SHOW BRIEFS

Plastics News *staff reporter Dan Hockensmith covered the following items at the Society of Plastics Engineers' Thermoforming Conference, held Sept. 20-23 in Minneapolis.*

Extreme TPO offers option to fiberglass

Spartech Corp. unveiled its new Extreme-brand thermoplastic olefin, which the Clayton, Mo., firm is marketing as an alternative to fiberglass. Spartech offers Extreme in three grades: LG, with low- to medium-gloss after thermoforming; HG, aimed at eliminating the need for secondary painting after it's formed; and D, a TPO sheet with Korad acrylic to impart gloss and weather-resistance.

Spartech executives said Extreme has lower sheet sag than traditional TPOs, due to higher melt strength. The material is aimed at the recreational vehicle, bus, truck and marine markets.

Primex's Bio Green touts compostability

Paul Uphaus, commercial development manager for Richmond, Ind.-based Primex Plastics Corp., highlighted several green initiatives the company has undertaken. He cautioned against accepting companies' biodegradability claims at face value.

"Doesn't do any good for [most of] these products if they get to a landfill environment. You can crush them, smash them, bury them under 120 layers of trash and they're not going to biodegrade. They're not going to be in the right environment. They have to be in a composting facility," he said.

Primex has developed Prime Bio Green 550, a corn-based bioplastics it claims is as strong as high-impact polystyrene as well as biodegradable and compostable according to ASTM D5400 and D68686 specifications. Primex has developed the additive Vanish for polypropylene, polyethylene and PS to make those plastics compostable and is marketing as eco-friendly its Prime Bio Green, a 50-50 mix of PP and proprietary starch-based plastics, as it broadens its sustainability-oriented lines, Uphaus said.

FDA-approved TOPS aimed at frozen food

In a Sept. 22 presentation to SPE attendees, Jeffrey Pristera, senior project manager at Reynolds Packaging Kama of Hazleton, Pa., unveiled Tough OPS, a new biaxially oriented polystyrene that recently won Food and Drug Administration approval for food contact. Reynolds Packaging Kama, a business of Pittsburgh-based Alcoa Inc., is aiming TOPS at frozen foods packaged in PET.

"So far we've seen superior anecdotal performance in flash-freezing applications and drop tests in freezers and cold temperatures all the way down to minus 40° F," Pristera said.

Advantages of TOPS over PET include competitive cost, good thermoformability, high clarity and rigidity and an available silicon coating for anti-fogging in hot and cold, he said.

Quick-change lock is mega time saver

Tooling Technology LLC of Fort Loramie, Ohio, introduced its Segan PD500 Mega Cylinder quick-change steel pneumatic cylinder locks in January, for plastics processors seeking time-saving changeovers of inverted and vertically positioned tools, molds and dies.

Weighing in at 11 pounds, each Mega Cylinder holds its mating 2-pound knob with 25,000 pounds of static holding force. Like its smaller predecessors, the Mega Cylinder has a corrosion-resistant finish and is engineered to withstand temperatures ranging from minus 65° F to 300° F.

BioLand PET finding uses in packaging

Advanced Extrusion Inc. of Becker, Minn., featured its new PET material, BioLand.

BioLand is made from PET base resin and a proprietary additive designed to enhance its biodegradability in landfills. BioLand, introduced in June, already has garnered 1 million pounds in orders for customers in food packaging and paint trays.

"It has an 8 percent haze, which is higher than PET," said Advanced President and Chief Executive Officer John Thibado. "We're working on that."

Advanced Extrusion has licensed BioLand to thermoformer Display Pack of Grand Rapids, Mich., a custom manufacturer of packaging for the consumer goods, food, health and beauty, cosmetics, hardware and electronics markets.

New Eco-Therm sheet made of recycled PET

The husband and wife team of Bill and Brenda Mechar, founders of Integrated Packaging Films Inc. of Ayr, Ontario, gave out information on new sheet that's made of post-consumer and post-industrial recycled PET.

The material, which is available in FDA nonobjection status, can be thermoformed into clamshells, trays and other food containers.

"We believe there's going to be a significant market in Canada for this product, as provincial and municipal recycling programs bring more of the PET that's out there for post-consumer recycling use," Bill Mechar said.

Eco-Therm will biodegrade in landfills in the same time frame as wood and paper, the firm said.