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FMC in new lithium search

03 August 2010

by [Simon Moores](#)

CLARIFICATION: FMC looks for new lithium source to prepare for next growth phase

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Keywords: [FMC](#), [lithium carbonate](#), [lithium](#), [EV](#), [electric vehicles](#), [batteries](#)

This story has been amended from 2 August 2010

FMC Lithium is searching for a new lithium source in preparation for the projected significant growth in the next ten years from the battery sector.

The company is expanding its brine operation in Argentina to 23,000 tpa lithium carbonate, but feels a new source is also required.

President and CEO of parent company, FMC Corp., Pierre Brondeau, said: "We have begun to look for our next source of lithium to be ready by the [middle of this decade] for the next leg of the lithium growth curve."

Producers and explorers alike are preparing for what could be a golden age in lithium demand if project electric vehicle (EV) production figures are even partially realised.

The vast majority of EV are designed around lithium-ion technology, now widely accepted as the best battery for the medium term.

CLARIFICATION: Hombre Muerto brine

After operating lithium carbonate production at Hombre Muerto since 1997, FMC clarified to **IM** that brine quality issues has never been a problem at the salar.

Jon Evans, FMC Lithium president explained: "There has never been any quality problems in regards to brine. Our resource has the lowest Mg/Li weight ratio amongst all the major brine sources in addition to low sulphates."

In comparison to other sources the company explained that the lithium content at Hombre Muerto is favourable.

"Our lithium content is second only to the Atacama it is higher than even the Bolivian resources," said Evans.

In terms of processing, FMC's methods employed were owing to solar evaporation challenges not issues to do with chemistry quality.

Evans added: "In fact today it is an advantage as the industry moves beyond industrial grade carbonate standards. Solar evaporation cannot match the purity we can achieve in most cases."

The search for new sources follows in the footsteps of leading hard rock lithium producer, Talison Minerals Pty Ltd, which recently expanded its business through a merger with Atacama brine explorer, Salares Lithium Inc. (*IM August 2010: [Talison backs brine with Salares Lithium merger](#)*).

Welcome back, [George Hawley](#)

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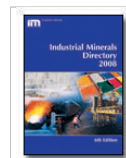
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