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VIGAN invests in products to improve durability, costs and ease of use



VIGAN builds unloaders, loaders, complete turnkey terminals and the interface conveying systems. Photos courtesy of VIGAN.

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NIVELLES, BELGIUM – In order to meet the demands of customers and address challenges with the supply chain, VIGAN Engineering SA continues to invest in electronic components and new hard alloys to further improve life expectancy, running costs and ease of use for its equipment.

VIGAN, based in Nivelles, Belgium, traces its roots back to 1968 and grain pumps built around the concept of a turbine driven by diesel and then electrical engines. The machines captured a good part of the market and the capacities and configurations kept increasing.

"Today, VIGAN is a leading company in the production of ship unloading and loading systems," said Dirk Janssens, sales director for VIGAN. "We have realized several turnkey port agribulk projects, increasing our vertical and horizontal integration possibilities."

The company builds tailor-made robust equipment with long-life expectancy. The process starts with customer interaction, through the conceptualization and drawing in the engineering department to the pre-mounting in VIGAN's factory and the final assembly onsite.

Customers include ports and their operators, companies along waterways and those involved in agribulk trading.

"We keep track of all our machines and can keep on servicing them, even after 30 years of loyal services," Janssens said.

The [company has expanded](#) in cycles, from mobile grain pumps to mobile and highly automated unloaders on rails or wheels. VIGAN builds unloaders, loaders, complete turnkey terminals and the essential interface conveying systems. The machines can be used in transfer of agribulk from all kinds of sources, including train to silo, silo to truck, vessel to quay and more.



VIGAN has a 12,000-square-meter production facility that allows for premounting and full electrification, reducing assembly on site and the chance for errors.

VIGAN continues to innovate. It is working on new concepts to improve air tightness, the latest alloys and innovative electronic components.

VIGAN has a production space of 12,000 square meters where everything is built. The surface and height of the space allows for premounting and full electrification of the equipment, an advantage in reducing assembly on site and the chance for errors.

It recently invested in a laser cutting machine to fulfill increasing demand. The 200 solar panels on the roof of the production space provides one-third of the facility's energy needs.

“We have recently built machines that are more silent than ever, being operated in urban areas where acoustic sound levels are extremely severely controlled,” Janssens said. “Our filters are removing most dust out of the air, meeting specs of below 3mg/m³.”

With its “build everything under one roof” concept, VIGAN is able to control what it does from A to Z, which has been particularly helpful during the recent supply chain challenges experienced across the globe.

“We invest in our strategic stock in order to have the machines ready as fast as possible,” Janssens said. “This implies a big flexibility in everything we do.”

To combat the recent rise in steel and component prices, the company invested in a strategic stock of spare parts for the maintenance of customers’ machines, thereby reducing the lead time.

Customers also are requesting increased suction capacities as ports are becoming more and more congested. Vessels need to be unloaded in the shortest time possible.

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“VIGAN machines have high efficacy and availability, together with a high capacity and smooth operation, this guarantees minimal demurrage costs,” Janssens said.

In some parts of the world, **unloading equipment demand** is on the rise due to population growth and a change in eating patterns. Also, energy price increases and the war in Ukraine has created new geographical opportunities for loading and unloading, Janssens said.

“These trends will definitely proceed for the time being,” he said. “As the UN recently announced in its new report, our planet will have 8 billion people before the end of 2022. The Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines and Tanzania will be critical locations for the cereal market in the future.”

For its part in the industry, VIGAN will continue to invest and find new solutions for its customers.

“We are loyal to our customers until the end of their project,” Janssens said.