

## News Briefs

---

### MANGANESE: DECLINE IN CONSUMPTION

World consumption of manganese ore which peaked at 25 Mt in 1989, has experienced a downturn since early 1990. Reports predict that consumption of the metal will continue to decline during the 1990s, in spite of the expected recovery in demand from the steel industry.

It is anticipated that the most significant drop in Mn consumption will occur in the steel-producing region of Eastern Europe and the USSR. Steel production capacity in this region will be reduced to two-thirds of what it was in the 1980s.

In addition, improved plant efficiency will result in a lower unit consumption of manganese ore during steel production. At present, the USSR and Eastern Europe have the highest unit consumption level at 12 kg Mn/t of steel compared to 4.3 kg Mn/t of steel produced in the USA.

### RARE EARTHS APPLIED TO AGRICULTURE

Inner Mongolia region of China has utilized rare earths in agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing and forestry and intriguing results have been achieved. The rare-earth output of Inner Mongolia ranks first in the world and accounts for 75 per cent of the China's total production.

Results of research which commenced in 1984 indicate that rare earths can increase yields of sugar beet, wheat, hay and other crops by more than 10 per cent. Rare-earth additives can help increase the weight of carp by 17 per cent and wool yield per sheep by 4.3 kg.

The region applied rare earths to 180 000 hectares of crops in 1990 and recorded an increase in output value worth US\$6 million.

(According to China Daily, October 2, 1991)

### **RARE EARTHS - RAPID GROWTH OF DEMAND**

The low-volume, high-value, high-purity processed rare earths market is set to maintain strong growth (possibly in excess of 10 per cent per annum) throughout the 1990s, according to Roskill's Economics of Rare Earths, 1991.

Major rare-earth processors are upgrading existing capacity, and new plants are under construction to meet the growing demand. The increasing consumption of separated products will help offset the recent declines in the high-volume rare-earth-concentrate markets, such as metallurgy and petroleum cracking catalysts.

In particular, demand for neodymium is soaring as a result of a dramatic increase in the use of Nd-Fe-B permanent magnets.

Japanese demand for neodymium oxide rose by 18 per cent to 650 tonnes in 1990, as production of Nd-Fe-B magnets increased by 65 per cent to 860 tonnes. Sustained growth in the production of permanent magnets is forecast to raise Japanese demand for neodymium to 770 tonnes by the end of 1991.

Industry sources predict a dramatic growth in the use of Nd-Fe-B magnets in high-tech fields such as permanent magnets, magneto-optical discs and optical fibre lasers. These trends were the subject of the conference and exhibit on Nd-Fe-B magnets in Orlando, Fla., on February 16-18, 1992.

### **CARPCO GOES SUPERCONDUCTING**

Carpco, Inc. has acquired Magnetic Separation Group (MSG) from Cryogenic Consultants Ltd., London, U.K.. The new company will concentrate on the design, testing and supply of superconducting magnetic separation equipment. Technology included in the acquisition is the Cryofilter HGMS for kaolin purification and the OGMS for beneficiation of dry minerals.