

FKuR: Bioplastics Specialist Strengthens its Sales Team

Source: polyNews

Posted: Dec 17, 2012



FKuR Kunststoff GmbH has been expanding its sales team systematically in the second half of 2012. For this purpose, the bioplastics specialist has brought three new team members on board.



Oliver Reppel, Diana Engels, Sara Pehe

Intensive customer care in Europe

Oliver Reppel joined the team in October 2012 and has taken over regional sales for Germany, Austria & Switzerland. Mr. Reppel will not only maintain customer care and direct dialogue with existing customers, but also establish active contact to new customers on site. As a graduate in Business Administration, he gained extensive experience working for a renowned compounder and has several years' experience in thermoplastics sales.

In addition, Diana Engels has taken over the distribution region of Eastern Europe as of September 2012. With a diploma in Business Administration and being a native of Russia, she is responsible for the further expansion of sales activities in Eastern Europe. Thus, FKUR is able to meet the rising demands in Eastern Europe and to move closer to its customers. Furthermore, Sara Pehe complements the FKUR team in sales administration. In addition to the processing of customer orders, as a French native speaker, Mrs. Pehe supports the regional sales agents in France and Belgium. FKUR is in the position to offer its customers a complete service in their native language and thus sharpen the international focus.

"These personnel developments enable us to meet our own high standards for maximum customer care and customer service orientation. The additions to our team allow us to respond more quickly to customer needs and achieve our sustainable growth goals" said Patrick Zimmermann, Director of Marketing & Sales.

BITE ME: a Bioplastic LED Desk Lamp

Source: Green Plastics

Posted: Dec 13, 2012



Introducing a new product that has taken the interior design scene by storm: a fully biodegradable, compostable, and edible bioplastic desk lamp. Created by American designer Victor Vetterlein, the BITE ME Desk Lamp is an algae-based plastic, made using the same basic recipe and method that we have described on this website, in the article HOW TO: make algae bioplastic. The core ingredients are agar (the polymer substance found in seaweed and algae), vegetable glycerin, purified water, food coloring, and flavoring. The desk lamp comes in orange, cherry, blueberry, and apple. Yes, that's the flavor of the lamp, not just the color.

The ingredients of the bioplastic are all natural, non-toxic, and edible. In fact, all of the ingredients can usually be bought in a regular corner grocery store. As a result, when you are done with the lamp, you can compost it... or you can eat it.

Of course, you can't eat the entire thing. It comes with a LED lighting adhesive strip, an LED circuit board, and an electrical cord. But the plastic part is not only edible, it's good for you. Agar is low in sodium, cholesterol and saturated fat. It is a good source of vitamins E and K and other trace minerals. It will not be out of bounds for any healthy diet.



SustainComp Products Combine Bioplastics and Wood Fibre

Source: European Plastics News

Posted: Dec 11, 2012



The EU-funded SustainComp project has been completed after four years of work in which partners developed demonstrator products made from bioplastics reinforced with wood fibres. The project involved 17 partners from eight European countries within the EU Seventh Framework Programme. It had a budget of €9.5m, of which €6.5m was funded by the European Commission.

The demonstrators designed and produced in SustainComp were: a cushioning system for electronic devices (created by SCA in Sweden); an extruded bus seat component (Elastopoli, Finland); toy building blocks (Polykemi, Sweden); an advertising display panel (3A Composites, Switzerland); and a compostable cutlery set for catering applications (Novamont, Italy). For all these items, except the cutlery set, the companies developed composites made from starch-based bioplastic PLA filled with wood fibres. In the cutlery application, Novamont used its own bioplastic with the brand name Mater Bi reinforced with wood fibres.

Sustainability assessments of new materials developed for the different applications were carried out by Itene packaging institute, based in Valencia, Spain, Innventia, based in Sweden and Novamont. Two highlights mentioned by the company were the replacement of glass fibres with wood fibres in the bus-seat demonstrator, ensuring its durability, and the degradable nature of the cutlery, which is a disposable application.

The SustainComp partners were: Innventia, 3A Composites, BASF, Borregaard, CNRS, Elastopoli, EMPA, EPFL, Aalto University, Itene, K-Tron, Novamont, PFI, Polykemi, KTH, SCA and Sintef.



Ecovio Tableware Serves German Racers

Source: European Plastics News

Posted: Dec 4, 2012



The catering company in charge of the Masters Weekend motorsport event in Lausitzring, Germany, chose to use biodegradable tableware made from BASF's ecovio FS Paper earlier this year.

The tableware was made of paper coated with a thin layer of the ecovio material. Ecovio is made of bio-based ecoflex FS and PLA (polylactic P360/12e acid), which is obtained from corn starch. As a result, the thin plastic layer on the disposable tableware consists of more than 50% renewable raw materials and the finished article consists of more than 90% organic raw material, says BASF.

The tableware could therefore be processed along with organic waste to make compost, which was then subsequently used on the Lausitzring site. "Consequently, this pilot project serves not only to underscore an active commitment to saving resources in the realm of motorsports but also to study the degradation behaviour of large quantities of trays and plates that have been coated with ecovio FS Paper," says BASF.



Bioplastics Growing, but are 'No Panacea'

Source: Plasticsnews

Posted: Dec 7, 2012

Plant-based plastics account for less than 1 percent of total global resin demand — but that could change quickly. Hasso von Pogrell, managing director of the Berlin-based trade group European Bioplastics, told the EurActiv.com website that bioplastics are still a niche material, but it's still a market that's growing rapidly.

EurActiv has two stories about bioplastics: a Q&A interview with von Pogrell headlined "Industry chief: 'In the long run, there is no alternative to bioplastics'" and a story headlined "Plant-based plastics 'no panacea,' Greens warn." Some of von Pogrell's statistics are noteworthy. He said **global bioplastic demand currently stands at about 1 million metric tons annually, but it's forecast to hit 6 million metric tons by 2016. That's a drop in the bucket compared to total global resin production of 260 million metric tons.**

But it's still becoming a very significant share of certain plastics markets — especially PET beverage bottles, thanks to the push of the big soft drink companies' plans to use bio-based PET. "The main driver is, of course, the growing demand for more sustainably developed consumer products. Brand-owners and OEMs are looking for ways to reduce their environmental footprint and replace limited fossil-based materials with renewable, bio-based solutions. More and more companies therefore integrate bioplastics into their corporate sustainability programs," von Pogrell said. But not all environmentalists are sold on the benefits of plant-based plastics.

The story quotes Robbie Blake, a campaigner at Friends of the Earth Europe, saying that "Bioplastics raise exactly the same controversy about our over-consumption of land, and the damaging style of intensive plantation agriculture used to mass-produce the raw materials." Plant-based plastics risk competing for land with food. And many bio-based resins, including PET and high density polyethylene, aren't biodegradable, so the environmental advantages over conventional resins aren't clear, he said.

"Other solutions for our insatiable appetite for plastic exist like reusable bottles, bags and packaging, recycling, and consuming less in the first place," Blake said. I've covered the topic of plant-based plastics vs. recycled plastics before, and every time I mention it I get feedback from people who say it's not a question of one or the other — plant-based plastics can be recycled.

I understand that point, but urge Blog readers to keep in mind that the real question is which material brand-owners want to use to meet their sustainability goals. If a brand-owner wants to use 100 percent plant-based resins, what does that mean to the brand's use of recycled-content resins? It can't squeeze in any more than 100 percent.

