

The Editor
Financial Times

Brussels, 30 November, 2004

Ensuring refrigerant choice to cool off

Sir,

In response to an article published on 18 November 2004 by Roger Crowe, entitled "Enemies find a better way to cool off", I welcome the fact that companies involved in the food & beverage sector such as Unilever (in partnership with Greenpeace) are exploring options on refrigerant choice and innovation. Some of the innovative approaches discussed expand the refrigerant options that can be considered for use in a range of commercial refrigeration, air-conditioning and heating equipment.

The European Partnership for Energy and the Environment (EPEE) promotes and encourages a well-informed debate in Europe on refrigerant selection. However, there are clear limitations in choice if Hydrofluorcarbons (HFC) technology is ignored, particularly in respect of energy efficiency. Innovation is not limited to those companies developing non-HFC technologies. Newer HFCs are demonstrating improved energy efficiency across a range of refrigeration and air-conditioning applications and equipment designers are taking advantage of these gains.

The perfect refrigerant has not yet been developed as all have some negative impact on either the local or global environment. Each refrigerant has different individual characteristics that have to be taken into account when considering their long-term use. but common to all is that they have to be used responsibly and contained effectively.

HFCs have vital uses in everyday applications (air-conditioning, refrigeration, heating pumps, electricity transmission and medical uses) which provide health and safety benefits. Indeed following the tragedy of more than 15,000 heat-related deaths last year in Europe, demand for air-conditioning is on the rise. HFC-units - commercial and residential - are not only playing a key role in comfort cooling and refrigeration - but more crucially in the health and safety of our society.

Energy efficiency improvements are the key to long-term sustainable refrigeration, irrespective of the refrigerant used. On average, over 80 per cent of the impact of equipment on the climate comes from the CO₂ produced in generating the energy to power equipment - for small factory sealed systems this can be even higher. By limiting the choice of refrigerants and not taking account a holistic approach to all options, there is a risk that overall environmental gains may well be negated.

The debate on refrigerants is not only limited to users such as Unilever. There is also an ongoing legislative discussion on HFCs at an EU level. Discussions on the proposed Regulation on Fluorinated Gases are expected to go on until early 2006.

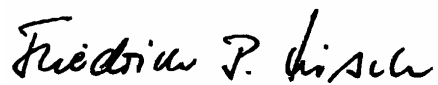
Fluorinated gases (f-gases) are greenhouse gases, and EPEE is therefore a strong supporter of an EU-wide framework which will ensure their emissions are minimised while recognizing their positive energy efficiency and safety attributes. The proposal is a step in ensuring that fluorinated gases are used responsibly and properly contained.. A crucial part of the proposal is the monitoring of use of

fluorinated gases. This will make it possible to have an accurate picture of emission trends in Europe, and this is an essential step to ensure the legislation results in real emission reductions.

The EU is serious about its commitment to reducing CO2 emissions. It will not risk achieving this objective by turning its back on HFCs. In the end, the EU, like the United States, will choose a path that saves energy through the use of safe, cost effective refrigerants - including HFCs - so that we can continue to improve the quality of life for our citizens at home and work as we improve the environment for our children and future generations.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Friedrich P. Busch". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Friedrich P Busch
Director General EPEE