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Cement Industry demonstrates sustainability progress

UK cement makers are making significant progress towards sustainability - cutting emissions of carbon dioxide and using over one million tonnes of waste materials in 2004 as replacement fuels or raw materials, according to *Performance*, the British Cement Association (BCA)'s corporate responsibility report.

The report shows that direct emissions of carbon dioxide, the greenhouse gas linked to global warming, from UK cement manufacture have been reduced by around 24 per cent between 1990 and 2004, reflecting the continually improving environmental performance of the industry.

Mike Gilbert, Chief Executive of the British Cement Association said: "We introduced the *Performance* report last year to provide a preliminary baseline for reporting against the eight key objectives agreed with the Environment Agency as part of our sector plan. The report plays a major role in the industry's overall approach to openness and sets out our plans for delivering continually improving environmental benefits. It is a cornerstone of our work to demonstrate the industry is sound, sustainable and transparent."

An important objective for the industry is to reduce consumption of natural resources per tonne of cement manufactured. In 2004, 11.5 per cent of fossil fuels and 4.8 per cent of virgin raw materials were replaced by waste materials, adding up to over one million tonnes of waste being recovered in the year. The industry will continue to seek alternative materials as long as their use has no adverse impact on the health of its employees, the general public, its environmental performance or product quality.

“While we can take heart from the progress made so far, we know that the industry is committed to making greater contributions in the future,” added Mike Gilbert. “We are currently over half way through the work of a year-long Sustainable Development Taskforce. This involves a rigorous review of the scope the industry has to make breakthroughs in its performance in the coming years, and we plan an open dialogue with stakeholders as we work this through.”

The industry, working with BCA, established the taskforce in 2004 to set a new agenda for the future. Its goal is to demonstrate continually improving performance by setting and reviewing targets on environmental, economic and social objectives. Its work is due to be completed and published before the end of the year.

The members of the BCA – Buxton Lime Industries, Castle Cement, Cemex UK and Lafarge Cement UK – invested heavily in new, efficient and cleaner plants and better distribution networks. They produce 12 million tonnes of cement, fulfilling 90 per cent of the UK’s needs for this essential building material which is vital for sustainable construction.

The report can be obtained from the BCA Press Office or can be downloaded from the BCA website, www.cementindustry.co.uk.

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Notes to editors:

The British Cement Association (BCA) is the trade and research organisation that represents the interests of the United Kingdom’s cement industry in its relations with Her Majesty’s Government, the European Union and relevant organisations in the United Kingdom. The members of the BCA (Buxton Lime Industries, Castle Cement, Lafarge Cement UK and Rugby Cement) are the major domestic manufacturers of Portland cement producing over 90% of the cement sold in the UK.

The cement industry has an annual turnover of £750 million and is a major supplier to the construction industry. It employs around 3,500 people directly with a further 15,000 jobs depending upon its operations.