

Online special

“The Rise of Natural Refrigerants and its costs”

A statement by Heikki Oksanen, Sales Manager, Vahterus Oy

The Australian government set new political regulations for the use of HFCs: In contrast to the former legislation to support the use of eco-friendly refrigerants, the new tax on greenhouse gas emissions presses every button and lets consumers and the industry pay for applying fluorocarbon refrigerants. Meant as a financial incentive to encourage the use of natural refrigerants, the Australian government places a price tag on every ton of synthetic greenhouse gases and by this shows one way to take influence on the refrigerant preferences.

In the context of the F-Gases Regulation and the need also for European's industry and consumers to change over to applications with natural refrigerants, the question rises whether an adaption of the Australian tax model will also be possible in Europe. Heikki Oksanen, member of eurammon and Sales Manager at Vahterus Oy, Finland, provides an appraisal of natural refrigerants' rise and its costs.

1. The Australian government set political regulations for the use of HFCs. Do you think that other European countries will follow this example and also implement a HFC levy?

Even if Australia is the most popular example for taxes on synthetic greenhouse gases, there are already comparable political regulations in Europe. Denmark and Norway introduced taxes relative to the Global Warming Potential (GWP) of refrigerants. Thus each refrigerant has its own tax, for example Denmark charges the synthetic refrigerant R404A (HFC blend) with a tax of 50 euros per kilogram. Other countries, like the Netherlands, provide fiscal incentives for energy efficiency and natural refrigerants. Although there exist different forms of taxes in Europe, I am sure that the number of countries using taxes will increase so that there will be more environmental taxes in all countries.

2. Do you believe it should be the governments' function to support the use of natural refrigerants in the future? Or is it up to the industries to focus on natural refrigeration in order to implement environmentally friendly cooling technologies?

Everybody must take responsibility for our environment. Furthermore, the industries have to realize that natural refrigerants are also economically attractive, especially in perspective of the long-term costs. Transporting this message should also be part of the governments' work. Taxes are only one way to a better future – the other is to steer the conversation about natural refrigerants and contribute to the public opinion in a positive way. For me, there is no future for industry with environmentally unfriendly technology, not only because of the green image, which every company longs for.

3. In your opinion, how will applications with natural refrigerants develop in the future?

Already today there are many applications with ammonia and carbon dioxide, especially for large capacity ranges in industrial refrigeration. From my point of view, in future, applications with natural refrigerants will be commonly used for a wide variety of cooling requirements. For example applications with heat pump will strongly increase over the next years.

For more information on the event and on eurammon, visit www.eurammon.com.

About eurammon

eurammon is a joint European initiative of companies, institutions and individuals who advocate an increased use of natural refrigerants. As a knowledge pool for the use of natural refrigerants in refrigeration engineering, the initiative sees as its mandate the creation of a platform for information sharing and the promotion of public awareness and acceptance of natural refrigerants. The objective is to promote the use of natural refrigerants in the interest of a healthy environment, and thereby encourage a sustainable approach in refrigeration engineering. eurammon provides comprehensive information about all aspects of natural refrigerants to experts, politicians and the public at large. It serves as a qualified contact for anyone interested in the subject. Users and designers of refrigeration projects can turn to eurammon for specific project experience and extensive information, as well as for advice on all matters of planning, licensing and operating refrigeration plants. The initiative was set up in 1996 and is open to European companies and institutions with a vested interest in natural refrigerants, as well as to individuals e.g. scientists and researchers.
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