Review vgbe Chemistry Conference 2023 October 24 to 26, 2023 in Ingolstadt

Around 170 participants attended the 59th vgbe Chemistry Conference from October 24 to 26, 2023. The wide-ranging lecture programme was once again rounded off by an accompanying trade exhibition with 20 exhibitors who presented their products and services relating to power plant chemistry.

One of the main topics of this year's chemistry conference was the increasing loss of knowledge in power plant chemistry, which Michael Rziha addressed very impressively in his presentation "The loss of know-how, the "galloping consumption" of power plant chemistry is increasingly leading to expensive damages". It was shown that continuously dwindling expertise can be observed not only in the plants themselves, but also among manufacturers (OEMs). These deficits often lead to incorrect assumptions, especially in the case of smaller systems, and thus to sometimes serious cases of damage. Specific examples from the recent past clearly demonstrate this trend. Effective remedial measures were explained.

On the subject of water treatment, contributions were made by Karla Georgi-Kruggel – "TOC monitoring of a demineralisation plant – Why online monitoring can be useful after a resin change", Christoph Giebmanns – "Practical example: Damage to HP distributor (SCC) due to insufficient water treatment" and Monika Nielsen – "Handling seawater ingress at the Avedøreværket". Among other things, simplified troubleshooting, the limits of online monitoring of deionised water and the effects of inadequate water treatment were presented.

In flue gas cleaning, optimisation options for denitrification and desulphurisation were presented and the mistakes that can be made when measuring trace substances in flue gas were pointed out.

In his paper "Measuring the concentration of the sum of heavy metals in wet flue gases from coal-fired power plants", Jan Middelkamp explained the influence of the flue gas sampling lance on the measured heavy metal values. In the case presented, the results of heavy metal measurements regularly carried out by certified institutes differed depending on whether the sampling lance was made of titanium or PTFT. The causes were presented and remedial measures were introduced so that reliable measurement results of heavy metals, especially in the concentration range of the new limit values, can be determined in wet flue gases from coal-fired power plants.

All contributions were discussed in a lively and very interested manner.

In addition, the get-together on the evening before the event, hosted by our sponsor Swan Systems Engineering at the trade exhibition, as well as the evening event co-sponsored by Kurita and Purolite on the first day of the conference, once again provided ample opportunity for personal discussions and in-depth technical dialogue.

This year, the focus was primarily on personal discussions, as the vgbe chemistry community had to say goodbye to Dr Andreas Wecker, who retired after 14 years with the association.

Andreas Wecker had been working for vgbe energy e.V. since 2009, initially as expert in the field of chemistry. His area of responsibility later expanded to include flue gas cleaning and thermal waste utilisation. He can look back on an impressive track record: during this time, he supervised numerous committees, cooperated in standards, supported projects such as the

BREF LCP process in Seville, dealt with topics such as mercury and emission measurements and organised the annual chemistry conference and the international "Flue Gas Cleaning" workshop. In Andreas Wecker, the association has lost a chemicals expert with a very high reputation in the industry and who, during his tenure, further raised the profile of "vgbe chemistry" – one of the association's flagships.

But it was not only Andreas Wecker who had to be bid farewell; the chairman of the vgbe Technical Committee "Chemistry and Emission Control", Dipl.-Chem. Walter Hoffman, who had also been a member of this committee since 2009, had also retired. vgbe is greatly indebted to Walter Hoffmann for his commitment and dedication to power plant chemistry and it was a particular pleasure for vgbe to award Walter Hoffmann the vgbe silver badge of honour.

The generational change in vgbe chemistry will be completed with Lars Hahner (M.Sc.) succeeding Andreas Wecker and Dr Anne Wiesel (EnBW) taking over the chairmanship of the chemistry committee.

Lars Hahner is an expert in power plant chemistry. After successfully completing his bachelor's and master's degree in mechanical engineering, specialising in energy and process engineering, at the Ruhr University Bochum, Lars Hahner has worked as a water chemistry engineer at vgbe energy service GmbH since 2019. There he carried out chemical analyses for water treatment and the water-steam cycle, advised on chemical operating modes and offered comprehensive support for changes to operating modes. vgbe energy e.V. is delighted to welcome an experienced colleague from its service GmbH as new expert for the areas of chemistry, flue gas cleaning and cooling technology from October 2023. With his expertise and knowledge of the benefits of the synergies between vgbe energy service GmbH and vgbe energy e.V., Lars Hahner will continue the successful work of Dr Andreas Wecker and, together with the new committee chairwoman Dr Anne Wiesel, will certainly provide new impetus in power plant chemistry.

The vgbe conference team would like to thank all speakers, exhibitors and sponsors as well as the interested participants for their support and looks forward to the next vgbe Chemistry Conference, which will take place in Potsdam from October 22 to 24, 2024.