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The Boeing Company has linked two companies from the United States and The Netherlands in an effort to help The Netherlands meet increasingly stringent environmental regulations for hazardous materials.

The two companies -- the Mirachem Corp. of Tempe, Ariz., and H.L. Van Leeuwen BV of Waalwijk, The Netherlands -- recently signed a distributorship agreement for the sale of Mirachem's line of worker-safe cleaners and degreasers, and rust and scale removers. The agreement is designed to help Mirachem penetrate the European market for its products and calls for the eventual manufacture of Mirachem products in The Netherlands.

The agreement between Mirachem and Van Leeuwen, a trading company specializing in distribution throughout Europe and the Middle East, came as a result of AH-64D Apache sales by Boeing to the Royal Netherlands Air Force in 1995.

As part of that purchase, The Boeing Company agreed to help with the introduction of new technologies to The Netherlands through joint ventures, distributorships and licensing agreements.

Linking Van Leeuwen with Mirachem, whose products are being used at the Boeing Douglas Products Division in Long Beach, Calif., made sense, said Andre Doumitt, the Boeing project manager who helped broker the deal.

"This Mirachem product is new technology," he said. Most solvents are petroleum based and contain up to 100 percent volatile organic compounds (VOCs), while Mirachem products are water based, non-flammable and contain less than 5 percent VOCs in use, he added.

In addition, the California South Coast Air Quality District, responsible for Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernadino and Riverside counties, last month pronounced Mirachem technology "certified clean air solvents" compliant with 1999 regulations for industrial cleaning agents. This stamp of approval from a California air quality board, considered among the strictest in the world, ensures that these products comply with the strictest legislation on the horizon.

"This technology was a perfect fit for The Netherlands, which is tightening up its own environmental regulations for the year 2000," Doumitt said.

"It's a good fit all around," said Mirachem President Jim Edwards, who added he was pleased with the opportunity to establish a foothold in the European market.

"Van Leeuwen gets a proven environmental product, Boeing is able to make good on its promise to introduce new environmental technologies to The Netherlands, and we get an excellent distributor," he said. "This is one of those rare 'win-win' situations, and we're very excited about moving this project forward."

Herbert Braun of Van Leeuwen was equally upbeat. "We are very satisfied with the arrangement," he said. "Now that the Dutch government is phasing out hazardous solvents, the timing is very good for this kind of technology transfer to The Netherlands."

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