Compiled by Stephanie Harris

2007 The Year to Date

A mid-year update on water quality issues

Summertime is in full swing as we approach the midway point of the year. While this is the time of year when many people head to the beach or pool to enjoy themselves, it is also the time of year when the most drinking water is consumed. The summer heat and outdoor activities means people have to stay healthy and hydrated. While consumers do their part to keep healthy by drinking water, several regulations and standards are in place to ensure that the water they consume is in fact healthy to drink. The following is a mid-year industry overview and a summary of standards and regulations that have been implemented thus far in 2007.

By the Numbers

Bottled water sales and consumption continue to rise according to the International Bottled Water Association and Beverage Marketing Corp.

Total U.S. bottled water volume exceeded 8.25 billion gal in 2006, a 9.5% increase over the prior year. Additionally, the 2006 bottled water per capita consumption level of 27.6 gal increased by over 2 gal, from 25.4 gal per capita the previous year.

NSF Nitrogen Reduction Standard

NSF Intl. announced that a new standard has been published to reduce nitrogen from residential wastewater. The focus of the standard is to decrease excess nitrogen from any source that flows into surface waters and stimulates algae formation, a condition that could potentially harm marine life habitat and destroy fish and shellfish populations.

NSF/ANSI Standard 245: Wastewater Treatment Systems – Nitrogen Reduction was developed to address regulatory agencies' concerns about onsite wastewater systems' environmental impact. This standard specifically addresses the impact these systems have on groundwater used as a drinking water source, and on surface waters receiving discharge from the systems.

NSF/ANSI Standard 245 was developed based on a protocol developed under the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Environmental Technology Vertification Program's Water Quality Protection. The protocol for nitrogen reduction for residential wastewater treatment systems served as a guide to evaluate six different nitrogen reduction technologies. The new standard incorporates pass/fail criteria for system performance and additional requirements for alarm systems, tank requirements, noise levels and manuals.

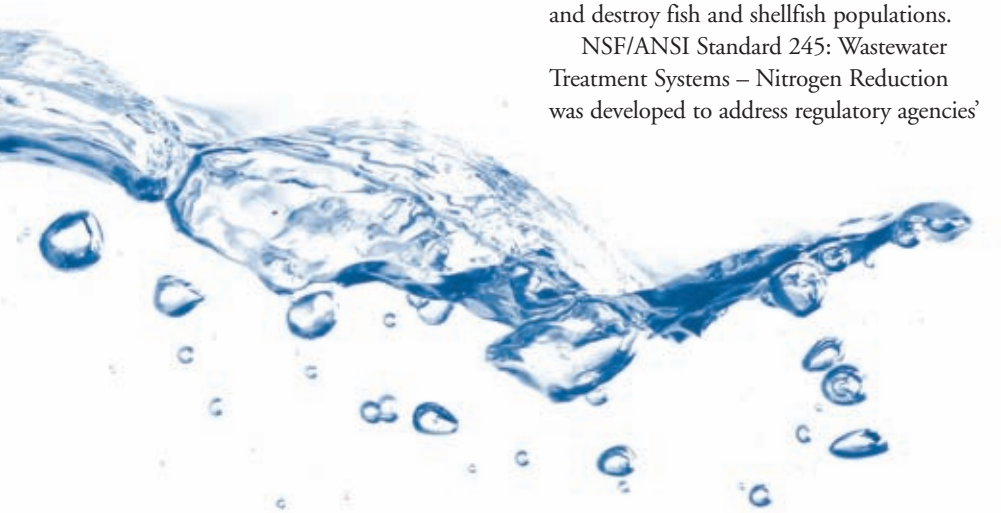
Around the Industry

The Water Quality Association (WQA) is working with the U.S. EPA to help make POU/POE products a part of the EPA's WaterSense program. WaterSense is a public-private partnership that began in fall 2006, and is designed to protect the future of the nation's water supply by promoting and enhancing the market for water-efficient products and programs. WQA will partner with the EPA to help establish water efficiency standards.

Certification Update

NSF: NSF Intl. announced a new agreement with the California Department of Health Services (CDHS) that will expedite the certification approval process for water softeners and water filters sold within the state. The new agreement with CDHS will reduce the time it takes to get drinking water treatment products to market.

Under the terms of the agreement, manufacturers of water softeners and water filters



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that have been certified by NSF's drinking water treatment units certification program will be able to work directly with NSF to gain certification from the state of California. NSF Certification ensures that these products meet NSF/ANSI standards 44 and 53.

WQA: The CDHS also authorized the WQA to conduct third-party certifications for water softeners and water filters with health-effect claims. Under the agreement, items already certified by NSF/ANSI standards 44 and 53 by WQA's Gold Seal Program would not be required to submit test data or product submissions.

Manufacturers must still pay the required fees to CDHS, and would automatically be issued a California Certificate. This shortens the approval process considerably. Products that are not certified by either Gold Seal or NSF Intl. would have to follow the original, lengthier process to receive a California Certificate.

WHO Guidance on Desalination

With production of drinking water by desalination rapidly growing, the World Health Organization has prepared a draft document giving guidance on associated health and environmental issues.

Desalination for Safe Water Supply was published in July, and provides an overview of desalination technologies, addresses chemical and microbial aspects of desalinated water, and offers specific guidance relating to monitoring, surveillance, regulation and an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring

Approximately 4,000 public water systems will begin to monitor drinking water for up to 25 unregulated chemicals to inform the EPA about the frequency and levels at which these contaminants are found in drinking water systems across the U.S. The information will help determine whether regulations are needed to protect public health. This is the second scheduled review under the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR2).

The Safe Drinking Water Act requires the EPA to identify up to 30 contaminants for monitoring every five years. The new rule requires systems to monitor for contaminants that are not regulated under existing law.

Costs for the five-year UCMR2 will total about $44.3 million. The EPA will conduct and pay for the monitoring for systems serving 10,000 people or fewer at a cost of $9 million.

Canadian Standards

Canada has published the final version of its standard for drinking water treatment systems (B483.1-07) and it is available for purchase from the Canadian Standards Association (CSA).

Standard B483 was issued in March 2007 and published in April 2007. The guidance covers drinking water treatment systems intended to reduce or inactivate harmful substances, including POU or POE plumbed systems and non-plumbed systems.

The standard was one of many issues discussed at the Water Sciences & Government Relations Committee meeting during the WQA Aquatech USA convention in March. Although the regulation will not be included in the Canadian National Plumbing Code until 2010, the standard may be adopted by providences at any time.

B483 essentially comprises the NSF/ANSI standards plus mechanical provisions to bring it in line with requirements of the Canadian Plumbing Code CSA 125/ASME 112 for similar components.

Around the Globe

U.S. and European researchers will unite to solve common environmental problems and study emerging issues, according to an agreement finalized in Brussels on Feb. 9.

The use and impact of nanotechnology in water quality is one of the areas slated for study, according to the EPA.

EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson and Director General for Research Jose Manuel Silva Rodriguez of the European Commission (the executive body of the European Union) have signed an agreement called "Implementing Arrangement on Environmental Research and Ecoinformatics." Ecoinformatics is advanced computer and information technology necessary for environmental research.

Cooperation under the EPA-EC Implementing Arrangement is expected to take many forms, including direct collaboration between U.S. and European researchers and associations; joint sponsorship of conferences, workshops and meetings; coordinated calls for proposals and mutual participation in peer reviews; and exchanges of information, methodologies and data.

Among the collaborative research topics included in the arrangement are efforts to address the linkages between environmental pollution and human health, as well as uses and impacts of nanotechnology in environmental monitoring, soil redemption and water quality. *wqp*

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