



## Applied Materials Introduces the Metal Etch DPS Plus Centura for Sub-0.18 Micron Metal Etch

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SANTA CLARA, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--April 13, 1999--

Significant Advancements to Industry's Leading Metal Etch System Boost Throughput, Uptime and Reduce Operating Cost

Applied Materials, Inc., the world's largest supplier of etch systems to the semiconductor industry, introduces the Metal Etch DPS Plus Centura, an advanced metal etch system that sets a new standard for system throughput, uptime and cost per wafer.

"Our DPS (decoupled plasma source) technology has been the industry benchmark for metal and silicon etch for several years," noted David Bergeron, president of Applied Materials' Etch Products Business Group. "We've spent the past year developing several key productivity advancements that maximize our customers' throughput, yield and cost of operation, particularly for 0.18 micron and below device geometries. DPS Plus has the technology and productivity performance to further extend its market leadership over several more device generations."

The DPS Plus lets chipmakers produce significantly more wafers per month in high volume production environments, due to features such as a very fast VHP-plus dual arm transfer robot, improved process capability, software enhancements, new fast cooldown chamber and innovative chamber materials. Productivity is increased with system throughput of more than 50 wafers per hour, extended Mean Wafers Between Cleans (MWBC), and industry leading uptimes of greater than 90 percent. Overall, the system can process approximately 20 percent more wafers per month in high-volume production environments over currently available metal etch systems.

The new productivity features of the DPS Plus are also combined with advances in process technology to bring metal etching to the next level. Defect densities, a measure that becomes increasingly important as feature sizes drop below 0.25 micron, have been reduced on the DPS Plus to less than half those typically found on competitive systems, for improved device yield in the fab. Reducing defect levels is especially critical to chipmakers as chip sizes continue to grow.

Mike Morita, vice president of Applied Materials' Etch Products Business Group, said, "The more than 200 Metal Etch DPS Centura systems installed in fabs around the world have gained an industry-wide reputation for long life, cost-effective operation and extendible technology. The DPS Plus system takes those outstanding qualities and elevates the production capability of the system even further, so our customers can maximize their capital investments. This new system gives our customers considerable additional value where it counts the most, in day-to-day production."

The enhancements featured on the new DPS Plus can be field retrofitted to the large installed base of DPS systems, allowing customers to cost-effectively upgrade their tools to provide higher levels of productivity.

According to Dataquest, the market for metal etch systems was \$690 million in 1998, and is projected to more than double to \$1478 million by 2003. Applied Materials is the global market leader in plasma etching, including the metal etch segment.

Applied Materials, Inc. is a Fortune 500 global growth company and the world's largest supplier of wafer fabrication systems and services to the global semiconductor industry. Applied Materials is traded on the Nasdaq National Market System under the symbol "AMAT." Applied Materials' web site is <http://www.AppliedMaterials.com>.

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