

CHINA

By Tom Palkon

An update  
from the WQA  
International Section

As this segment of the industry continues to grow, WQA thought it would be a good opportunity to discover where members in this region of the world would like the association to focus its efforts.

The primary focus of the meetings was to introduce WQA's programs and services to current members and potential members in this region. But this meeting didn't stop there—WQA also wanted to know if these companies would be interested in the establishment of a WQA China Task Force, similar to the WQA India Task Force.

The meeting concluded with a detailed explanation of international standards and regulations to help companies import and export their products, along with how WQA's Gold Seal Product Certification can help them comply with the required standards and regulations around the world.

With the expanding Gold Seal Product Certification Program, WQA's International Section has become very active in recent years. This section recently established the first international task force (WQA India Task Force), which currently meets two times per year in India. This group has now been meeting for two years and has increased WQA's India membership from 13 companies to more than 50 companies, with the possibility of 100 WQA member companies by the end of the year.

By holding meeting two times per year in India, the India Task Force provides an excellent opportunity for WQA member companies to provide feedback to WQA on issues specific to India members. The meetings typically include 50 to 75 WQA member companies with a variety of agenda items, such as:

# International Expansion

*Aquatech China 2010 is over, but the Water Quality Assn.'s (WQA) international focus continues to expand. For the third annual Aquatech China exhibition, WQA decided to host a meeting for its current and potential members in China. WQA currently has 88 member companies located in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong.*

- Protecting WQA registered logos;
- Public relations activities;
- Launch of a professional certification program in India;
- Development of product testing standards for the Indian market; and
- Encouraging product testing and certification.

During the Aquatech China show, WQA's seminar provided members in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong with an explanation of WQA programs and services, including the success and difficulties of the India Task Force. WQA also proposed the idea of establishing a China Task Force. As WQA's International Section continues to grow, it has become evident that different regions of the world need different member services. The establishment of regional task forces around the world allows WQA's International Section to determine what these member services should include for each region. WQA presented some of the problems facing Chinese members, which include:

- Member and Gold Seal logo misuse;
- Understanding product certification;
- Understanding standards and regulations;
- Language barriers;
- Networking; and
- Counterfeit products.

The meeting also provided WQA member companies and potential member companies the opportunity to inform WQA of additional needs.

If the group decides to suggest the establishment of a WQA China Task Force, they will develop an issue document and have WQA's International Section present it to WQA's board of directors. Because of the strong membership commitment in this

region and the number of Gold Seal Certified companies and factories in China, WQA's International Section feels that China would be a great location for an additional task force.

The China, Taiwan and Hong Kong members were reminded that when developing a task force outside the U.S., there are several considerations that WQA must make. There has to be interest from the member companies and the leading companies have to be willing to chair the task force and keep it progressing. The companies need to have specific topics that they want WQA to address. Meeting dates must be established, and WQA typically uses Gold Seal Product Certification staff to help run the meetings. WQA's Gold Seal Program now has staff located in Shanghai, which will be able to help the task force complete its objectives and assist by offering the meeting in Chinese and English.

WQA's International Section is eager to hear the outcome of this preliminary meeting. This section has helped establish the India Task Force, is currently working on the development of a South East Asia Task Force and is now considering a China Task Force. Although these initial task forces all focus efforts in Asia, the section is also considering Europe, South America and Mexico for future task force establishment. Look forward to hearing more about these groups at WQA's Mid-Year Leadership Conference. *wqp*

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