

BUY QUIET 2011

Paris, 5-6 July 2011



Background and perspective

Over the last three decades much progress has been made by acousticians and noise control engineers to determine the noise emissions of products in a standardized manner. These include household appliances, machines and equipment, power tools, IT products etc. However, the noise labels or ratings currently used are neither understood by the public nor widely available to them. There is a global lack of understanding by manufacturers, suppliers, and potential users alike. The EU has developed an energy label for products that is simple, well understood, and widely available. It has proven to be an effective incentive to encourage the consumer to buy more energy-efficient products. This information has induced major reductions in product energy consumption over the last 15 years. In a similar way, providing simple, understandable noise information to the general public should ultimately increase the availability of low-noise products.

The complexity of existing noise ratings along with their relative scarcity has not induced the user to develop a "buy quiet" attitude nor has it stimulated competition needed to produce quieter products and thus encourage lownoise design. The reasons for this are varied:

- Complexity of the dB scale and frequency dependence,
- Confusion between sound power, sound pressure, and other metrics being used to characterize the noise,
- Statistical quantities and procedures to determine values to declare,
- Complexity of test codes including dependence of noise on operating and installation conditions,
- Information generally presented as informative rather than comparative, product families, and
- Limited information on product noise released by manufacturers and suppliers.

The objectives of the symposium are to stimulate "buy quiet" purchasing attitudes through simplified noise ratings and to provide manufacturers with the information needed to design low noise products.

- Confirm the need for meaningful product noise ratings,
- Reiterate and list the benefits of providing information to consumers and other stakeholders,
- Discuss the lack of a "buy quiet" attitude for products and machines used in all activities (at home, during leisure, at work, in industry,) and among all buyers (individual consumers, professional buyers, stakeholders, and advertising media),
- Discuss the pros and cons of existing noise ratings,
- Propose and discuss designs for comprehensive and uniform product noise ratings that will serve the needs of manufacturers and suppliers, and
- Propose and discuss design for simplified product noise rating schemes that will assist consumers in making purchasing decisions.

Conference Secretary: Cathy Mackenzie - INCE/Europe
INCE/Europe - Riverside House, 4 Oakland Vale, New Brighton, Merseyside CH45 1LQ, UK Tel: +44 (0)151 638 0181 Fax:+44 (0)151 639 5212