**IMERYS**

**Week 18 Content EN**

TITLE: Boosting bentonite output capacity in China

STANDFIRST: Soaring demand for bentonite has led Imerys’ joint venture in China to boost output capacity

An Imerys joint venture in China focused on bentonite announced an increase in production capacity after rising demand for the clay led to a massive surge in sales.

The joint venture in the Liaoning province in north-east China more than tripled its sales since 2014.

The company extracts the material from its own mines, in addition to activating, drying and milling bentonite.

The operation was formed in 2013 through a tie-up with a real-estate conglomerate. It aims to supply the paper, civil engineering and foundry industries in mainland China, Taiwan and Japan. It has since expanded and now serves markets in Korea and other Southeast Asian countries.

Bentonite, which is usually created from volcanic ash, plays a crucial role in industries ranging from papermaking, where it absorbs wood resins and improves quality, to oil and gas, for which it is used in drilling mud, which seals off porous rock and cools the drilling bit.

To produce more paper-grade bentonite, the joint venture installed three new Raymond mills – a type of grinding mill in which spring-loaded rollers bear against a rotating bowl.

The joint venture has proved highly successful, however challenges still remain.

Maximo Coll, the Asia Manager of Imerys’ Metalcasting & Absorbents Business Unit, admitted that the bentonite market in the region involved a number of major international companies and that it was “very competitive”.

The aim is to expand into new markets, such as animal feed and pet litter, where bentonite is used because of its high absorbency.

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(long)

Demand for #bentonite has soared in recent years driving an #Imerys joint venture in China to boost production capacity. The joint venture announced that several new mills had been added to allow the #Liaoning province plant to produce additional paper-grade bentonite. But developments do not end there: other innovations are planned.

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Soaring demand for #bentonite led Imerys to expand production at its joint venture in China

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#Imerys boosted its #bentonite production capacity in north-east China to meet rising demand.

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