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Mitsui Chemicals to Produce NOx Reduction Additive For Diesel Truck Exhaust Gas

Japan's leading chemical company Mitsui Chemicals, Inc. (MCI) is embarking on production and sale of "AdBlue", a reduction additive for denoxing – eliminating nitrogen oxides – of exhaust gas emitted from diesel engines on heavy-duty trucks, the company announced today.

AdBlue is designed for use in the Urea SCR (selective catalytic reduction) System to be installed in heavy trucks manufactured by Nissan Diesel Motor Co., Ltd. (NDM) to comply with Japan New Long-Term Exhaust Emission Regulations (the new regulations) coming into force in 2005.

MCI plans to produce AdBlue at a production unit of 20,000-ton/yr capacity to be installed at its Osaka Works, Japan. Start of installation work is scheduled for July 2004, with completion envisaged in September the same year. Commercial operation is scheduled to start in October. The company expects AdBlue annual sales to reach 5 billion yen by 2007.

The company's move this time has been motivated by the increasing tightening of automotive emission control in Japan every year as a part of stronger environmental conservation initiatives. With the new regulations coming into force next year, development of automobiles complying with them is now a must, and in particular, denoxing of exhaust gas from heavy diesel-engine trucks is an important issue.

Given such a backdrop, Urea SCR System which is based on spraying an aqueous solution of urea into exhaust gas in order to decompose the nitrogen oxides into harmless nitrogen and water by a reduction reaction, is attracting much interest as a denoxing technology meeting the new regulations .

It was as a top urea maker in Japan that MCI recognized the potential benefits of the SCR system, prompted by its policy of actively addressing environmental issues in line with the spirit of Responsible Care. In its development activities leading up to the latest move, the company participated in the Advanced Clean Energy Vehicle Project sponsored by New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization, while at the same concentrating its efforts on establishing a stable process for producing a high-quality denoxing agent suitable for the system.

So it is that MCI has decided to embark on the production of AdBlue this time, taking the opportunity of NDM's launching of the new regulations-compliant

heavy trucks equipped with Urea SCR System.

Now that the various European Union countries being just about decided to adopt the SCR system as a standard issue in heavy diesel-engine trucks, the system is also very likely to be standard in Japan in future, and the company expects that the demand for AdBlue would increase in step with the popularization of the system.

In order to achieve a smooth supply of AdBlue meeting strict quality requirements for safe operation of Urea SCR System in heavy trucks to gasoline stations and truck stations all over Japan, MCI intends to initially rely on its Osaka Works – the urea production site – as the main supply center, and eventually lay down a network of AdBlue production locations throughout the country.

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