Business Week
4th April 05 – 10th 05

Licensing 2005 International to reflect expanding reach of licensing industry

04 April 2005

Licensing 2005 International, the world's largest licensing show is to be held in Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, New York on 21-23 June.

"The show is the global marketplace for fresh concepts and innovations that drive retail sales," says Michael Alic, general manager of Advanstar Communications, a business information company serving specialised markets including automotive, fashion, apparel, and powersports. "As the starting point in the process that turns concepts into products and promotions, this show is where the deals get made. Attendees get a unique opportunity to preview all the properties that will be driving popular culture worldwide. Given the breadth of exhibitors we are offering, a trip to New York, in essence, will be like visiting Europe, Asia and the US rolled into one."

This annual trade show offers benefits to the key players in consumer products worldwide. Exhibiting companies from all over the world can meet directly with key American retailers, manufacturers and promotional partners. Attendees can preview the newest properties from key US licensors and contacts can be made between the people who represent properties and the people who bring them to life as products or promotions regardless of origin.

Wicked Motorsport and Carroll Shelby to launch men's line for automotive fans

04 April 2005

Wicked Motorsport, an affiliate of Wicked Road Warrior Boots, has signed a multi-year licensing agreement with Carroll Shelby Licensing, Inc., to launch a men's sportswear line aimed at automotive enthusiasts. The new Cobra/Shelby line, which will feature the Team Shelby Cobra, Cobra Daytona and Shelby 350 logos, is part of Wicked's new Holiday 2005 collection of shirts, trousers and outerwear inspired by classic cars and the look of racing uniforms.

The new apparel will embody the spirit of American ingenuity in automotive design with Wicked's tradition of interpreting the rugged, brash styling of motorcycles and car racing in materials that are refined enough for everyday wear.

The Cobra/Shelby sportswear will be part of Wicked's new apparel and footwear group featuring logos and emblems representing renowned, classic automobiles. The Holiday 2005 collection has been designed using durable fabrics such as twill, corduroy and denims, and features details, including epaulets, patch pockets, eyewear pockets, and a number of other functional elements. The line will be available through leading retailers throughout the US from June 2005.

Wicked Motorsport is a division of Wicked Open Minds, LLC, established in 1988 as a marketing company for licensed apparel and footwear with a focus is on the motorcycling and hot rod markets. The company also produces its own footwear and clothing lines available through more than 400 US retailers, including Harley-Davidson dealers, specialty shops and is available online.

Uzbekistan to grow textile capacity

04 April 2005

Uzbekistan's Trade Minister, Rustam Azimov, has unveiled plans to build on the country's textile potential and branded the recently adopted investment programme a major step towards the goal.

The programme includes 94 projects worth $1.2 billion and will allow for the processing 50% of domestically produced cotton, up from the current 28%. It is also expected to raise yarn production to nearly 330,000 tonnes, fabrics to 144.4 million sq. metres, knitted products to 186.6 million and hosiery products to nearly 60 million pairs.

The benefits of investing in Uzbekistan listed by Mr Azimov include access to raw materials (1.2 million tonnes of cotton fibre a year), cheap and skilled labour force (estimated at $0.22 per hour), cheap energy resources (electricity cost of $0.02 cents per kWh) and the country's convenient geopolitical location.

Uzbekistan is not straddled with export duties or quotas, has free trade agreements with Central

Asia and CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries and a favourable trade regime with the EU (European Union).

In 2004 production volume of import-substituting raw materials, goods and consumer products grew by 5.1%, the light industry enterprises produced 356 new types of light industry goods and a total of 21.4 million metres of cotton fabrics as well as 1.4 million units of sewed and knitted clothes using new types of textile products.

Z-Coil Footwear defends its name

04 April 2005

Z-CoiL Footwear, US producer of pain-relief footwear, has recently featured on New York City CBS television station, which presented the footwear's properties in a favourable light. This comes six weeks after a report outlining possible dangers of wearing the footwear was screened by the Good Housekeeping Institute.

"We were very discouraged by the report and the testing methods," says Andrés Gallegos, Z-CoiL President and CEO. "People were randomly put in the footwear, which did not guarantee correct fittings. The Z-CoiL fitting experience sets us apart from any other shoe on the market." Z-Coil footwear is custom-fitted for each individual and a fitting may take more than an hour. Some customers need follow up visits for additional fitting needs, he added.

Z-Coils are designed with a rigid orthotic plate designed to offer stability, protection and support to the foot, combined with a one-inch-thick neoprene forefoot to cushion each step and a tempered steel coil under the heel to absorb body weight. The result is a unique-looking shoe that many customers report provides immediate and unmistakable relief from the shock of impact and associated discomfort in the foot, leg or back area.

LaCrosse Footwear strengthens management team

04 April 2005

LaCrosse Footwear, Inc., a provider of branded work and outdoor footwear, has announced additions to its management team.

Gary Rebello joined LaCrosse as Vice President of Human Resources (HR). He has over 20 years HR experience and most recently served as Vice President of HR for Mentor Graphics which has over 3,800 employees in North America, Asia and Europe.

Erron Sorensen as Director of Marketing. Mr Sorensen has over 10 years of marketing management experience, including over seven years with Dr. Martens, where he was instrumental in helping the company expand into the work and safety market.

Dave Strouse as Vice President of Product Development, Apparel & Accessories. He has over 20 years of experience in the developing, sourcing and marketing apparel, most recently as Vice President of Product Development and Sourcing for Gander Mountain.

Aaron Atkinson as Corporate Controller. Mr. Atkinson has over 14 years of experience in accounting and financial management, including five years as Accounting Director for Nike Inc.where he directed Nike's USA Accounting Operations, including its on-going implementation of Sarbanes Oxley.

Stahl commences construction of plant in China

04 April 2005

Following the recent formation of Stahl Coatings and Fine Chemicals (Suzhou) Co Ltd, Stahl has commenced construction work on its manufacturing facility in Suzhou, in southern Jiangsu province, between Nanjing and Shanghai.

The ground breaking ceremony took place on the 2nd March. Stahl anticipates that the new $18 million, 54,000 square metre plant will come on stream in April 2006 with a capacity to manufacture 17,000 tonnes of product per year.

Products will initially include acrylics, pigments and lacquer emulsions for the leather and shoe industries and surface coatings for the flexible substrate industry.

Footwear and textile fair in Vietnam

05 April 2005

With footwear exports expected to reach $3.3 billion in 2005, Vietnam is fast becoming an important market as both a footwear and textile exporter.

With this in mind there will be a lot of activity anticipated at Apparel-Textile and Leather-Footwear Export Fair (A&F Expo 2005) that is to be held April 6-10 in Ho Chi Minh City.

With approximately 200 companies exhibiting at the show, it is hoped the country's exports can be boosted further.

The show is organised jointly by the Vietnam Textile & Apparel Association (VITAS), the Vietnam Leather and Footwear Association (LEFASO), HCMC Investment and Trade Promotion Centre (ITPC), Vietnam National Textile & Garment Corporation (VINATEX), HCMC Association of Garment Textile Embroidery Knitting (AGTEK) and Vietnamese High Quality Goods Enterprises' Club.

India and Germany seek closer economic cooperation

05 April 2005

Indian Finance Minister, Shri P. Chidambaram, has called upon the German investors to invest in a wider variety of value added and high technology ventures in India. Inaugurating the 15th Session of the Indo-German Joint Commission on Industrial and Economic Cooperation, the Finance Minister said that there is a vast range of possibilities for bilateral economic, commercial, industrial, scientific and technological cooperation between the two countries. He urged that specific problems faced by the business and industry of both the countries should not impede bilateral broader economic, industrial, commercial and trade cooperation from moving rapidly forward.

Chidambaram stated that German small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which are strong in clean technologies, especially in the field of ceramics, leather, textiles, pharmaceuticals, chemicals and waste management, will find it cost effective to co-produce in India by transferring technical know-how and managerial knowledge, and by investing in Indian SMEs.

Responding to Shri Chidambaram's speech, German Minister of Economics and Labour Mr. Wolfgang Clement assured that Germany will play its part in India's ongoing integration into the world economy. He said that Information and communications technology, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, bio-technology, environmental protection are the key sectors that can offer fresh possibilities for cooperation.

Kodiak acquires Terra Footwear

05 April 2005

Canadian footwear brand, Kodiak group Holdings Inc., has acquired Terra Footwear, a manufacturer of safety shoes and boots, from the Aleven family, the Company's founders.

President and CEO Kevin Huckle said, "Canadians and consumers around the world expect top quality products from Kodiak and our ability to meet that commitment has now increased as a result," said. "The Aleven family has built a company that has been a first-class competitor and a leader in the industrial shoe industry. We will be actively marketing the Terra brand and its industrial footwear across North America and Europe," he added.

Former Terra President Dan Aleven said, "Terra is a world-class industrial footwear manufacturer with an excellent workforce and two of the world's most technologically advanced industrial shoe manufacturing facilities in Ontario and Newfoundland. We're looking at ways to maximize production capacity at the Harbour Grace and Markdale plants by taking back some of our offshore manufacturing," Huckle said.

Kodiak has assembled a senior management team that includes Dan Aleven, who is its new chief operating officer. He is also a shareholder and will sit on Kodiak's Board of Directors. Robert Worrall, Terra's former senior vice president of Sales and Marketing is the new senior vice president of Sales and David McCarthy, formerly vice president of Sales and Marketing at Kodiak, becomes executive vice president of Marketing.

Terra was founded in 1971 when he revived a former shoe factory in Harbour Grace, Newfoundland. In 1977, Terra acquired a former Kinney shoe plant in Markdale, Ontario and began operating its second manufacturing site.

M&S to shut textile plant in Northern Ireland

05 April 2005

Marks & Spencer's textile plant in Claudy, County Londonderry, Northern Ireland, is to close in December this year just three years after opening, following the chain's decision to purchase all of its clothes through a central department in London.

The closure will result in 108 redundancies. M&S has confirmed that some of the Claudy staff will be offered alternative employment at their store in the Foyleside Centre of Londonderry and at its London offices.

The news is a blow to the country's ailing textile industry and comes just two weeks after Adria Strabane announced 175 job losses.

AirBoss expands US manufacturing capacity

05 April 2005

AirBoss of America Corp., an Ontario-based maker of rubber products that include footwear and tyres, has reached an agreement to expand

its US manufacturing capacity by up to 100 million pounds annually in Scotland Neck, North Carolina. The leased facility will see the production of high-quality, rubber-based compounds for selected industrial markets.

The two-phase expansion programme will see the installation of equipment over the next three years. Initial production should commence in the first quarter of 2006. Employment is expected to exceed 85 people at completion, says the company. This expansion is worth $10 million and when completed will give the company a capacity of over 300 million pounds annually, representing a 50% increase over current capacity.

AATCC announces research meetings

05 April 2005

AATCC (The American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorists), has scheduled over 60 meetings to be held by research and administrative committees in the Research Triangle Park, N.C. The Technical Committee on Research will meet at 5.30 pm on Wednesday, May 4, and at 11:45 am on Thursday, May 5.

Presentations, given by prominent speakers, will include the following themes: spectroscopic technologies, colourfastness to water, hand evaluation test methods, UV protective textiles, home laundering technology, preparation test methods, colourfastness to light test methods, colour measurement test methods and flammability technology.

Lotto Sport Italia launches cosmetic line

05 April 2005

Lotto Sport Italia is extending its product portfolio with the launch of a cosmetics line for active individuals. It has signed a licensing agreement with Weruska & Joel for the exclusive worldwide production and distribution of a Lotto-branded perfumes and cosmetics line, presented at the Cosmoprof trade fair in Bologna.

The agreement between the two Italian companies will last eight years (2005-2012). The first products to be launched will include eau de toilette for men and perfume for women, deodorants, a body lotion for women and an aftershave for men, followed by a line of products to include bath foam, shower foam and moisturisers. The marketing idea guiding the licensing agreement aims to transfer the performance content of Lotto products to cosmetics targeted at meeting the needs of sportspeople.

The launch of the first products with the Lotto brand is scheduled for mid 2005.

Australia to standardise apparel sizing?

05 April 2005

Andre Haermeyer, State Manufacturing and Export Minister, has urged for the introduction of a national standard in the sizing of clothes. The Council of Textile and Fashion Industries of Australia and the Fashion Technicians Association of Australia have welcomed the suggestion.

The Victoria Government believes dramatic variations in clothes sizes are unfair to consumers, fail to reflect Australian physical characteristics and confuse consumers. “Australian fashion industry is now mature enough to demand an updated and consistent national sizing regime” Mr Haermeyer said.

The code would be voluntary but the industry, worth $9 billion, would most likely embrace it, enabling it to produce clothes that will sell and fit better. The first step in creating the standard would involve 3-D scanning to measure a cross-section of Australians.

The last significant data study undertaken in Australia was in the 1939s and 1940s, making current standards, largely based on it, obsolete due to changes in the body-size of the average Australian.

Wipe demand to grow 6% before by 2009

05 April 2005

“Wipes”, a new study from The Freedonia Group, Inc., predicts a 6% growth in US demand for wipes to $1.9 billion in 2009 due to further segmentation of the market and new product introductions.

Household cleaning, hand and body, and a number of other small volume consumer wipes will register the strongest growth whilst demand for baby wipes will suffer due to market maturity. New product innovations and expanding applications will drive demand for wipes in the industrial market, with manufacturing and health care remaining the largest segment.

Although the US wipes market traditionally favours the use of airlaid substances, there will be a further increase in the use of spunlaced nonwovens in a number of applications. Surfactants will experience the fastest gains,

resulting from an ongoing shift from solvent formulations, the report says.

Bata Sri Lanka to be investigated

06 April 2005

Following a complaint made by the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGWLF) against multinational footwear company, Bata, the Canadian OECD National Contact Point has confirmed that an investigation of Bata's Sri Lankan subsidiary will go ahead.

The case involved the termination of 600 workers of the Bata plant in Sri Lanka, on the grounds that they had engaged in collective action following the dismissal by the management of the branch president of the Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union of Sri Lanka and the retrenchment of 146 workers.
The Global Union Federation contended that such behaviour violated the OECD guidelines.

These guidelines govern the activities of multinational enterprises, which cover all internationally-recognised core labour standards as well as covering general policies for good corporate behaviour. In particular, the guidelines require companies to respect the right of their employees to be represented by trade unions and to engage in constructive negotiations.

ITGLWF General Secretary Neil Kearney met with Canada's Foreign Ministry earlier this month to discuss the submission. According to the ITGLWF, Bata turned down an offer to meet to discuss a resolution to the problems in Sri Lanka.

Cognis reports significant improvement in results

06 April 2005

Cognis has reported significant growth in both sales and operating results for 2004. In the twelve months from January 1 to December 31, 2004, the specialty chemicals supplier posted total net external sales of €3,073 million, a 4.2% increase compared with 2003.

"The 2004 financial year was a successful one for us. Despite the continuing weakness of the US dollar and increasing raw material, energy and transport prices, we achieved a significant turnaround in our business. This is a result of a volume pick-up in our markets but also confirms the validity of our strategy of focusing on the wellness and sustainability trends. The comprehensive package of restructuring measures initiated through 2003 and 2004 has also contributed substantially to the cost savings," commented Antonio Trius, CEO of Cognis.

Cognis' organic sales grew 8.3% from 2003, with all five SBUs achieving growth. Positive sales growth was also achieved by all regions, led by Central and South America (+24%) and Asia-Pacific (+16%). North America achieved a10% increase, Northern Europe a 4% rise and Southern Europe a 6% increase in sales.

Report on USA manufacturing output released

06 April 2005

Economic activity in the US manufacturing sector grew in March for the 22nd consecutive month, while the overall economy grew for the 41st consecutive month, say the nation's supply executives in the latest Manufacturing ISM Report on Business.

The report was issued today by Norbert J. Ore, C.P.M., chairman of the Institute for Supply Management Manufacturing Business Survey Committee. "The manufacturing sector maintained its strength in March, finishing the first quarter in a relatively strong position. Growth in New Orders and Inventories helped offset lower index readings in Production, Supplier Deliveries and Employment. Price inflation continues to present a problem for manufacturers as the Prices Index gained significant momentum."

The 16 top industries reporting growth in March were: Primary Metals; Textiles; Glass, Stone & Aggregate; Wood & Wood Products; Instruments & Photographic Equipment; Electronic Components & Equipment; Rubber & Plastic Products; Furniture; Miscellaneous; Industrial & Commercial Equipment & Computers; Chemicals; Fabricated Metals; Transportation & Equipment; Printing & Publishing; Apparel; and Food. The industries reporting the same level of activity as last month are: Tobacco and Petroleum. Paper is the only industry reporting decreased activity during March.

Rohm and Haas to demonstrate latest developments in reactive hot melt adhesives

06 April 2005

Textile laminators at Techtextil 2005, to be held in Frankfurt, Germany in June, will be able to see the latest development in the area of reactive hot melt adhesives from Rohm and Haas Company.

Rohm and Haas, which has wide experience in the development of adhesives for laminating membranes, garments and upholstery, foam bonding, and automotive and medical textiles, will address issues related to the ease of running reactive hot melt adhesives on textile laminating machines.

“This is an area some adhesives producers may overlook, but we at Rohm and Haas appreciate that production line issues are tremendously important to textile laminators,” states Julie Birch, Rohm and Haas commercial manager for textile laminating in Europe. “We expect a lot of interest at Techtextil surrounding this topic.”

According to the company, its Mor-Melt R-7001E moisture-curing polyurethane reactive hot melt adhesive can be cleaned from the laminating machine with ease, thus saving the company time on cleaning and increasing productivity – this is said to save as much as half an hour each day. In addition to this it is claimed that the adhesive’s high initial bond strength and long open time contribute to faster line speeds and substantially less material loss during machine stoppages, respectively.

Motexha highlights children’s apparel

06 April 2005

According to statistics, children’s apparel is among the top growth sectors in the Middle East garment industry, with demand growing at a rate of 15 to 20% annually. This year, Motexha Spring 2005 will see several children’s clothing and accessory brands in its ‘KidZone’ pavilion, all seeking a foothold in this lucrative growth market. The fashion and textile show is being held April 11-14, 2005 at the Dubai International Exhibition Centre.

Chickeeduck, one of the most popular kids’ wear brands in Hong Kong is participating at the show for the first time to scout for franchise partners. The company is looking to expand its retail presence across the Middle East following its successful debut in the UAE in 2004 at Al Ghurair City, Dubai.

Recent market studies indicate that the Arabian Gulf has the fifth largest population of children and second largest expenditure on children’s clothing and accessories globally. The countries in the GCC (Arabian Gulf Cooperation Council) have among the highest birth rates in the world, while nearly half of the estimated 25 million population in Saudi Arabia and Oman is below the age of 14.

Suman Manian, show manager, Motexha, commented, “KidZone offers buyers a chance to see first-hand the latest global trends in children’s clothing, and more importantly, to do business with a large number of children’s wear manufacturers from the Indian subcontinent, South East Asia and Europe. Our research indicates that over 57% of trade visitors to our shows in the recent past have requested more baby and children’s wear.”

BASF celebrates 140th anniversary

06 April 2005

German chemical company, BASF, celebrates its 140th anniversary on April 6, 2005, and the company is planning a wide range of campaigns, events and sponsorship programmes to celebrate this milestone.

For example, through the “We Help the Region Win” campaign, BASF intends to fund youth affairs and education, social affairs, culture and sport in the Rhine-Neckar region with €22 million in 2005 –around three times last year’s amount. One of the main thrusts is a project called “Proactive Education” which is intended to improve the prerequisites and framework for schooling and education over the coming years. The focus is on laying the foundations for a good education, starting in daycare centres, nursery schools and elementary schools. The goal is to give children of all abilities the best possible stimulation and encouragement.

“To us, 140 years of history means 140 years of responsibility – to all our customers, employees, shareholders and neighbours,” said Dr. Jürgen Hambrecht, chairman of the Board of Executive Directors of BASF Aktiengesellschaft.

BASF came into being on April 6, 1865, when Friedrich Engelhorn, a goldsmith by trade and later owner of a lighting gas factory, set up a stock corporation called Badische Anilin- & Soda-Fabrik (Baden Aniline & Soda Factory) for the production of dyes. When a planned real estate deal in Mannheim fell through, production buildings were erected on the opposite bank of the Rhine River in Ludwigshafen. Today, BASF is the world’s leading chemical company with sales in excess of €37 billion in 2004 and some 82,000 employees worldwide.

US court rules on lacrosse stick patent infringement

06 April 2005

A judge in Boston, USA, has found STX LLC of Baltimore, Maryland, in contempt of court for violation of a permanent injunction following a

case brought by Brine, Inc. of Milford, Massachusetts for infringement of a lacrosse stick patent.

The judge ordered STX to pay Brine the gross profits from sales of an infringing lacrosse stick, as well as costs and attorneys' fees relating to the contempt issue. On January 21, 2004, Judge Gorton issued a final judgment of over $2 million in the patent infringement suit brought by Brine against STX. In November 2003, a federal jury in Worcester returned a verdict of willful patent infringement and damages for lost profits of $1.9 million in the same suit.

Brine, based in Milford, Massachusetts, manufactures and distributes lacrosse sticks, equipment, accessories, and apparel, as well as other sporting goods. In 1995, Brine introduced its line of Edge Offset Head lacrosse sticks with lowered sidewalls, which was an immediate commercial success. Two years later, STX introduced its first offset head to the marketplace. In 1999, Brine filed the patent infringement suit against STX in Federal Court which resulted in the 2003 jury award. On January 21, 2004 the judge denied STX's post-trial motion to stay the injunction and issued the permanent injunction that barred STX from making, offering to sell, or selling STX's Octane, Proton or X2 products anywhere in the USA. Together with pre-judgment interest, the award totalled over $2 million, among the ten largest awards in the state of Massachusetts in 2003.

Last October, Brine filed a complaint alleging that STX had violated this injunction by continuing to sell a product that was "substantially the same" as the X2, named the X2+. Last month, the judge held a hearing in the matter, which included expert testimony. In his opinion, Judge Gorton found that the X2+ lacrosse sticks are not different from the X2. "As such, Brine has proven infringement by clear and convincing evidence," his ruling stated.

"We are very pleased by the outcome of this latest judgment," commented Sean Fox, president of Brine.

Russell Corporation to present at Sidoti & Company's Annual Emerging Growth Conference

06 April 2005

Russell Corporation, the athletic and sporting goods company, has announced that a member of its management team will be presenting at Sidoti & Company's Annual Emerging Growth Conference. Jack Ward, chairman and CEO, will provide an overview of the company's products and operations. The presentation is scheduled for Wednesday, April 6, 2005 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in New York, NY.

3D Systems introduces new flexible plastic

06 April 2005

Provider of rapid 3-D printing, prototyping and manufacturing solutions,3D Systems Corporation has announced the launch of DuraForm Flex plastic, a new rubber-like, tear-resistant, flexible plastic for the SLS system product line.

DuraForm Flex plastic is said to have superior tear resistance and enables customers to produce functional prototypes and end-use parts for which rubber-like flexible characteristics are required. Parts made from DuraForm Flex plastic can be substituted for urethane, silicone or rubber parts.

"This is yet another example of the close development collaboration between our key customers, suppliers and our own talented team," said Abe Reichental, 3D Systems' president and chief executive officer. "As a result of working closely with our customers to determine the best attributes and characteristics required in a flexible material, DuraForm Flex plastic is designed to handle harsh environmental conditions such as heat and chemicals, making it ideal for applications such as gaskets, hoses, seals, watertight parts, equipment and athletic shoes. To further enhance the functionality of our new DuraForm Flex plastic, we are offering it in an array of colours, including red, yellow, blue, white and black.

“The tight integration between DuraForm Flex plastic and our family of SLS systems enables customers to produce usable parts quickly on our SLS systems without the expense of traditional manufacturing methods. By producing rubber-like parts directly, our customers reduce their product development time to market and can easily customize parts without incurring additional tooling expense."

Vietnam and EU sign agreement

06 April 2005

Vietnam and the European Union have signed an agreement on market access designed to create more favourable conditions for EU investors in exchange for the suspension of quotas on textile and garments exported from Vietnam to the EU since January 1, 2005. Vietnam will also apply import tariffs on garments, cloth and yarns from the EU, including a 5% tariff on yarns.

The agreement was signed by Vietnam's ambassador to the EC and Belgium Phan Thuy Thanh, Luxembourg's ambassador to the EC and EC representative Martine Schommer and director of the EC directorate general for trade and EC representative Paul Vandoren.

The deal is designed to tighten cooperation in trade and investment between the two sides. Bilateral trade between Vietnam and the EU hit €6.5 billion ($8.57 billion) in 2004, up 20% from 2003. Vietnam's export turnover to the EU currently accounts for 22% of the total exports.

US criticises 61 countries for imposing trade barriers

06 April 2005

The Bush administration has accused 61 countries and three regional blocs of significant trade barriers that harm American manufacturers and farmers. The government's 672-page report on trade barriers is designed to guide US negotiators over the next year in their efforts to attack barriers seen as doing the most damage to American companies.

Focusing on China, Japan and the European Union, the administration has warned that if direct talks should fail to produce results, it could bring cases before the World Trade Organisation to deal with barriers it claims violate WTO rules.

"Consultations, negotiations and litigation are among the tools at our disposal, and we are using all of them aggressively to make sure that Americans are treated fairly," acting US Trade Representative Peter Allgeier said.

The report has been prepared annually for 20 years under legislation Congress first passed in 1974 to require the executive branch to give an accounting of which countries were erecting the most harmful barriers to US exports.

Nike's 15-year name dispute resolved by Spain's Supreme Court

06 April 2005

The Spanish Supreme Court has passed a judgment in favour of Nike, after the Constitutional Court reversed a 1999 ruling banning Nike from the use of its name for apparel in Spain. This means that Nike can now use its name for apparel in Spain, as it has been doing in the rest of the world.

The Supreme Court has therefore confirmed the Barcelona High Court ruling of 1995, which was first repealed by the Supreme Court in 1999, then referred to the Constitutional Court and finally returned to the Supreme Court a year ago.

The High Court considers that, in effect, the trademark Cidesport (a combined trademark composed of a predominant figure of the Goddess Samothracia over the word "Nike"), must be cancelled from the registry due to "lack of real and effective use" and because its use led to confusion amongst consumers about the business origin of Nike's apparel.

Nike's trademark rights for apparel in Spain are thus re-established although they have always been acknowledged by other entities and Spanish and European Courts, such as the Oficina de Patentes y Marcas Española (Spanish Trademark Office), the OHIM (Office of the European Union Trade Marks), as well as by the First Instance Court and the Appeal Court of Barcelona.

Soledad Rodriguez, General Secretary of ANDEMA (Spanish National Association of Trade Mark Defence), which is dependent on the Spanish Chamber of Commerce, said "It is a very positive ruling and it is very important because it will improve on the necessary protection of renowned trademarks in our country and will prevent consumer confusion in the origin of products."

Fabrice Ducceschi, Nike's General Manager in Spain, believes the judgment will provide transparency in the market place and guarantee the real business origin of the Nike apparel products in Spain to consumers and sporting goods retailers.

AATCC to hold introduction to Textile Testing Workshop

07 April 2005

AATCC is conducting a training programme on the fundamentals of textile testing at its Technical Center in Research Triangle Park, N.C. on July 20-21. The programme will consist of demonstrations and discussions of approximately 30 AATCC procedures for evaluating colourfastness and physical properties.

The colourfastness tests that will be discussed include crocking, light, washing, and perspiration. Tests for evaluating physical properties include dimensional change (home laundering and accelerated methods), skewness, soil release, water repellency and resistance, appearance retention, and UV radiation blocked or transmitted by fabrics. Emphasis will be placed on how to properly conduct and interpret the tests.

The workshop is an intensive overview of the majority of tests needed to operate a textile laboratory. It is

designed for those responsible for product evaluation, specifications, and quality control of fibres, yarns, fabrics, garments, and carpets.AATC, which is headquartered in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, USA, specialises in education, technology transfer, and test method development for the textile design and wet processing industry.

New board appointment at Wolverine

07 April 2005

Wolverine World Wide, Inc., producers and marketers of active lifestyle, work, outdoor, sport and uniform footwear, has appointed Shirley D. Peterson to the company's Board of Directors.

Peterson, age 63, joins the Wolverine board having served as president of Hood College of Frederick, Maryland, and as a partner and head of tax practice at Steptoe & Johnson of Washington, D.C. She has also served as Commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service and as Assistant Attorney General of the Tax Division for the US Department of Justice.

Mrs Peterson is also a director of AK Steel Corp., Champion Enterprises, Federal-Mogul Corp., Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co., and she serves as an independent trustee for Scudder Mutual Funds.

US Dockers president takes sabbatical

08 April 2005

Levi Strauss & Co. has announced that Bobbi Silten, president of the US Dockers brand, has decided to take a six-month sabbatical, starting in June of 2005. The company has an external search under way for a new brand president.

"For several months I have been considering taking a substantial period of time off from work for personal renewal and development," said US Dockers president Bobbi Silten. "I have decided that the time is right for me to do this now. The US Dockers brand is off to a good start in 2005, with preliminary indications of a solid first quarter. We also have action plans in place, including strong product and marketing programmes for 2005, to continue to revitalise this great brand."

Silten has been with the company for 10 years. She joined in 1995 as the director of marketing for the brand after working with the company for several years through its marketing agency. Since that time, she has held increasingly responsible positions in marketing, merchandising and management, culminating in her current role.

Li & Fung appoints new VP at Royal Velvet

08 April 2005

Li & Fung USA, a subsidiary of Hong Kong-based premier global sourcing group Li & Fung Ltd., has named Robert P. Fleischer as vice president of Merchandising for the Royal Velvet brand. Mr. Fleischer will report to Lou Casali, who oversees the Royal Velvet team as senior vice-president and general manager of Li & Fung USA.

Mr. Fleischer will manage product development, merchandising and sourcing for the Royal Velvet brand. Additionally, he will work with Li & Fung's global offices to find and develop product and new manufacturing partners.

Quiksilver acquires Australia’s Surfection

08 April 2005

Designer, producer and distributor of boardriding clothing and accessories, Quiksilver, has announced the acquisition of Australian retail group, Surfection, which will join Quiksilver's more than 240 Boardriders Club stores throughout the world. The acquisition is part of Quiksilver's current retail growth strategy in the Asia Pacific region, opening Boardriders Club stores in Japan, China and South East Asia.

Chris Athas, owner of the Surfection Group, will take on an executive role at Quiksilver as retail director for Asia Pacific, where he will work directly with president of Quiksilver Asia Pacific Clive Fitts.

Surfection has been operating for nearly 20 years and owns seven Surfection surf shops and five Quiksilver/Roxy concept stores, or Boardriders Clubs, throughout New South Wales. The deal comprises the purchase of five key Surfection stores and the five Quiksilver/Roxy concept stores. The Surfection stores will all be gradually converted to Quiksilver Boardriders Clubs.

Hewitt Manufacturing merges with Fordham

08 April 2005

Hewitt Manufacturing, a manufacturer of athletic and specialty jackets and chenille, has agreed to merge with Fordham, Inc., a subsidiary of Redi-Direct Marketing, provider of technology-based sales and marketing systems.

Fordham produces US athletic and awards jackets, banners and chenille emblems for sports teams, service organisations such as police and

fire departments, sporting goods stores and businesses.

Under the terms of the merger, Hewitt, will operate as a division of Fordham, and will continue to produce its products for domestic and export markets.

"The companies have some excellent synergies and Hewitt both strengthens the domestic base of business and expands upon the international accounts. We welcome them to the Redi-Direct Family of Companies," commented James Lombard, president of Fordham, Inc.

VF Corporation adopts Paxar RFID solution

08 April 2005

Apparel producer VF Corporation, has chosen Paxar's Monarch RFID printer/encoders and smart labels for use by its Imagewear division. Paxar Corporation provides merchandising systems, bar code, RFID and identification technologies for apparel customers and the retail supply chain.

"We performed extensive testing of RFID equipment and labels before choosing Paxar's products for the Imagewear division," said Jim Jackson, VF's director, vendor relationship management. "The labels provided by Paxar, and run through Paxar's Monarch printer/encoder, have been virtually 100% readable. Paxar's extensive experience in the retail market, the extremely high read rates we've seen, and the fact that Paxar ensures 100% satisfaction, gives VF the peace of mind that the solution we've chosen is in compliance with the requirements of our major retailer partners, and will help keep our implementation costs low."

Scottish textile industry receives funding

08 April 2005

The Board of Scottish Enterprise Borders has approved funding in principle of £443,000 towards the operating plan of Scottish Textiles for the coming year.

The Scottish Textiles team, part of Scottish Enterprise, is dedicated to delivering a range of initiatives specifically for textiles businesses across Scotland. These aim to assist the sustainable development of the Scottish textiles industry and the growth of the industry.

As an important contributor to Scotland’s economy, the textiles sector has an annual turnover of £1.4 billion, with over 500 companies, employing 22,000 people. The industry contributes £483 million in annual exports. The industry encompasses the fashion sectors of weaving, knitwear and apparel, and the technical sector with end markets in medical, environmental and industrial applications.

Hohenstein Institutes work with TTRI

08 April 2005

The Hohenstein Institutes in Bönnigheim, Germany, has been working with the Taipei-based Taiwanese textile research institute TTRI, rounding off the scientists’ ties with the Far East. The research they will be carrying out with TTRI will cover new fibres and the functionalisation of the entire textile material.

Although still in early stages of development, an extensive range of services will also be offered to the Taiwanese industry, which will include providing textile manufacturers and laundries with intensive support for future market development, building on the longstanding experience of the Hohenstein specialists in this area. In return, the Hohenstein Institutes will benefit from the experiences of the TTRI in the Chinese market, which has gained increasing importance at an international level since the start of 2005.

The TTRI covers the entire textile manufacturing chain from spinning to the sales of the textiles. It employs a workforce of over 200 and is associated with the Chinese speaking part of Asia as well as USA and Europe.

Eschler holds firmly to European location

08 April 2005

Christian Eschler AG, specialists in the development of innovative knits for active sportswear, work and corporate wear as well as for technical textiles, has made up for the stagnating turnover it has suffered in Europe over the past year thanks to the corresponding growth of Thaiknit. The turnover in 2004 totalled roughly 45 million Swiss francs, with 550 tons of yarn being processed in the two Swiss companies alone.

Now the company, which has headquarters in Bühler/CH and other manufacturing locations in Münchwilen/CH and Thailand, as well as Eschler Textil GmbH in Balingen/D which also belongs to the group, plans to strengthen the importance of its locations in Switzerland and Germany through well-directed construction and expansion of new markets, thereby assuring the turnover medium-term.

Eschler puts the recent success down to its market-driven research and development and the high degree of specialisation which has been the result of total manufacturing control and vertical production.

Peter Eschler, chairman of the management, said: “With the decision to build up a modern production for basic materials for embroidery in Thailand we set the course for further development of our company. But, we will continue to hold firmly to the location in Europe.”

Peacock Bros release Weber’s RFID Smart Label Printer-Applicator

08 April 2005

Peacock Bros. has just released Weber’s latest RFID Smart Label Printer-Applicator into Australia with its unique Smart Tag Pre-Apply Reject feature. The Weber 5200RFID label printer/applicator prints labels, encodes RFID smart tags, verifies the tags encoding before it applies the RFID label, all in one integrated process.

The company says the system will provide businesses with high-quality smart labelling that will meet and exceed the RFID supply chain requirements of major retailers and government agencies, and ensure high speed, precise label printing and application. Special retrofit kits can also be provided that will enable present 5200 users to upgrade their existing units into RFID smart tag capable encoder/applicators.

The 5200RFID model offers a selection of direct thermal and thermal transfer print-encode engines that can produce smart labels imprinted with text, barcode and graphics at 203dpi or 300dpi. The labels can be as large as 127mm wide and 152mm long dispensed and applied at a rate of over 300mm per second.

The unique Pre-Apply Reject feature encodes and verifies the smart tag prior to applying to the product. If the smart tag cannot be verified as accurate then the label is rejected and replaced with another label prior to applying, ensuring that all of the labels applied to your products have a fully functioning smart tag included. This method does not alter the print engine operation or media handling speeds, yet collects and counts the rejected labels for examination and disposal at the end of the day.

Mr. Neil Crump Managing Director of Peacock Bros. commented, “The introduction of RFID encoder upgrade kits will represent a saving of thousands of dollars to every Australian company currently using the 5200 printer/applicator when upgrading to RFID enabled labelling systems. Another critical factor is that the encoders will be pre-compliant with EANs smart tag standards commencing January 1, 2005.”

Nike reveals plans for grind sports complex and RUNTO race in Toronto

08 April 2005

Nike Canada has announced its plans to build a $500,000, state-of-the-art soccer, basketball and track complex made out of recycled shoe material (Nike Grind) through its Reuse-A-Shoe Program that is now coming to Toronto. At the same time Nike Canada has revealed details of the forthcoming RUNTO race in the city that is to attract over 10,000 Torontonians.

The sport complex will be raised in partnership with the City of Toronto and will require the city’s residents to donate their previously worn shoes essential to the surface of what will become the largest Nike Grind facility in the world. Canadian Olympian Perdita Felicien made the first donation with a pair of shoes she wore while training and other Toronto-based personalities and celebrities followed.

"With help from Torontonians, our goal is to have 50,000 pairs of athletic shoes - the approximate equivalent to the amount it will take to build a state-of-the-art sports complex in the GTA. So come 'on Toronto, clean out that closet, bring in those smelly sneakers, and make a difference in your community," said Derek Kent, Head of Corporate Communications, Nike Canada. Nike will also contribute nearly $500,000 on behalf of the RUNTO participants to develop this sporting complex.

RUNTO, scheduled for May 29, is expected to be Ontario's largest attended single distance run of the year and will tap into the friendly rivalries that already exist in the close to 140 neighbourhoods in the GTA to engage people to run and spend time outside. The 10km race will take place on Centre Island.

Six Torontonians were selected among nearly 300 applicants for the job of "Nike Running Rival" who represent the different communities on the day and inspire the people in their neighbourhoods to participate in the race and in the associated events.

In 2003, RUNTO attracted more than 7,500 participants. From initial sign-up to race day participants are engaged through weekly training runs that provide musical entertainment, food and beverages, expert trainers, massages as well as

occasional opportunities to train alongside Nike Athletes.

US textile industry urges government to re-impose quotas

08 April 2005

The US textile and clothing industry has requested the Bush administration to bring back quotas on 14 categories of clothing to protect American manufacturers from a flood of Chinese imports. This comes only a few days after the US government announced its plans to re-instate quotas on several products imported form China. The goods listed by the industry include: cotton and man-made fibre non-knit shirts, man-made fibre knit shirts, cotton and man-made fibre sweaters, cotton and man-made fibre brassieres, cotton and man-made fibre dressing gowns, other synthetic filament fabrics and man-made fibre trousers.

Whilst the industry welcomes the steps the government is taking to protect home clothing and textiles, it believes the measures are not far-reaching enough to make a real impact on retaining jobs and businesses.

Sulzer Textile to showcase new machinery at Shanghaitex

08 April 2005

Sultex Limited will present its latest technical innovations on projectile and rapier weaving machines at Shanghaitex, June 3-7.

For the first time on display in China will be the Sulzer Textil P7300HP, representing the newest generation of projectile weaving machine. This machine features a performance increase of up to 20% versus previous models. However, thanks to optimised motion sequences and direct projectile acceleration, the weft acceleration speed could be kept at the same low levels, resulting in a minimum number of weft stops. With its open, modular design concept, the P7300HP has many expansion options, making it a safe, long-term investment, proved by the overwhelming success of this machine since its market introduction.

At Shanghaitex, a dense belt fabric made of 1100 dtex polyester in warp direction and a 4-fold weft insertion of 4 times a 500 dtex polypropylene monofil in weft direction, demonstrates the possibilities of this new development.

Less than one year after the first presentation at the open house in Rüti (Switzerland), a substantial number of installed Sulzer Textil G6500 rapier weaving machines are setting standards in weaving. From the very beginning, the Sulzer Textil G6500 was developed to satisfy the requirements of premium fabric quality, high performance and low production cost. In order to meet these demands, the machine was built around the core of every weaving machine: the shed geometry and the weft insertion.

Rhino Garments factory to close in Namibia

08 April 2005

The Namibia Food and Allied Workers' Union (NAFAU) has confirmed long-term speculations regarding the closure of the Rhino Garments. The Windhoek-based facility will officially stop production at the end of April, making over 1,600 workers redundant.

The company attributes the decision to a shortage of buyers interested in the products and to problems resulting from negative publicity generated by NAFAU and the International Textile Garments and Leather Workers Union (ITGLWF). The two deny being involved in a "boycott" of the company's products but stress they have criticised poor labour conditions at the factory.

Ramatex, the owner of the Rhino Garments and Thai Wah Textiles subsidiaries, employs approximately 6,000 people. It invested $150 million in Namibia's textile sector and started operations in 2002, with the aim of capitalising on preferential access to US markets.

Steven Madden advertises namesake's return from prison

09 April 2005

US footwear manufacturer Steven Madden is celebrating its founder's release from prison through a series of eye-catching posters and print advertisements. Steven Madden has been serving a 41-month prison sentence for a stock fraud scheme.

A new print ad campaign has been launched in consumer and trade magazines, newspapers and also appears on buses in Manhattan. There are different versions of the advertisements but one features an empty pair of shoes with the words "There's one pair of shoes that's been impossible to fill. Steve returns Spring 2005."

Monsanto acquires Emergent Genetics' cotton business

10 April 2005

Monsanto, a global provider of seeds, technology and agricultural products designed to improve farm productivity and food quality, has announced that it has completed the acquisition of Emergent Genetics' cotton business.

Emergent will be integrated into Monsanto's existing commercial operations. It will give Monsanto a branded cotton seed presence that complements its germplasm development and licensing in its Cotton States business, forming a branded and licensed seed platform for cotton that mirrors the business model Monsanto has established in its corn and soybean businesses.

Through its Stoneville and NexGen brands, Emergent Genetics, Inc. is the third largest cotton seed company in the USA, holding approximately 12% of the US cotton seed market.