FRAXINEWS

N°13 // 2025

AUTOMATING
SMARTER TOGETHER

FRAXINUS

Published by Fraxinus NV — Wijnendalestraat 162, 8800 Roeselare, Belgium

INDEX

Dear reader,

You're holding the thirteenth edition of Fraxinews in your hands — a long-standing tradition by now, and at the same time proof that there's always something going on at Fraxinus. Each year brings new projects and investments we're proud to share with you.

In this edition, you'll discover four very different cases that together show what Fraxinus stands for. From our long-standing collaboration with Frager, where we've helped make automation feasible even for bespoke production, to our partnership with Ardo, where efficiency in strict conditions has been a shared focus for years. Clarys demonstrates how safety and efficiency can go hand in hand, while ODTH transformed their warehouse with large-scale automation that significantly boosted capacity. Four unique challenges, but always the same approach. We work together to find the best solution — pragmatic, purposeful and smart.

We're also taking this opportunity to shine the spotlight on some of our people. New colleagues and loyal team members celebrating anniversaries show the growing strength of the team behind Fraxinus. You'll also read about our investments, because they help us serve our customers even better.

Whatever the project, we pursue the same goals: challenging work, satisfied customers and motivated employees. Those three reinforce each other. Without customers there are no projects, without projects there is no team — and without the team, there is no Fraxinus.

Thank you all for your trust. And to anyone who shares our vision and drive: you're always welcome at Fraxinus.

Hans Van Essche
Fraxinus CEO

CHEERS TO THESE FRAXINEERS!

10 YEARS OF FRAXINUS

KOEN KERKHOVE
Started on 25 November 2015 as a portal milling machine operator

JONAS CAPPELLE
Started on 19 January 2015 as a project engineer

15 YEARS OF FRAXINUS

FREEK VROMAN
Started on 9 August 2010 as a technician/customer mechanic

A STRONG BOND, AT WORK AND BEYOND

FAMILY DAY AT FRAXINUS

On 21 September, we opened our doors to the families of our employees. Guided by our own colleagues, partners, children and parents got a unique look behind the scenes. It turned into a wonderful day full of pride and connection. A big thank you to all the families who joined us, and to our team for their enthusiasm and energy — you make Fraxinus stronger every single day!

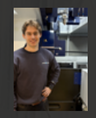
WELCOME TO OUR NEW FRAXINEERS

KOEN VAN DE VYVER
Started on 16 October 2024 as CFO

LAURENZO WITTEVRONGEL
Started on 19 August 2025 as a warehouse worker

JONAS VERCOUTERE
Started on 20 January 2025 as a project engineer

JARNE GYSSELS
Started on 15 September 2025 as a technician



LENNERT MAUWS
Started on 1 October 2025 as a project engineer

THREE INSPIRING TRADE FAIR DAYS

TRANSPORT & LOGISTICS

From 14–16 October, Fraxinus attended Transport & Logistics in Antwerp. For three days, we explored the future of internal transport, pallet flow, robotic solutions and custom-built machines. We look back with pride on a fair full of inspiring conversations and new contacts. Thank you to everyone who visited our stand!

A NEXT STEP IN AN OPTIMAL PRODUCTION FLOW FOR ARDO

AUTOMATED CLEANING AND FILLING OF FREEZER BOXES

Ardo is an international producer of frozen vegetables, herbs and fruit. With 16 sites across Europe, the company supplies retail, foodservice and industrial customers. In 2014, Ardo (founded in Ardooie) merged with Dujardin (founded in Koolskamp). Ardo was one of Fraxinus' first customers, and the two companies have now been working together for over twenty years on projects in internal transport and logistics automation. We spoke to Ignace Kint (Investment & Environmental Manager, Ardo Ardooie) and Christophe Soenen (Engineering & Maintenance Manager, Ardo Koolskamp).

From left to right: Hans Van Essche, Christophe Soenen, Ignace Kint, Mathias Desnouck

We preserve nature's gifts

ARDO IN A NUTSHELL

Ardo is a globally active producer of **freshly frozen vegetables, herbs and fruit**, with a "glocal" mindset: production sites are located close to cultivation areas, and sales offices are spread worldwide.

› **16 sites** in **7 countries**

› Annual turnover of approx. **€ 1.4 billion**

› Annual processing of around **947,000 tonnes** of products

› **3,300 employees** and **about 3,500 growers**

› Exporting to over **100 countries** worldwide

→ More info at www.ardo.com

> **"We see automation as a lever: it not only increases our capacity, but makes our entire process safer, more flexible and more sustainable."**
>
> — Christophe Soenen

> **"No project is ever perfect, but Fraxinus's willingness to look for solutions together builds real trust."**
>
> — Ignace Kint

What defines Ardo, and how exactly does its processing work?
Ignace: "Our operations are entirely seasonal. Everything we process comes straight from the field – no artificial lighting or heating, just what nature provides. This means major peaks during harvest time and calmer periods in between. During these downtimes – usually from January to March – we carry out maintenance and build new installations. The products we process also require a wide variety of packaging formats: from small retail packs of 200 grams, to 10 or 20 kilo foodservice bags, and large industrial octabins for customers who use our vegetables as ingredients in soup, pizza or ready meals."

Christophe: "Unlike the French fries industry, for example, we process dozens of different vegetables, each with its own season and packaging type. That makes our processes complex and demands great flexibility in logistics and storage. To manage this, we work with specialised lines at different sites: some products in Ardooie, others in Koolskamp. This means a smooth internal logistics flow between our locations is crucial."

How important is automation in this context?
Ignace: "Automation is key to coping with those seasonal peaks. In the past, we handled it with extra people and forklifts. Today, we think in terms of automated supply, cleaning, buffering and discharge. It's more efficient, safer and more sustainable."

Christophe: "Moreover, it's not just about standalone machines. It's about linking entire chains: production, storage and packaging. An installation has to work perfectly on its own, but also fit seamlessly into the bigger picture."

The most recent project realised together with Fraxinus was the installation of the new box line in Zwevezele. What made this project special?
Ignace: "The installation had to be integrated both in an existing and a new building. That meant dealing with different floor levels, narrow passages and existing lines. Fraxinus was involved throughout the construction phase, ensuring we wouldn't face surprises later on."

Christophe: "Hygiene requirements were another major factor. In a freezing environment you deal with steam, condensation and extreme temperatures. Photo cells need heating, and all surfaces must be easy to clean. Fraxinus knows the sector well and was able to translate that knowledge into stainless steel constructions, adapted drives and sloping surfaces. It's these details that make the difference."

How did the collaboration work in practice?
Christophe: "This project involved many parties: suppliers of film machines, the electrical/control partner and the building contractors. Fraxinus took the lead in coordination. Their 3D drawings brought everything together in one global plan, allowing us to identify and resolve bottlenecks in time. In the past, this was often done in 2D, but then you miss a lot."

Ignace: "The advantage is that Fraxinus is located nearby and knows the ins and outs of our industry. Short communication lines, quick follow-up and practical problem-solving – that's what really makes the difference."

Safety seems to be a recurring theme.
Ignace: "Twenty years ago you would build an installation first and think about safety afterwards. Today, every design starts with safety. That makes projects more complex, especially with multiple suppliers, but it's the only right way. It's not just about regulations – we really don't want accidents."

Christophe: "And safety has to remain workable. If an installation is too complicated to operate safely, people will look for creative ways to bypass it – with all the risks that entails. That's why we always have both safety and usability in mind."

What keeps the partnership with Fraxinus strong?
Ignace: "No project is ever perfect, and there are always things that can be improved. The key is that Fraxinus always helps look for solutions. That constructive attitude builds trust."

Christophe: "And they never work with standard solutions. Every project is custom-made: different buildings, products and circumstances. Fraxinus adapts each time, and we appreciate that."

What are your future plans?
Ignace: "We're currently building a large high-bay warehouse in Spain. The project involves tens of thousands of pallet spaces, which is a major construction and logistics challenge."

Christophe: "It is an excellent illustration of the direction we're heading in: automation as a lever for capacity and return – not only in production, but across the entire chain. Always with an eye on safety, sustainability and flexibility."

View this case on our website
Scan the QR code!

A Fraxtion of the project

BY MATHIAS DESNOUCK
PROJECT ENGINEER
—

"For the site in Koolskamp, we developed a **box line** that automates the **entire process from cleaning to stacking**. The installation had to be integrated into both existing and new buildings, which meant taking into account different floor levels and narrow passages.

In phase 1, we built the **cleaning line**: empty boxes are placed, tilted and brushed out. Quality is inspected using pressure sensors and cameras, and damaged boxes are automatically filtered out. The remaining boxes are then weighed and fitted with a plastic inner liner, ready for production.

Phase 2 extended this process to the **production lines**. Empty boxes are supplied and full ones are discharged. During filling, an integrated **vibration system** ensures **optimal use of volume**, resulting in 10–15% extra capacity. Afterwards, the boxes are automatically wrapped, covered and double-stacked for more efficient transport and storage.

Automation has **significantly reduced internal forklift traffic**, improving not only safety but also the reliability and continuity of the process."

EXTENSIVE AUTOMATION PROJECT FOR CLARYS

AUTOMATED EMPTYING OF PACKAGED RAW MATERIALS INTO CONTAINERS

Clarys, based in Oostkamp, began as a spice trader and has since grown into a specialist in tailor-made blends for meat products, bakery goods, soups and ready-made meals. The company's core strength lies in co-creating solutions with customers, supported by a strong R&D team and even an in-house baker and butcher. For the development of a new container discharge flow, Clarys partnered with Fraxinus. We spoke with Alexander Callens, Plant Manager at Clarys, about the collaboration, the automation itself and its impact on the workplace.

From left to right: Alexander Priem, Alexander Callens, Hans Van Essche

ABOUT CLARYS

Family-owned Clarys, based in Oostkamp, is a producer of powder blends for the food industry. Founded in 1970 by Herman Clarys and now led by the second generation, Kurt Clarys, the company develops **tailor-made powder mixes** and specialises in customised solutions for clients. Their products are used in bakery goods, meat products, soups, sauces and ready meals. Clarys mainly supplies the **Benelux**, France and Germany.

A strong in-house R&D team (about 20% of the workforce) works closely with customers. With its own laboratory, bakery and butcher's shop, Clarys can test and optimise recipes and processes in transparent collaboration.

› **700 raw materials** and over **1,000 recipes**

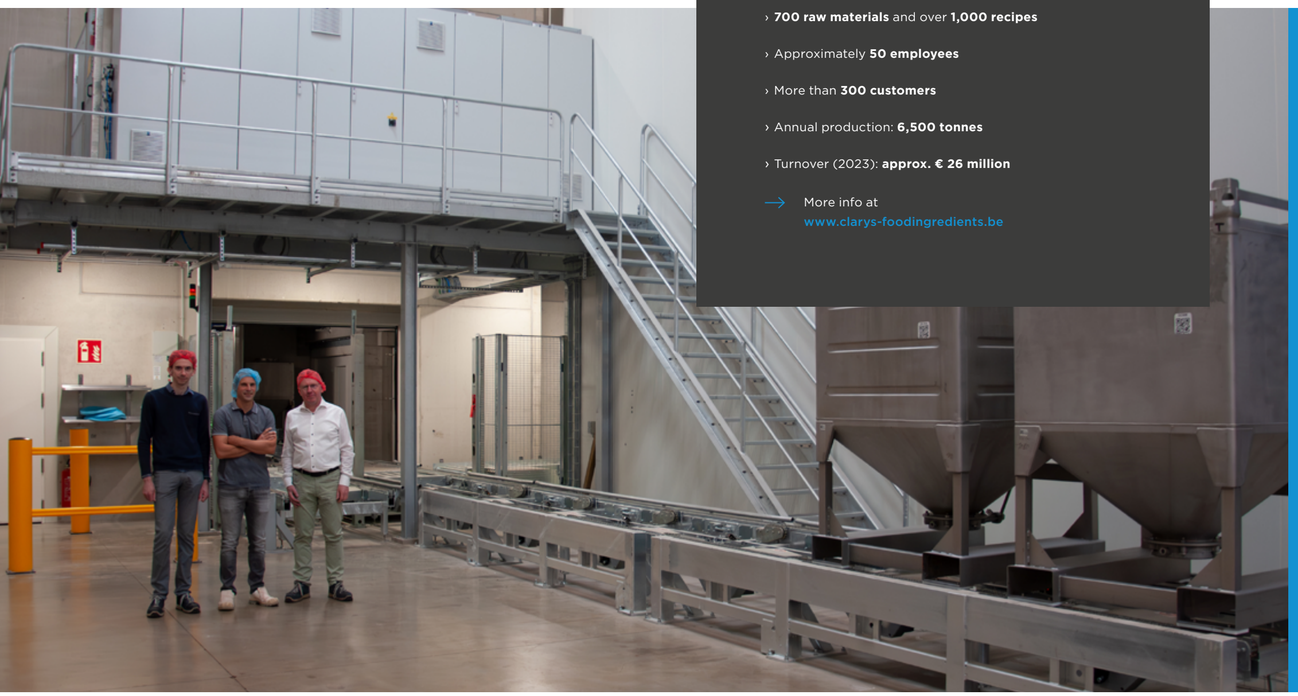
› Approximately **50 employees**

› More than **300 customers**

› Annual production: **6,500 tonnes**

› Turnover (2023): **approx. € 26 million**

→ More info at
www.clarys-foodingredients.be



How would you describe Clarys today?
"We create tailor-made premixes. Customers often come to us with a finished product and a problem: insufficient flavour, the wrong texture, or a shelf life that doesn't meet expectations. We look for the solution and test it here in our own pilot bakery and butcher's shop."

What led to this automation project with Fraxinus?
"It started with a practical issue: we had a long corridor constantly used by forklifts, and we wanted to automate that with a simple roller conveyor. But as we started thinking, more possibilities emerged, and the idea grew into a broader automation project. That's when we got in touch with Fraxinus.

We also realised that the existing floor wasn't strong enough – it was an office floor, not suitable for heavy machinery. Together with a structural engineer, we decided to remove part of it and replace it with a stainless-steel platform with drainage channels, topped by a new mezzanine. Everything then came together into one integrated project. The need might not have been urgent yet, but we chose to do a thorough job, all in one go – and looking back, that was absolutely the right decision."

Which challenges did the new installation address?
"The previous discharge process was entirely manual: operators had to lift bags, operate stackers and move everything themselves. We've replaced that with a controlled container flow. The result: far fewer forklift movements, improved ergonomics and, above all, greater traceability. We now know exactly what is where and what has been processed. That's crucial in a food company."

How did the collaboration with Fraxinus go?
"Honest and to the point. What was drawn was exactly what was built – no surprises along the way. Any issues were discussed and solved immediately. That was certainly the case for the big-bag unloading station: there's never a standard solution there, because every product flows differently. Fraxinus fine-tuned that with us. Safety was part of the discussion right from the design phase, for example in the manual discharge area. That open communication created real trust."

How were safety and ergonomics incorporated into the design?
"From the preliminary design stage, this was a key topic. Fraxinus integrated our existing automatic discharge machine into the new control system and made it fully CE-compliant. In the manual discharge area, additional adaptations were made so that operators can work safely and ergonomically, without losing speed. This combination ensures that the flow is not only safe but also practical for people on the floor."

How does the new flow work in practice?
"Pallets arrive on roller and chain conveyors. A barcode scan determines their route: to the discharge points, upwards, or return. Empty containers are sent via shuttles and lifts to the various discharge zones – big bag, automatic or manual. Weigh cells and MES registration provide complete traceability. Even cleaning is built in: a fixed cleaning container collects rinse water and drains it automatically. Hygiene is thus fully integrated into the process."

How have your employees reacted to this change?
"It has made things much easier for them. In the past, they had to lift bins to height with stackers and move everything back down manually. Now everything arrives directly on the conveyor they can unload it, discharge the material and get on with the next job straightaway. It saves a lot of effort and makes the process more user-friendly. The team is happy, and at the same time, we can handle more volume."

And strategically, what role does this project play?
"It fits perfectly with our growth ambitions. The next step is to fully link the "old" production area to the new container flow, so that preparation starts already in the warehouse and unnecessary movements disappear."

" Thanks to Fraxinus, we looked beyond a simple conveyor and tackled the entire flow."

— Alexander Callens

A fraxtion of the project

BY ALEXANDER PRIEM
SALES ENGINEER
—

"The installation at Clarys is a technically challenging line, realised within an existing building that was never designed for heavy machinery. Raw materials from the warehouse (pallets with bags or big bags) are transported **via several routes to discharge zones** where stainless-steel containers are filled. Due to an intermediate level, available height was limited, meaning the lift systems had to be partially built into the floor, which made the layout particularly complex.

A floor that was too light for machinery was removed and, together with Stumaco, replaced by stainless-steel platforms. From the transfer trolley to the discharge zones, everything is built in stainless steel, suitable for cleaning with water.

The upstream supply sections are made of galvanised steel. A roller curtain separates the dry area whenever the stainless-steel zone is being cleaned.

On level 0, a long roller conveyor buffers pallets. A barcode scan on the lift determines whether a pallet goes straight ahead to the discharge points, moves upwards, or gets sent back. There's also an emergency function to send a pallet directly up. Empty containers enter here and are distributed via a shuttle to two container lifts with integrated weigh cells. A fixed cleaning container collects rinse water and drains it automatically, preventing contamination.

On level 1, pallets arrive on a transfer carriage with three destinations:

› **Big bag discharge**: big bags are hoisted manually from the pallet and placed on a discharge station. The product flows dust-free via a rotor and sieve into the container.

› **Automatic discharge (bags)**: a lift brings the pallet to an ergonomic working height. The bags are placed on a belt, automatically opened and discharged while the contents fall through a rotor and sieve into the container. This was an existing machine, now integrated into the control and safety system.

› **Manual discharge (level 2)**: pallets with collars are transported via a separate lift to the upper level, where chain conveyors and two discharge hoppers are installed. Operators empty the bags manually here.

The entire process required nearly a year of preparation. Everything was modelled in 3D in advance to clearly visualise the flow within the limited heights, narrow buffer zones and strict hygiene areas. The result is a traceable, safe and easy-to-clean installation – installed in a building that was never originally intended for this purpose."

View this case on our website.
Scan the QR code!

AUTOMATING TO KEEP CUSTOMISATION MANAGEABLE

BUFFER SYSTEM **FOR FRONT DOOR PANELS**

Frager specialises in panels and door leaves for exterior doors and is part of the Belgian group Harinck. What sets them apart is that almost nothing is standard. Every country and customer demands different dimensions, colours and styles. This high level of customisation makes production and logistics complex. Fraxinus has been a trusted partner for twenty years – from the first packaging machine to the recent installation of a gluing machine and a new buffer system for front door panels. We had a chat with Managing Director Franck De Munster about innovation, automation and those early-morning brainstorming sessions.

From left to right: Franck De Munster, Hans Van Essche, Wesley Poissonnier, Kurt De Rijcke

ABOUT FRAGER

Frager, Harinck NV's brand in Wielsbeke, has been producing panels and door leaves for entrance doors in PVC and aluminium for over 40 years. What makes Frager unique is that almost every project is custom-made – different dimensions, materials and styles – with a strong focus on quality, finish and originality. Thanks to this flexibility and innovation, Frager serves customers in Belgium and abroad, meeting growing demands for insulation, larger dimensions and contemporary design.

- Employees: **66**
- Doors per year: **26,130**
- Powder colours in stock: **1,550** (different brands)
- Annual turnover: **€ 24.9 million**
- Markets: **Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Spain, Portugal**

→ More info at www.frager.be

frager.
CREATORS OF DOORS

> **“ Automation helps us keep variety under control. Without it, custom work would become chaos.”**
>
> — Franck De Munster

What defines Frager as a manufacturer?
“We make door panels and exterior door leaves. It may sound like a niche, but it’s one that’s evolving rapidly. We work almost entirely to order, because every project requires its own door type with specific dimensions, colours and styles. This focus on bespoke production has built our reputation with customers in Belgium and abroad. But automation in a non-standardised context is far more complex than in a production environment with thousands of identical pieces. That’s our daily challenge.”

What trends do you see in the door industry today?
“Doors are becoming larger and heavier. That’s partly due to stricter insulation standards, which call for thicker panels and heavier materials. Design trends play a role too: architects and customers increasingly opt for sleek, tall and wide doors, often in darker shades and with large pull handles. These doors don’t just require different production methods – they also demand a different logistics setup. A warehouse designed for standard doors can no longer store doors of 2.7 metres high. Packaging that used to suffice is suddenly no longer strong enough. Everything shifts accordingly.”

What does that mean for your production process?
“Every link – from assembly and packaging to storage and dispatch – has had to be adapted to accommodate larger, heavier doors. The old buffer system could no longer cope, so together with Fraxinus we built a future-proof installation capable of handling current and upcoming variants.”

Tell us more about that new system.
“The new buffer system was the most challenging project, because production could only be halted for a short time. Now the flow runs automatically: from assembly and packaging to buffering and night-time order picking. In the morning, the doors are ready, arranged according to the delivery route. In addition, we installed a gluing machine that makes the process more consistent and faster, with fewer intermediate steps and a more ergonomic workstation.”

How important is ERP integration in this story?
“In the past, a lot of know-how was concentrated in a few experienced employees. Today, every door gets a barcode containing its length, width, weight and order details. Based on that data, the system automatically determines the correct route: packaging, buffering or dispatch. That brings peace of mind and certainty, and it also helps new employees get up to speed quickly. They arrive into a system that guides them step by step.”

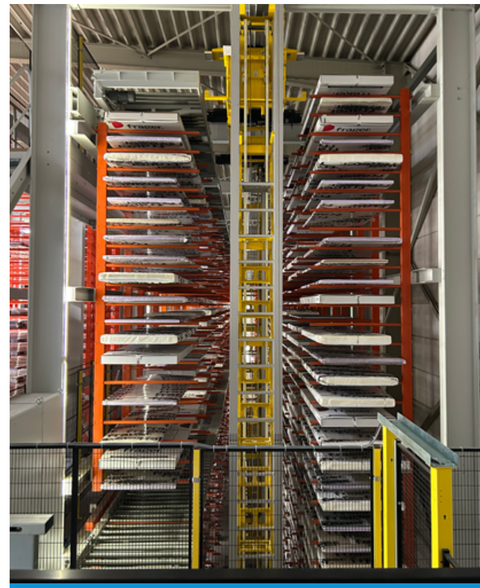
How would you describe your collaboration with Fraxinus?
“We’ve been working together for decades, so there’s deep trust and little need for words. Early-morning meetings are when we do our best thinking: sketching, mapping out scenarios, and aligning on the approach. First, we look at how the process runs manually, then we jointly explore how to automate it. What I appreciate is that Fraxinus has been working for years with the same control and cabling partner – Codius (formerly Engico and DD Engineering). For us, it feels like a single team. Everyone knows what everyone else is doing and approaches it in the same way. There’s no noise in communication, and that makes all the difference.”

The Magnetude door is one of your most striking innovations. How did that idea arise?
“The Magnetude arose from a problem, actually. We occasionally received complaints that, after some time, doors would start jamming. Aluminium and PVC expand with heat, causing the door leaf to warp and stick. One day, while sitting on a terrace, I noticed the magnetic cover of my iPad – securely attached yet still allowing movement. That was the spark. With magnets, you can fix the door leaf while allowing it to move. This means the outer panel can expand without distorting the frame. We tested it extensively, patented it, and only then brought it to market. It turned out to be a bull’s eye: it not only prevents jamming but also saves time during production and installation. Today, some construction companies explicitly request Magnetude doors. For us, that’s proof that innovation pays off.”

How do you keep things simple in such a complex process?
“We always look for the shortest route. Every extra step costs time and increases the risk of errors. That’s why we first map out the flow as simply as possible before we start automating. If you reach for the technology too quickly, you often make things unnecessarily complicated. That approach takes discussion, but it’s worth it. Once the machine is running, it must above all be reliable and easy to use.”

What are Frager’s plans for the near future?
“We want to continue growing and expanding Magnetude while keeping our processes simple. Automation is not a goal in itself, but a lever. It helps us keep our wide range of bespoke products under control, guarantee quality, and give our people pride and peace of mind. If we can maintain that balance, we can keep moving forward for many years.”

View this case on our website. Scan the QR code!



A fraxtion of the project

BY WESLEY POISSONNIER
PROJECT ENGINEER
—

“A recent project at Harinck involved a new system for buffering and in- and outbound transport of increasingly large and heavy exterior doors. The heart of the installation is a pallet crane developed specifically for the dimensions and weights of these doors.
The telescopic system can safely handle both narrow and wide doors and is designed for heavy loads.

Implementation took place in two phases to minimise production downtime. During the Christmas shutdown, conveyors and turntables were widened, the lift was modified and a more powerful PLC installed. The new warehouse was then constructed, and during the summer break the pallet crane was connected to the existing line.

After assembly, the doors pass through the packaging line: a box, bubble wrap, labels and stretch film provide full protection. They are then transported via lifts and conveyors to the racking system. There are several in- and outbound options, including for manually packed or rejected doors, which are safely re-introduced into the flow. Barcodes with length, width and weight determine the correct position every time. At night, orders are automatically prepared per truckload.

Safety is a key focus: there is no access to the warehouse while the system is running, but specific doors can always be safely requested via the control panel. The installation is modular and programmable, allowing it to adapt to future door sizes or production volumes.”

ODTH MAXIMISES STORAGE CAPACITY WITH SHUTTLE TECHNOLOGY

INBOUND AND OUTBOUND LOGISTICS **OPTIMISATION IN HIGH-BAY WAREHOUSE**

ODTH combines the roots of a family business with the scale of a modern logistics service provider: three sites, 165,000 m² of storage space and a clear vision for the future. Their *Elixir* project is breathing new life into their Rumst site — from renovated offices and a new canteen to large-scale warehouse automation. The project's name refers to a stage at the nearby Tomorrowland festival and symbolises the "elixir of life" that will sustain the site for the next twenty years. We spoke to COO Rob Van den Berghen and Logistics Project Manager Wim Van Leuven about their approach and the collaboration with Fraxinus.

From left to right: Rob Van den Berghen, Wim Van Leuven, Hannes Dekeyzer

A fraxtion of the project

BY RYAN DEBACKER
PROJECT ENGINEER
—

"At ODTH in Rumst, an existing warehouse is being transformed in five phases into an automated shuttle system from **Movu**, built within racking supplied by **Stow**. In total, the project will add around 31,000 pallet spaces. The biggest challenge: working in a live warehouse without halting operations.

Fraxinus developed all **in- and outbound systems**. Pallets enter via conveyors, are automatically measured, scanned and subjected to a **gabarit check**. Compliant pallets proceed to inbound; any deviations are diverted to a manual line.

From the inbound conveyors, pallets travel via **vertical lifts** to the correct level. The lifts are designed to transport shuttles as well, allowing capacity to be flexibly distributed. The shuttles store pallets in the racks and retrieve them for outbound transport. Conveyors then move the pallets to the expedition zones, where a connection has been created to the existing **rapid-loading system**. This buffers pallets and arranges them in sequence for efficient truck loading. A **retrofit** of this system is planned in a later phase.

The warehouse was originally filled with old Stow racking and manual Movu units. These were dismantled block by block; the steel was recovered and reused in the new installation, saving over 680 tonnes of CO_2. A central cube structure was retained in the middle of the site, introducing additional height variations and complexity in construction. Fire safety requirements added to the challenge: all zones are enclosed and fitted with liquid containment curbs, even beneath conveyors. This demanded precise integration and close coordination throughout every phase.

In addition to the mechanical systems, Fraxinus supplied the complete **cabling and control** system installation, including safety features such as fencing, signalling and access detection. The system processes **2,500 to 3,000 inbound and outbound pallets per day**, and provides a total of **10,000 extra pallet positions**."

ODTH
FIRST CLASS LOGISTICS

Why did this project make it onto the agenda now?
Rob: "It had actually been on our minds for a while, but the timing was never right. The market is changing fast: customers expect speed, prices are under pressure and at the same time it's increasingly difficult to find enough staff. At a certain point you realise something has to change."

"In the past, the business case never worked out because the height restrictions in this building made a classic crane-based automation system impossible. It was only with shuttle technology that everything fell into place: suddenly we could use the available space to its maximum and make the project financially viable."

What has been the biggest challenge during this project?
Wim: "The hardest part is that everything has to happen live. We couldn't use several halls for months while construction was ongoing, but storage had to continue. At times we were really at our limit with 34,000 pallets on site. That required serious juggling, limiting inbound flows and rearranging product categories. It created enormous pressure, but also the satisfaction of succeeding while maintaining outstanding service. Our customers barely noticed the transition."

Why did you choose shuttle technology?
Rob: "Because it allows us to make smarter use of what was already there. We were able to reuse the existing frames in the new installation, which saved a great deal of money and reduced our environmental footprint by more than 680 tonnes of CO_2. The system also offers flexibility: lifts can carry shuttles to different levels, so we can shift capacity where it's needed depending on demand."

How did Fraxinus become involved?
Rob: "We sat down with Movu, Stow and an external consultant. During those sessions, Fraxinus emerged as the right partner to handle the in- and outbound systems. They integrate all conveyors, lifts and cabling, and also manage the interface with our existing Magic Black Box."

The Magic Black Box has been part of your site for some time. What role does it play today?
Wim: "We use that system for fast truck loading. Pallets are buffered and arranged in the correct order for dispatch. Initially, we considered replacing it with the shuttle system, but along the way we decided to keep it because it loads far faster than shuttles can. Fraxinus created the connection so that the system now runs seamlessly within the new automation. In the next phase, a retrofit is planned to upgrade the control system and make the Magic Black Box fully future-proof again."

How has the collaboration with Fraxinus worked out in practice?
Wim: "Very smoothly. There have been many versions of the plan, and many last-minute changes, but Fraxinus has always responded flexibly. When an adjustment is needed, there's no fuss but just a shared focus on finding the best solution. Technically, everything fits together perfectly: mechanics, cabling and software complement each other."

What's unique about the cooperation in this project?
Rob: "Normally, in a large-scale automation project, an integrator is appointed to coordinate everything. That's not the case here. Fraxinus communicates directly with Movu and with us as the client — and it works remarkably well. Fraxinus shows great flexibility; they'll move heaven and earth to get things ready on time. The collaboration with Codius for software and cabling also runs smoothly. The only drawback is the distance, but with Digi X-ON many issues can be resolved remotely. In an upcoming stage of the project, camera monitoring will also be installed."

Can you give us an idea of the timeline for this project?
Wim: "We began demolition work in June 2024. Phase 1 is already operational, and the rollout of the next phases is in full swing. In total, the construction and installation period spans about eighteen months. By mid-2026, all five phases should be fully operational."

ABOUT ODTH

Founded in 1978 by Jos De Wael, ODTH has grown into a benchmark for storage, handling and value-added logistics services in the wider Mechelen region. With an asset-based philosophy – owning its own warehouses and IT systems – the company combines flexibility with stability. ODTH serves customers in sectors such as FMCG, pharma, food & feed, steel & coil and general cargo.

› Founded in **1978**

› **More than 140** employees

› **4 sites** in the Mechelen region

› Over **165,000 m²** of warehouse space

→ More info at www.odth.be

How do you see the future once the project is complete?
Rob: "By the end, together with the Magic Black Box, we'll have 30,000 pallets in automated storage. That gives us the scale and flexibility to continue growing over the next twenty years. That's exactly what Project Elixir is about: giving our site new life for the decades ahead."

"Thanks to this project, we're ready to grow for the next twenty years."

— Rob Van den Berghen

View this case on our website. Scan the QR code!

INVESTING STRONGLY IN EFFICIENT CUSTOMISATION

NEW MILLING MACHINE AND TUBE LASER STRENGTHEN OUR MACHINERY FLEET

Over the past year, we've expanded our machinery fleet considerably once again. With the installation of a large portal milling machine and a new tube laser with integrated tube storage, we're continuing to make deliberate investments in the future. Production Manager Andy Kerckhof explains how these investments help us deliver every project with maximum efficiency and precision.

PORTAL MILLING MACHINE

"With the arrival of an impressive portal milling machine — 14 metres long and 3.5 metres wide — we've taken a major step forward in our production capacity. Thanks to this investment, we can now machine larger components in-house, react faster and deliver even more tailor-made solutions. It makes us more flexible and allows us to execute projects of any size with the same precision and quality."

TUBE LASER WITH TUBE STORAGE

"In addition to the milling machine, we've invested in an advanced tube laser for tubes of up to 12 metres long, including an integrated tube magazine. This allows operations such as cutting, tapping and flow drilling to be fully automated, enabling us to respond efficiently to a wide range of customer needs. The tube storage ensures a smooth supply and handling process, so we can always produce quickly and accurately."

" With the milling machine, we can handle more operations in a single setup, and thanks to the tube laser with integrated storage, we can respond even faster. Together, they make our work quicker, more efficient and more future-ready."

— Andy Kerckhof

FRAXINUS
Customized solutions for production and logistics

WIJNENDALESTRAAT 162
8800 ROESELARE
051 30 78 53
WWW.FRAXINUS.BE