



Castlecool (AGRO Merchants) sites at Lough Egish and Castleblaney Optimised with ProWMS Warehouse Management Software

The former Castlecool (later AGRO Merchants) sites at Castleblaney and Lough Egish were acquired by Americold in 2020. The company owns and operates 243 temperature-controlled warehouses with approximately 1.5 billion refrigerated cubic feet of storage across the US, Europe, Asia-Pacific and South America.

The 180,000 square feet Lough Egish facility had 21,000 pallet locations making it then the largest warehouse in the business in Ireland. The facility had 8 segregated chambers and caters for chilled, ambient and frozen products. The cold store also had five blast freezers able to and freeze up to 150 tonnes per cycle. It was the first, and only third-party provider in Ireland to offer flexible packaging lines approved by DAFM [Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine]. The 65,000 square feet Castleblaney site had 9,200 pallet locations. The facility had three segregated chambers and three blast freezers with a capacity of 100 tonnes per cycle. Castleblaney became the first in the industry in Ireland to achieve BRC standard.

THE BUSINESS

- Third-party Logistics cold storage
- Cold storage, frozen storage, cross-docking, order picking, blast freezing and tempering
- Commodities handled: meat, seafood, dairy, consumer packaged goods, bakery
- Halal approved

THE CHALLENGE

Americold's ex-Castlecool/AGRO Merchants Lough Egish and Castleblaney site offers traditional 3PL cold storage facilities and provides many value added services to its clients. For example: blast freezing, tempering, QC control (on-site micro-testing lab), order/case picking, cross-docking, packaging of bulk imported product for retail ready packaging, able to weigh and pack; meat, poultry, snacks, seafood, fries, breaded products, etc.

The company needed a WMS able to manage and control all of these value-added services while providing complete traceability, live stock visibility and KPI reporting. This was both a demand of its clients and also a requirement for the many site certifications it holds. These include BRC, DAFM approval for food packaging, Halal and similar. The system also needed to calculate the various handling and storage associated with the value-added services, up to and including invoicing.

RESULTS SUMMARY

- All value-added services controlled and tracked with ProWMS
- Interfaces PoWMS and multiple customer ERP systems
- System-directed Picking and Putaway
- 100% adherence to client specific handling and storage rules
- Best before date and batch number traceability through pickfaces
- Serial item tracking of variable weighted items



THE SOLUTION

The ProWMS Warehouse Management System from Principal Logistics Technologies had been in use at the Castleblaney site since the business was founded in 1994 by Paul Shortt. It was later deployed to Lough Egish when that site was purchased by Mr. Shortt in 2006. Soon after these sites were acquired by AGRO Merchants Group in 2013 (and later by Americold in 2020) it was intended to replace ProWMS with the in-house AGRO Merchants Warehouse Management System. However, it soon became apparent that complexities, and how these were being managed by ProWMS, could not be matched.

Key considerations:

- ProWMS's ability to **manage in real-time**, the many and varied value-added services and to provide complete forwards and backwards traceability.
- **Business rules management** which are automatically implemented by ProWMS both at client and consignee level for example by not mixing sell by dates in a consignment even when there is no health or safety implication etc.
- **Racking management** the sites utilise a mix of drive-in, static racking, and mobile racking. Both in the putaway of goods and the picking to customer order, ProWMS calculates the optimal order and routing of the forklift trucks. Each truck is equipped with a portable computer and the operator is guided by on-screen picking instructions. Even when multiple forklifts are operating in the same warehouse the most efficient coordination of their movements is worked out automatically by the system.
- **Mobile racking** to minimise the movement (open and closing of racks) ProWMS can, on a customer-by-customer level, where agreed with customers, break the traditional rotation of stock by best before date (BBD) sequence and let operatives pick from open racks so long as there is no similar stock coming with "X" of its BBD – in other words continue to pick from open racks.
- **Dual cycling/forklift backhauling** enabling operators on, for example, goods-in to locate items at the putaway location due for extraction, to minimise unnecessary travel with empty forklifts.
- **Dynamic application of stock to pickers** when they arrive at a pickface to provide batch and BBD date traceability through pickfaces.



"We are delighted that Americold (ex-Castlecool/AGRO Merchants) continues to be a Principal Logistics Technologies customer and that we can continue to work together to deliver innovative solutions to its onwards customers. The subsequent acquisition of another one of our customers, Grocontinental, in 2020 with 197,000 daily pallet spaces and 5,000 pallet movements, by Americold further enhances this relationship."

Joe O'Shea. Principal Logistics Technologies

About Principal Logistics Technologies

For over 30 years, Principal Logistics Technologies has been a leader in the design and delivery of innovative warehouse management software (WMS) and enterprise resource planning (ERP) software. Our technology and services optimise operational performance, reduce OpEx, and increase revenue for 3PL, distribution, wholesale, manufacturing, and retail warehouse businesses.

The company supports enterprise-level and multinational businesses with complex single and multisite operations spanning 3PL, chemicals & hazardous goods, hard & soft commodities, chill picking, cold storage, cross docking, eCommerce, FMCG, pharmaceuticals & healthcare and more. We operate from offices in Dublin in Ireland and Manchester and Birmingham in the UK.