

Temperature Monitors Gain in Carrier Acceptance

MOTOR carriers have begun to specify that Ryan or similar temperature recorders be included in produce loads. "Years ago, it was the shippers who specified their use," says Jules Canipe, president of Kneipp Truck Transportation Systems in Nogales, Arizona. "Now, as a trucker, we specify them."

"They show what the true temperatures are and help protect carriers from claims based on market fluctuations that are passed off as temperature abuse. Temperature recorders are the best friend a produce hauler has."

When temperature monitors first appeared on the market, many carriers were reluctant to have them included in a load. Shippers or receivers usually had to insist on recorders. Several factors have changed that attitude. Trailers and refrigeration units are much more reliable than they were when recorders first appeared. Confidence in the recorders has improved, and the value of produce shipments has increased.

Low-Cost Insurance

"Maybe product goes bad from time to time, but usually it is not because of temperature abuse on our part," says Canipe. "It's critical for produce to be hauled at the correct temperature. It's also critical to be able to prove temperature management. We haul about 2,000 loads from Arizona and the West Coast to eastern markets annually. Those loads vary in value from \$25,000 to \$35,000 each. For \$23.50, we can put a Ryan recorder in the load and get a verifiable record of our performance."

Many carriers follow Canipe's example. "We request a recorder if we're handling a real perishable load like asparagus or strawberries," says Frank McWhorter, president of McWhorter Transportation in Fresno, California. "We've saved \$1,000 or more on a claim more than once. Recording instruments are just as valuable to carriers as to shippers. They tell the truth about transit temperature, protecting both shipper and carriers from claims."

The cost of temperature recorders should not prevent carriers from using them, says Arthur Wall, president of Fresh Agri Service Transportation in Salinas, California. "Some people are penny pinchers and always try to find

ways to save every dime," he says. "But what's the big deal about paying for a recorder? A small price for safety has got to be worth it when we're talking about produce loads that may be valued at \$50,000 to \$60,000."

Valuable for Resolving Claims

Temperature monitors can be a valuable instrument in resolving claims for spoiled produce, says Steven Drew, general claims adjuster for Ballard & Company in Seattle. Drew handles about 200 cargo claims cases a year for the independent claims adjusting firm. Usually, 50 to 60 of these cases are related to temperature abuse. "Ryan recorders can prove that temperature was properly maintained by the carrier," he says. "Otherwise the opposing parties just engage in a shouting match."

"Recorders benefit the trucker most often by showing that product was loaded warm. If cargo is loaded warm, the temperature chart usually shows a distinct tail pattern over the course of a two-day-or-more trip," he says.

A good example of the cooling record of a rejected load is given by Dan Pearce, president of Dan Pearce Inc of Fresno, California. Pearce hauls an average of 3,000 produce loads annually.

"We had moved a combination load of strawberries and cauliflower," he says. "When the load got to the receiver, the strawberries were off-color. The receiver complained that we had heated the berries. At least, they complained until they saw the tape from the recorder loaded with the strawberries. It started at 56°F, and went down steadily to 36°. The berries had been too warm when put on the trailer, and the recorder showed that. This is just one of several instances where one or two pallets in a load may be bad and the receiver tries to file a claim for the whole load."

Return Recorders to Manufacturer

Even the courts accept temperature recorders as evidence in claims cases. This is true if the recorder is tested and calibrated before and after each trip. "Most carriers don't realize that for them to be fully protected with verifiable information about a trip, the recorder must be returned for testing and calibration," says Pat Vaché, president of Ryan Instruments. "We'll pay the re-

turn postage, but it's in the best interests of truckers to see that each Ryan recorder completes the final step in its journey."

Ryan's position in the industry is so strong that many temperature recorders are referred to generically as "Ryans" regardless of the actual manufacturer.

Ryan Instruments was founded in 1921, and is headquartered in Redmond, Washington. During 1989, Ryan's recorders were used to monitor transit temperature in more than 250,000 produce shipments. In 68 years of operation, the company has saved millions of dollars for shippers, carriers, and receivers in the produce industry. □