

Milestones: Membrane production in Bitterfeld

The specialty chemicals company LANXESS began five years ago doing business with reverse osmosis membrane elements.

A look at its historical timeline:

2010: On January 21, 2010, ground is broken for the construction of a new plant at the industrial park in Bitterfeld-Wolfen. LANXESS invests EUR 30 million in the project, which also receives funding from the German state of Saxony-Anhalt. The pilot and development phase begins in late 2010.

2011: On September 16, 2011, LANXESS celebrates the official opening of its new production facility for membrane separation elements in Bitterfeld and launches regular production in the 4th quarter.

2012: Market introduction of the LANXESS membrane separation elements under the new trade name Lewabrane. The main field of application for the first two product types – Lewabrane RO B400 HR and Lewabrane RO B090 HF 4040 – is in the desalination of brackish water for a variety of industrial processes. The HR types boast a high rejection rate, the HF types a high flow rate.

A unique design tool developed in-house is introduced to the industry for the first time in July. The LewaPlus-brand proprietary software is a comprehensive tool for engineering and dimensioning water treatment systems that work with ion exchange resins (IXR) and membrane elements for reverse osmosis (RO).

2013: The new line of Lewabrane FR products for water with a high fouling potential is launched on the market on February 1. A free update of the LewaPlus software is made available for download: It can now be used to design complete systems, for example to treat feed water.

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On April 1, 2013, the Ion Exchange Resins business unit is renamed Liquid Purification Technologies (LPT). With its new name, the business unit underscores its transformation into a complete supplier of two complementary water treatment technologies: ion exchange resins and reverse osmosis membrane elements.

The U.S. National Sanitation Foundation (NSF International) certifies in May 2013 that all membrane elements currently sold by LANXESS are safe for use in the treatment of drinking water as per NSF/ANSI Standard 61.

LPT adds Lewabrane LE (low energy) elements to its product range in mid-2013. Their operating pressures are between 20 and 40 percent lower than the company's standard elements, which reduces energy consumption of the pumps.

On October 30, 2013, LPT announces that the membrane range will be expanded in mid-2014 to include additional product types for seawater desalination. The latest version of the LewaPlus software fittingly offers a number of new features, such as the configuration of seawater desalination plants.

2014: After successful practice tests in Egypt, the LANXESS membranes for seawater desalination are launched at Singapore International Water Week (SIWW) in June 2014. The new Lewabrane RO S line, initially encompassing three product types, displays high salt rejection even under fluctuating temperatures, salt contents and pH values, meaning that it delivers permeate in consistently high quality.

With the new LewaPlus version 1.9 software, existing systems can now be analyzed to determine if they are working up to design dimensions. Users can correctly evaluate fluctuations in the process and, if necessary, promptly initiate appropriate remedial measures.

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2015: The production facility for membrane elements in Bitterfeld approaches the limits of its capacity. The business unit announces its plans for expansion in early November 2015. It is also announced that new Lewabrane products with innovative spacers will be available as of 2016. These novel “feed spacers,” with netting comprised of filaments of alternating thickness (ASD - alternating strand design), increase the output of reverse osmosis elements.

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2016: LANXESS premieres its new generation of feed spacer reverse osmosis elements at a leading trade show in the United States from February 1 to 5. Optimized for applications in brackish water, the new ASD elements display very low energy consumption and high fouling resistance.

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The LewaPlus design software is expanded in late February to include a condensate polishing module, which helps to more reliably and precisely design condensate treatment systems in water-steam circuits, especially in power plants.

On August 25, the membrane facility celebrates its 5-year anniversary. Among the guests is Petra Wust, mayor of Bitterfeld-Wolfen.

For detailed information on products from the LANXESS Liquid Purification Technologies business unit, go to www.lpt.lanxess.com.

LANXESS is a leading specialty chemicals company with sales of EUR 7.9 billion in 2015 and about 16,600 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 chemical intermediates, specialty chemicals and plastics. Through ARLANXEO, the joint venture with Saudi Aramco, LANXESS is also a leading supplier of synthetic rubber. LANXESS is listed in the leading sustainability indices Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJSI World) and FTSE4Good.

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Forward-Looking Statements

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