectural grade
perimeter and underslab insulation were
used in the construction of the new cold
storage facility.

Mark Konrardy has had a long-term
interest in environmental stewardship.

“I set up a list of quantifiable parameters
grouped into three categories: perfor-
mance, cost and environmental steward-

ship. Within those categories I researched
various materials available and when all
was said and done, Foam Control EPS
insulation came out the clear winner for
several reasons,” Konrardy added.

Compressive strength concerns were
addressed by using Foam-Control Plus+
400 (40 psi) for the freezer area and
Foam-Control Plus+ 250 (25 psi) for
the remainder of the perimeter and
underslab areas. “I also researched the
performance of rigid insulations when
exposed to moisture,” stated Konrardy,

“And found that EPS has a higher perme-
ability than XPS. That extra permeability
allows trapped moisture to escape. This
is a good thing, because it maintains its
R-value better.”

Konrardy also wanted to find an insu-
lation that contained recycled content
and didn’t leach toxic chemicals into the
ground water. “This was a great find for
me: that Foam-Control insulations con-
tain up to 15 percent recycled content in
the code-approved labeled EPS. This is
the highest percentage of recycled con-
tent of all the rigid foam insulations on
the market,” explained Konrardy.

The tipping point, according to
Konrardy, was cost savings. R-value to
R-value, EPS is 10 to 20 percent less
expensive than other rigid foam insula-
tions. “My decision wasn’t that difficult,”
he added. “I was able to find a material
that satisfied the criteria Mr. Gardner set
out for me and satisfy my desire to make
our plant greener.”

The cranberry harvest ended in early
November and Konrardy says the new
freezer is packed full of frozen berries.
The new building is serving the com-
pany’s needs and the focus is now on
finishing construction work on the pack-
aging room.

For more information on ACH Foam
Technologies circle 130.