

## Studsvik's Erwin Facility in Commercial Operation

- **The Studsvik Processing Facility completed testing with non-radioactive resins in June**
- **The first radioactive ion-exchange resins were processed in July**
- **Facility availability is being increased to achieve overall processing targets**
- **Stable price trend**
- **Next development stage started**

Studsvik's THOR<sup>sm</sup> (THERMAL ORGANIC Process) Process Facility in Erwin, Tennessee, USA, inaugurated in September 1998, was taken into commercial operation in July. The facility is Studsvik AB's largest investment since the construction of the R2 reactor, located at Studsvik outside Nyköping in the late fifties. So far, the investment has amounted to just over USD 35 million.

The facility is unique on the US market and processes a special type of low-level waste – ion-exchange resins. The resins are used in nuclear power plant coolant treatment systems. The resins contain a significant quantity of organic matter which is separated from the non-organic matter through pyrolysis/steam reforming, i.e. a process whereby heat and steam in a controlled environment cause the organic matter to vaporize. Through the THOR<sup>sm</sup> Process, the original weight and volume of the waste can be reduced by over 95 per cent. The nuclear power plants are interested in the process since final disposal capacity for low level radioactive waste including ion-exchange resins is limited and, therefore, costly.

During the facility startup program conducted over the first half of this year, approximately 3000 cubic feet of non-radioactive ion-exchange

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resins have been processed on a trial basis. The Erwin facility commenced processing radioactive resins on July 19, which means that the plant, from the standpoint of safety and operation, must now be treated as a nuclear facility. The first major customer order for just over 6,000 cubic feet has been received and processing will commence the last week of August.

“This is an important development in Studsvik’s evolution and it is highly satisfying that the Erwin facility is now operating on a commercial basis,” says Carsten Olsson, Chief Executive Officer of Studsvik AB.

“We have had a positive reaction from the US. We know that our method is superior to those of our competitors and this bodes well for future demand,” concludes Carsten Olsson.

As the facility is now being taken into commercial operation, the next objective is to develop a similar facility for processing the very large quantities of mixed waste stored at the US Department of Energy’s (DOE) various facilities.

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