

Paradise Island Foods: Proving that Going Green is Worth It

Paradise Island Foods Inc. owners, Len and Kevin Thomson, have always been environmentally conscious and they didn't hesitate to stay on the leading edge of green commerce when it came time to update their fleet of trucks at Paradise Island Foods Inc. (PIF).

Jason Kozubal, the company's Operations Manager, says becoming the first fleet on Vancouver Island to purchase Class VIII enviroTrucks and enviroTrailers, solidifies PIF's position as a green leader in food production and distribution industry.



"We're proud of what we've done but the real recognition should go to the technology and our employees," said Kozubal. "The technology for making environmentally friendly equipment like these Kenworth T660s and Carrier Deltek Hybrid trailer refrigeration units possible and our employees for embracing them."

The food manufacturer & distributor's new tractors include low emission engines, speed limiters (90kph corp speed limit), on board XataNet driver computers (full electronic logs, GPS, satellite communications, performance recording) and aerodynamic packages; all of which results in lower greenhouse gas emissions and greater fuel efficiency.

The newest trailer refrigeration units to the fleet are the Carrier Deltek Hybrid multi-temp units. These units have less moving parts and half of the refrigerant of traditional reefers. They run on diesel while on the road, but get plugged into building power when at their facility. The fuel and maintenance savings are significant, not to mention 60% quieter! PIF is in the process of retrofitting most of the fleet to the new hybrid reefer units.

"Paradise Island Foods employees deserve some kudos because they've bought into every environmentally friendly policy we've instituted because we've shown them it's worth their while," said Kozubal.

It began about six years ago when the company, which manufactures, processes, imports and distributes cheese, dairy products, and specialty goods for retailers, established an employee incentive program linking their bonuses to productivity goals. Every fiscal quarter since, employees have seen hundreds of dollars go into their bank accounts because drivers have helped contribute to the incentive program. The drivers have been very focused on green practices like progressive shifting, idle reduction and driving slower, which have boosted fuel efficiency and helped Paradise Island Foods hit its productivity targets.

“But we can’t let up now that we’ve made these strides. It’s time for us to continue to show leadership and help other fleet operators see the benefits of going green,” said Kozubal. “Working with Green Fleets BC, we are collecting the hard data to demonstrate to those company owners who are considering enviroTruck options, that making the transition isn’t just environmentally sound, it’s a good business move.”

He says the cost to purchase the Hybrid Reefers are relatively similar to buying a traditional reefer but, with all the new environmentally friendly technology, quicker payback and lower maintenance costs, it makes a lot of sense to go with the hybrid units.

Kozubal believes the transportation industry will always be under the environmental microscope simply because of the sheer impact on the environment. But, he says this is also a great opportunity to demonstrate that the sector is paying attention to the public’s demand for greening up and is willing to make the necessary changes.

Paradise Island Foods is also being proactive with its clients. Like most of us, the company is facing skyrocketing fuel prices and trying to find ways to minimize the impact and the infamous “fuel surcharge.”

“Almost everyone would like to do something to help the environment and clean up the mess we have made of the world. However, most people just don’t know where to start or think that they can’t make a difference by themselves. We have been very fortunate to get the opportunity from Green Fleets BC to demonstrate this new technology to the whole industry and hopefully make a huge difference in the future. Our enviroTrucks and enviroTrailers will play a huge role in helping to keep our fuel surcharges and emissions down,” said Kozubal. “Not only are we doing our best to not to pass on the ever-increasing cost of fuel to our customers, but we can honestly tell our clients that we’ve taken action to reduce our fuel consumption and emissions by running environmentally conscious equipment. We’ve even changed our sales vehicles to hybrids and reduced their fuel usage by approximately 50%!”