

Cryocoolers 12

The last two years have witnessed a continuation in the breakthrough shift toward pulse tube cryocoolers for long-life, high-reliability cryocooler applications. One class of pulse tubes that has reached maturity is referred to as "Stirling type" because they are based on the linear Oxford Stirling-cooler type compressor; these generally provide cooling in the 30 to 100 K temperature range and operate at frequencies from 30 to 60 Hz. The other type of pulse tube cooler making great advances is the so-called "Gifford-McMahon type." Pulse tube coolers of this type use a G-M type compressor and lower frequency operation to achieve temperatures in the 2 to 10 K temperature range. Nearly a third of this proceedings covers these new developments in the pulse tube arena.

Complementing the work on low-temperature pulse tubes is substantial continued progress on rare earth regenerator materials and Gifford-McMahon coolers. These technologies continue to make great progress in opening up the 2 - 4 K market. Also in the commercial sector, continued interest is being shown in the development of long-life, low-cost cryocoolers for the emerging high temperature superconductor electronics market, particularly the cellular telephone base-station market. At higher temperature levels, closed-cycle J-T or throttle-cycle refrigerators are taking advantage of mixed refrigerant gases to achieve low-cost cryocooler systems in the 65 to 80 K temperature range.

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