Seasons Greetings

Reach Chemicals Law

Euro MPs have recently backed a major chemical law which will lead to the safety testing of thousands of chemicals used in everyday products. The law, which is called REACH – Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation of CHemicals, will have a database to include all the chemicals used in the EU. The European Parliament also voted for improved labelling of products and included a requirement for firms to replace hazardous chemicals with safe ones, whenever possible. Businesses wanting to use the most dangerous chemicals will have to get special authorisation from the agency. Up to now, the majority of the chemicals used have not had to be checked for their effects on health and the environment and the onus has been on public health authorities in individual countries to test the ones they suspected to be dangerous. According to Reach this burden of proof, and the duty of care will fall on businesses. However, the regulation still has to be approved by national governments before it can become law, and may return to the parliament for another vote next year. For more information please see BBC News.

Hurricane Katrina's After Effects

A US environmental group has warned residents of New Orleans of a major health risk caused by spores of mould growing in properties that were flooded after the Hurricane Katrina. Natural Resources Defence Council (NRDC) has tested air samples taken from flooded homes have shown high levels of mould that can trigger serious allergic reactions, particularly those who have lung problems or weak immune systems. The hot, humid climate in New Orleans and the fact that many of these properties were flooded for days or weeks following Hurricane Katrina has made it an excellent breeding ground for the mould. The authorities have encouraged workers and residents returning to New Orleans to wear masks and protective clothing when cleaning up these buildings and warn the residents of the risks involved. For more information please see BBC News.

Gas Flaring in Nigeria is illegal

The High Court in Nigeria have recently ruled on the burning of gas by all oil companies violates the human rights of local people and must be stopped. Nigeria is the world's biggest gas flarer. Its is a by-product of crude oil production, which needs to be released to produce oil and is the most visible impact of the oil industry on the daily life in Nigeria. The case was brought by the Iwerekan community - supported by Environmental Rights Action, Friends of the Earth, Nigeria and Climate Justice Programme. Environmental rights group in Nigeria are celebrating their victory to stop gas flaring in those areas. For more information please see BBC News.

New Control Tower at Edinburgh Airport

The opening of the new control tower at Edinburgh airport, with the state of the art facility will allow the airport to handle more

flights, increase passenger numbers and should reduce delays. The tower has replaced one which was built in 1940 for RAF Turnhouse. Edinburgh Airport has traditionally been the main business airport, operating the highest number of domestic flights. However, environmentalists have warned of increased noise and air pollution as a result of the airport expansion. Mr. Donald Dowds, the managing director of BAA Scotland, said Edinburgh was growing by 6% each year and admitted that everyone should be aware of the environmental challenges associated with the growth in aviation. For more information please see BBC news.

One Planet Olympics

London has joined the environmental group WWF and BioRegional to form the "One Planet Olympics" concept. The environmental plan for the 2012 Summer Olympic Games focuses on four areas:

- Low-carbon emissions – such as minimising the Games' carbon "footprint" during its development stages. Using most carbon efficient vehicles to transport staff and competitors to and from venues. Also encouraging people to use public transport, cycle or walk to the park.
- Zero waste – avoiding waste being sent to landfill sites, making sure products and packaging which eventually become waste during the Games can be recycled or recovered.
- Biodiversity – how the construction of the site will improve wildlife habitats, such as restoration of rivers, wetlands being created and effective drainage.
- Promoting environmental awareness – there will also be a "Sustainable Sport Programme" for local community, as well as annual clean-up projects.

For more information please see BBC News.

ISO9000:2005 released

Another in the ISO9000 family of standards has been revised. ISO9000:2005 *Quality management systems: Fundamentals and vocabulary* has been recently released. Although there have been no changes in the basic definitions, the revised standard has

additional definitions and some of the diagrams have been improved. According to Youssef El Gamal, Chair of the relevant ISO Subcommittee "The primary reason for this new edition is to provide a single, unambiguous meaning of key words used in the various management system standards". Further information can be found at www.iso.ch

IQA aiming for Royal Charter status

The Institute of Quality Assurance has applied for a Royal Charter of Incorporation creating the Chartered Quality Institute. This was decided at an Extraordinary General meeting in October. The IQA believe that the work of the IQA would be helped by having such a charter. According to the petition the charter would:

- Strengthen the relationship with the government and the other sectors of the economy
- Give public recognition to quality management as a profession in its own right
- Help develop, maintain and promote standards of competence and progression within the profession, for the benefit of the public at large. For further information visit www.iqa.org

Information Security Standards

A new information security standard has been released ISO/IEC 27001:2005, *Information technology – Security techniques – information security management systems – Requirements* describes what is required to establish, operate and review an Information Security Management System ISMS – it was the old BS7799-2 standard. This standard follows the same pattern as the ISO9001:2000 and ISO14001:2004 standards so that an integrated management system will be easier to operate. Although changing its number, the standard still forms a pair with the ISO/IEC 17799:2005 *Code of Practice for information security management* that was released in June 2005. According to Ted Humphreys, convenor of the ISO working group on the standard, "The publication of ISO/IEC 27001:2005 is a big event in the world of information security and the standard has been eagerly awaited. It is a standard that all security-conscious organisations should look to implement". The ISO are planning to renumber the standards so

that eventually ISO 17799 will become ISO 27002. In the meantime a new British Standard BS 7799-3 *Guidelines for information security risk management is planned for release in December 2005.* For further information visit www.iso.ch

Chip and Pin has reduced Fraud

The Association of Payment Clearing Service (APACS) has released figures showing that counterfeit card fraud has fallen by 31%, fraud on lost or stolen card by 27% and losses on missing cards by 37% for the period January to June 2005 compared to the same period last year. They believe that these reductions are primarily due to the introduction of the chip and pin technology. Unfortunately it is not all good news, internet card fraud has increased and online Banking fraud rose from £4 million to £14.5 million. APACS have released launched an advertising campaign to encourage people to take simple precautions when shopping online – especially with the expected increase before Christmas. Shoppers should make sure they are using a secure site and lock for the locked padlock or unbroken key symbol at the bottom of the screen.

Environmental Directive

The RoHS Directive *The restriction of the use of certain hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment* will be imposed on the EU market from July 1 2006. This directive incorporates the WEEE directive (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) that concerned waste and recycling and extends it much further. The hazardous substances include mercury, cadmium and lead and they are included in a range of everyday electrical equipment. The new directive means that all producers of electrical and electronic equipment working in the European Union will have to make sure that their products comply. Although, many of these substances are already regulated in some form, the new directive is more far-reaching and looks towards potential health and environmental problems. It also covers, not just the manufacturers of products containing these substances, but also dealers and distributors selling them in the EU.