Corporate report: Scrutiny of Radioactive Waste Management: annual report 2016 to 2017

The Environment Agency and Office for Nuclear Regulation's (the nuclear regulators) joint publication about their scrutiny of RWM's work relating to geological disposal of radioactive waste.

Government policy for managing higher activity radioactive waste in the long term is through geological disposal.

The nuclear regulators provide regulatory advice to RWM about implementing geological disposal.

This report explains what the regulators looked at and the main comments provided to RWM. It also highlights areas for RWM to improve.

RWM is making good progress towards ensuring that it will have the right people, skills and systems in place by the time it applies for environmental permits and a nuclear site licence for a geological disposal facility.

The regulators will make sure that any future geological disposal facility meets their high standards for environmental protection, safety, security, radioactive waste transportation and safeguards.

For more information email the Environment Agency at geological.disposal@environment-agency.gov.uk.

News story: The new robot helping clean up Sellafield

The 'Avexis' will help dislodge and clear waste from the Magnox Swarf Storage Silo.

Watch the robot enter the plant for the first time

It has been developed by Cumbrian firm Forth Engineering with support from the University of Manchester.

The company was launched in 2000 by former Sellafield apprentice Mark Telford.

The Maryport business is now a global specialist in remote tooling,

deployment methods, and sensor systems.

Mr Telford said:

> Having Sellafield on our doorstep gives a huge advantage.
>
> It's a testbed where we can develop unique skills and technologies.
>
> The site needs innovative technology to undertake engineering tasks in harsh environments underwater.
>
> Successfully deploying our technology at Sellafield means we can then transfer it to other industries like marine and oil and gas which are looking for similar products.
>
> The Avexis is already generating interest from potential clients overseas.

The Magnox Swarf Storage Silo was built in the 1960s to store waste from the UK's earliest nuclear reactors.
It closed in 2000 and has now been prioritised for clean-up by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA).

Rebecca Weston, Strategy and Technical Director for Sellafield Ltd, said: "The Avexis is a great example of the supply chain helping us to reduce the UK's nuclear hazard faster, cheaper and more safely.

"And, on top of that, companies are developing products and skills that can be exported all over the world."

The Avexis offers the ability to 'see' inside the silo via cameras attached to its body.

It can also clear away small bits of waste clinging to the silo wall.

Its key feature is its size – it is small enough to fit through spaces of just 150mm space.

It is the first robot of its kind to go from concept to market within five years. At just £10,000 it is also the cheapest of its kind.

SRUC launches new three-year drive to build awareness of mental ill health

Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) has launched a new three-year healthy

learning and wellbeing strategy to support staff and students to improve productivity and learning.

Former student named as Young Farmer of the Year

Former SRUC student James Fairlie has been named Young Farmer of the Year in the prestigious Farmers Weekly annual awards.

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