

Alpha Commodities: Solar salt 30-40% more cost effective than mined-rock salt



'Best value' is the watchword for public sector procurement managers. In plain English, it simply means 'value for money'.

But in the world of local (and central) Government 'best value' most definitely does not mean the cheapest. In fact, it allows civil servants to take other factors - such as customer service, a proven track record, or all-life-costs of a service or product into account when procuring goods and services. For example, there is a well-known brand of battery which advertises on 'value for money' because it can power a toy rabbit for longer than rival brands. The message is - 'Rivals may be less expensive per battery, but you have to buy more of them.'

The same issues arise when it comes to stock-piling salt by local councils to keep our roads open during the winter. There are two main sources of salt - 'rock salt' and 'solar salt'. Both types do the same job in the same way - they lower the freezing temperature of water and thereby dissolve snow, ice and frost - to keep roads open and traffic moving in winter.

So what is the difference? The difference is that rock salt - mined

from underground seams - inevitably includes non-salt impurities such as clay, and contain up to 40% fine salt which is short-active salt - and is practically non-active for de-icing roads.

In contrast, 'solar' salt is formed by harvesting natural sodium chloride once salt water - or brine - has evaporated in natural sunlight in a series of storage ponds. Consequently, it has virtually no mineral impurities and contain small amount of fine salt. The solar salt type is a far more active product for de-icing roads. "The fine salt and impurities in rock salt can be significant - up to 30-40% sometimes," explained David Setton, President of Alpha Commodities Ltd. "For example, if you buy a ton of rock salt for £1000 - this means that you're only getting £600-700 worth of Active salt.

"Alpha's Solar salt comprises 99.7% pure sodium chloride - it's as pure white salt as you can get. So a ton of solar salt at £1000 means there is only £3 worth of minerals and almost



negligible impurities.

"The solar salt which we supply is the whitest salt you can buy. It's also environmentally-friendly and - because it is harvested from evaporated brine (sea water) - it's also entirely sustainable.

"Put it another way, solar salt is 30-40% more cost effective than mined-rock salt." Alpha Commodities - which supplied the bulk of the 'emergency supplies' shipped to the UK when domestic supply was unable to cope with the severe winters two and three years ago - is now able to supply non-emergency customers in the UK, thanks to a recent investment in

a new 50,000 sq.m salt storage facility just across the Channel in Cherbourg. Bulk-supplies of solar salt are shipped in up to 75,000 metric tonne Panamax vessels to Cherbourg from a variety of global suppliers. Setton added; "Our long term contracts with our suppliers give Alpha an edge on our competitors. And from Cherbourg, we can break down these bulk supplies for onward shipping by road, rail and smaller coastal freighters direct to the customer's destination."

For more information:
www.alphacommodities.net