

Autocatalyst Manufacture at Brussels

JOHNSON MATTHEY RESPONDS TO NEW EUROPEAN DEMAND

During December 1989 the European Commission announced exhaust emission limits, equivalent to current U.S. standards, which will apply to all new cars sold within the European Community from the end of 1992. Three-way autocatalysts have proved to be the most efficient means of achieving such standards and already many motor manufacturers are selling cars in Europe fitted with these devices.

Johnson Matthey is the world's leading producer of autocatalysts and opened the world's first facility to make them as long ago as 1974, at Royston in the U.K. This was followed by a major plant at Wayne, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. and more recently by a third just outside Sydney, Australia.

To satisfy the fast-expanding European market, Johnson Matthey has now opened its fourth autocatalyst production plant at Brussels-Evère. This new factory has an initial capacity of 5 million units per year.

The manufacturing technology employed is the culmination of many years' development by Johnson Matthey, and sets new standards for the industry. Extensive use has been made of robotics. Statistical process control is applied to all key process variables, particularly those influencing noble metal deposition, to ensure quality requirements are met.



The interior illustration above, shows a storage area for catalyst precursor suspensions, which are transferred to the flowline coating process under computer control.

The foresight which led to building the plant in this central location for the European motor industry was matched by planning for further expansion of the market for exhaust emission catalysts. Thus, provision has been made in the building for further investment in plant and equipment to expand rapidly the productive capacity when required.

The first units manufactured at the Brussels Autocatalyst Plant were shipped in February 1990.

