Press release

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Industrial Refrigeration Network Conference (IRN) 2026 puts ‘Driving Natural Refrigeration’ in the spotlight

Rottenburg-Ergenzingen/Sindelfingen, 16.06.2026. The Industrial Refrigeration Network Conference (IRN) once again took place at the SCHAUFLER Academy in Rottenburg-Ergenzingen on 10 and 11 June 2026 under the motto ‘Driving Natural Innovation’. This year’s keynote was presented by the International Institute of All-Natural Refrigeration (IIAR) on international developments relating to natural refrigerants.

BITZER, the specialist for refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pump technology, hosted the independent IRN Conference for the third time at the company’s international training and education centre, the SCHAUFLER Academy. Alongside the IIAR keynote, the programme included technical discussions and case studies on industrial refrigeration and heat pump technology. Conference sponsors also presented solutions for current and future industry requirements to more than 100 participants from 19 countries.

IIAR keynote on international developments in natural refrigerants

The keynote by Yesenia Rector, Vice President of the IIAR, was one of the highlights of IRN 2026. She spoke about experiences and developments relating to natural refrigerants and explained their importance for modern industrial refrigeration and heat pump technology. At the same time, she showed how natural refrigerants have evolved alongside technological and regulatory requirements so that they can also be used reliably, efficiently and safely on a large scale. This highlighted new opportunities for contractors and planners.

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‘The Tech Talks by the sponsors also provided valuable impulses for professional exchange on how the uses of natural refrigerants are continuing to evolve in Europe and the opportunities this creates,’ says Bernhard Blaeser, Head of Industrial Refrigeration at BITZER. ‘That is exactly why the IRN was launched: to discuss developments, innovations, experience and practical applications within the industry. We thank the IIAR, and all other speakers for this technical exchange.’

Further presentations provided insights into the speakers’ work as well as new trends from their organisations. In line with the motto ‘Driving Natural Innovation’, the focus remained on natural refrigerants and solutions for industrial refrigeration and heat pump technology.

The IRN was launched in 2024. This year, too, the conference brought together manufacturers, contractors, planners, users, researchers and students, as well as representatives of industry associations, for technical exchange on industrial refrigeration in Europe.

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As an independent specialist for refrigeration, air conditioning and heat pump technology, BITZER is present all over the world: with products and services for refrigeration, air conditioning and process cooling as well as transport, BITZER ensures optimum temperature conditions for trade in goods, industry processes and indoor climate control – always striving for the highest possible energy efficiency and quality. BITZER is represented all over the world with 74 sites in 40 countries, including its sales companies and production facilities. Trade and service partners included, the BITZER network of manufacturing, development and sales extends to almost all countries in the world. In 2025, 4,500 employees generated a turnover of €1.135 billion; expenditure for research and development totalled €67 million.

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Image 1: More than 100 participants attended the Industrial Refrigeration Network Conference (IRN) 2026 at the SCHAUFLER Academy



Image 2: A keynote on international developments relating to natural refrigerants was one of the highlights of the Industrial Refrigeration Network Conference (IRN) 2026