CONTAINERISATION INTERNATIONAL
LINKING THE SUPPLY CHAIN

May 2009

The Port of Hamburg Supplement

Feeding the feeder

Port Feeder Barge

...

An interesting compromise yet to get off the ground involves a specially designed self-propelled barge with its own crane that can utilise the end of a terminal's quay for its own loading and unloading operations.

Moreover, the maximum draught required alongside is only 3.1m. Called Port Feeder Barge, the concept is the brainchild of Dr Ulrich Malchow.

But for the demise of two separate shipyards contracted to build the barge, it would now be up and running. The theory is that once containers are unloaded onto the quay, the terminal's equipment would then transfer them into its own container handling system at a convenient time, and vice-versa.

The smallest model has a capacity of 168TEU, and is equipped with 14 reefer plugs. It has a length of 64m and a beam of 21m. The crane height and reach is 17m and 29m respectively. Malchow enthused: 'According to our calculations, boxes can be moved at a lower cost than proposed by trucks, and no alterations to the port's basic infrastructure is necessary.

'We already have each terminals' approval of the system, and it has been agreed that our crane driver does not have to be paid the same as an expensive gantry crane driver. All we need to do now is to sort out the legal mess created by the collapse of the last shipyard with whom we had contracted the building work.'

An additional benefit of the self loading/unloading Port Feeder Barge is that it could also be used by the port to cope with emergency cargo operations required by vessels in distress. Cargo frequently has to be discharged from grounded or beached vessels at short notice, for example.

Malchow is also currently examining the system's advantages for overseas ports suffering from either a lack of infrastructure investment or congestion, such as in India.