

AUTOMOTIVE

Audi furthers sustainable push with climate-neutral production

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Audi will soon begin production on its first all-electric series model. Image courtesy of Audi

By STAFF REPORTS

German automaker Audi is looking to reduce its carbon footprint with the opening of the first CO₂-neutral production plant in the premium segment.

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The brand's new production facility in Brussels, Belgium will be dedicated to electric models, including the manufacturing of Audi's first fully electric series model. As climate change becomes an increasingly pressing issue, brands are finding ways to reduce their own impact both in product design and production.

"In 2014, we were the first premium manufacturer to measure our CO₂ footprint and have it certified," said Rüdiger Recknagel, head of environmental protection at Audi AG, in a statement. "Since then, we have been working steadily to reduce it further.

"We are also installing new technologies at all our plants to reduce water consumption, prevent air pollution and improve recycling."

Shifting in neutral

The Belgian-based testing company Vinotte has certified Audi's Brussels plant as a CO₂-neutral site. Almost all emissions from the plant are covered by renewable energy, while about 5 percent are offset by environmental projects.

Audi powers the plant through green electricity, with a solar energy system that spans almost 400,000 square feet on the facility's roof. The plant also uses biogas for heating, further reducing the emissions used for its operations.



Audi's Brussels plant uses solar energy. Image courtesy of Audi

Here Audi will produce the series version of its e-tron prototype.

Released at Auto Shanghai last year, Audi's e-tron Sportback has an emphasis on electricity in theme, as well as functionality ([see story](#)).

"At the same time, our first electric car is also the first car in our core competition that is completely climate-neutral in production. We avoid any waste," said Peter Kessler, member of the board of management for production and logistics at Audi AG, in a statement. "In addition, we are working hard to make all our factories in the group even more sustainable.

"We intend to gradually supply our plants with green electricity," he said. "And last year, we were the first company in Germany to make all domestic rail transport climate-neutral."

Virtually all reputable studies of the Earth's climate over the past few decades have shown that the temperature of the planet is changing at an alarmingly fast rate.

This is the consensus among climate scientists who have been desperately trying to get people to pay attention to this growing crisis for years. While luxury brands may think that climate change is something that will have a bigger effect on governments than on business sectors, the truth is that climate change can and will have a major impact on how luxury brands and manufacturers do business ([see story](#)).