

High-quality industrial chemicals from LANXESS

Modern, more efficient and safer – the aromatics network

Cologne – The production of aromatic intermediates is a core competency of specialty chemicals company LANXESS, as demonstrated by a recently completed, three-year investment program totaling over EUR 20 million aimed at expanding the company's aromatics network. The comprehensive modernization project focused mainly on facilities that manufacture nitrotoluenes, chlorobenzenes, and their downstream products.

Joachim Waldi, head of the LANXESS Production, Technology, Safety & Environment group function, explains: “Since 2013, we have modernized several production plants in the aromatics network operated by the Advanced Industrial Intermediates (All) business unit at our German locations. Thanks above all to the introduction of state-of-the-art automation systems, we also tapped into considerable capacity reserves, for example for nitrotoluene derivatives.” At the same time the safety equipment was updated and significantly improved once again.

“The new automation systems, combined with the knowledge and experience of the specialists working on implementation, have not only brought the plants up to the latest standard, but also to a new level of efficiency,” emphasizes Dr. Torsten Hauschild, head of the Aromatics Network at All. Efficiency enhancements of this kind are an opportunity for the European chemical industry, as reported in Commerzbank's “Chemical Industry Report” (Branchenbericht Chemie), which it presented in early February 2016 together with the German Chemical Industry Association VCI.

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Controlling complexity

Developed over decades, the LANXESS aromatics network is a complexly networked structure encompassing seven large production plants that manufacture over 60 synthesis components from petrochemical raw materials. Its name comes from the products themselves: aromatic compounds, mostly derivatives of benzene and toluene, of which chlorobenzenes, nitrotoluenes and their downstream products are among the most important. They are used by numerous industries to generate a wide range of final products: active ingredients for pharmaceuticals and crop protection products, additives for plastics and rubber products, paints and coatings, flame retardants, biocides, perfumes and flavorings.

The roughly 500 employees of the aromatics network manufacture 300,000 metric tons of product a year. Apart from the close networking of material and energy flows, the highly advanced infrastructure in and around the CHEMPARK sites is another key factor for the success of the aromatics network. Furthermore, decades of experience managing processes ensures that the plants can be operated highly flexibly and thus in line with market demands. Byproducts of one production stage frequently serve as starting materials for another, promoting high economic efficiency and minimizing waste volumes.

Safety with a capital “S”

Safety is of crucial importance in the chemical industry, including at LANXESS. “Every facility holds regular meetings with plant, process, occupational safety and environmental protection experts to continuously improve our safety concepts and measures,” explains Ansgar Eltner, head of Technology for the All aromatics network. These discussions cover any technological advancements in the field and result in action plans that are implemented in investment projects. All changes naturally are in compliance with all relevant legal requirements and standards.

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“Our regularly and well-trained employees, some of whom have decades of experience, are the foundation for the safe, day-to-day operation of our plants. Another contribution comes from the technical equipment we installed or modernized as part of the investment program. Such investments are by no means standard in all companies or in all parts of the world,” Hauschild points out. Investments were made in the latest-generation process control systems, and in autonomous, fully-automated, safety-based control systems. The former manage the production processes in standard operating mode, while the latter ensure that even if the process deviates from target values, it is always returned to a safe operating state without manual intervention. “Independent auditors check the systems regularly to make sure they are all functioning reliably,” says Hauschild.

“Our commitment to our aromatics network is a good example of how LANXESS operates and improves its production facilities under the principles of sustainability. Safety is important for our employees, and it is the foundation for the trust put in us by neighbors, the general public and our customers. Safety and reliability – and that includes also supply safety – contribute directly to our economic success,” summarizes Waldi.

Advanced Industrial Intermediates business unit

The Advanced Industrial Intermediates business unit belongs to the Advanced Intermediates segment, which achieved total sales in fiscal 2014 of EUR 1.6 billion. Its production sites in Germany are located in Leverkusen, Krefeld, Dormagen and Brunsbüttel. The business unit has a total of 1,300 employees in Germany, 650 of them in Leverkusen.

For more information on products from the LANXESS All business unit, go to <http://advancedindustrialintermediates.com/>.

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News Release

LANXESS is a leading specialty chemicals company with sales of EUR 8.0 billion in 2014 and about 16,300 employees in 29 countries. The company is currently represented at 52 production sites worldwide. The core business of LANXESS is the development, manufacturing and marketing of plastics, rubber, intermediates and specialty chemicals. LANXESS is a member of the leading sustainability indices Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI World) and FTSE4Good.

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Forward-Looking Statements.

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Information for editors:

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You can find further information concerning LANXESS chemistry in our WebMagazine at <http://webmagazine.lanxess.com>.

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