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Letter from the
Publisher

Whither the CPI?

Is the current definition of the CPI relevant to manufacturers and marketers? In a special supplement this month we examine the state of chemical engineering. After reading it, ask yourself if the "traditional" CPI definition should be replaced with a term that better reflects what chemical engineers do today.

According to data gathered from AIChE, NSF and other sources by Bechtel's Freeman Self and retired consultant Ed Ekholm, most graduating chemical engineers are still working in the traditional CPI, but an increasing number of those are moving into fields not traditionally considered to be a part of the "CPI" (p. 22S–25S).

Some of the new disciplines include bioengineering, chemical engineering at the molecular level, information technology, genomics and a variety of others. It is clear that there is an increasing demand for well-educated, problem/solution-oriented chemical engineers in non-CPI disciplines. As an industry, however, we continue to use a term that does not adequately describe the scope and breadth of their work.

Isn't it time, then, for a new definition of the CPI? When this supplement to *CEP* was conceived last summer, some of our staff tried to come up with a term that reflects the new reality. The working definition we hit on was "CEI," chemical engineering industries. With its emphasis on *engineering* vs. *processing*, CEI is perhaps a better way to describe the labors of today's chemical engineers. But while it may be an improvement, we're not completely sold on the term CEI.

Let us know what you think. Send us your comments or your own better definition of the CEI.

David H. Colby, CBC
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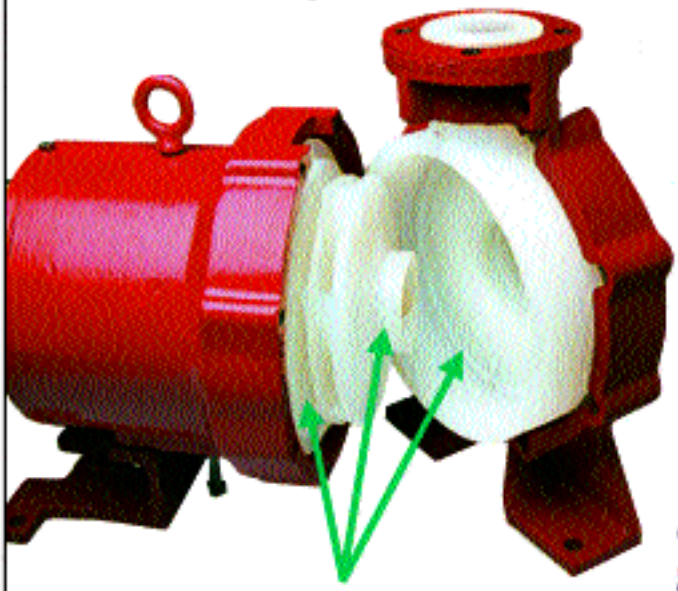

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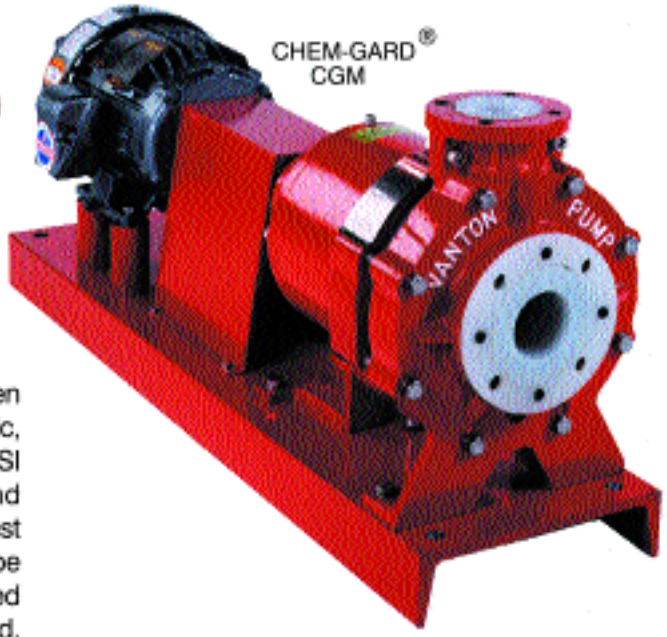

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