

INDUSTRIAL SHELL AND TUBE HEAT EXCHANGER

FIELD OF INVENTION

The present invention relates to an industrial shell and tube heat exchanger.

More particularly, the present invention relates to an industrial shell and tube
5 heat exchanger for producing slurry ice with a rotating spiral in the tube mechanism.

BACKGROUND TO INVENTION

According to the Internet, slurry ice is a phase changing refrigerant made up of
millions of ice "micro-crystals" (generally 0.1 to 1 mm in diameter) formed and
10 suspended within a solution of water and a freezing point depressant. Some
compounds used in the field are salt (sodium chloride), ethylene glycol,
propylene glycol, various alcohols (Isobutyl, ethanol) and sugar (sucrose,
glucose). Slurry Ice has greater heat absorption compared with single phase
refrigerants (Brine) because the melting enthalpy (latent heat) of the ice is also
15 used. Flow-Ice™ is a trade name for slurry ice. Flow-Ice™ is made with a heat
exchanger.

The small ice particle size of slurry ice results in greater heat transfer area than
other types of ice for a given weight. It can be packed inside a container as
dense as 700 kg/m³, the highest ice-packing factor among all usable industrial
20 ice. The spherical crystals have good flow properties, making them easy to
distribute through conventional pumps and piping and over product in direct
contact chilling applications, allowing them to flow into crevices and provide
greater surface contact and faster cooling than other traditional forms of ice.

Its flow properties, high cooling capacity and flexibility in application make a
25 slurry ice system a substitute for conventional ice generators and refrigeration
systems, and offers improvements in efficiency: energy efficiency of 70%,
compared to around 45% in standard systems, lower freon consumption per ton
of ice and lower operating costs.

Slurry ice is commonly used in a wide range of air conditioning, packaging, and industrial cooling processes, supermarkets, and cooling and storage of fish, produce, poultry and other perishable products.

Conventional current slurry ice producing technologies include the following:

5 (a) Orbital rod tube whip heat exchanger

Orbital rod tube heat exchanger include a rod which rotates centrifugally in each tube of a vertical shell and tube heat exchanger, and a film of brine drains down the tube by gravity and carry the ice created down to exit the heat exchanger. The orbital rod induces the heat transfer. This technology has a drive plate to
10 drive a multiple of rods hanging from the top and has the tendency to vibrate and does not suit needs in terms of robust operation. This technology is more suited for thermal energy storage where all fluids and conditions are designed for the operation.

 (b) Flat plate heat exchanger

15 The flat plate heat exchanger is more robust in operation, but will not cover the full scope of slurry ice needs, and the capacity is too small for larger applications. The flat plate heat exchanger is also very costly to manufacture and requires a refrigerant pump, pressure vessels and controls that further increase the cost, making the system too expensive. The general operation is
20 wipers wiping both sides of a flat plate or multiples of flat plates mounted parallel with each other and the drive shaft of the wipers drives through the centre of the plates to wipe the static plates removing the crystals forming on the surface with refrigerant in the flat plate channels.

 (c) Scraped surface heat exchangers

25 This type of heat exchanger is too small and also too costly to upscale to larger systems. It is based on a larger diameter tube with thicker walls reducing the heat transfer rate. The scraping mechanism is very costly to manufacture and the system requires a carefully designed system to make it successful in operation. The basic operation is based on a double tube heat exchanger with
30 the refrigerant circulated through the jacket and the brine through the inner

tube. The ice crystals are formed on the inner tube surface and scraped off with a scraper or wipers and transported out with a pump pushing the brine or slurry ice.

It is an object of the invention to suggest an industrial shell and tube heat exchanger, which will assist in overcoming these problems.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

According to the invention, an industrial shell and tube heat exchanger for providing freezing or chilling of brine to produce slurry ice, includes a shell and tube heat exchanger located in a horizontal position and which includes

- 10 (a) At least one tube within the shell and tube heat exchanger; and
 - (b) At least one rotatable spiral driven in at least one tube, and which is adapted to move or pump the brine and slurry ice through the respective tube to ensure individual supply of brine for the production of slurry ice.
- 15 Also according to the invention, a method of producing slurry ice, includes the steps of providing an industrial shell and tube heat exchanger located in a horizontal position and which includes at least one tube within the shell and tube heat exchanger; and at least one rotatable spiral driven in at least one tube, and which is adapted to move or pump the brine and slurry ice through the
- 20 respective tube to ensure individual supply of brine for the production of slurry ice.

Yet further according to the invention, a method of producing slurry ice, includes the steps of moving or pumping brine and slurry ice through at least one tube to ensure individual supply of brine for the production of slurry ice.

- 25 The tubes outer surface on the refrigerant (shell side) of the tubes may be specially prepared.

The tubes may be fixed in the end plate of the shell and tube heat exchanger.

The spirals may be driven inside the tube by mechanical means.

The heat exchanger may include a mechanical drive adapted to drive the spirals and which may be aligned with the centre of the tube and fitted with bearings and shaft seal.

5 The mechanical drive may be directly connected to a motor and/or in bundles where the centre tube spiral drive provides the driving pulley for other tube spirals around.

The mechanical drive may be operated with belts to an arrangement of tubes around the centre tube spiral.

There may be no bearings in the opposite side of the spirals.

10 The spirals may self centre in the tube with the rotation.

The mechanical drive may also be done with an arrangement of gears and each gear drives a shaft supported by acetal water lubricated bearings able to drive inside the water.

15 All the gears mesh and balanced loads may ensure easy rotation and the centre drive exist through a shaft seal to be driven by a single geared motor.

The non drive end of the spirals may be tensioned in order to facilitate stability in the spiral operation.

The brine may provide the lubrication and dampening effect of the spiral inside the tube.

20 The brine may be fully flooded and circulated through the heat exchanger tubes.

Ammonia may be evaporated in the shell side and absorbs the heat from the brine in order to create ice crystals on the inner tube surface inside the brine stream.

25 The spirals may provide high velocity brine stream on the inner tube surface to provide best heat transfer.

The spirals may remove the ice crystals from the inner tube surface with high velocity brine stream created by the rotation of the spiral.

The spirals may provide agitation to the brine stream inside the tube and facilitate a super cooling effect, where brine is super cooled and ice crystals forms inside the brine stream.

5 The spirals may provide sufficient vibration in the tube to facilitate the removal of ice crystals from the inner tube surface.

The spirals may provide sufficient vibration to improve heat transfer on the refrigerant side with specially prepared surface on the outside of the tube.

The inner tube surface may be prepared to facilitate the removal of ice crystals.

10 The overall flow rate may be controlled with a pump to ensure the ice concentration required.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

The invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying schematic drawings.

In the drawings there is shown in:

- 15 Figure 1: Sectional side view of an industrial shell and tube heat exchanger in accordance with a first embodiment of the invention;
- Figure 2: Front view of the industrial shell and tube heat exchanger shown in Figure 1 as seen from arrow A;
- 20 Figure 3: Enlarged front view of tubes of the industrial shell and tube heat exchanger as seen in Figure 2;
- Figure 4: Sectional side view of an industrial shell and tube heat exchanger in accordance with a second embodiment of the invention providing an alternative method to drive the spirals with gears inside the water and a single external geared motor outside the water driving
- 25 the centre gear through a shaft seal assembly; and
- Figure 5: Enlarged front view of tubes of the industrial shell and tube heat exchanger as seen in Figure 4.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

Referring to Figures 1 to 3, an industrial shell and tube heat exchanger for providing freezing or chilling of brine to produce slurry ice in accordance with a first embodiment of the invention is shown.

- 5 The industrial shell and tube heat exchanger for providing freezing or chilling of brine to produce slurry ice, includes a shell and tube heat exchanger located in a horizontal position and which includes

(a) At least one tube within the shell and tube heat exchanger; and

- 10 (b) At least one rotatable spiral driven in at least one tube, and which is adapted to move or pump the brine and slurry ice through the respective tube to ensure individual supply of brine for the production of slurry ice.

The tubes outer surface on the refrigerant (shell side) of the tubes are specially prepared.

- 15 The tubes are fixed in the end plate of the shell and tube heat exchanger.

The spirals are driven inside the tube by mechanical means.

The heat exchanger includes a mechanical drive adapted to drive the spirals and which may be aligned with the centre of the tube and fitted with bearings and shaft seal.

- 20 The mechanical drive is directly connected to a motor, or in bundles where the centre tube spiral drive provides the driving pulley for other tube spirals around.

The drive is done with belts to an arrangement of tubes around the centre tube spiral.

There are no bearings in the opposite side of the spirals.

- 25 The spirals self centre in the tube with the rotation.

Figures 4 and 5 show an industrial shell and tube heat exchanger for providing freezing or chilling of brine to produce slurry ice in accordance with a second embodiment of the invention. In this embodiment the mechanical drive is done with an arrangement of gears and each gear drives a shaft supported by acetal
5 water lubricated bearings, able to drive inside the water. All the gears mesh and balanced loads ensure easy rotation and the centre drive exist through a shaft seal to be driven by a single geared motor.

The non drive end of the spirals can be tensioned in order to facilitate stability in the spiral operation.

- 10 The drive method shown in Figure 4 has a more compact arrangement to allow more tubes in the same shell. The diving loads on the gears and shaft is more balanced and therefore ensures lower friction and lower power consumption.

The brine provides the lubrication and dampening effect of the spiral inside the tube.

- 15 The brine is fully flooded and circulated through the heat exchanger tubes.

Ammonia is evaporated in the shell side and absorbs the heat from the brine in order to create ice crystals on the inner tube surface inside the brine stream.

The spirals provide high velocity brine stream on the inner tube surface to provide best heat transfer.

- 20 The spirals remove the ice crystals from the inner tube surface with high velocity brine stream created by the rotation of the spiral.

The spirals provide agitation to the brine stream inside the tube and facilitate a super cooling effect, where brine is super cooled and ice crystals forms inside the brine stream.

- 25 The spirals provide sufficient vibration in the tube to facilitate the removal of ice crystals from the inner tube surface.

The spirals provide sufficient vibration to improve heat transfer on the refrigerant side with specially prepared surface on the outside of the tube.

The inner tube surface is prepared to facilitate the removal of ice crystals.

Each tube spiral moves or pumps the brine and slurry ice through the respective tube and ensure individual supply of brine for the production of slurry ice.

5 The overall flow rate is controlled with a pump to ensure the ice concentration required.

The shell and tube heat exchanger in accordance with the invention is designed to produce slurry ice from a brine or any temperature depressant like salt water, sea water, ethanol, glycol etc, from now on called "brine".

10 Brine is flooded through the tube and ammonia provides the refrigeration outside the tube on the shell side.

A drive mechanism with bearings and shaft seal drive the spiral inside the tube.

The spiral is large enough in diameter to fit loosely in the tube, but with a tolerance close enough to touch the tube inner wall evenly when rotating.

The spiral drive is therefore positioned in the centre of the tube.

15 Each tube and spiral has its own drive and can be driven in different ways.

For large industrial applications, there are bundles of tubes driven with a single motor and belt drive multiple spirals from the centre.

The brine is flooded in the tubes of the heat exchanger and ice crystal forms inside the tube.

20 Each tube spiral transports the brine and slurry ice crystals through the tube to exit the heat exchanger.

A pump could also be used to control the flow rate through the heat exchanger in order to control the slurry ice concentration.

25 The applications for this heat exchanger varies from fishing, energy storage, food processing, water treatment, desalination and any application where slurry ice can be used as a secondary refrigerant.

The rotating spiral in tube shell and tube heat exchanger in accordance with the invention has the following advantages compared to the different known technologies:

- (a) Lower manufacturing cost making the unit more cost effective;
- 5 (b) More suitable to upscale the system to large capacities
- (c) More robust in design and operation;
- (d) More versatile over the full range of applications for this technology;
- 10 (e) Is not dependent of any ancillary equipment or fluids to facilitate successful operation i.e. thermal storage tanks, special brine fluids etc.;
- (f) The heat exchanger is stand alone and complete with pressure vessel and controls, compared to other equipment required pumps, pressure vessels construction frames to make the low pressure side
15 complete.

PATENT CLAIMS

1. An industrial shell and tube heat exchanger for providing freezing or chilling of brine to produce slurry ice, which includes a shell and tube heat exchanger located in a horizontal position and which includes
 - 5 (a) at least one tube within the shell and tube heat exchanger; and
 - (b) at least one rotatable spiral driven in at least the one tube, and which is adapted to move or pump the brine and slurry ice through the respective tube to ensure individual supply of brine for the production of slurry ice.
- 10 2. An exchanger as claimed in claim 1, in which the tube(s) is(are) fixed in the end plate of the shell and tube heat exchanger.
3. An exchanger as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, in which the spiral(s) are driven inside the tube by mechanical means.
- 15 4. An exchanger as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, which includes a mechanical drive adapted to drive the spirals and which is aligned with the centre of the tube and fitted with bearings and shaft seal.
5. An exchanger as claimed in claim 4, in which the mechanical drive is directly connected to a motor and/or in bundles where the centre tube spirals drive provides the driving pulley for other tube spirals around.
- 20 6. An exchanger as claimed in claim 4 or claim 5, in which the mechanical drive is operated with belts to an arrangement of tubes around the centre tube spiral.
7. An exchanger as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, which includes no bearings in the opposite side of the spirals.
- 25 8. An exchanger as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the spirals are self-centred in the tube with the rotation.
9. An exchanger as claimed in claim 1 or claim 2, in which an arrangement of gears drive each spiral.

10. An exchanger as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4 and 9, in which the gears are driven with a single geared drive outside through a shaft seal assembly.
- 5 11. An exchanger as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4 and 9 to 10, in which the spiral is tensioned to facilitate stability in spiral operation.
12. An exchanger as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the brine provides the lubrication and dampening effect of the spiral inside the tube.
- 10 13. An exchanger as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the brine is fully flooded and circulated through the heat exchanger tubes.
14. An exchanger as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, which is adapted to allow Ammonia to be evaporated in the shell side and which absorbs the heat from the brine in order to create ice crystals on the inner tube surface inside the brine stream.
- 15 15. An exchanger as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the spirals are adapted to provide high velocity brine stream on the inner tube surface to provide best heat transfer.
16. An exchanger as claimed in claim 14 or claim 15, in which the spirals are adapted to remove the ice crystals from the inner tube surface with high
20 velocity brine stream created by the rotation of the spiral.
17. An exchanger as claimed in any one of claims 14 to 16, in which the spirals are adapted to provide agitation to the brine stream inside the tube and facilitate a super cooling effect, where brine is super cooled and ice crystals forms inside the brine stream.
- 25 18. An exchanger as claimed in any one of claims 14 to 17, in which the spirals provide sufficient vibration in the tube to facilitate the removal of ice crystals from the inner tube surface.
19. An exchanger as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the spirals are adapted to provide sufficient vibration to improve heat transfer

on the refrigerant side with specially prepared surface on the outside of the tube.

20. An exchanger as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the inner tube surface is prepared to facilitate the removal of ice crystals.
- 5 21. An exchanger as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, in which the overall flow rate is controlled with a pump to ensure the ice concentration required.
22. A method of producing slurry ice, which includes the steps of moving or pumping brine and slurry ice through at least one tube to ensure
10 individual supply of brine for the production of slurry ice.
23. A method as claimed in claim 22, in which the tubes are fixed in the end plate of the shell and tube heat exchanger.
24. A method as claimed in claim 22 or claim 23, which includes the step of driving spirals inside the tube by mechanical means.
- 15 25. A method as claimed in any one of claims 22 to 24, which includes the step of self-centring the spirals in the tube with the rotation.
26. A method as claimed in any one of claims 22 to 25, in which the brine provides the lubrication and dampening effect of the spiral inside the tube.
- 20 27. A method as claimed in any one of claims 22 to 26, in which the brine is fully flooded and circulated through the heat exchanger tubes.
28. A method as claimed in any one of claims 22 to 27, which includes the step of allowing Ammonia to be evaporated in the shell side which absorbs the heat from the brine in order to create ice crystals on the
25 inner tube surface inside the brine stream.
29. A method as claimed in any one of claims 22 to 28, in which the spirals provide high velocity brine stream on the inner tube surface to provide best heat transfer.

30. A method as claimed in claim 28 or claim 29, in which the spirals remove the ice crystals from the inner tube surface with high velocity brine stream created by the rotation of the spiral.
- 5 31. A method as claimed in any one of claims 25 to 27, in which the spirals provide agitation to the brine stream inside the tube and facilitate a super cooling effect, where brine is super cooled and ice crystals forms inside the brine stream.
- 10 32. A method as claimed in any one of claims 22 to 31, in which the spirals provide sufficient vibration in the tube to facilitate the removal of ice crystals from the inner tube surface.
33. A method as claimed in any one of claims 22 to 32, in which the spirals provide sufficient vibration to improve heat transfer on the refrigerant side with specially prepared surface on the outside of the tube.
- 15 34. A method as claimed in any one of claims 22 to 33, which includes the step of preparing the inner tube surface to facilitate the removal of ice crystals.
35. A method as claimed in any one of claims 22 to 34, which includes the step of controlling the overall flow rate with a pump to ensure the ice concentration required.
- 20 36. An industrial shell and tube heat exchanger for providing freezing or chilling of brine to produce slurry ice substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.
37. A method of producing slurry ice substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.