FKuR to Distribute Evonik's Biobased Range

Source: eppm

Posted: December 17, 2013

Evonik Industries AG, High Performance Polymers Business Line, and FKuR Kunststoff GmbH have announced a distribution agreement for Vestamid Terra. With immediate effect, FKuR will market, sell and distribute Evonik's full line of biobased polyamide Vestamid Terra products worldwide.

"We value our partnership with FKuR, a specialist in the field of bioplastics promotion. We are excited to share our experiences and, combined, strengthen our expertise" said Jean-Marc Chassagne, Director Biopolymers - Resource Efficiency, High Performance Polymers, Evonik.

"As 'the bioplastic specialist' we offer innovative solutions for all processing methods and applications for our customers' product of choice. With Vestamid Terra we have extended our range of products with a high-tech engineering plastic. Thus, we enable our customers to open new areas of applications with biobased plastics", said Edmund Dolfen, CEO of FKuR

Vestamid Terra polymers are partially or entirely based on renewable feedstock. The raw materials are the castor bean (Ricinus Communis) and its oil derivatives, which are synthesised into monomers which form the basis of the Vestamid Terra product range.

Packaging Demand Drives Bioplastic Output

Source: PRW

Posted: December 13, 2013

The bioplastics market is predicted to grow from around 1.4 million tonnes annual production capacity in 2012 to approximately 6.2 million tonnes in 2017, according to industry association European Bioplastics.

"Our market data update once more affirms above average growth in the bioplastics industry around the world", said François de Bie, chairman of European Bioplastics. "Continuous growth can be expected with regard to all bioplastic material types and in a range of very diverse market segments – from packaging to fibres to consumer electronics."

By far the strongest gain is expected in the bio-based, non-biodegradable bioplastics group. Bio-based versions of bulk plastics such as PE and PET in particular are significantly increasing capacities, he added. The packaging market will remain the leading segment for bioplastics applications, predicted European Bioplastics.

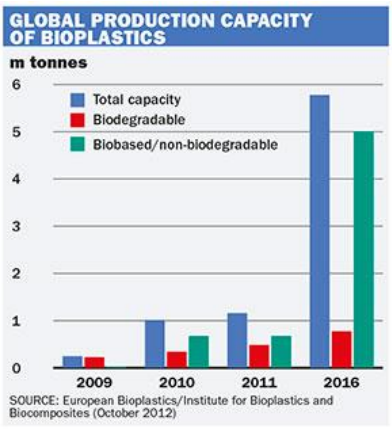
Market outlook: Industrial Biotechnology Moves up a Gear

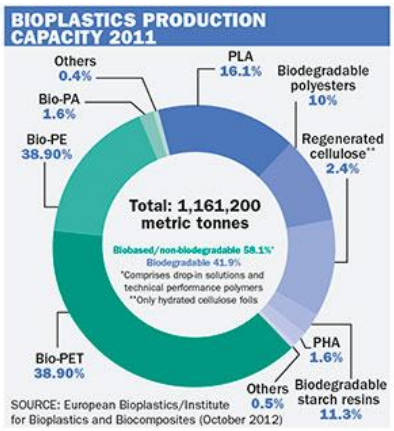
Source: ICIS News

Posted: December 6, 2013

A public-private partnership is about to inject €3.8bn into Europe's industrial biotechnology and bio-based products sector, aiming at the entire value chain. Industrial biotechnology and bio-based products – using enzymes and microbes through fermentation to produce materials – is already maturing as a valid way to produce chemicals on a commercial scale.

With the right approach, white biotechnology could grow to as much as 30% of the chemical industry by 2030. Europe has lagged behind the US and other regions in the race for industrial – or white –biotechnology because of a lack of effective public investment in the nascent technology. But that situation could be about to change thanks to a new public-private partnership (PPP), which will pour billions of euros into the development of new technologies to a commercial scale of production. If exploited successfully, white biotechnology has the potential to grow from around 10% of the chemical and plastics industry today up to 25-30% by 2020-2030. Already some sectors such as fine and specialty chemicals are successfully exploiting the technology, with it accounting for 60% of turnover there. Although the figure is a lot less for bulk chemicals, one of the fastest-growing bio- plastics technologies is polyethylene (PE), polypropylene (PP) and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) from ethanol, which can be bio-based. According to Dirk Carrez, managing director at Clever Consult, there are two major issues in Europe: investment in innovation and feedstock availability. The cost of biochemical production also constrains development.





However, the situation is improving in Europe. On 10 July it was announced that a PPP known as the Biobased Industries Initiative is being set up with a €3.8bn ($5.1bn) budget. It now has to be approved by member states and it should start up in 2014, running until 2020. A consortium of almost 60 companies has committed €2.8bn to the project while the EU will inject €1bn. The initiative will focus on the entire supply chain for biochemicals, covering agriculture, agro-food, biotechnology, forestry, pulp and paper, chemicals and energy.

Carrez is a director of the industrial consortium and says the aim of the project is to focus on the development of new products to commercial-scale production. "We will aim to fund pilot, demonstration and at least five to six flagship [commercial-scale] production facilities over the next 10 years. These flagship facilities will be the first of their kind in Europe and will be focused on different value chains and advanced second or third generation feedstocks such as cellulosic forest waste, agricultural non-food waste," he said.

FISCAL CHALLENGE

The EU has many tax incentives for biofuels but nothing for bio-based products. The European Commission's Lead Market Initiative for bio-products is an attempt to generate a synchronised approach to stimulating demand for bio-based products. But it has been operating since 2008 and does not yet seem to have achieved much in terms of concrete policy initiatives.

Carrez points out the challenges it faces: "This does take a joined-up approach from feedstocks to markets but it's quite slow. If an incentive stimulates one sector then it may have a negative impact on another one. For many companies conventional production is their main business [and there may be a conflict] so it may take a while to develop."

The other challenge is that this does not belong to just one policy area but covers environment, transport and energy, and all of these have separate ministries. It is difficult to bring them together in a coordinated approach to incentives.

Global Demand for Biobased Resins to Rise 19% per year through 2017

Source: Greener Package

Posted: December 2, 2013

The most rapid gains in demand are expected for biobased commodity resins such as polyethylene and polypropylene, which are just beginning to enter the commercial market.

Global demand for biobased and biodegradable plastics will rise 19% per year to 960,000 metric tons in 2017. That's according to a new study, "World Bioplastics," from The Freedonia Group, Inc. The study notes that the bioplastics industry, while still in the emerging growth phase, has established itself as a fixture in a number of commercial markets and applications.

Says analyst Kent Furst, "Robust growth in demand is expected in virtually all geographic markets," driven by consumer preferences for sustainable materials, the increased adoption of bioplastics by plastic processors and compounders, and new product developments that expand the range of applications for bioplastics. However, despite the rapid rise in demand, bioplastics are still expected to account for less than 1% of the overall plastic resin market in 2022. "The success of the bioplastics industry will ultimately depend on price and performance considerations, and large scale conversion to bioplastics will not occur until price parity with conventional plastic resins is achieved," Furst adds.

Starch-based resins and polylactic acid (PLA) will remain the leading bioplastic products through 2017, combining to account for more than 60% of demand. For starch-based resins, advances will be bolstered by increased regulation of conventional plastic products, particularly plastic bags. PLA demand will benefit from the development of resins and compounds with enhanced performance attributes, suitable for more durable applications such as fibers, automotive parts, and electronic components. The most rapid gains in demand, however, are expected for biobased commodity resins such as polyethylene and polypropylene, which are just beginning to enter the commercial market.

Western Europe was the largest regional consumer of bioplastics in 2012, accounting for over half of global demand. The region will see strong gains through 2017 as well, bolstered by added regulations and incentives that favor bioplastics over conventional resins. North America will also register strong advances, with demand in the region expected to more than double, driven by rising consumption of PLA and biobased commodity resins. Advances in the Asia/Pacific region will be fueled by robust growth in China, which has become a major consumer of bioplastic resins used to produce manufactured goods for export.