

Refrigerated Transporter®



FLEET EQUIPMENT

UNFI adds 53 electric TRUs to fleet

Food wholesaler to lease the zero-emission refrigeration units, which meet CARB requirements, through PLM Trailer Leasing

Commercial Vehicle Staff

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United Natural Foods (UNFI) is adding 53 all-electric transport refrigeration units (TRUs) to its trailer fleet domiciled at the company's Riverside CA distribution center.

UNFI said the effort is in keeping with its Better for All 2030 Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) agenda, and the company's commitments to take innovative action on global social and environmental issues that help transform the future of food. The company is one of the first wholesalers to utilize the innovative technology and comes as the California Air Resources Board (CARB) announced plans in January

to impose zero-emission requirements on TRUs sold or operated in California by December 31, 2029.

The all-electric TRU achieves zero-emission results by using a high-efficiency refrigeration system powered by roof-mounted solar photovoltaic panels, a wheel-momentum generator, lithium-ion batteries, and a unique auxiliary power unit to eliminate the requirement for diesel fuel to power the refrigeration system. Through this process, the refrigeration system provides multi-zone temperature settings with the capability of maintaining a full load of frozen product from minus-10 to minus-20 degrees F throughout the distribution route.

To accomplish this work, UNFI is removing 53 of its diesel-powered TRUs from operation and utilizing [Advanced Energy Machines](#) (AEM), a leader in the



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electrification of refrigerated trailers, to rebuild the units to all-electric specifications, the company said. UNFI will lease the TRUs through [PLM Trailer Leasing](#) for five years while it continues to explore how they integrate into its operations. By operating the all-electric TRUs, UNFI anticipates it will save approximately 135,000 gallons of diesel fuel per year while reducing particulate matter pollutant emissions and greenhouse gas emissions.

“Nearly 50% of UNFI’s direct greenhouse gas emissions are from our fleet of trucks and trailers. These 53 all-electric TRUs will help us get a head start on the proposed CARB zero-emission requirements, and are expected to allow us to decrease our

emissions as we make progress on [our climate action commitments under Better For All](#),” said Jeff Wismans, national director of fleet operations at UNFI. “Adding these TRUs comes after an exhaustive four-month pilot testing the equipment through a variety of conditions with the intention to replace diesel-powered TRUs. When we look at it from an operational standpoint, we’re not changing anything, but it gives us a fresh look at running our operations and finding additional efficiencies.”

To help reduce the cost of retrofitting the diesel-powered TRU, PLM applied for and received vouchers on UNFI’s behalf through CARB’s Clean Off Road Equipment (CORE) Voucher Incentive Project. CARB launched CORE in 2017 to accelerate the purchase of zero-emission freight handling equipment in California by providing a streamlined voucher process to offset the higher cost of such technologies.

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