PRESS RELEASE

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GB Railfreight showcases first biomass wagons

GB Railfreight (GBRf), the UK's most reliable freight haulier, showcased its newly modified biomass wagons, which will be used for its multi-million pound contract with Drax Power Limited, at Barrow Hill Roundhouse Railway Centre on Thursday 1 July, 2010.

Commenting on the new wagons, Graham Backhouse, commercial manager at Drax, said: "*Our commitment to reducing the carbon footprint of our electricity generation through the use of sustainable biomass extends to the transportation of this renewable fuel source. With a focus on moving biomass by rail we are able to make a meaningful saving in emissions of CO2*.

"*In partnership with GBRf, WH Davis, VTG and Lloyds Register we have developed bespoke wagons which ensure that biomass of the right quality is delivered straight to our storage and processing facilities at the power station. The success of this working partnership is capable of making an important contribution to realising the full potential of generating renewable power from biomass on a significant scale*."

The wagons, which are the first of their kind, have top and bottom doors that are operated automatically by the use of magnets and sensors controlling a pneumatic cylinder on each door.

John Smith, MD, GBRf, said: "*We would like to thank all of our partners for their contribution to the building of these new wagons. They will allow us to introduce a new market to rail and continue to bring innovation to the industry*."

The event was attended by GBRf's partners in building the wagons W.H Davis, ITT, Lloyd's Register and VTG Rail UK, as well as customers and members of the media.

Ian Whelpton, W.H Davis Sales and Marketing Director commented: "*Having built 23 new hopper wagons, W.H Davis was delighted to be awarded a subsequent contract for the manufacture and installation of an automated roof door system and other associated components necessary to keep biomass protected against water ingress. The design also demanded a linked automatic discharge system with many built-in operational safeguards, together with comprehensive cyclic testing of the whole system to ensure the required high level of performance*".

In total 23 wagons have been modified and they will be used to haul renewable biomass, from Port of Tyne to Drax Power Station near Selby, North Yorkshire, making GBRf the first freight haulier to regularly move biomass on the rail network.

VTG Rail UK's sales manager, Ian Shaw, said: "*The automated roof system has been retrofitted to the wagons to ensure the biomass product stays in optimum condition during its journey. This is especially important for this product, as water contamination would prevent it burning properly, as well as stopping it from being effectively discharged from the wagons*."

Richard Gibney, head of Rolling Stock Design, Lloyds Register Rail, said: "*This project required a great deal of co-operation between our engineering team, approvals team, Drax and the port authority to ensure compatibility with respective installations and safety processes. Developing this unique system to meet all stakeholders needs along with railway standards and operating procedures was a huge challenge and we are delighted with the outcome*".

GBRf will look to start commissioning trains for the biomass contract in early October.

Photo: John Smith GBRf and partners from VTG Rail UK, W.H Davis, ITT and Lloyd's Register Rail.

About GBRf

GB Railfreight is one of the UK's leading specialist rail freight companies, operating a wide ranging portfolio of intermodal and bulk traffic services in commodities such as coal, petrochemicals and construction materials. Its innovative approach and focus on flexibility, reliability and customer service has led to a raft of rail industry awards and a number of recent significant contract wins.
GBRf is part of Europorte, the rail freight arm of GET.