

OZONews

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1- Premature Sighting of Weakened Ozone Hole this Week

... Using satellite data from the European Space Agency (ESA), Henk Eskes from the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute (KNMI) has found that the depth of the ozone hole is much smaller than previously seen. 'This breakdown is occurring exceptionally early in the year, about two months earlier than normal,' says Mr Eskes, a KNMI senior scientist. 'The depth of the ozone hole this year also is unusually small, about half that recorded in 2001.' ... During the South Pole's spring and summer, the temperature increases and the winds weaken. As a result, ozone-poor air inside the vortex mixes with the ozone-richer air outside, and the ozone hole dissipates. ... KNMI, the Dutch national research and information centre for climate, climatic change and seismology, uses data from ESA's Global ozone monitoring experiment (GOME) instrument onboard the ERS-2 satellite to generate daily global ozone analyses and nine day ozone forecasts. ESA, together with the European organisation for the exploitation of meteorological satellites (EUMETSAT), is also preparing a series of three satellites called MetOp that will carry follow on GOME instruments and guarantee at least 10 years of continued ozone monitoring from space, starting in 2005. Further information @: <http://www.esa.int>

Article @: http://dbs.cordis.lu/cgi-bin/srchidadb?CALLER=NHP_EN_NEWS&ACTION=D&SESSION=&RCN=EN_RCN_ID:19001

Source: CORDIS RTD-NEWS - European Communities, 26 September 2002.

2- Mitsubishi Heavy Unit Released CFCs (Japan)

NAGOYA (Kyodo) A contractor of a Mitsubishi Heavy Industry Ltd. subsidiary intentionally released ozone-depleting gas chlorofluorocarbons into the air at a Mitsubishi facility in the town of Miwa, Aichi Prefecture, Mitsubishi Heavy officials revealed Saturday. The incident came to light after an anonymous phone call tipped off Mitsubishi Heavy Industry on Tuesday. The repair company, commissioned by the subsidiary to fix air conditioners, released 63 kg of CFC into the air over a period of about one month from July 8, the officials said. The CFC had been collected from air conditioners. The officials said the repair company released the gas after bungling the collection process by, for example, failing to have a sufficient number of gas cylinders ready to accommodate the gas. The repair company asked the Mitsubishi subsidiary about potential problems prior to the operations, according to the officials, but the subsidiary failed to make a specific response. A Mitsubishi Heavy Industry spokesman admitted the subsidiary's response to the repair company was inadequate and pledged to take preventative steps.

Article @: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/getarticle.pl5?nn20020929a7.htm>

Source: The Japan Times, 29 September 2002

3- Time to Deal with Halon Systems (UK)

Norwich Union is encouraging businesses to replace Halon based fire extinguishing systems "sooner rather than later" to avoid any problems in complying with impending regulatory deadlines. Allister Smith, property risk manager for Norwich Union, warned that by the end of 2002 thousands of businesses in the UK may be putting themselves at risk if they fail to comply with new legislation, and that by the end of 2003 they could find themselves breaking the law. It is all to do with the Montreal Protocol, which deals with the threat to the Earth's protective shield through the release of ozone depleting substances. Halon 1301 is an agent that has been used since the 1950's in fire suppression systems and contains significant quantities of the halogenated hydrocarbons that damage the ozone layer. European regulation

EC 2037/2000 implements the Montreal Protocol, which requires there to be no refilling or replacement of activated Halon systems after 31 December 2002. By the end of 2003, all systems must be decommissioned and the Halon must be removed and safely destroyed at a registered disposal site. Release of the agent in non-fire related circumstances could result in severe penalties ...

Article @: http://www.thenetrisk.com/html/news/news_long_1_template1.html

Source: The Net Risk, 26 Septembre 2002, By: Jonathan Thomson

4- Impact of Methyl Bromide Ban to Exceed \$60 Million Annually (US)

WASHINGTON, DC--The North American Millers' Association (NAMA) has presented an application to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to exempt NAMA members from a ban on methyl bromide (MB) fumigant ... The NAMA exemption application calculated the cost of a MB ban to the grain milling industry at more than \$60 million annually. The largest component of the impact was from lost revenues as a result of the additional downtime required to sanitize mills with potential alternatives ... "Mill cleanliness is expected by consumers and required by FDA [Food and Drug Administration] regulations," said NAMA chairman Bernard J. Rothwell. ... "NAMA members are committed to meeting, and exceeding, those expectations ... The U.S. Department of Agriculture has spent more than \$100 million researching alternatives ... "We need additional time with which to develop economically and technically feasible alternatives," said Rothwell. MB is used to fumigate the mill structure, not raw grain or milled grain products. MB is also used to fumigate the soil in the production of tree seedlings and many fruits and vegetables, as well as for protecting museums, imported spices, coffee and cocoa and other important uses.

Source: NAMA, 23 September 2002, Press Release @: http://www.namamillers.org/PR_MethylBromide_09_23_02.html

OzoNews is available on the OzonAction Programme web site @:

<http://www.uneptie.org/ozonaction/compliance/ozonews/main.html>

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