

# MOVING QUICKLY *TO ELIMINATE PFAS*

Edward Goldberg, CEO of Perimeter Solutions spoke to International Fire Buyer about how Perimeter Solutions have dealt with a tough year and how the industry is changing for better

## TAKING EVERYTHING INTO CONSIDERATION, HOW WAS 2020 BEEN FOR THE COMPANY?

This has obviously been a year with many challenges, but for Perimeter Solutions, we have been fortunate as it has been quite successful. We kept our employees safe and despite going through a very severe fire season, we provided exceptional support to our customers with 100% reliability.

We suffered no production or supply interruptions, and every airplane that came into a pit to be loaded with PHOS-CHEK fire retardant was loaded successfully and we provided our normal level of exceptional service to all customers throughout the year, despite the challenges.

## HOW DID THE COMPANY GENERALLY COPE WITH COVID-19?

We reacted to COVID-19 quite quickly and took significant action early in the pandemic. We locked down our manufacturing facilities to ensure that we minimised the potential for an infection that could spread and disrupt production.

We accelerated our pre-season production and distributed products throughout our network. This ensured that if there was a disruption at any one site, that it didn't impact our overall supply chain.

Perimeter Solutions also accelerated our purchases of raw materials to avoid potential disruptions in our supply chain.

In general, our employees worked from home except those involved in manufacturing. There was a total of two or three positive COVID cases in the company around the world. Each case was mild and thankfully, our colleagues recovered quickly and returned to work. We had no production or supply disruptions.

We are still following all the same guidelines we put in place at the beginning of the pandemic, and we will continue to do that



for the foreseeable future to ensure that our team stays healthy and that we have no disruptions in any of our production facilities or supply chain.

## DESPITE EVERYTHING, YOU MANAGED TO ACQUIRE LADERATECH AND FORTIFY EARLIER THIS YEAR – WHAT MADE YOU MOVE FOR THEM AND HOW CAN THIS HELP THE COMPANY GROW?

Traditionally, the use of our fire retardant was reactive to fight ongoing wildfires. For several years, we have used that same product proactively to pretreat high risk and critical areas ahead of the fire season to either protect properties from potential wildfire damage. More importantly, we pre-treat to prevent fires caused by sparks from utility failures, railroads or other human-related causes from starting in the first place.

We knew the LaderaTech technology could be a game changer in the industry because the durability it adds to retardant. When the Fortify brand retardant is applied pre or early season it remains effective, even when exposed to heavy rain. With this breakthrough, we can now provide season-long protection with a single application.

That technology and capability were so critical to us as we worked to grow the prevention and protection part of our

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business, that we decided to move forward with the acquisition of LaderaTech, even in this challenging year. Now that we have that technology, we have been working with a number of big customers on sizeable pilot scale projects to demonstrate the efficacy of that technology.

We see a lot of new, innovative ideas out in the world all the time and we are always looking for new technologies that we believe can really have a positive impact for our business and in the world. When we evaluated the Ladera technology, it really did the things that the Ladera people said that it does. It was highly effective and durable; even more durable than we expected. We were tremendously excited about bringing this technology in house.

It's actually pretty rare to find technology that really moves the needle in this industry. The feedback from the customers that have seen this product in action are very favorable. We demonstrated effectiveness after as much as two inches of rain with little to no reduction, so this really is a game changer. We now can prevent fires from starting and prevent some of the truly devastating fires that you see started by utility failures.

### YOU CLAIM TO BE THE LARGEST GLOBAL PRODUCER OF FIREFIGHTING CHEMICALS, HOW DIFFICULT CAN IT BE TO DEVISE A PRODUCT THAT CAN BE USED IN VARIOUS REGIONS AND PASS REGULATORY CHECKS?

We have decades of experience working in areas around the world and we understand that different regions and countries have specific requirements for the products that they use. We tailor our products either to meet the certain specifications we find in the world, or in many cases to develop products that will meet all specifications – even the most stringent ones, so that they can be used anywhere.

For example, our long-term fire retardant products PHOS-CHEK LC95A and PHOS-CHEK MVP-Fx meet every specification and can be used anywhere in the world. For our firefighting foams – both Class A and Class B – we have products that meet all the specifications, and some that are specific to either UL or EN or other country or industry specific standards. We also specifically tailor products to meet industry requirements such as the aviation industry, etc., With our exceptional R&D resources we are able to tailor these products to meet whatever specifications are required.

### WILDFIRES IN SOME PARTS OF THE WORLD HAVE ACTUALLY GONE UP DESPITE THE LOCKDOWNS, WHICH MAKES YOUR PARTNERSHIP WITH CSAA INSURANCE GROUP TIMELIER. HAS THIS BEEN IN THE WORKS FOR A WHILE?

We have actually been working with the insurance industry for many years on the use of retardant around homes to protect them from oncoming wildfires. This goes back many years when we worked with AIG and other insurance companies to provide retardant treatment for homeowners.

As we have seen over recent years, the incidence of wildfires that have significant impact on communities, on neighborhoods and specific homeowners has really increased. Wildfires have become more severe and more frequent, and the fire season has become much longer. Significantly, the density of homes in the wildland-urban interface has continued to increase, putting more lives and property at risk. CSAA was a highly successful project for us, but one in a long line of successful projects with insurance companies, homeowner associations and homeowner groups and others over many years. ➔



## CAN YOU TELL US MORE ABOUT THE SOLBERG AVIGARD LINE OF FLUORINE FREE FOAMS?

We all know that the world of firefighting foams is quickly moving toward fluorine free products, getting away from the traditional AFFF or AR-AFFF products that contain fluorinated compounds – it's a movement that is accelerating quite significantly.

The challenge facing the industry is to develop products that match the effectiveness of the traditional fluorinated products but without fluorine. One of the major areas that we have been working hard on is in aviation where products used for aircraft rescue firefighting have to be very effective in a short period of time because you have a very limited amount of time to save lives as people escape from a burning airplane.

The SOLBERG AVIGARD product was a major development. Our R&D scientists were able to formulate a product that provides effectiveness similar to that of fluorinated products to meet the ICAO [International Civil Aviation Organisation] specification, but with no fluorine. We are incredibly proud of this product. As airports around

the world move away from fluorine and into fluorine-free products, they can use SOLBERG AVIGARD to match the effectiveness of the products they depend on and give firefighters and travelers confidence that they will be protected.

## IT'S ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF INNOVATION FROM THE COMPANY, HOW MUCH TIME, EFFORT AND RESOURCE GOES INTO THE R&D DEPARTMENTS?

Innovation is a core value at Perimeter Solutions and we invest heavily in R&D across all of our product lines. We have an R&D Centre of Excellence in Rancho Cucamonga, CA, that is focused primarily on retardant technology. We also have two centres of excellence in our suppressant business – one in Green Bay, Wisconsin and another in Asturias, Spain.

Perimeter Solutions puts a lot of effort and resources behind the development of new products, new technologies and the improvement of existing products. We have full-scale burn test facilities, where we can test all these products on a large scale, including all the testing that is done for certifications.

We have some of the best, world-renowned scientists and formulators in our R&D organization and we are also focused on finding and evaluating technologies that we see throughout the world, that we may be able to bring into Perimeter and leverage into new products that advance the industry.

## WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR 2021?

Obviously, we will continue to offer great products and services to our customers. This year, we witnessed what we believe is a significant and likely long-term change in the way wildfires are fought in the US – putting much heavier reliance on aircraft for early, initial attack to minimise the number of firefighters on the ground. We believe the demand for aerial delivery will increase, and we are working hard to increase our capabilities to support this.

In our suppressant business, we are focused on the transition from fluorinated to fluorine-free products. In 2020, we introduced a number of new products. We expect that to accelerate into new product areas in 2021. New fluorine-free products will move the industry forward quite quickly and significantly, and we look forward to bringing those products to market.

I also believe we will be dealing with COVID well into the new year. We will continue to take steps that we need to in order to protect our people and facilities, so that we can serve our customers with the 100% reliability that they depend on. **FB**



# Your Next Solution in Fluorine-Free Foam

Our Fire Safety Brands: **PHOS-CHEK® SOLBERG® AUXQUIMIA®**

The move to fluorine-free fire suppressant foams is one of the most important developments in the fire safety industry today.

At Perimeter Solutions, we're engaged in an intensive development program for fluorine-free technology that meets the highest level of fire suppression requirements and delivers the most environmentally friendly products on the market.

We're proud to have delivered numerous advances in fluorine-free technology to the market, starting with the first ever Class B fluorine-free foam concentrate – SOLBERG® RE-HEALING. Now, we're introducing SOLBERG AVIGARD™, a low-viscosity fluorine-free foam technology that meets ICAO standards for aviation applications.

**What's next in fluorine-free? Call us and we'll tell you.**

**Solutions that Save. Lives. Property. The Environment.**



#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact any of our worldwide Perimeter Solutions Fire Safety offices or visit:

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