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VOLUME ONE, ISSUE THREE | 2026

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LEADOFF

MESSAGES FROM GCCA LEADERS

THE COLD CHAIN DOESN'T STAND STILL — AND NEITHER DOES THE GCCA. IN ISSUE 3 OF COLD FACTS MAGAZINE, WE DIG INTO NEW IDEAS AND COMMODITIES, SHIFTING GEOPOLITICAL IMPACTS, AND HOW THE GCCA BRINGS US TOGETHER TO CONTINUE VITAL CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE GLOBAL COLD CHAIN'S WORK.

For readers unable to join us in person at the 2026 GCCA Convention, here is a brief report back: this year's program was purposeful, optimistic, and inspiring. As we reflect on our time in Scottsdale, we wanted to bring that same spirit directly to you in these pages.

The cold chain is at an inflection point. Our industry is consolidating. Technology is accelerating. Regulatory complexity is growing. And the world — policymakers, the next generation of talent, and the general public — still doesn't fully understand what we do or why it matters. Against this backdrop, your GCCA leadership has been undertaking some of the hardest and most important internal work in recent memory: asking uncomfortable questions, challenging long-held assumptions, and building something stronger in their place.

At the Convention, we presented GCCA's state of the association and details from our strategic plan anchored by three words that we believe capture both where we are headed and what this industry deserves:

Lead. Educate. Connect.

Leading the industry means establishing GCCA as the globally recognized authority on cold chain policy, market intelligence, and performance standards — the trusted source of insight that helps your businesses make better decisions and remain resilient. This includes reimagined industry benchmarking, updated cold storage capacity reporting, an expanded Quarterly Cold Chain Index, and a growing focus on transportation pinch points, port capabilities, and temperature-sensitive trade trends.

We must also think creatively about the story we tell. The cold chain is one of the world's most critical industries, yet it remains largely invisible. That invisibility has consequences. It shapes whether talented young professionals see a career with us. It shapes whether decision-makers treat cold chain infrastructure as essential or expendable. It shapes the communications and industry promotion priorities of GCCA — committing to talking about ourselves clearly, compellingly, and consistently.

We are also reimagining how we engage the “missing middle” of our membership: mid-level professionals who represent the future leadership of this association and who, until now, have lacked meaningful touchpoints between our Institutes and our executive-level events. New and invigorated committees, special interest groups, task forces, and regional councils are being built specifically to reconnect these members with our mission.

Connecting the industry means ensuring the cold chain is recognized as the indispensable infrastructure it is. We are expanding our advocacy capacity across all regions and building a proactive government relations function that not only responds to regulatory developments but also anticipates and shapes them.

Our three advocacy priorities — Resilient Infrastructure, Safe and Secure Trade, and Sustainable Supply Chains — reflect the realities your businesses are navigating every day. We are doing all of this while deepening our global engagement strategy, ensuring that GCCA serves members across every region with growing value.

None of this work emerged from an isolated conversation. It reflects our members' feedback, our Board's strategic direction, and the demands of a competitive and regulatory landscape. It reflects a group of leaders truly aligned and ready to provide serious strategic direction. And it reflects a staff dedicated not simply to gathering people together, but to making you better at what you do, stronger in the market, and more resilient as an industry.

COLDFACTS

COLD FACTS magazine is published every other month by the **Global Cold Chain Alliance (GCCA)**, an organization that unites partners to be innovative leaders in the temperature-controlled warehousing, transportation and logistics industry.



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Design by SWALLIS Design, Dallas, Texas, USA.

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LEADOFF

MESSAGES FROM GCCA LEADERS

We are also proud to share that the Global Cold Chain Foundation is entering its next chapter. The Foundation is now in a planning phase to refine its mission and sharpen its priorities into three strategic pillars: insights and research, reducing supply chain waste, particularly food waste, and connecting the global cold chain. At its core, the Foundation will focus on helping the GCCA and its members achieve broader, more measurable impact in the communities served by the global cold chain.

We bridge the gap between producers and retailers, manufacturers and schools, and farms and families. We absorb complexity so everyone else in the chain can function. The groundwork is laid, and the north star is set. We are grateful for your trust and energized by what we are building together. 🌐



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NEXT CHAPTER FOR CUSMA

Canada's Calculated Approach to North American Trade

By Jean-Michel Laurin

As the mandatory review of the Canada–United States–Mexico Agreement (USMCA in the United States, or CUSMA, as Canadians refer to it) gets underway, the GCCA is active in coalitions and dialogue with governments across all three countries.

The GCCA is making the case not just for continuity but for the ambition to go further in delivering modernizations of trade and border inspections that reduce cold chain burdens. This article, authored by the vice president of Tactix, a firm of advisers and agriculture policy experts retained by GCCA, explains how this vital negotiation is viewed from the North.

As we consider the upcoming CUSMA review, one contrast is hard to miss. In the United States, agriculture and agri-food stakeholders are mobilizing to make the case for renewal

A Noncontroversial Priority

For Canada, the CUSMA review is clearly a priority. More broadly, managing the country's economic relationship with its southern neighbor has become one of the defining challenges of this generation. The long-standing assumptions that shaped that relationship for decades – that trade would remain largely free and rules-based – no longer feel like a given.

At the same time, CUSMA is not controversial in Canada. There is broad agreement across federal and provincial governments,

opposition parties, and industry that the agreement has delivered tangible benefits and should be preserved. For a deeply trade-dependent economy, preferential access to the U.S. market is foundational.

This consensus explains why Canadian stakeholders might be perceived as lobbying their government with a different level of intensity than in the United States. Here in Canada, the debate is not whether CUSMA should be renewed, but how best to navigate the review process and the trade-offs it may entail.

Politics and the U.S. Relationship

The importance of managing relations with Washington has become increasingly salient in Canadian politics. The perceived ability to deal effectively with a more transactional U.S. administration was widely viewed as a defining issue in the federal election that resulted in Prime Minister Carney forming a minority government.

The stakes could not be higher for Canada – in fact, economic analysis continues to underscore trade uncertainty as a key risk to Canada's outlook. The Bank of Canada and

major financial institutions have highlighted how exposed Canada remains to shifts in U.S. trade policy, and the limits of its leverage.

Preservation Crucial for Canada

Consultations conducted by Global Affairs Canada reveal stakeholders, including those in agriculture and agri-food, are largely on the same page. The core message is straightforward: CUSMA works, and preserving it is critical.

For agriculture and the cold storage and logistics systems that support it, this reflects the reality of deeply integrated North American supply chains. Predictable cross-border flows, regulatory cooperation, and clear rules are essential. Disruption is the primary concern.

Stakeholders have identified areas for improvement including sanitary and phytosanitary measures and technical barriers to trade. These are framed as practical refinements rather than reasons to reopen the agreement. For most, maintaining the status quo with targeted improvements would be acceptable.

Pressing Set of Issues

From the Canadian perspective, the issues likely to dominate the review are well understood. Broadly speaking, U.S. priorities have been articulated with consistency.

Canada's priorities are more defensive. The federal government faces sustained pressure to address Section 232 tariffs impacting sectors

such as steel, aluminum, autos, and lumber. These measures have become emblematic of the uncertainty facing exporters. In addition, Canadians feel their government already made concessions, including abandoning its digital services tax. The expectation is that any further concessions would be matched by tangible outcomes.

These measures have come to symbolize the uncertainty exporters are facing.

The message is clear: if there are more concessions to come, they better be worth something. There is a shared understanding that flexibility may be required to secure a longer-term extension of CUSMA. That flexibility, however, is conditional. From a Canadian standpoint, extending the agreement now matters less than whether it can meaningfully provide certainty and reduce the risk of disruption.

Certainty Sought but Not Assumed

Canadian stakeholders place a high value on certainty. At the same time, there is growing realism that even a successful review may not restore the predictability once associated with North American trade.

Recent U.S. trade actions have reinforced the limits of formal agreements. Canadian officials have begun signaling that maintaining access to the U.S. market may increasingly come with a baseline cost, potentially in the form of enduring tariffs. The July 2026 review milestone itself may slip, and continuing under the existing agreement – with annual reviews over the next 10 years – has been framed as a viable outcome if a better deal does not materialize.

Canada has navigated similar dynamics before. Strategic patience and disciplined engagement proved effective during the original CUSMA negotiations, and many see value in applying that approach again.

Quiet Not Passive

Canada being perceived as quiet on CUSMA review should not be misread. Stakeholders are engaged, aligned, and actively shaping the government's approach. The difference is that the debate in Canada is not about whether to renew the agreement, but rather how to navigate a more uncertain and transactional trade environment.

For the cold chain industry, the takeaway is clear: the framework underpinning North American trade remains intact (for now), but the conditions around it are changing. Managing that uncertainty will be as important as the outcome of the review itself. ☞

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THE THINGS WE MOVE AND STORE

From pet food and pandas to priceless paintings and seasick baby eels, today's temperature-controlled 'products' run the gamut.

GLP-1 weight-loss drugs have rapidly moved into the mainstream, and their impact has begun to reach far beyond the pharmacy, reshaping supply chains. Their impact spans manufacturing, cold-chain logistics, grocery retail, and food production, driven in part by shifts in consumer eating habits.

Surging demand has forced food manufacturers to rethink production, retailers to adjust product mixes and portion sizes, and pharmaceutical companies to expand cold-chain capacity and output.

These drugs require strict handling. They must be kept between 35°F and 46°F, demanding reliable cooling, careful planning, detailed documentation, and expanded temperature-controlled storage and packaging. Companies are also rethinking warehouse processes, from packaging to inventory management.

As a result, operators are broadening their definition of temperature-sensitive cargo beyond traditional food and beverage products.

Transportation Challenges

The most pressing challenge in pharmaceutical temperature-sensitive supply chains is maintaining uninterrupted temperature integrity across the entire chain.

What's compounding the challenge right now is scale says Dr. Janeth Gabaldon of the University of Arkansas and a member of the GCCA's Council of Scientific Advisors (CSA) specializing in emerging supply chain technologies. She believes the explosive demand for GLP-1 has outpaced the cold chain infrastructure designed to support it. "We're seeing strain at every node (manufacturing, distribution, and dispensing). GLP-1 is manageable in controlled environments but becomes risky across complex, multi-modal supply chains."

Dr. Gabaldon points out that's why visibility is also a critical gap. Real-time temperature monitoring, IoT-enabled sensors, and data logging have improved significantly, but adoption is uneven across the supply chain. She says the weakest links tend to be the handoff points between parties, where temperature drops can occur.

Security is another growing concern due to the high market value of these medications. Cargo theft, counterfeit products, and diversion risks are increasing pressures across pharmaceutical logistics networks.

"This requires stronger chain-of-custody controls, tracking technologies, and secure transportation protocols, which increase operational costs for companies," says Dr. Gabaldon. "The Drug Supply Chain Security

Seasick Eels

Baby eels can experience motion sickness and disorientation during transport. Their inner ear structures, called the utricle and saccul, are fully developed and actively detect motion from birth. They can lose their balance, swim erratically, and show signs of severe stress. Fluctuations in ammonia, nitrite, and dissolved oxygen levels compound the physical trauma of the trip, potentially causing severe health issues or even death. To suppress travel sickness and extreme stress, approved sedatives are sometimes used. Baby eels should be transported at temperatures between 15°C and 23°C with high dissolved oxygen. When transporting live eels, it is essential to control the temperature, oxygen and water chemistry to ensure their survival. *(Courtesy of Dr. Brecht)*

Act (DSCSA) was designed to address this through serialization and traceability requirements, but implementation has been uneven, and enforcement is still catching up."

The most challenging best practice for transporting glucagon-like peptide -1 (GLP-1) meds is preventing temperature excursions and corresponding heat or freeze damage during the unpredictable last-mile delivery to a patient's doorstep, explains Dr. Patrick Brecht with PEB Commodities and CSA expert in refrigerated transportation. "The final leg of transit from the carrier's delivery vehicle to the patient retrieving the package is the highest-risk phase. Packages left in direct sunlight, on hot porches, or in freezing mailboxes during the summer or winter can experience temperature excursions that can destroy the peptide structure."

Dr. Brecht says to lessen the risk of damage to GLP-1 medications during the last mile, they should be shipped in validated, insulated containers combined with pre-conditioned phase-change materials (PCMs) or frozen gel packs tailored for the 2 C to 8 C range. Recipients (patients) should transfer the medication to the middle shelf of their refrigerator immediately upon receipt.

According to Dr. S. Paul Singh of Michigan State University and SAC packaging and labeling expert, the International Safe Transit Association (www.ista.org) has, with participation from major pharmaceutical companies, developed a test protocol to qualify packaging systems that require strict temperature control in the single parcel shipping environment of UPS and FedEx. In addition, participating packaging companies have developed insulated packaging that can provide such strict temperature control during shipping.

Beyond Food and Pharma

"There is some fascinating nontraditional 'cargo' beyond pharmaceuticals and vaccines that are stored and transported under temperature control such as baby eels that can get seasick, live escargot, honeybees, blood plasma, historic artifacts and paintings, Christmas trees, cut flowers, zoo animals like polar bears and pandas, volatile/self-reactive and flammable chemicals and more," notes Dr. Brecht.

Dr. Singh adds other products that require temperature and humidity control during storage extend to antique furniture, cigars, flavors, aroma alcohols, musical instruments, precious art and rare books. "Some items such as wood, paper, and cigars, have to be preserved at low humidity to avoid mold as well as physical deformation (warping)."

Dr. Gabaldon notes the list is longer than most people expect. Her examples of temperature-sensitive products requiring transport

Flammable Chemicals

Transporting temperature-sensitive, self-reactive, and flammable chemicals requires a strict, multi-layered approach to prevent explosions, accidental ignition, or material degradation. Since a single temperature spike or static spark can potentially be catastrophic, safe transit relies on very strict handling protocols and best practices. For self-reactive chemicals, a control temperature of at least 10 C below the Self-Accelerating Decomposition Temperature (SADT) is required. *(Courtesy of Dr. Brecht)*

and storage include fine wine, biological specimens such as organs or tissue samples, seeds, agricultural genetics, certain industrial chemicals, electronic components sensitive to thermal cycling such as composites and adhesives, cosmetics, and personal care products with active biologicals.

“Each has its own temperature, humidity, handling requirements, regulatory oversights, and security concerns, which is part of what makes the temp-sensitive chain such a rich and complex field,” says Dr. Gabaldon.

Purpose-Build or Retrofit

Can traditional cold storage warehouses be retrofitted to accommodate non-food temperature-controlled products? Yes, but ...

“Retrofitting would likely require investment in monitoring systems, qualified personnel, backup power redundancy, controlled-access zones, audit systems, and regulatory compliance protocols,” explains Dr. Gabaldon.

For archival documents and fine art, the environmental requirements differ substantially. Dr. Gabaldon points out these are niche but real applications, and purpose-built art storage facilities exist. “A food warehouse retrofit is theoretically possible but would require careful assessment. Temperature is only one factor in these supply chains; humidity control, vibration minimization, lighting exposure, and contamination prevention are equally important.”

Refrigerated trailers can maintain exact and uniform temperature tolerances for pharmaceuticals when software is used to properly program the trailer’s microprocessor.

“The refrigerated trailer must undergo precise empty and loaded validation mapping studies to ensure that there are no hot or cold microenvironments within the cargo. Mapping, validation and empirical studies are systematic evaluations that are used to record and analyze temperature variations throughout a refrigerated trailer’s cargo space,” notes Dr. Brecht. “These studies ensure that pharmaceuticals and vaccines are uniformly chilled or frozen during the entire trip thereby meeting or exceeding strict regulatory and quality standards.”

Regulatory Differences

Transporting temperature-sensitive pharmaceuticals are regulated by multiple agencies. United States Pharmacopeia (USP): USP Chapter 1079 outlines, in part, specific

Feeding Our Best Friends

United States Cold Storage began providing cold storage services for pet food products within the last five years, specifically for a pet food company operating within its network. Since then, the company received several additional inquiries about pet food storage, indicating the growing interest in this segment of the market.

In addition to pet food, US Cold also stores raw materials for manufacturing operations because of its strategic proximity to several manufacturing facilities. It also handles storage for gel packs and related products, which are food-adjacent but not technically food products themselves.

“The business has shown encouraging early growth and market interest since it first brought on these pet food customers,” says Natalie Larson, Senior Manager, Customer Experience & Key Accounts at US Cold. “However, because this is still a relatively new category for both our customer and our organization, it is probably too early to definitively label it a major success.”

While demand and customer expectations for future growth appear positive, there have also been challenges, including product aging and disposal issues that naturally come with managing frozen and refrigerated inventory. “At this stage, the business is still evolving, and its long-term performance remains somewhat to be determined,” Larson says.

In many ways, handling pet food products is very similar to handling human food products because the pet food products are human-grade and held

to comparable standards. Larson says the biggest distinction is the potential for increased e-commerce fulfillment and direct-to-consumer shipment opportunities, including sample shipments. She says while USCS is not currently performing those services, they have had discussions around expanding into that area.

“Additionally, because many of the products are meat-based, we also perform blast freezing services,” says Larson. “However, blast freezing is already a capability we provide for existing customers, so it was not a completely new operational requirement specifically for pet food.

“We evaluated considerations such as allergen risks, storage compatibility with dairy products like yogurt and ice cream, and the ability to transport pet food alongside other food products. After working through those compliance discussions internally and with customers, we determined that there were no major differences beyond standard food safety and allergen protocols already in place.”

No significant facility reconfiguration or additional space was required to support pet food storage operations. During onboarding, US Cold Storage did extensive due diligence to determine whether any physical or operational changes would be needed. In the end, they found existing infrastructure and processes were already well-suited to accommodate the pet food products without major modifications.

Ultimately, these products are human-grade food that is marketed for pets, and the operations, regulations, and storage and transportation requirements closely mirror those of traditional food products.

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Cool Bears

Polar bears can be seriously affected by elevated temperatures during transport. They are extremely prone to overheating (hyperthermia) because they are uniquely adapted to the extreme Arctic cold. The polar bears' bodies are built to trap and retain heat using thick layers of blubber and dense fur. Accordingly, the polar bears are transported in specialized shipping containers in climate-controlled trucks or cargo planes. The transport vehicles are often equipped with redundant refrigeration systems. To prevent overheating the polar bears, the transport environment is precisely maintained between 7.2 C and 15 C with temperatures legally prohibited from exceeding 23.9 C for more than four hours.

(Courtesy of Dr. Brecht)

temperature ranges for storage and shipping such as controlled room temperature/room temperature, refrigerator, cooler and freezer medications.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulates the transportation of pharmaceuticals through enforcement of Good Distribution Practices (GDP) and Title 21 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). The FDA's regulatory oversight during transit focuses on temperature control, traceability, security and chain of custody, sanitation, and recordkeeping.

The Drug Supply Chain Security Act (DSCSA) requires tracking and tracing of prescription drugs across the distribution supply chain.

The International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) Code applies to any pharmaceutical product transported by sea that meets the criteria for classification as a hazardous material or dangerous goods. "Although pharmaceuticals are highly regulated, the points and counterpoints for more regulations and corresponding economic, human safety, and logistical hurdles are hotly deliberated," Dr. Brecht points out.

Dr. Gabaldon's view is that the gap is not in the volume of regulation, but in the consistency of enforcement and the speed of regulatory adaptation to new realities. "For example, the GLP-1 distribution, home delivery of specialty medications, and AI-driven monitoring systems are all outpacing the regulatory frameworks meant to govern them," she says. "I would advocate for smarter, faster-adapting regulation over more regulation, particularly standards that address last-mile accountability and real-time excursion reporting."

A Reconfigured Cold Chain

Dr. Gabaldon believes the cold chain is already reconfigured from the impact of GLP-1 medications. She explains that historically, many pharmaceutical cold chains were designed around seasonality, episodic demand, or specialty demand. The demand trajectory for GLP-1 medications is unlike anything the pharmaceutical cold chain has experienced in terms of volume, velocity, and geographic breadth.

"These aren't specialty medications for small patient populations anymore; they're becoming mass-market products with patient populations in the millions. GLP-1 is introducing sustained, large-scale consumer demand that resembles a hybrid of pharmaceutical and retail distribution. In many ways, it is pushing the cold chain toward becoming

Precious Paintings

Historical artifacts and paintings are transported by climate-controlled reefer trailers and containers to maintain museum-grade environments. The reefers are programmed to maintain a desired fine-art standard, which is generally 10 C to 22 C with a percent relative humidity of 50 to 55%. The reefer trailers utilize air-ride suspensions to dramatically reduce the effects of rough roads and various forces on the condition of the valuable artifacts and paintings.

(Courtesy of Dr. Brecht)

more consumer-facing, data-driven, and resilient," Dr. Gabaldon says.

She points out it also strengthens the case for purpose-built last-mile solutions for temperature-sensitive pharmaceuticals, including smart lockers, temperature-controlled delivery vehicles, and pharmacy-to-patient logistics networks.

"From a research perspective, I find this moment fascinating: the human systems dimension, including patient behavior, provider workflows, delivery personnel training, and regulatory compliance culture, will determine whether the technology investments translate into safe, reliable delivery," says Dr. Gabaldon. 🌀

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WAIT FOR THE STRAIT

The impact of the spring disruption in the Gulf.

By Isobel Davidson

The outbreak of conflict between the United States-Israel and Iran in late February 2026, and the subsequent closure of the Strait of Hormuz, led to widespread global disruptions of maritime traffic, oil availability, and energy markets in March and April.

The immediate supply chain effects included MSC's "end of voyage" declaration for all cargo under its custody bound for the Persian Gulf, discharging cargo at the next safe port for shippers to resume responsibility for the container. At the same time, maritime insurers cancelled war risk coverage for vessels operating in the Gulf.

Energy Insecurity

As disruptions to established shipping routes are expected to last well into the year, there are significant cost implications for fuel, particularly diesel, worldwide. GCCA's member briefings reported in April that, second to the

Middle East, the early fuel supply impacts were strongest across Asia. In parts of Asia, emergency stockpiles were opened, and diesel price caps, fuel tax adjustments, export limits, and fuel rationing came into effect.

Shane Brennan, GCCA Senior Vice President, Global Policy, Projects & Partnerships, says, "After Asia, the next regions expected to experience increased energy insecurity because of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz are Africa and Oceania. Europe's energy situation will continue to deteriorate if the conflict continues. With strong domestic production, the United States is likely to be cushioned from supply impacts but can still expect large price

increases as a result of market disruption."

The consequences of the Strait of Hormuz closure are a clear demonstration of energy vulnerability. "Europe's energy market has been more resilient in 2026 than during the major energy shock of 2022. This time, Asia has been particularly exposed," says Brennan. "This spring has highlighted the continuing frailties of national, regional, and global energy systems. The business case for cold chain operators to improve energy efficiency and to invest in on-site energy generation is stronger than ever."

Steering Through Turmoil

Throughout this period, supply chain professionals have once again drawn on experience, creativity, and strong relationships to steer through global turmoil.

Richard Winnall, President, International at Americold, explains the company's approach. "Americold's global network of cold chain solutions enabled customers to adapt quickly when critical trade routes and ports were

disrupted. When one node was impacted, volumes could be redirected through alternative ports, facilities, and regions, helping maintain product flow and integrity. This combination of resiliency, creativity, and connectivity positioned Americold to support customers in navigating supply and demand shocks during a highly volatile period.”

The impacts of the conflict are also expected to have longer-term, system-wide implications. That shipping lines can abandon product is now a stark reality. The withdrawal of insurance remains a major issue, and a widespread reset can be anticipated when ships are unblocked. Impacts on food resilience will become clear over the course of many months.

“Customers are increasingly focused on resilience and contingency planning, including holding higher inventory levels and reducing reliance on single ports or routes,” says Winnall. “These events reinforced the value of optionality, flexibility, and a well-connected network across the cold chain rather than efficiency alone.

“During recent disruptions, cold storage played a critical role by allowing customers to hold inventory closer to market when fuel availability and transport routes were uncertain,” Winnall adds. “Investing in well-located, reliable facilities helps ensure essential food and temperature-sensitive products remain available, even when energy and logistics conditions are unstable.”

Visit the news section of the GCCA website (www.gcca.org/resources/news-and-media) to access GCCA’s regular briefings, including updates and analysis on the Middle East conflict disruption, and what it means for cold chain operators around the world.

RSA Cold Chain in Conflict

RSA Cold Chain, founded in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in 2017 as part of RSA Group, became Americold’s partner representative for the region when Americold acquired a stake in the business in 2023.

RSA Cold Chain has grown rapidly in the past two years with significant investment in infrastructure. The business has expanded its Dubai South facility (located outside the bonded zone in the mainland) to 22,000 pallet positions across 10 chambers with variable temperature settings.

The company has also opened a new import/export hub in the Jebel Ali Free Zone (JAFZA) near Jebel Ali Port in Dubai, the

largest port in the Middle East. This new facility has 40,000 pallet positions and offers both bonded and non-bonded temperature-controlled storage inside the port, managing mainland cargo as well as cargo for re-export.

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz abruptly halted the region’s cargo traffic. “Without port calls inside the Gulf, the flow to storage for consumption in UAE and for export to near markets was throttled,” says Brent Melvin, General Manager at RSA Cold Chain. “Vessels already at sea that were destined for Jebel Ali Port could no longer enter the Gulf, and insurers declined to insure vessels that were going to navigate the Strait. Nothing could reach Jebel Ali, and cargo was offloaded at a range of other ports.”

Alternate Ways and Means

Melvin describes a quick and effective response from the UAE Government to the risk to national food security and sustainable operations. Three avenues of access were rapidly identified: the ports of Khorfakkan and Fujairah (which operate predominantly as an oil terminal) on the UAE’s east coast, and via neighboring Oman.

The UAE Government acted quickly to ramp up capabilities at the Port of Khorfakkan. Melvin explains that while rerouting so many vessels to Khorfakkan (previously destined for Jebel Ali) resulted in congestion and bottlenecks, the port quickly became key to bringing cargo into the region.

“Some operators also moved their cargo to the ports of Mundra and Nava Sheva in India,” Melvin adds. “UAE port operators arranged for feeder vessels to bring cargo from these ports to Khorfakkan. Road transport businesses rallied to ensure vehicles were lined up to bring containers from Khorfakkan to Dubai. There was more congestion on the roads to Dubai and more bottlenecks, but these alternatives ensured products were coming into the UAE and entering the region’s logistics network.”

Green Corridor

As well as meeting the logistics needs of customers bringing products into Khorfakkan, RSA Cold Chain also provided temperature-controlled logistics services along a new Green Corridor established between Oman and Dubai in March 2026. The Green Corridor was designed to create a “fast lane” to allow efficient, secure passage of goods between Omani ports and Dubai’s major hubs,

with cargo brought into the UAE over land by truck.

“The Green Corridor was a bold statement but there were complexities while the necessary mechanisms were still being put in place,” says Melvin. “As in any opportunistic market, there were businesses immediately offering to transport goods that they couldn’t deliver. We made sure the solution RSA Cold Chain offered worked, and we’ve been able to provide customers with a trusted service.”

Melvin says it took a while to settle the route, but the government was active in changing regulations needed to help get products moving. He acknowledges that now there is a flow of products, not at the speed of previous routes, but moving steadily.

Container Solutions

March and April also saw demand for a new service from cold chain businesses in the region. With vessels stuck inside the Strait, containers that had been ready for export were sitting in port, incurring high costs.

“People were coming to businesses like ours to store these containers,” says Melvin. “Storing with us at a flexible rate on a per pallet per day storage situation, they were able to decrease their costs, and we kept the goods in a safe, consistent manner at the correct temperatures, while the cargo awaited re-export or was sold to a new market.”

While pivoting to provide new solutions for customers, RSA Cold Chain has continued moving cargo to essential markets, serving the retail, hotel, catering, and restaurant industries. Melvin explains, “Businesses have tried to maintain ‘business as usual,’ following the example of the government and the sentiment of the whole country. It has been nerve-racking for the region but on the ground, Dubai has been safe, with very little real impact on the country’s infrastructure. People started to adjust, creating a new normal in the current environment.”

RSA Cold Chain implemented several operational procedures to maintain its crucial role in the region’s food supply chain during this period. The four business units of RSA Global (focusing on cold chain, logistics, petrochemical, and e-commerce services) have navigated the challenges on a day-by-day basis at a whole-business level.

Melvin lists company priorities as the well-being and safety of RSA Global’s people; the safety of its sites as far as possible; 24/7 monitoring and forecasting impacts on the flow of

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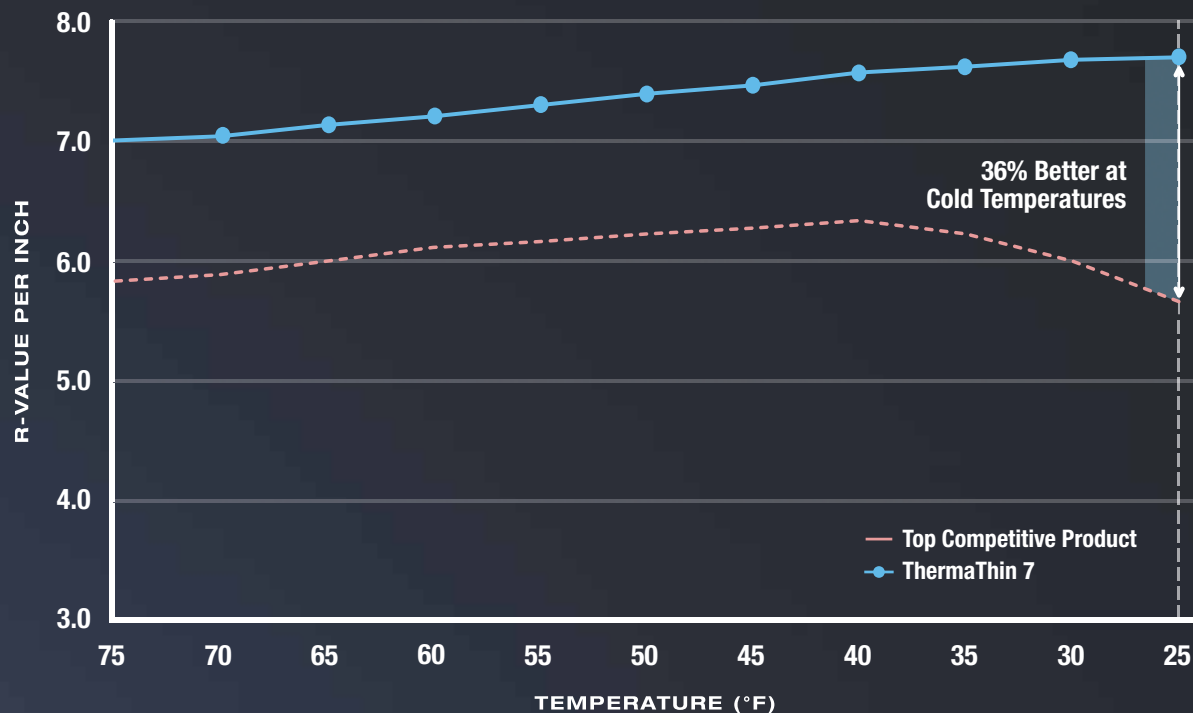


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goods; and communicating with customers on potential alternative routes and solutions for cargo to enter the Gulf countries. He considers that constant touchpoints have been essential to steering through this period.

Government Support

One such touchpoint has been the company's daily meetings with the UAE Government's food security leaders to discuss impacts, continuity, and how much food was currently in the country. The UAE Government food security leads were well prepared for the unexpected, and the cold chain has been integral to the national response.

"Government has prioritized essential goods, including food and pharmaceuticals, which have been given priority for clearance," says Melvin. "It also issued a notice the very first days of the disruption to reassure the public that products were available, and there was no need to panic buy. Stock has been refilled on shelves every day, and price controls have avoided excessive inflation, so costs have remained steady apart from, unavoidably, fuel."

Strong Teams

The existing flexibility within RSA Cold Chain through both bonded and non-bonded storage capabilities has been an asset in the business' ability to pivot with speed to effective, reliable new solutions for customers. Delivery of these solutions has only been possible through the commitment of the company's people, explains Melvin.

"One of our strongest pillars of success in this period is our people, and our culture of ownership. Operational staff have come to work to deliver, with full awareness of the crucial role each of us is playing in maintaining the food supply chain," he says. "The company leadership has worked every single day, visible on the shop floor, and amping up two-way communication. We had to make people as safe as we could, scoping out 'what if' scenarios, and we have robust protocols for evacuation, safe locations, and business continuity. We put in place anonymous hotlines to psychologists so anyone could share any concerns. Logistics is a people business, and this period has really demonstrated why good people practices are so important."

Wait for the Strait

At the moment, the timeframe for the Strait of Hormuz to become navigable again is uncertain. With emergency investment increasing capacity at Khorfakkan, the Green Corridor fully operational, and international relationships constantly evolving, the extent of

permanent change for temperature-controlled logistics operations in the region remains to be seen. 🌐

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AI IS TRANSFORMING COLD TRANSPORTATION

From ice packs to algorithms, a sophisticated ecosystem is built around actionable intelligence.

By Keith Loria

As chilled and frozen supply chains move increasingly high-value products – from biologics and GLP-1 drugs to premium prepared foods – transportation networks are under growing pressure to become faster, smarter, and more resilient.

Across rail, air, and intermodal channels, the focus is no longer simply on refrigeration capacity. The conversation has shifted toward visibility, predictive analytics, and real-time decision-making.

For cold chain operators, the most significant changes are occurring at the points where modes intersect: ports, rail ramps, air cargo hubs, and distribution facilities. These handoffs, once viewed largely as operational touchpoints, are now critical data environments where temperature integrity, dwell time, and shipment visibility can determine whether cargo arrives safely or is lost at a cost.

“What we’re seeing now is a fundamental shift in how the cold chain industry thinks about transportation. It’s no longer enough to simply move temperature-sensitive products from point A to point B – shippers, carriers, and logistics providers have to consider end-to-end visibility, real-time intelligence, and the ability to anticipate disruptions before the worst case scenario happens,” says Sara Stickler, President and CEO of GCCA.

Don Durm, Vice President of Supply Chain Solutions for PLM Fleet, which operates the ColdLink cold chain moni-

toring platform, notes the industry has rapidly evolved from simple tracking into a much more sophisticated ecosystem built around actionable intelligence. “Historically, companies only looked at the data after there was already a loss,” he says. “Now you can proactively monitor temperature, door activity, refrigeration-unit performance, and even shock events while the product is still moving through the supply chain.”

That real-time visibility has changed how refrigerated cargo is managed across multiple modes. Rather than monitoring every shipment equally, operators can now isolate exceptions and focus on the freight that is causing concern.

“You don’t have to constantly watch 150 trailers on the road,” Durm says. “You focus on the one that’s actually creating a problem and intervene much faster.”

Rail's Growing Role

While trucking still dominates refrigerated freight, rail operators are positioning themselves to handle more long-haul temperature-controlled cargo, particularly as intermodal networks expand and sustainability pressures mount.

Robert H. Fay, President of Florida Freezer and Executive Vice President of Seminole Gulf Railway, notes Class I railroads are continuing to invest in solutions.

"Rail carriers are enhancing their refrigerated container fleets to support intermodal service," he says. "At the same time, the build-out of refrigerated boxcars is slower."

He adds that many railroads still rely heavily on private refrigerated fleets operated by companies such as Lineage's Cryo-Trans system or on dedicated services like Tropicana's juice train.

"Short lines want to become more involved," Fay says. "But many smaller operators simply don't have the capital capacity to significantly increase the supply of refrigerated rail cars."

However, technology has helped narrow one traditional advantage trucking once held over rail – shipment visibility.

"All the refrigerated fleets are GPS monitored, and most have live telematic sensors," Fay says. "Trucks no longer have an advantage over rail in data collection and monitoring."

That increased visibility is being driven in part by customers demanding more detailed shipment data. According to Fay, railroads have responded by improving customer-facing portals and digital access to shipment information.

"This has been building for years," he says. "For the most part, it's been addressed through customer visibility portals like ShipCSX."

AI Moves Beyond Tracking

The next phase of the cold chain is not simply collecting data but interpreting it.

Durm notes that the biggest challenge today is that operators are overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information from modern telematics systems. "The raw data is overwhelming users," he says. "You can end up with thousands of alerts, so people start turning them off."

Artificial intelligence is beginning to solve that problem by adding context to the data rather than simply generating alarms.

"AI can look at a temperature drift, recognize a door opening, check the ambient

temperature outside, evaluate dwell time, and review refrigeration-unit performance trends all at the same time," Durm says. "That allows operators to understand whether something is actually wrong or whether it's just a normal operational event."

Rather than replacing operators, Durm believes AI will primarily augment human decision-making. "It's really going to help remove the noise," he says. "That means fewer spoilage events, fewer insurance claims, and better operational decisions."

Nick de Klerk, senior director of TMX Transform, which advises food, grocery and pharmaceutical companies on cold chain optimization, notes many organizations are moving away from reactive supply chain management toward predictive operations powered by connected data.

"Historically, demand signals were fragmented and pieced together with manual processes and spreadsheets," de Klerk says. "As supply chains become increasingly connected through IoT sensors, big data, and AI-driven models, end-to-end visibility is improving."

AI's most immediate value, he adds, often lies in day-to-day execution rather than futuristic automation.

"In the warehouse, AI-driven machine vision is bridging the dexterity gap in piece-picking," de Klerk says. "In the office, it helps planners manage variables such as weather and geopolitical shifts in real time."

Simulation and "what-if" modeling are also becoming important tools as companies evaluate potential disruptions before they happen.

"Simulation allows companies to identify congestion points and stress-test transportation networks before making major investments," de Klerk says. "That's becoming increasingly important as global trade lanes continue to shift."

The Weakest Link

Despite improvements in monitoring technology, the industry's biggest vulnerabilities remain at the transition points between transportation modes.

"The weakest link in the chain is still the handoffs," Durm says. "That's where most abuse happens and where the greatest risks exist."

He points to situations where refrigerated cargo sits too long at docks, ports or terminals awaiting transfer between systems. "You can have highly sensitive ice cream or biologics

sitting at a dock and missing a delivery window," Durm says. "That's when temperature excursions start happening."

Jim Jelinek, President of Roadtex, a 3PL that specializes in cold chain transport, sees similar risks. "The biggest challenges arise at the handoff points between modes, where systems don't always connect cleanly," he says. "Ports and rail ramps can introduce dwell time, increasing the risk of temperature excursions."

The problem becomes even more significant as more biologics and pharmaceutical products pass through cold chain networks.

Compliance and Traceability Expand

The increasing value and sensitivity of refrigerated cargo are also accelerating regulatory pressure on traceability and documentation.

The Food Safety Modernization Act's FSMA 204 rule is pushing companies to achieve much deeper visibility across the supply chain. These requirements extend beyond transportation providers to warehouses, retailers, and even restaurants. The ultimate goal is to improve recall response and isolate the product more quickly before it reaches consumers.

"If you know exactly where your product is, maybe it never enters commerce," Durm says. "You can stop it while it's still in the warehouse instead of recalling everything after it's already in stores."

Infrastructure and Resiliency Pressures

Beyond technology, infrastructure remains a major concern as trade disruptions and changing global supply routes reshape freight flows.

According to Americold, cold storage facilities located near ports, intermodal hubs, and major consumption centers are becoming increasingly important as operators work to stabilize temperature control amid disruptions and congestion. Americold noted that more than 90% of its facilities now capture real-time utility and performance data to support predictive maintenance and provide network-wide visibility.

Fay believes rail investment will continue to grow despite policy uncertainty. "Rail will continue to expand its intermodal offerings because it remains one of the most efficient ways to move goods over long distances," he says.

Trade tensions and geopolitical disruptions are also forcing companies to rethink flexibility.

"Policies in Washington, Ottawa, and Mexico City obviously affect planning decisions," Fay says. "But rail continues to position itself for long-term opportunities across North America."

Jelinek notes many cold chain operators are building more optionality into their transportation strategies. "Flexibility is now core to how networks are designed," he says. "That means multi-port, multi-carrier and multi-mode options so shippers are not locked into a single path."

Durm says retailers are also becoming a major force behind the adoption of monitoring and visibility technologies. Large grocery and retail chains increasingly want real-time location and temperature data integrated directly into their systems to better manage delivery windows and product quality.

"The big-box retailers want to know where the shipment is, when it's arriving, and whether temperature integrity was main-

tained the entire way," Durm explains. "That's becoming a differentiator in the marketplace because consumers are expecting freshness and validation."

Durm believes those demands will continue accelerating investment in connected cold chain systems that can track products seamlessly across multiple transportation modes and facilities.

The Future of the Smart Cold Chain

While AI remains in the early stages of deployment, many operators believe the industry is just beginning to understand its potential.

"There isn't a single AI solution that solves everything today," Durm says. "We're still in the early stages of understanding how all of this works together." Still, he believes the direction is clear. The future cold chain will rely on systems that connect fragmented transportation modes into a single, continuous source of truth.

"If you can't see it and monitor it, you can't improve it," he says. "The companies that can connect all those handoffs are going to be the ones that succeed."

"GCCA is working on new strategies to equip our members working in transport with the resources, connections, and knowledge they need to lead in this environment," says Stickler. "Technology continues to advance rapidly, and we want to ensure our members have the right systems for the right job – connecting fragmented modes into a continuous, reliable backbone that commodities can depend on." 🌀

KEITH LORIA is an award-winning journalist who has been writing for major newspapers and magazines for close to 20 years, on topics as diverse as sports, business and technology.

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AT THE TOP OF GLOBAL WAREHOUSE CAPACITY

GCCA releases 2026 'Top Lists' of global warehouse capacity.

In late April, GCCA released its highly anticipated 2026 Top 25 Lists, offering a comprehensive look at the world's largest temperature-controlled warehousing and logistics companies. The numbers tell a story of sustained, global expansion.

Topping this year's global rankings are Lineage, Americold, Newcold, US Cold Storage, and Emergent Cold LatAm. Together, the Global Top 25 now operate a combined 7.76 billion cubic feet of temperature-controlled space – a 6.3% increase over 2025 and part of a remarkable six-year run that has seen total capacity grow by 41.2% since 2021. The two largest members alone account for 58.1% of the Top 25's total capacity, and the minimum threshold to earn a spot on the global list now stands at 40 million cubic feet.

Regional growth has been anything but uniform. Europe leads in percentage with 90% capacity growth over six years, followed by Latin America at 67.2%, and North America at 25.1%. In North America specifically, the entry bar to the regional Top 25 rose from 15 million to 18 million cubic feet this year, reflecting just how competitive the market has become.

Mergers and acquisitions have played a significant role in reshaping the rankings, particularly in Latin America where Emergent Cold's aggressive expansion and the merger of SuperFrio and Icestar have reshuffled the Top 10. Europe has seen similar consolidation through Lineage and Constellation's growth and merger and acquisition activity. New entrants have emerged across all regions, with several companies joining the competitive landscape since 2020.

"The world's top cold storage companies have continued expanding their capacity over the past year, continuing a decade-long trend driven by growing demand," says GCCA President & CEO Sara Stickler, who presented the findings at the GCCA Convention 2026 in Scottsdale, Arizona.

The full Global Top 25 List, along with the North America Top 25, Europe Top 10, and Latin America Top 10 regional lists, are available now at www.gcca.org. 



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PROGRESS, PRIORITIES, AND PARTNERSHIPS AT GCCA AFRICA CONFERENCE

Johannesburg hosts GCCA Africa's cold chain conference.

Africa is experiencing a transformation as extreme population growth strains the capacity to store and deliver fresh, safe food to every community. The demand for food puts pressure on all parts of the supply chain, but especially on the overlooked backbone of the entire system: the cold chain.

The GCCA Africa Cold Chain Conference's 2026 theme, "Progress, Priorities, and Partnerships," brings together regional cold store operators, controlled-environment builders, equipment suppliers, and service providers to discuss the present and future of African logistics.

Speakers include economic forecasters and cold chain and tech leaders detailing the trends reshaping the temperature-controlled industry. From shifting trade corridors to the next leap in climate-smart infrastructure, the Africa Cold Chain Conference provides

needed insights on complex challenges and practical solutions.

Convening in Johannesburg

Hosted at Johannesburg's Fairway Hotel, Spa & Golf Resort on September 2-3, the event will build on last year's successful conference in Durban and provide a platform to share knowledge and build stronger networks across the continent.

At the 2025 program, Minister John Steenhuisen addressed similar themes of "priorities and partnerships" in the sector, including the relationships needed to build rural access to

food and the necessary collaboration with the Department of Energy and Electricity. "We cannot build a cold chain on shaky foundations," says the Minister. "Reliable, affordable, and sustainable energy must underpin everything. And in doing so, we also align with our climate change commitments, proving that food security and sustainability are not opposites, but partners."

Steenhuisen adds, "When government, agribusiness, and logistics companies collaborate to expand cold chain networks into rural areas, the effect is transformative. It means fewer losses and new jobs in packing houses, trucking, and storage facilities. This is smart economics. Rural cold chain access is rural development in action."

New partnerships like these are already reshaping temperature-controlled storage and transport.

"GCCA's priorities in Africa include finding solutions to barriers that affect day-to-day operations. The Port of Durban is one

example. Along with Transnet Port Terminals (TPT) and Transnet Freight Rail (TFR), GCCA is supporting a Durban-Johannesburg reefer rail pilot to enhance efficiency and reduce detrimental congestion at the Port,” says Adam Thocher, Senior Vice President, Global Programs and Insights for GCCA.

“Another great example is the collaboration in GCCA Africa’s Food Safety and Compliance Committee,” adds Thocher. “GCCA members discuss the regulations impacting the cold chain logistics and storage in South Africa, building stronger relationships between industry and government agencies. Currently, the members are undertaking a gap analysis of the Kenya Meat Act with the South Africa Meat Safety Act to begin development of new standards.”

Strong Speaker Lineup

This year’s conference involves a mix of trade, investment, infrastructure, and logistics professionals. Notable speakers include representatives from DP World, Trade Research Advisory (Pty) Ltd., South African Association of Freight Forwarders, and the Centre for Risk Analysis (CRA).

Confirmed speakers include Brent Melvin, RSA Logistics Dubai; Dr. John Deng Diang, Executive Secretary of the Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Coordination Authority (NCTTCA); Dr. Ikechukwu Opara, University of the Western Cape, and others.

Growth Across the Sector

The World Bank has stated that Africa’s food market, valued at about \$313 billion a year in 2013, could triple by 2030 with the right investments in infrastructure, smart busi-

ness, and trade policies – cold chain growth is driven by rising demand for these perishable foods, along with pharmaceuticals and biotechnology products.

The spread of e-commerce and online food delivery is also putting extra emphasis on the need for cold chain investment.

“GCCA’s 2026 Africa Cold Chain Conference couldn’t come at a more critical time. This event brings together the people and partnerships needed to ensure Africa’s cold chain future is built on collaboration, innovation, and resilience,” says Sara Stickler, GCCA President and CEO.

Register Now

Additional programming and speakers will be announced throughout the summer, and registration for the 2026 Johannesburg event is open at www.gcca.org/events/gcca-african-cold-chain-conference. 

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GLOBAL COLD CHAIN DEVELOPMENT

SUMMARY OF GCCF ACTIVITIES

This column features news about key projects of the Global Cold Chain Foundation (GCCF) and its work with members, aid organizations and international development partners to help emerging economies and lower-income countries meet the challenges that arise when growing a safe and efficient global cold chain.

ACTIVE PROJECTS

Cold Chain Development in Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, 2023 – 2027

Manuel Cabrera-Kabana reviewed perishable handling protocols for operators in Guatemala and suggested infrastructure requirements for cold stores for border inspections. In July, project participants will attend the GCCA Cold Chain Institute Latin America and participate in a site visit to observe cold chain best practices.

Powering Food Banks Project, 2025 – 2027

Partnered with Michael's Energy, University of Arkansas Sam M. Walton School of Business, and Feeding America

GCCF and partners are piloting an energy efficiency program with two food banks in Texas. The project's goal is to reduce energy consumption to generate cost savings. After conducting energy audits and generating a total of 28 recommendations, the food banks have incorporated the operational recommendations to improve energy efficiency. The project team is now working to implement higher investment options such as LED lighting, doors, and thermal energy storage.

Ongoing Industry Support to Reduce Food Loss And Waste

GCCF launched the Food Waste Reduction Initiative in 2022, centered around three objectives:

1. Support food rescue groups by increasing their access to GCCA's resources and network.
2. Alleviate the barriers that prevent GCCA members from donating food that would otherwise go to waste.
3. Increase awareness within the membership of the problems caused by food loss and waste and potential solutions.

GCCF has more than 90 food waste reduction members. In addition, GCCF has developed virtual training for food rescue



Members of the Powering Food Banks project team performed site visits at two food banks in Texas in 2025.



Dr. Elhadi Yahia (left) met with producers in El Salvador to discuss postharvest handling of fresh fruits and vegetables.

organizations and a Food Waste Reduction toolkit to support members with donation and community support, both of which will be promoted in 2026.

The Energy Excellence program, piloted through the Powering Food Banks project, has demonstrated the cost savings achieved by food banks when utilizing private sector expertise to reduce energy consumption. 🌱

This section highlights a cold chain question and answer submitted through the GCCA Inquiry Service to the team of experts on the GCCF Council of Scientific Advisors (CSA) and the roster of advisors. Submit your cold chain questions to the Council of Scientific Advisors at www.gcca.org/inquiry.

Q: We are vetting a claim submitted by a customer for spoiled beef product. We are questioning the timeline and whether the product had already passed its useable shelf-life even prior to the request to relocate the claimed product from the cooler to the freezer. There was no shelf-life, expiration date, or days noted on the cases, on the bill of lading, or provided by the customer.

A: The product has a pack date of early June to mid-June, so I will assume a June 15 pack date for calculation. Product was received at the facility on August 28, received and stored in a cooler (32 to 34°F, or 0 to 1°C). This is 74 days past the assumed packed date.

The customer requested to move product to a freezer on October 6. This would be 113 days after packing and a total of 39 days in the facility. According to “Meats, Chilled and Frozen” from the GCCF *Commodity Storage & Handling Manual*, beef (regular cuts), would have an expected storage life of vacuum packaged meats at 35°F (1.5°C) of 40 days.

Since 35°F is close to the storage temperature of 32 to 34°F, we can assume that the shelf life is close to 40 days. Although we don’t know the temperature the product experienced for the first 74 days of its shelf life, we can assume that it is experiencing some loss of shelf life in that time.

My guess is that the product was at or past the end of its shelf life at the time the request was made to move it to frozen storage.

I can make more precise calculations if we know the storage temperature in the first 74 days of its shelf life. I can also adjust the estimated shelf life based on the temperature difference between 35°F and the average expected storage temperature of 33°F (0.5°C), but my guess is that those differences will be small and will be more than offset by any loss of shelf life experienced in the first 74 days.

This answer was provided by Dr. Donald Schaffner, Microbiologist Expert, Rutgers State University, New Jersey. ®



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ASSOCIATION NEWS

NEWS ABOUT GCCA CORE PARTNERS

Bylaws Updated and Membership Votes at 2026 Convention

On April 28, GCCA Leadership presented an updated set of bylaws designed to provide the Alliance the flexibility to respond to change.

“The previous bylaws have served GCCA well. But they were written for a version of this association – and a version of this industry – that has evolved considerably,” states GCCA President and CEO Sara Stickler.

The amendments were the result of months of review by the board’s governance committee, legal counsel, and staff leadership. They were designed to modernize the governance structure, provide operational flexibility, and ensure GCCA is equipped to make decisions at the speed the industry requires.

Key updates include:

- **Organizational Scope and Purpose:** Reframes GCCA from a warehousing trade group into a global cold chain leadership and advocacy alliance.
- **Membership Structure and Philosophy:** Formalizes a tiered ecosystem model that preserves governance control for operators while enabling broader participation.
- **Governance Model and Board Composition:** Moves to a strategic, globally representative board with modern nonprofit governance practices.
- **Role of Regions and Chapters:** Decouples chapter engagement from formal governance power, streamlining decision-making while maintaining global input with Region Councils.
- **Officers and Executive Leadership:** Clarifies executive authority, strengthens accountability, and aligns with best-practice nonprofit officer structures.
- **Meetings, Voting, and Modernization:** Modernizes governance for a global, digitally connected organization.

These amendments were distributed to the full membership prior to voting. For more information, please contact Sara Stickler at ssstickler@gcca.org.



2026 GCCA Board of Directors and 2026 GCCF Board of Governors Take Office

The GCCA is proud to announce the volunteer leaders who will guide its strategic direction in 2026 – a pivotal year marked by organizational transformation, renewed focus, and expanded global representation.

Together, the GCCA Board of Directors and the Global Cold Chain Foundation (GCCF) Board of Governors represent and set strategy for the full breadth of the temperature-controlled logistics industry, from refrigerated warehousing and transportation to international development and scientific research. Board terms will now run from convention to convention where GCCA members and stakeholders will recognize outgoing board members and hear from incoming chairs as they take the reins and step into leadership.

Tim Ludwig, Francisco Moura, Larry Alderfer, Karen Reece, and Jason Dresibach will serve as officers of the GCCA Board. Adam Forste, Graham Harvey, Mathew Moore, and Mickey Hoffman will serve as officers of the GCCF Board. Additionally, Executive and Finance Committee members were announced for each board.

Read the full press release and visit the updated board leadership at www.gcca.org/about/leadership



2026 GCCA Convention Recap

The 135th GCCA Convention wrapped on April 29, 2026, after several days spent at the Grand Hyatt Resort in Scottsdale, Arizona. The event brought together 530 cold chain professionals from around the globe for the premier gathering in temperature-controlled warehousing and logistics. Four keynote speakers anchored the main stage, including Greg Creed, former CEO of Yum! Brands and Taco Bell, who explored how creative and customer-centric thinking drives growth; Doug Ducey, former CEO of Cold Stone Creamery before serving two terms as Governor of Arizona; and Drew Matus of MetLife with an outlook on the economy and workforce. Closing out the last general session, SNL

producer Lindsay Shookus detailed how she builds trust and relationships with celebrities – directly translating to how 3PLs can build trust with their customers.

President and CEO Sara Stickler presented the GCCA “State of the Association,” and the findings of the organization’s annual Global Top 25 List, noting that the world’s leading cold storage companies have continued expanding capacity over the past year amid rising demand.

Educational sessions covered a wide range of pressing topics, including cold chain facility upgrade strategies, cyber and physical asset security, energy management, the future of temperature-controlled facility expansion, changes in refrigerated transportation, and multimodal logistics. New this year, Deep Dive Discussion sessions were designed to bring warehouse and logistics operators together with subject matter experts to talk emerging industry challenges.

An Innovation Showcase with 54 exhibitors and a Cold Chain Café, where small groups discussed real business challenges, rounded out the educational programming.

Thank you again to the sponsors of this year’s convention. To see photos from the conference, visit the GCCA Flickr account, and mark your calendars now for the 136th GCCA Convention in sunny Miami, Florida, May 17-19, 2027.



World Refrigeration Day

On June 26, GCCA proudly joins the global cold chain community in celebrating World Refrigeration Day. This year’s theme, “Cool Intelligence,” focuses on how cold chain systems are designed, installed, operated, and maintained. While AI is grabbing headlines, this year’s emphasis on human expertise and smart, sustainable operations aligns closely with GCCA’s own priorities. GCCA is committed to advancing operational excellence, sustainability, and workforce development across every link of the cold chain – and to championing the skilled professionals who keep it running.

Visit www.gcca.org to learn more about how GCCA priorities, programs, and projects align with “Cool Intelligence.” 

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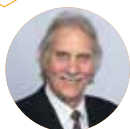
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The Global Cold Chain Foundation (GCCF) Council of Scientific Advisors is an eminent group of food scientists, logistics, and packaging experts from around the world. The Council provides cutting-edge research and advice to members of the Global Cold Chain Alliance and its Core Sectors.



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Have a burning cold chain question?

Submit an inquiry to the Council of Scientific Advisors at www.gcca.org/inquiry

MEMBER NEWS

NEWS FROM MEMBERS OF GCCA CORE PARTNERS

AMERICOLD AND EQT announced a \$1.3 billion North American cold storage joint venture. Under the terms of the agreement, Americold will contribute 12 cold storage facilities to the joint venture with an aggregate value in excess of \$1.3 billion at inception. The facilities are located across the United States and comprise a total of approximately 124 million cubic feet of temperature-controlled capacity, with over 400,000 combined pallet positions. The joint venture is expected to be among the largest operators of cold storage facilities in North America. EQT will acquire a 70% interest in the joint venture, and Americold will retain a 30% equity interest and serve as day-to-day manager of the platform to ensure continuity of service.



AMERICOLD announced a new long-term relationship with Jerónimo Martins, Portugal's leading retail group. Under the multi-year agreement, Americold will manage the storage and store case pick fulfillment of approximately 12 million cases of frozen products annually, serving roughly 300 retail stores across Portugal. To support these operations, Americold has enhanced its Lisbon facility, including refurbishing cold storage chambers and increasing throughput capacity. Richard Winnall, President, International at Americold, says, "At this scale, storeready fulfillment requires precision and consistency. This is where our standardized operating model and experienced teams create meaningful value, enabling scalable execution for customers like Jerónimo Martins."



LINEAGE released its "Cold Chain Insights Survey," which finds food and beverage companies are navigating an increasingly complex operating environment characterized by geopolitical disruption and shifting market dynamics. In response, those companies are prioritizing resilience, making greater investments in data and automation, and seeking deeper

collaboration with logistics partners to enable more agile execution. These findings are based on a survey of 1,000 decision-makers across the United States, Canada and Mexico that examines how food and beverage supply chain leaders plan to navigate 2026. Greg Lehmkuhl, President and CEO of Lineage, says, "As companies navigate 2026, the focus is on making faster, better-informed decisions, using flexibility, insight, and technology to keep operations running reliably."



SHORELINE FREEZERS announced a major expansion of its facility in southern New Jersey, planning to add 128,000 square feet of new warehouse space, increase capacity to 27,000 pallet positions, and to broaden the company's integrated service offerings. Owned and operated by the Reichle family of Lund's Fisheries in Cape May, New Jersey, the enhanced facility will offer value-added logistics services, including: LTL shipping; cross docking; case picking; ocean container services; and railcar siding access. 🔄

Cold Chain Index First Quarter 2026 Updates Now Available

**The GCCA Cold Chain Index
tracks cost growth in
refrigerated warehousing,
helping members benchmark
expenses and justify pricing
during negotiations.**



**Cold
Chain
Index**

GCCA Members can access CCI templates
and executive summaries at

www.gcca.org/resource/gcca-cold-chain-index

2026 GCCA EVENTS

JANUARY

- 21 January 2026 — Cold Chain Development in Latin America (Webinar)
- 29 January 2026 — The Global Year Ahead (GCCA Members Only Webinar)

FEBRUARY

- 7-10 February 2026 — U.S. Cold Chain Institute East | Atlanta, Georgia, United States

MARCH

- 1-4 March 2026 — U.S. Cold Chain Institute West | Tempe, Arizona, United States
- 10 March 2026 — Cold Chain Connection Medellín | Medellín, Colombia
- 12 March 2026 — Cold Chain Transportation Best Practices (Webinar)
- 18-20 March 2026 — GCCA Europe Conference | Düsseldorf, Germany

APRIL

- 15 April 2026 — Brazil Regulatory Forum | Brasília, Brazil
- 27-29 April 2026 — GCCA Convention | Scottsdale, Arizona, United States

MAY

- 13 May 2026 — Cold Chain Connection Guatemala | Guatemala City, Guatemala
- 21 May 2026 — Cold Chain Connection Singapore | Singapore
- 27-28 May 2026 — Brazil Cold Chain Congress | São Paulo, Brazil

JULY

- 8-9 July 2026 — Cold Chain Connection Canada | Toronto, Canada
- 20-22 July 2026 — Cold Chain Institute Latin America | Mexico City, Mexico
- 22 July 2026 — Cold Chain Connection Mexico City | Mexico City, Mexico

AUGUST

- 18-20 August 2026 — Cold Chain Institute Brazil | São Paulo, Brazil
- 26-27 August 2026 — Cold Chain Connection Midwest | Kansas City, Missouri, United States

SEPTEMBER

- 2-3 September 2026 — GCCA Africa Conference | Johannesburg, South Africa
- 7-9 September 2026 — Cold Chain Institute Europe | Rotterdam, Netherlands
- 9 September 2026 — Cold Chain Connection Rotterdam | Rotterdam, Netherlands

OCTOBER

- 14-15 October 2026 — Cold Chain Connection Northeast | Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States
- 27-28 October 2026 — Cold Chain Connection Lima | Lima, Peru

NOVEMBER

- 2-3 November 2026 — Cold Chain Connection Southeast | Atlanta, Georgia, United States
- 18-19 November 2026 — Cold Chain Connection Gdansk | Gdansk, Poland

CONVENTIONS, CONFERENCES & CONGRESSES

Major industry gatherings with broader programming and networking opportunities.

- **18–20 March 2026** — GCCA Europe Conference | Düsseldorf, Germany
- **27–29 April 2026** — GCCA Convention | Scottsdale, Arizona, United States
- **27–28 May 2026** — Brazil Cold Chain Congress | São Paulo, Brazil
- **2–3 September 2026** — GCCA Africa Conference | Johannesburg, South Africa

COLD CHAIN CONNECTIONS

Regional, informal networking and education events — often alongside other industry activities.

- **8–9 July 2026** — Cold Chain Connection Toronto | Toronto, Canada
- **22 July 2026** — Cold Chain Connection Mexico City | Mexico City, Mexico
- **26–27 August 2026** — Cold Chain Connection Midwest | Kansas City, Missouri, United States
- **9 September 2026** — Cold Chain Connection Rotterdam | Rotterdam, Netherlands
- **14–15 October 2026** — Cold Chain Connection Northeast | Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States
- **27–28 October 2026** — Cold Chain Connection Lima | Lima, Peru
- **2–3 November 2026** — Cold Chain Connection Southeast | Atlanta, Georgia, United States
- **18–19 November 2026** — Cold Chain Connection Gdansk | Gdansk, Poland

GCCA WEBINAR SERIES

The GCCA Webinar Series delivers virtual educational and industry-focused sessions throughout the year, with multiple webinars offered each month on advocacy, leadership development, emerging trends, and cold chain best practices. Learn more and register for webinars at www.gcca.org/events

COLD CHAIN INSTITUTES

Multi-day training and professional development programs powered by the Global Cold Chain Foundation.

- **7–10 February 2026** — U.S. Cold Chain Institute East | Atlanta, Georgia, United States
- **1–4 March 2026** — U.S. Cold Chain Institute West | Tempe, Arizona, United States
- **20–22 July 2026** — Cold Chain Institute Latin America | Mexico City, Mexico
- **18–20 August 2026** — Cold Chain Institute Brazil | São Paulo, Brazil
- **7–9 September 2026** — Cold Chain Institute Europe | Rotterdam, Netherlands

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