

Concerning Consumers



Recently, the Water Quality Assn. (WQA) released the results of a survey it commissioned on homeowners' opinions on water quality and treatment. The respondents showed increasing awareness of water quality and willingness to pay for treatment systems—all promising news for dealers and distributors of residential water treatment.

According to the survey, which was conducted by Applied Research-West Inc., one-fourth of respondents were “extremely concerned” about the quality of their water, with 52% indicating their level of concern at four or five out of five. Contaminants and taste topped the list of water quality worries.

Additionally, approximately two-thirds of those surveyed believed that primary responsibility for water quality lies with their municipalities—down from nearly three-fourths in 2008. More respondents said they would be willing to pay for home water treatment systems than in 2011.

These results are good news for the industry; however, as many dealers are aware, there is another consumer trend that continues to grow—the desire for green, sustainable and efficient products.

A look at the new products and systems that were launched at WQA Aquatech USA 2013 in April shows us that technology is keeping up with consumers' demands for products and systems that not only get the job done, but also do it in more efficient, sustainable ways.

As Mike Mecca and Greg Reyneke discuss in their article, “Efficiency Revolution” (page 8), residential softening is one area that has seen great improvements in efficiency over the years. Since the early days of portable exchange tanks, manufacturers have met consumer and dealer demands for softeners that are easier to use and are salt- and water-efficient. New systems that use electrodeionization or capacitive deionization—some of which were on display at the tradeshow—completely eliminate the use of salt.

WQA also has been working to meet consumer demands for greener treatment—it launched its new Product Sustainability Certification standards at the tradeshow. These standards, which currently cover activated carbon and filtration systems that use activated carbon, are intended to guide consumers to sustainable choices. WQA will continue to develop sustainability standards for other treatment technologies, such as reverse osmosis, ultraviolet and more. (For more on the new standards, see “The Journey to Sustainability,” page 16).

With technology and standards developing at a rapid pace, it is more important than ever to stay educated on the latest products and trends. Tradeshow and conferences are excellent ways to learn about new technologies and ideas, but there are plenty of education options that you can use from the comfort of home, from industry publications to Web videos to webinars. Whatever method you use, staying up to date will ensure that you are able to offer your customers the best products and services to meet their needs and wants.

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