

Trick or treat?



David Sevier of Aqueous Logic says companies have a lot to answer for when it comes to the quality of products.

The water treatment industry has endlessly discussed a performance standard for preventing corrosion in heating systems. The discussions go so far and then, one of the manufacturers whose product cannot meet the proposed standard effectively brings the discussions to an end. This has gone on for years. Meanwhile, end users and installers have no information to guide them on how to choose the best product for their application. There is a huge difference between products, but it is an almost impossible task to know which product works best as most of the bottles and the liquid inside them look the same. The effects of

choosing the wrong product can take years to notice and the increase in energy bills generally goes unnoticed. As a result, many installers don't bother with water treatment and view it as snake oil that is a waste of money and time. This is the water treatment industry's fault - by not providing information on the performance of our products, we have created a situation where we ask installers to take our word that our products work. Who can blame people for not believing the companies that profit when it is so hard to tell if the product works or which product works better? It is economically advantageous for the companies concerned to state that their products are the best ever - just like a snake oil salesman.

Spot the difference

This has to stop. There is a huge difference between the ability of products to prevent corrosion. Some products are over 100 times more effective than the worst product on the market, yet they look the same and have the same packaging. This is widely known in the water treatment products market. For years, there has been a product ranking test that was developed for British Gas by Advantica. It pushes products to the limit in a variety of stressed tests and accurately rates their performance. It is a very good indicator of how good a product is at preventing corrosion. It is my understanding that the data from the testing is widely used by boiler manufacturers and British Gas to tell if a product is suitable. It has never been made available to the professionals who buy the products and has instead been treated as a closely guarded secret. It shouldn't be - we think that all water treatment manufacturers should make the profile of their products freely available. This is why we are breaking ranks and publishing our product's corrosion protection profile.



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The corrosion protection profile of Aqueous Logic's Central Heating Protector, as tested by Sheffield Testing Laboratories using the standard test developed by Advantica on the behalf of British Gas to measure the corrosion protection of water treatment products, is as follows:

Aqueous Logic Rapid-Dose Central Heating Protector Corrosion Protection Profile

		Material Life (Years)		
		Steel*	Copper*	Aluminium*
Aerated Water	Hard	540	2430	830
	Soft	1200	500	430
Deaerated Water	Hard	420	370	300
	Soft	290	1600	830

All our results and products can be viewed at www.aqueouslogic.co.uk

** This is a standard test developed by Advantica Ltd on behalf of British Gas to measure the corrosion protection of water treatment products.*

1 typical radiator wall thickness of 1.2 mm, 2 typical pipework thickness of 1 mm, 3 typical boiler heat exchanger wall thickness of 5 mm

This test is designed to push a product's performance to the limit. It is likely that in many areas, the actual metal working life will be greater than the predicted working life shown here. In a few areas that have severely corrosive waters, working life will be less but we anticipate it to be over 100 years and, in many cases, hundreds of years.

The test uses aerated water because newly filled systems have water that is aerated. Open systems also tend to be slightly aerated. Sealed systems, over time, become deaerated.

Often a system will have parts that are aerated and deaerated. The soft water and hard water testing is important because the water quality in Britain ranges from very soft, as in much of Scotland, to hard, as is found in London. It is very difficult to create a product that has excellent performance in all areas. It is for this reason that some products perform well in England and badly in Scotland. By comparing products' performance profiles, customers can choose the product that best serves their needs.

I urge other manufacturers to follow our lead and publish their product's corrosion protection profile so that plumbers can make an informed decision. Producers of good products should have nothing to fear by divulging the weaknesses and strengths of their products. It is my hope that this is taken up and plumbers and end users start using good water treatment. If this is done widely, we will significantly reduce the amount of greenhouse gases emitted by Britain and save our customers a mountain of money. Everyone wins if this comes about, but in order for this to happen it will require the water treatment industry to stop keeping secrets and open up to the installer.

"Who can blame people for not believing the companies that profit when it is so hard to tell if the product works or which product works better?"