

Decarbonising The Cold Chain

From Farm to Fork...

A Strategy to Mitigate Global Food Loss



DATE

27TH - 28TH May 2026

Blaauwberg Beach Hotel -Cape Town

VENUE



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Reimagining the Cold Chain for a Low-Carbon Future

Join industry leaders, innovators, and policy-makers at South Africa's Premier Cold Chain Logistics Summit — A dynamic two-day summit hosted by Empire Conferencing (ECC) dedicated to advancing the future of temperature-controlled supply chains across Africa and beyond. Whether you're part of a third-party logistics operations or manage in-house supply chains, this summit offers unmatched opportunities to engage with top-tier professionals and thought leaders shaping the sector.

Be Part of the Conversation That's transforming Cold Chain Logistics across Africa.

The conference aims to create a discussion that addresses strategies for:

- **PIONEERING** the Future of Cold Storage -Exploring Cutting-Edge Innovations Dive into the Latest Developments in Cold Chain Design, Digitalisation, and Decarbonisation Technologies.
- **BRIDGING** the Cold Chain Divide -Address Pressing Global Challenges around Cold Chain access in Low-Resource and Rural Communities.
- **FOSTERING** Strategic Collaboration across Industries — Agriculture, Logistics, Technology, and Sustainability — To Spark Impactful Partnerships.
- **EVERAGING** Data for Impact- Discover Data-Driven Strategies to Enhance Traceability, Efficiency, and Reduce Food Waste in Cold Chain Systems.
- **COOLING** with the Sun: Sustainable Infrastructure (Solar Power) for Energy-Efficient Cold Chains -Africa's Answer to Costly Food Waste.
- **BREAKING** the Ice: Rise of Female Powerhouses in the Cold Chain Sector.
- **REDUCING** Waste and Ensuring Safety of Temperature-Sensitive Goods.
- **INNOVATING** in Traceability and Supply Chain Transparency.
- **INVESTMENT** Opportunities and Policy Frameworks for Resilient Logistics.

Transforming cold-chains into sustainable, low-impact systems will require a paradigm shift away from the current 'business as usual' models. This transformation is not optional—it is essential.

Cold-chains should be regarded as core infrastructure for modern societies, on par with water, electricity, and internet services. They must be made resilient in the face of a changing climate, especially as rising ambient temperatures and more frequent, severe, and prolonged heatwaves place increasing strain on refrigeration systems. Equally important is ensuring equitable access to cold-chain infrastructure. This is especially crucial for the half a billion smallholder farmers in low-income countries who play a vital role in the current and future global food system. Empowering these farmers with sustainable cold-chain access can help reduce post-harvest losses, improve food security, and support climate resilience.

Just as people in economically developed countries expect water to flow from taps, electricity to come from wall sockets, and the internet to stream from the air around them, they also take for granted the ready availability of safe, high-quality food from restaurant kitchens, fast-food outlets, and supermarket shelves. This is not the reality for those living in low- and middle-income countries. But aspirations are rising. As these populations grow more affluent through economic development, billions more people around the world will rightly demand the same standards of food. Meeting this demand, however, poses a profound challenge—not just for global supply systems, but for the planet itself.

Rethinking the Cold Chain Food production and distribution already account for roughly one-third of global greenhouse gas emissions. These systems also consume vast amounts of land, energy, and water, and contribute significantly to environmental degradation—from deforestation and habitat loss to pollution of air, soil, rivers, and oceans. A key part of this transformation lies in rethinking cold-chains—especially those powered by fossil fuels and dependent on outdated, environmentally harmful refrigerants. In both food and health sectors, cold-chains are essential. They maintain a consistent, temperature-controlled environment for the distribution of perishable goods, from production to end-use. Yet today's cold-chains rely heavily on fossil fuel-based energy and refrigerants that contribute to climate change and environmental harm.

Cold-chains are made up of a continuous series of stationary and mobile refrigeration units. These systems consume substantial energy and generate a wide range of pollutants—greenhouse gases, particulates, and chemical waste—during their operation. As such, cold-chains are not only a hidden driver of environmental degradation, but also a critical area for reform.

What to Expect:

- Engaging **Keynote Sessions** by Leading Experts Covering the Latest Challenges Facing the Industry Contributing to Food Loss and Waste.
- Practical **Case Studies** from Successful Cold Chain Implementations and Projects.
- In-depth **Discussions** on Policy, Investment, and Infrastructure Development.
- Unrivalled **Networking** with C-suite Executives, Innovators, and Policy-Makers.
- A Collaborative Platform to **Exchange Best Practices** and Actionable Strategies in Order to Streamline your Cold chain in a Climate Change Era

Join us at the 2nd Annual Cold Chain Logistics Summit as we explore the innovations, investments, and policies that are shaping the future of cold chain logistics in Africa and beyond.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

Industry sectors



BOOK YOUR PLACE TODAY:

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AGENDA: DAY ONE-27TH MAY 2026

08:30	REGISTRATION MEET AND GREET	
09:00-09:10	Opening Remarks/Introduction: CHAIRPERSON Is Cold Chain Logistics the solution to Food Loss?	
09:10-10:00	Global Trends & Strategic Outlook within the Fresh Produce Sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Cold Chain Expansion: Trends, Risks, and Opportunities The Cold Chain of 2035: Strategic Scenarios and Innovation Pathways Emerging Markets and the Cold Chain Divide: Bridging Infrastructure Gaps Policy and Regulation Shaping the Future of Cold Chain Logistics Speaker: Mr Thabile Nkunjane - Senior Economist -NAMC	
10:00-10:45	Frozen Space, Fluid Movement: Designing Cold Chain Warehouses for Humans, Machines & Margins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fred Unpacks how Smarter Storage System Designs Reduces Labour Exposure, Improves Safety, Maximises Frozen Space, and Enables Faster, More Predictable Movement of Goods. By Rethinking Storage Density, Material Flow, and Human-Machine Collaboration, Automation becomes More than Technology — it becomes a Strategic Advantage This Session Challenges Static Layouts and Conventional Thinking, Showing how Well-Designed Automation Protects People, Unlocks Margins, and Future-Proofs Cold Chain Operations, and how Cold Chain Warehouses can Evolve from Cost Centres into Strategic, Revenue-Driving Assets. Speaker: Mr Fred Albrecht - Chief Executive Officer - Logistics Systems Engineering (LSE)	
10:45-11:00		BREAK
11:00-11:45	Top-down Versus Bottom-Up: How Green Finance drives Sustainable Development in Cold Chain Logistics? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabling Investment in Energy-Efficient Technologies Incentivizing Low-Emission Logistics through Sustainable Financing Models. Speaker: Mr Anyababa Ikem - Africa Infrastructure Investment Managers (AIIM)	
11:45-12:30	Danfoss: Better Cold Chain Infrastructure a Must for Africa! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> With around 14% of food worldwide lost due to a lack of effective refrigeration, enough to feed one billion people Danfoss is calling for more attention on the need to establish sustainable and energy-efficient cold-chain infrastructure Speaker: Mr Kavir Sewlall -Danfoss SA	
12:30-13:00	Controlled Atmosphere: Extending Postharvest Life and Supporting the Cold Chain <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Controlled Atmosphere (CA) has transformed apple storage worldwide by slowing fruit respiration and extending post-harvest storage life. This session will trace the history of CA, explain the science behind oxygen and carbon dioxide management, and show how CA control underpins South Africa's competitive apple and pear exports. Speaker: Mr Andrew Brink- Gas At Site	
13:00-14:00		LUNCH BREAK
14:00-15:00	Round Table Discussion: The Role of Technology in Transforming Cold Chain Logistics <p>Session Overview: As demand for temperature-sensitive goods rises—especially in food, pharmaceuticals, and agriculture—technology is redefining how cold chains operate. This panel brings together experts from logistics, tech, and agri-business to explore innovations driving efficiency, traceability, and sustainability across the cold chain.</p> <p>Discussion Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smart Monitoring & IoT Integration: How real-time tracking of temperature, humidity, and location is preventing spoilage, reducing losses, and improving transparency. Automation & AI in Cold Chain Operations: From predictive maintenance of refrigeration units to AI-driven route optimization—what automation means for cost savings and reliability. Blockchain & Digital Traceability: How distributed ledger technology is enhancing food safety, compliance, and trust across the supply chain. Robotics in Cold Storage & Handling Sustainable Tech Solutions <p>Exploring energy-efficient cooling systems, solar-powered reefer trucks, and green packaging technologies supported by digital tools. Challenges & Adoption Barriers: What's holding back tech uptake in cold chain systems across developing markets, and how can public-private partnerships help?</p> Speakers: Mr Sean Hay -Fruit SA Mr Martin Bailey -Industrial Logistic Systems Mr Alan Richards- APEX Real Time Solutions	  
15:00-15:15		BREAK
15:15-16:00	Breaking the Ice!! Rise of Female Powerhouses in the Cold Chain Sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shifting the Climate of Leadership Real-World Female Trailblazers in the Industry Addressing Systemic Challenges & Gender Equity Strategies. Speakers: Ms Lutendo Ndhlovu -Dffe (Department of Fisheries, Forestry and Environment) Mr Grant Laidlaw- ACRA	 
16:00-16:45	Revolutionising Citrus Transport: Rail as a Catalyst for Cold Chain Efficiency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced temperature stability Larger volume, fewer trips Lower carbon footprint. Cost-effective over long distances Integrated cold chain infrastructure Speaker: Mr Parton Khumalo - PPECB	
END OF DAY ONE		

AGENDA: DAY TWO -28TH MAY 2026

09:00-09:45	Energy Efficiency of Cooling Facilities in the Fruit Cold Chain: Referencing the banana Ripening Centre in Tshwane Market <ul style="list-style-type: none">Optimizing Energy Use in Ripening ChambersUpgrades at the Tshwane facility, including variable speed drives (VSDs) on refrigeration compressors and high-efficiency insulation materials, highlight the role of retrofitting in lowering energy use and operational costs in older cold chain infrastructureData-Driven Performance Monitoring	
Speaker:	Prof Zhongjie Huan -Tshwane University of Technology	
09:45-10:30	Farm to Packhouse: Monitoring during Field Harvesting and Transit to Cooling Facilities <ul style="list-style-type: none">Pre-cooling at harvest pointOn-site data loggingReal-time sensor tagging at harvestTransit condition monitoringTime-to-cool tracking	
Speaker:	Mr Andy Connel - A-BAR-C Services	
10:30-10:45	BREAK	
10:45-11:30	Ripening Facilities for “Optimum Results” <ul style="list-style-type: none">This session explores the critical role that well-designed ripening facilities play in delivering consistent, high-quality fruit to both local and export markets.	
Speaker:	Mr Gjalt Hooghiemstra- Subtropico	
11:30-12:15	Optimizing Energy Use in Cold Chain Logistics: Insights from Implemented Projects and casestudies	
Speaker:	Mr Petrie Van Der Merwe- Energy Partners SA	
12:15-13:00	Designing Next Generation Cold Stores – the basics of good design for next generation Cold Stores <ul style="list-style-type: none">From a process flow, materials handling and a logistics perspective.	
Speaker:	Mr Clayton Thomas- Managing Director, Industrial Logistics Systems	
13:00-14:00	LUNCH BREAK	
14:00-14:45	Thermal Liners: A Sustainable Innovation for the Cold Chain’s Green Future <ul style="list-style-type: none">Thermal liners are emerging as a low-energy, eco-friendly alternative in cold chain logistics offering passive temperature protection without the heavy reliance on active refrigeration systems.Designed with reflective insulation materials and recyclable components, these liners help reduce energy consumption, cut CO₂ emissions, and minimize food spoilage.	
Speaker:	Mr Roger Bester MD - PowerPlastics SA	
14:45-15:30	Sustainability & Climate Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none">Reimagining the Cold Chain for a Low-Carbon FutureSustainable Cooling Solutions for the Global Food SystemGreen Cold Chains: Innovations in Energy-Efficient RefrigerationDecarbonizing Cold Logistics: From Farm to ForkClimate-Resilient Cold Chains in Emerging Markets	
Speaker:	Prof Leila Goedhals -Gerber -Stellenbosch University	
15:30-16:15	Hypoxic Fire Prevention: A New Standard for Cold Storage <p>Fires in cold stores are devastating, and traditional suppression systems respond only after ignition. Hypoxic fire prevention offers a proactive alternative: lowering oxygen to 15% in the protected space, a level safe for people but impossible for fire.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Backed by ISO certification and insurer acceptance, the Isolcell N2 ORS system delivers unmatched risk reduction.This session will show how hypoxic fire prevention safeguards cold storage complexes, high-value goods, archives, and even server facilities — with Gas At Site introducing this innovation to South Africa.	
Speaker:	Mr Andrew Brink- Gas At Site	
16:15	Closing remarks	
END OF CONFERENCE		

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