

Conference objectives

Welcome to this 9th international cadmium conference. With his event, we want to tackle the different aspects that the processors of cadmium, (in the broad sense) are facing.

Clearly, when working with cadmium or its compounds, one should know about the hazardous properties of cadmium. And for cadmium, we definitely have to look at human toxicity

Kidneys are known to be susceptible to cadmium toxicity, but what about all the different cancer types that affect lungs, breasts or prostate, and for which links with cadmium are claimed? And what are these endocrine disruptors you hear about nowadays? To find an answer to these questions, we have invited academic specialists that will bring an overview of today's insights in the different aspects of cadmium toxicology. They will also show you why there is so much confusion about toxicity of cadmium, so many different and even opposing conclusions.

Knowing that this is not a medical convention, these speakers will do an effort to bring this subject in such way that also non-medical skilled people can understand.

After understanding the hazards of cadmium, our speakers from industry will explain how they manage the risk of working with cadmium, how they protect workers against exposure to cadmium.

After introducing to you the ICdA Guidance documents, which is kind of a practical guide on how to avoid that workers take up cadmium by inhalation or by ingestion, you will learn how this guidance is nowadays used by many cadmium processing plants. We hope that the substantial improvements in the workplace exposure that are obtained, will convince you, that with an appropriate risk management in place, the workers' exposure to cadmium can be controlled. If you are an industry representative, we sincerely hope that the demonstrated beneficial effect of a risk management plan based on the ICdA guidance might encourage you to implement the Guidance in your plant as well.

Tomorrow morning, the environmental aspects will be addressed. You will see how cadmium emissions have evolved over the past years. What is the share of the cadmium refining and processing industry in the overall cadmium emission? Is the situation improving? Of course it is, but tomorrow, you will know how much better we are doing.

An academic study will bring more clarity in what happens with cadmium once it enters in the soil. And I can already give you a glimpse of the conclusion: it isn't as bad as some scientist claim.

Clearly, or interest in cadmium in soil is inspired by the potential risk of uptake of Cd by crops. An expert from the US food and drug administration will guide us through this topic and tell us how regulators manage this risk by setting food standards. If you didn't understand why food standard are different in different countries, you will understand tomorrow.

And we continue with regulations with a presentation on the European Reach regulation (and lookalikes that we see popping-up in other countries) including the fast approaching authorisation phase. You will learn what is required to continue your business once the application of your products enters the authorisation phase.

Sound information is essential, also for ECHA, as will you hear in the story about the environmental risk of cadmium in artist paints.

And of course you will be informed about the EU water framework directive. Are we heading for a zero emission of Cd and what is meant with “zero”?

A cadmium battery recycler will show you all the efforts he did and continues to do to keep up with the regulatory requirements.

Tomorrow’s afternoon session will be devoted to cadmium markets and applications. When hearing all the challenges to properly manage the risk of cadmium and the pressure to develop alternatives for cadmium in its applications, an evident question is: is there still growth in the cadmium market? Are there new applications for cadmium? Are there applications that are phased out? And what do we do with cadmium at the end of life stage? Will recycling become an essential part of any application that wants to sustain? Industry experts will bring their view.

We are confident that the next two days will bring valuable information to all of you and that we are able to bring answers to the many questions you have when dealing with cadmium. Only then, we will consider this conference a success.

Together with all of you, we want to work towards a sustainable future for cadmium.

Mik Gilles