Quality and the Environment

The environment is the 'hot topic' both nationally and internationally at the moment. World Environment Day on 5th June is a UN Initiative to stimulate worldwide awareness of the environment and enhance political attention and action. In the UK, the Environment Agency is carrying out the biggest survey on climate change ever, asking three questions: the number one thing people are doing to tackle climate change, the one extra thing people could do to tackle climate change, and what is stopping them doing it.

With all this interest in the environment, some Quality Managers are being asked whether it would make sense for their organisation to be registered to ISO14001. They are often the only people in the company that have experienced ISO standards and the registration process.

There are a number of reasons why organisations might embark on the implementation of an Environmental Management System (EMS):

- The organisation will have competitors, they will not be stationary and they may be actively pursuing the introduction of an EMS.
- Often customers demand the introduction of an EMS as part of their purchasing policy or as part of the contractual agreement.
- The introduction and application of an EMS saves time and money and importantly can protect the environment for the future.

The overriding aim of an EMS is primarily to prevent environmental non-conformity or stakeholder problems by concentrating on the environmental impacts of the product or service process. The objective of standard is the minimisation of risk and cost and the maximisation of benefits that the organisation can obtain from achieving the environmental requirements.

For further information on ISO14001, visit www.bsi-global.com

ISO Standards for Fisheries and Aquaculture

A new ISO technical committee has been formed to develop ISO standards that will aid the sustainable development of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. The first meeting will be in October 2007 and the aim will be the development of standards that will:

- Promote the sustainable development of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors
- Develop specifications for technical equipment adapted to the local environment
- Improve surveillance and management of marine resources
- Improve the safety of employees
- Establish a common terminology

If you would like further information on the work of the committee, please visit www.iso.ch

Food Safety Management for Small Businesses

A new product has been released by ISO aimed at Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) that need to implement a food safety management system based on ISO22000. The product should make implementation easier and it consists of a handbook and CD-ROM *ISO 22000 Food Safety Management Systems – An easy-to-use checklist for small business – Are you ready?* The checklist contains

questions covering various aspects of implementation and certification of a food safety system according to ISO 22000. It is in 13 parts, each covering an element of the standard, explaining the requirement and providing guidance on how to achieve the standard. Patricia Francis of the International Trade Centre and Alan Bryden of the ISO, say in the preface to the handbook, "We hope that this handbook on ISO22000 will be of benefit to small businesses, especially in developing countries and transition economies, in their effort to improve their market share of food and agricultural products in the global market."

For further information on the handbook and CD-ROM please visit www.iso.ch

New Chemical Regulations

New regulations on the management and control of chemicals came into force on 1st June 2007. The Registration, Evaluation, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals (REACH) is aimed at ensuring a high level of protection of human health and the environment as well as improving industry competitiveness and innovation. REACH sets in place measures for industry to provide evidence of any chemical risks and will make sure that everyone in the supply chain knows how to use them safely.

Jeff Rooker, Minister of Sustainable Farming and Food said, "REACH is an important step forward. It is good news for the environment and health, and it should also assist industry. But industry needs to make sure that it is gearing up so it can make full use of the pre-registration opportunity next year. We will be working with our partners, especially in the UK Competent Authority, part of the Health and Safety Executive, to do all that we can to make sure that industry hears the message about REACH and particularly about pre-registration".

REACH came into effect on 1st June 2007, but the first major milestone for business is 1st June 2008 – the start of a six month period when chemical manufacturers c an pre-register their products.

There is a helpdesk available if assistance is needed UKREACHCA@hse.gsi.gov.uk and more

information can be found at www.hse.gov.uk/reach

Are you a UK Quality Leader?

UK Quality leaders demonstrate good practice in quality improvement in commerce, industry and public service. They act as ambassadors for the Chartered Quality Institute (CQI), write articles on quality and best practic e, speak at seminars and conferences and work as part of the UK Quality Leaders Group to exchange good practice. If you or someone you know deserves to be recognised as a Quality Leader, then now is the time to apply to the CQI. Applications are reviewed by CQI panel members against UK Quality Leader criteria and if the criteria are met, they are invited for interview and may be selected as UK Quality Leaders.

The final deadline for entry is 3d September 2007 and application forms are available from www.thecqi.org

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Recycling

An EU Directive on waste electrical and electronic equipment (the WEEE Directive) came into force in the UK on 1 July 2007. It entered the statute book at the beginning of the year, but full producer responsibility was delayed until July. The directive is designed to tackle the increasing stream of electrical and electronic waste sent to landfill and incineration. Producers will now be responsible for taking back and recycling this waste and will have to fund recycling schemes. Retailers must offer take back services to customers. At the moment the UK produces about 1.2 million tonnes of this waste which includes items such as PCs, games consoles, washing machines and microwaves.

Manufacturers of such equipment now have to consider what is going to happen after the product has been sold and how they will meet their legal requirements. Manufacturers are required to join one of the "Producer Compliance Schemes" in the UK. These schemes collect and recycle waste on behalf of the members of the scheme. The amount a

manufacturer is responsible for is calculated by looking at the amount they sell. Manufacturers have to report their sales to their compliance scheme; these are then passed on to the Environment Agency. The Environment Agency calculates the total sales in the UK and then works out the percentage that each manufacturer is responsible for.

Under the legislation, retailers of electrical and electronic goods are obliged to offer customers a free 'take-back' service or help fund the expansion of a network of WEEE collection points. For example, one major electrical retailer is funding the upgrading of local authority-run recycling facilities.

Domestic and commercial users of electrical and electronic equipment can now take it to be recycled at the end of its lifetime, rather than just dispose of it in a skip. Quality managers can help their organisations by ensuring that the disposal options available are recognised and updating any waste disposal procedures to include these options. Environmental managers must make sure that this additional legislation is included in their environmental legislation register and procedures updated to include disposal of electrical and electronic waste.

The WEEE Directive is due to be reviewed in 2008, five years after the EU first agreed that such legislation was needed. Further information can be found on http://www.dti.gov.uk/innovation/sustainability/weee/page30269.html. Your local council can also be consulted about local recycling facilities.

ISO Tool for Software Asset management

A self-assessment tool that aims to help organisations prepare and maintain certification to ISO 17990-1 has been launched by the ISO. The CD *ISO/IEC 19770-1 Software Asset Management: Are you ready?* provides users with an interactive version of the standard and documentation for self-assessment. Software Asset management principles apply to media, installations, licences, proof of licence and intellectual property associated with the software. Roger Wittlock, convenor of the working group

that developed the documentation said, "the standard will help companies better manage their software assets and their accompanying licences. Companies who understand usage patterns, asset inventory and specific contract terms are potentially saving millions in licence costs and maintenance fees each year."

For further information, please visit www.iso.org

ISO14000 CD – ROM

ISO have recently launched a CD-ROM of the ISO14000 series of environmental management standards. It includes the latest editions of all the 23 standards in the series, including:

- Environmental aspects in product standards
- Product labelling and declarations
- Environment management systems
- Auditing environmental and/or quality management systems
- Environmental performance evaluations
- Lifecycle assessment
- Environmental communication
- Greenhouse gas emissions accounting and verification

The practical tools in the CD should help organisations to strategically approach environmental management and contribute to sustainable development. Alan Bryden, ISO Secretary General said "Environmental issues and sustainable development are rapidly becoming global priorities affecting all of our activities. Companies have to respond to government regulations, shareholder concerns and customer expectations. This new collection of ISO 14000 standards is a great tool to help organisations in both public and private sectors to get abreast of the latest developments in environmental management in a practical, user friendly way."

For further information, please visit www.iso.org

What is the most Dangerous Profession?

According to figures released recently, fishing is the most dangerous profession in the UK. In 2006, 19 fishing vessels were lost and 16 fishermen lost their lives. Mr Meyer, Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents urges that the following is considered by fishermen before putting to sea:

- Carry out maintenance checks
- Check all doors and hatches
- Seek professional advice on the effect any modifications will have on a vessel's stability
- Identify a suitable lifejacket that can be worn without getting in the way
- Ensure that the vessel has an in-date life-raft
- Fit an Emergency Beacon.

And, whilst at sea:

- Keep a good lookout and never leave the wheelhouse unattended
- Consider risks and how to reduce them
- Wear inflatable lifejackets on deck.

For further information please visit www.maib.gov.uk

New UK Government Departments that can help Business

The new British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown has established two new Department that can help business; the Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills.

John Hutton, the new Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, said that his Department will help Britain to seize new opportunities in the changing global economy. According to the Government, the new Department will:

- Promote the creation and growth of business and a strong enterprise economy
- Deliver free and fair markets with greater competition for businesses, consumers and employees
- Ensure the reliable supply and efficient use of clean, safe and competitively priced energy

- Ensure that all Government Departments and agencies deliver better regulation for the private, public and third sectors
- Manage a wide range of Government assets – including interests in public corporations.

The Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills aims to ensure that Britain has a highly-skilled workforce, a dynamic business community which seizes new technology and innovation opportunities. John Denman, Secretary of State for the Department, says, "It is thrilling to lead a department with the mission is ensure that every person in the country has the opportunity to reach their full potential and highest ambitions. High quality skills are vitally important to achieve this ambition and we must strive to build a workforce able to compete in a highly competitive global market."

For further information, please visit www.dti.gov.uk

Calculate your Carbon Footprint

David Miliband, Environment Secretary, launched an online calculator that allows people to work out their carbon footprint. It will allow people to calculate their carbon footprint from home energy, appliances and transport, and choose to calculate either their own personal footprint or their household's. It will then provide an action plan for users, with the steps that they can take to cut their emissions. David Miliband said, "The carbon calculator will help people decide what they can do – and be sure that it makes a difference. Using it, people can work out the impact of their actions and, with the tailored recommendations provided by the calculator, identify the best way to reduce their footprint."

The underlying software that runs the calculator's engine will be made freely available under 'open source' licences, to enable others wanting to power their own calculators to use it with their own branding.

The calculator can be found at http://www.direct.gov.uk/actonCO2 .