



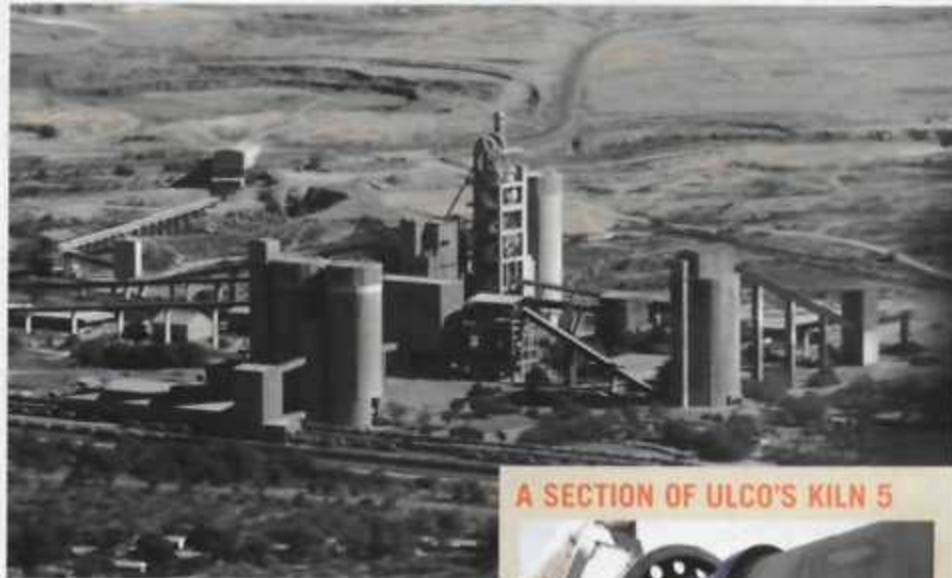
An island of sensibility

by Tony Stone

CIRCLING AROUND TO land at ULCO's tiny airstrip, you are immediately taken in by the enormity of Afrisam's cement factory 150 km north-west of Kimberley in the Northern Cape. Founded in 1936 as the Union Limes Company, ULCO is a state-of-the-art facility. The entire factory is monitored and controlled via PLCs from a small control room equipped with the latest in computer technology. General manager Hannes Meyer, a stickler for the Mine Health and Safety Act, says, "That's for good reason. There is a lot of activity going on, such as drilling and blasting, moving machinery and the kiln itself. We simply have to know who is on site."

Touching on the real purpose of the visit, environment manager Alan Cluett said, "With global warming a harsh reality, we simply had to do something about our contribution to it. Worldwide, cement manufacturing contributes 5% of the CO₂ footprint. We have to protect our air quality."

Chief operating officer Stephan Olivier, as innovative as he is pragmatic, said, "Cement is a reality. If we had to take cement out of everything, what would we have left?" Nonetheless, in driving Afrisam's initiative to reduce their carbon footprint, ULCO introduced variable speed drives and switched



ABOVE Afrisam's ULCO plant in the Northern Cape

its fuel usage from coal to a by-product of fuel tar.

As technical genius Mike McDonald explained, "With this, and by adding a careful blend of fly ash and slagment to our ingredient mix, we have taken our CO₂:g/kg APC to 527, well below the world average of 890."

In anybody's books, this is an absolutely sterling effort. With the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) constantly reminding us of the realities of global warming and climate change, Afrisam and its ULCO plant are an island of sensibility. **35**

A SECTION OF ULCO'S KILN 5



ULCO's kiln five is a polysius, four-stage calciner, 70 m in length and 4.6 m in diameter. It has a current capacity of 4 175 t/d with a planned future target of 4 750 t/d. With its original electrical usage of 42.4 kWh/t reduced to 41.5 kWh/t (a 2% improvement), we can appreciate the significance of Afrisam's innovations and their commitment to CO₂ reduction.

AFRISAM'S TEAM



Hannes Meyer, ULCO's general manager



Alan Cluett, Afrisam's environment manager



Stephan Olivier, Afrisam's COO cement operations



Mike McDonald, Afrisam's technical genius