

PRESS RELEASE

Europe's most modern grease factory on the way to Industry 4.0

The intelligent factory lays the foundations for the special greases of the future

Mönchengladbach, Germany, 3 July 2014 Mönchengladbach-based lubricant specialist Rhenus Lub has written a new chapter in the production of high-performance lubricating greases through the further automation of Europe's most modern grease factory. Customers will benefit from shorter delivery times, high delivery reliability and consistent product quality. That's because the often extremely complex processes for producing lubricating greases in Mönchengladbach will be planned, controlled and monitored using the latest process control technology. This is a continuation the systematic expansion strategy that the family-owned company has pursued since the opening of its ultra-modern grease factory in May 2006 at the company's headquarters in Mönchengladbach. The state-of-the-art facility has already earned Rhenus Lub a reputation as "the Mecca of oleochemistry" in professional circles.

Lubricants "made in Mönchengladbach" are considered indispensable elements of lifetime lubrication as they ensure that bearings placed under high stress in trains, cars, steel mills and in mechanical engineering function flawlessly over years and decades. "By implementing our automation concept, we will increase our ability to satisfy demand for highly flexible production systems and structures. To us, Industry 4.0 means the ability to use intelligent processes to respond efficiently and in a highly flexible manner to ever increasing complexity and constantly changing requirements", says Dr Frank Hentrich, Managing Director of Rhenus Lub, explaining the multi-million euro investment.

Automation of production at Rhenus Lub is particularly relevant for customers who wish to implement innovative and demanding applications. Firstly, batch control is optimized; the ability to produce different products efficiently brings the frequently mismatched ratio of demand and production more closely into line. Secondly, with the help of automatic process control, a wide range of raw materials can be fed into the highly sophisticated production process for complex greases in a mostly automated way and in accordance with specified recipes. Until now, this has usually been done manually, as at least 30 process steps are required for lithium complex lubricating greases or innovative polyurea greases. In the future, it will be possible to coordinate additives fully automatically and with a high level of precision.

This will result in two major advantages for users in design and in practice. Progress in industrial engineering is linked to a new level of production quality. The various manufacturing processes are carried out under standardised and

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comparable conditions. To achieve this, it is necessary to provide all the compositions and production parameters in machine-readable format and store them in the system. In addition to precisely defined quantities of raw materials and additives, this also includes process parameters such as temperature, mixer settings, response times or exact timings for the addition of raw materials. Another important advantage is the precise traceability and transparency of the production process and the associated security for both the manufacturer and the user.

"A generation ago, the grease production process was rather secretive and based on experience", recalls Dr Hentrich. "In the future, we will work in the age of 'Industry 4.0'. In other words, this automation is a quantum leap forward for Rhenus Lub in the production of high-performance lubricating greases. In today's globalised world, this is also a step we need to take to maintain and strengthen our competitive edge".

About Rhenus Lub

Rhenus Lub is an international system provider of special lubricants, application consulting services and process solutions for metal working and metal processing. The company, which was founded in Mönchengladbach, Germany, in 1882, develops and manufactures water-miscible and non-water-miscible coolants for demanding machining applications, special products for metal working and special greases and special oils. Customers include leading companies in the mechanical engineering industry and automotive and automotive supply industries, as well as in the bearing, food and aerospace industries.

In 2013, Rhenus Lub sold around 26,000 tonnes of special greases and high-performance lubricants. It achieved sales of around EUR 82 million. As a leader in innovation, Rhenus Lub invests an above-average amount in research and development, and over 20% of all employees work in this area. Through its subsidiary companies and other representative partners abroad, Rhenus Lub has a presence in 31 countries.

www.rhenuslub.de/en/

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