

New guidelines may make it easier to share information on 'going green'

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Choosing "greener" household cleaners, computers, and other consumer products could become as easy as reading a product's label thanks to a movement under way to develop universal guidelines for determining whether chemical products and chemical processes are environmentally friendly. That's the topic of an article in *Chemical & Engineering News*, ACS' weekly newsmagazine.

C&EN Senior Correspondent Stephen Ritter notes that chemical companies are eager to produce greener products, but there are no standardized criteria for determining whether starting materials and chemical processes are environmentally friendly. Many green standards already exist, but they are usually issued by companies themselves, industry trade groups, or environment-focused nongovernmental organizations. The standards, however, tend to focus on only one or two product attributes, such as content of volatile organic compounds or percent of recycled content, the article notes.

That may soon change as the American Chemical Society's Green Chemistry Institute (GCI) spearheads an effort to create the "Greener Chemical Products & Processes Standard." The comprehensive standard will provide comparative data to allow anyone to evaluate the relative environmental performance of chemical products and their manufacturing technologies. The diverse stakeholder group creating the standard hopes to have the plan finalized by the end of the year.

The next step could be an information label, similar to nutrition

information labels now used on foods, that manufacturers can apply to product packaging to describe the product's eco-friendly attributes. For business-to-business markets and for consumers, this should make choosing "greener" products a lot easier.

More information: This story is available at pubs.acs.org/cen/science/88/8819sci1.html

Provided by American Chemical Society

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