

Driving fan and pump control in a range of niche sectors from HVAC to wine farms and mining

23 March 2018: From wine farms to the mining industry, the new LTP-B Eco drive from SEW-EURODRIVE is finding application in a range of sectors. The purpose-built drive is distinguished by the fact that different parameters can be set for a range of functions, from fan to pump control.

While SEW-EURODRIVE does have general-purpose units for fans, pumps, and even conveyors, it initially saw a niche for a unit specifically for the Heating, Ventilation and Air-Conditioning (HVAC) industry, targeted at building designers focusing on 'green' design, National Sales Manager **Norman Maleka** comments.

In terms of a commercial building such as a hospital, traditional drives meant that fans had to operate continually at full speed. "With the improved functionality of the LTP-B Eco HVAC drive, facilities managers can now control a fan by only running it according to demand, for example. This represents a major advantage in terms of energy-saving, as it allows for total flow control," Maleka highlights.

The HVAC sector remains a focus, especially in the key building-design market of Cape Town, the broader energy-saving benefits means it is equally applicable to customers in other niche sectors, especially as the drive is available in a broad power-output range from 0.75 kW to 250 kW.

In addition, it replaces the traditional electrolytic capacitors used in the DC link with film capacitors, which have reduced energy losses, as well as eliminating the need for AC, DC or swinging chokes, which boosts the overall efficiency of the drive by 4% compared with a standard AC drive.

Maleka reveals that SEW-EURODRIVE was recently approached by a Nelspruit customer for a 160 kW unit. "We are hoping to be able to use this as a case study, as the more real-time application data we can obtain, the more we can promote the new drive."

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To date, SEW-EURODRIVE Cape Town has carried out small-scale projects relating to pumping applications for wine farms, which require mobile pumping stations. "Our customer focus on fan-and-pump applications convinced us that we needed a dedicated HVAC drive.

"Even though we can use a multipurpose drive unit, there are some limits in terms of functionality. It is always best to have a dedicated product for specific sectors, as our customers prefer customised to generic products for various applications," Maleka notes.

In terms of fan-and-pump control for mining applications, the LTP-B Eco drive is ideal to ensure clean airflow underground. HVAC control in mining operations is also highly energy-intensive, which means the new energy-efficient drive can make a significant contribution to total cost-savings.

Another benefit for mining operations in terms of enhanced health-and-safety is the drive's fire mode, which allows for fans to run for as long as possible in the event of a fire, maximising smoke extraction and boosting evacuation time. In addition, the belt-break detection feature raises an alarm in the event of the belt slipping or any related fault occurring, in order to ensure continuous operation.

Extra features include pump-cleaning and pump agitation functions, which is particularly useful if a pump has been out of operation for a period of time and needs to be restarted. The sleep mode function allows for added energy-saving when the drive is inactive.

"All of these functions can be monitored directly from the drive itself, as all inputs can be fed back directly to the management system, with no direct interface required," Maleka adds. With two LTP-B Eco drives already sold to customers in Africa, he concludes that the growth opportunities for the new product remain robust, both locally and on the rest of the continent.

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