Business Week
03 July - 09 July 06

Market for biocides declines

03 July 2006

According to a recently completed market study by business analysts Kline & Company, enterprises from China and India have been flooding the market with generic biocide products, driving prices down, suppressing profitability, and generally adding to the pressure already being felt by Western suppliers.

The least affected sectors in both the Western European and US markets is the plastics and resins end-use segment, particularly for silver-based biocides, which are more environmentally friendly, protect the integrity of plastics, and offer antimicrobial protection.

European sales of biocidal actives to the plastics and resins market are expected to grow by almost 5% over the next five years, with silver-based actives growing 10% annually. In the US, silver-based biocides used for plastics and resins are set to grow by 25% in the same time frame, albeit from a very small base.

At the other end of the spectrum, the leather tanning market for biocides is in a downward spiral, with much of the market now dominated by offshore suppliers in China and India.

Those that remain are diversifying their product lines to offer formulated biocidal products, as opposed to single active ingredients, in order to provide value-added products.

La Quinta and Biofarmitalia launch fabric that interacts with the body

03 July 2006

International consulting network for the fashion and design sector La Quinta and Biofarmitalia, an Italian company that carries out research in the molecular nanotechnology field, have signed an agreement to market what is said to be the first patented molecular engineering product in the fashion and textile sector with chemical and physical characteristics which are beneficial to the body.

Manufactured using Sensitive—a fabric patented by Eurojersey and made of Meryl microfibre with a high percentage of Lycra—this new product is based on silver ions and is said to be capable of activating beneficial chemical reactions for the body, such as antimycotic and antifermentative actions as well as thermoregulatory and moisture control properties.

The new product is the result of five years of research in the Biofarmitalia laboratories—the latter phase of which was carried out in the Polaris Science and Technology Park in Sardinia—and has led to the development of an exclusive synthesis of nano-compounds, based on mesoscopic silver molecules, a metal with beneficial chemical and physical properties.

What is said to make the technology, patented by Biofarmitalia, unique is the stability of the beneficial properties of the fabric over time and with wear, as a result of the combination of the compound and Sensitive.

The new product has been registered as a class 1 medical device with the Health Ministry.

Prince O3 technology wins 2006 IDEA award

03 July 2006

US-based designer of raquets and sports footwear Prince Sports, Inc., has won the Bronze Award in the consumer products category at the Industrial Design Excellence Award (IDEA) Awards for its racquet technology.

Decisions were based upon design innovation, benefit to the user, benefit to the business, ecological responsibility and aesthetics and appeal.

The IDEA competition is sponsored by BusinessWeek and the Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA).

By expanding the ordinary pin-sized string holes into giant ‘O-Ports’, Prince’s O3 technology is said to have increased the sweet spot by up to 54%, allowing players to hit more consistent shots from more places on the racquet, more often. This has been achieved without enlarging the racquet head, increasing its length, or adding weight.

BASF to increase prices of acrylic monomers

03 July 2006

BASF will increase its prices for acrylic acid and acrylic esters (glacial acrylic acid; methyl acrylate, ethyl acrylate, n-butyl acrylate, 2-ethyl hexyl acrylate), as far as existing contracts permit. This is the company’s reaction to increasing raw material and energy costs.

The increase was effective July 1 in NAFTA (6 cts/lb),

Europe/Africa/Middle East (€50 to €90 per metric ton) and South America ($80 per metric ton). In Asia, BASF already announced a price increase by $80 per metric ton effective June 21.

Acrylic acid is the main precursor in the production of superabsorbent polymers, materials which absorb many times their own weight in liquid. They are used in a wide variety of products including the manufacture of polymer dispersions contained as a functional component in adhesives, fibre binders and coatings.

Solestrom launches UV Monitoring Smart Fabric bikinis and Solar Charger beach accessories

03 July 2006

Canadian swimwear retailer Solestrom has released a new line of high-tech bikinis. Its SmartSwim UV Smart Bikini features a smart fabric UV meter which collects UV data though a smart fabric belt, and reports the index to the wearer. The electronic components are built into the removable belt, and can even be worn underwater.

The SmartSwim UV Index Detector Bikini has UV sensitive beads that change colour with the level of UV intensity. The reading gives more of a range rather than an accurate number, but is able to show whether the UV is low, moderate or high.

Trevira moves to new headquarters

03 July 2006

Textile polyester fibres and filament yarns company Trevira GmbH has transferred its headquarters to Bobingen, Bavaria, Germany. The process of concentrating finance and accounting at the site began in January and the board has now also transferred to the site.

The Hattersheim location, with Marketing and Sales/Distribution, will continue as a sales office.

CEO Jörg Hellwig said, “Bobingen is the parent plant of Trevira – it was here that Trevira fibres and filaments were first produced, and we still have the two product lines together in the one location.”

Creora to present new products at ispo

04 July 2006

Elastane brand Creora, developed by Korean company Hyosung Corporation, will be showing key new developments in sports apparel fabrics at ispo on July 16-18.

One of its new products is creora H-100D, a new black elastane which delivers a blacker black in garments and maintains the depth of colour. Created by the addition of black colouring in the phase of extrusion of the elastane, it is spun into the fibre to maintain the black colour longer. Creora H-100D ensures garments/fabrics deliver a luxurious black colour even when stretched by eliminating the grin-through effect. It also allows for creativity in the development of new styling and novelty effects such as stripes.

A further offering from Hyosung dedicated to sports is Creora H-450, a low heat settable spandex which is said to be ideal for heat-sensitive fabrics such as cotton, rayon, bamboo, wool and silk; and produces excellent results for swimwear and sportswear, especially with polypropylene. In the same group, Creora C-400 is steam settable and delivers whiter whites, a softer handle, reduced shrinkage and better ‘hanger appeal’ –which is well-suited to seamless performance garments and sport socks.

Hyosung will also present Creora H-350, an elastane engineered to be blended with polyester. High heat resistant Creora H-350 delivers improved wash fastness in blends with disperse dye polyester, and avoids loss of power retention when over dyed. It is also chlorine resistant.

Two additions to Eurojersey range at Interfilière

05 July 2006

Italian textile company Eurojersey has added two new items to its Sensitive Seric fabric range. These innovations, targeted at the world of swimwear and underwear, will be presented for the first time at Interfilière, September 2-4.

Sensitive Seric Plus is the latest addition to the range of silk-look fabrics for lingerie, with a lighter, cooler and more transparent appearance and feel. Weighing just 120 grams, the fabric has a high Lycra content, offering greater wearability.

Sensitive Swimwear Seric is a new development for the beachwear sector. It offers a selection of colours with glossy weaves that are said to capture the sun’s rays, evoking the appearance of silk.

Philip Preest retires from Edana

05 July 2006

Philip Preest has retired from nonwovens trade association Edana after 32 years of service. He started his career at Edana in 1974 and was promoted to executive manager and then marketing director.

Mr Preest has promoted member companies’ nonwovens

technologies and products at exhibitions all over the world and developed a wealth of promotional material, amongst which were Edana's first ever website and brochures.

BASF completes acquisition of Johnson Polymer

05 July 2006

German chemical company BASF has completed its acquisition of resins manufacturer Johnson Polymer. The relevant antitrust authorities have approved the transaction.

The acquisition includes Johnson Polymer's production sites in the United States and in the Netherlands, as well as technical centres and offices in Asia Pacific. It provides BASF with a range of water-based resins that complements its existing resins portfolio and will strengthen the company's market presence, in particular in North America. The former Johnson Polymer business, which employs a total staff of 430 worldwide, will become part of BASF's Performance Chemicals division.

Andreas Pohlmann to leave Celanese

05 July 2006

Executive vice president and chief administrative officer of Celanese Corporation Dr Andreas Pohlmann will leave the chemical company by mutually amicable consent at the end of the 2006. He will also resign as chairman of the management board of chemical manufacturer Celanese AG at that time.

Andreas Pohlmann has been a member of the global executive management team since the founding of Celanese Corporation and was named chairman of the management board of Celanese AG on November 1, 2004. His primary responsibility was the company's reorganisation in Germany which was completed at the end of May.

Acupressure sportswear line launched

05 July 2006

The New York College of Health Professions has received an exclusive license on a patented line of clothing and accessories that provide the benefits of acupressure to specific points when in contact with the body that can be self administrated by the wearer during sports activities.

Acupuncture and Acupressure have been used for thousands of years and are well known in traditional Chinese medicine. Both have been shown to produce chemicals in the body that allow a person to either relax or become energised.

The natural drug release is achieved by placing small seeds in appropriate areas in garments so that when the user presses on these points they are practicing the most basic technique of acupressure.

The college will be launching the clothing and accessories line under the brand name MyChi.

World union body warns of job loss

05 July 2006

New figures released today by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) to coincide with the re-launch of WTO talks in Geneva show the potentially devastating effect on employment that developing countries face from the current negotiations.

Remarks by Pascal Lamy that a coefficient of 20 would be an acceptable number to those involved in Non Agricultural Market Access negotiations were received with alarm by trade unionists worldwide, given the undeniably large number of job losses in which such a drastic cut would result.

The US and EU are arguing for a low coefficient of 15 or less for developing countries, which in effect would mean that some of the sectors that employ the highest number of people due to their labour-intensive nature are facing the prospect of tariff cuts of up to 75%.

The end of the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing meant that all the quotas in this sector were reduced to zero in January 2005.

Textiles and apparel would be the hardest hit again, with rubber and plastic products, furniture and auto sectors also faring badly. These sectors represent a high proportion of formal employment in developing countries and the cuts would inevitably lead to a large number of job cuts. Argentina would be asked to cut its bound tariffs on textiles and auto parts by 50% and 62% respectively and Morocco would have to reduce tariffs by 78% in the clothing and textiles sectors, which employ just under half of those in formal employment in the country.

Trevira invests in new texturising machines German textile producer

06 July 2006

Trevira GmbH has invested in a number of air-texturising machines at its Trevira Neckelmann plant in Silkeborg, Denmark. These are the latest generation machines, built for high quality and high flexibility to handle small lots and quick changes. They will be phased in gradually to replace the existing machinery.

It is hoped that the new machines will improve quality whilst reducing costs as a result of higher productivity and efficiency.

The project is scheduled for completion in early autumn.

TaylorMade-adidas Golf makes new appointment

06 July 2006

Golfing footwear and apparel firm TaylorMade-adidas Golf Company (TMaG) has appointed Ben Sharpe as vice president and managing director of TMaG Europe. Mr Sharpe most recently managed world-wide business affairs for golf knitwear company Lyle & Scott.

In his new role he will be based in TMaG's European headquarters in Basingstoke, England, and will report to TMaG's executive vice president John Kawaja.

Award winning nanotechnology

06 July 2006

Scientists at The University of Texas at Dallas (UTD) NanoTech Institute, together with an Australian collaborator have won two awards for their breakthroughs in fabricating carbon nanotube yarns and transparent nanotube sheets.

The UTD team, lead by Dr Ray Baughman, and an Australian colleague, Dr Ken Atkinson from Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation Textile and Fibre Technology, were awarded the NanoVic Prize.

The researchers successfully assembled trillions of carbon nanotubes into strong, tough, electronically and thermally conducting nanotube yarns and transparent nanotube sheets and demonstrated their utility for such diverse applications as electronic textiles, protective clothing, artificial muscles, supercapacitors and organic light-emitting displays.

Individual nanotubes have spectacular properties, including strengths ten times higher than commercial fibres or yarns, a thermal conductivity higher than diamond and a thousand-fold higher current-carrying capability than copper. The challenge has been in developing methods for correctly assembling billion-mile lengths of oriented individual nanotubes for every pound of fabricated yarn and sheet, and doing so at industrially usable rates.

The sheets and yarns are produced at up to 10 metres per minute by the coordinated rotation of a trillion nanotubes per minute for every centimetre of sheet width. By comparison, the production rate for commercial wool spinning is 20 metres per minute.

Cancellation of surcharge leads to cheaper textiles

06 July 2006

According to local media, the 13% surcharge imposed upon almost 3,000 items in the Dominican Republic has been removed. As a result, products such as clothing, textiles, furniture and footwear should fall in price by around 15-16%. However, the government will leave price revaluation to the discretion of local businesses, importers and manufacturers.

Zumiez posts net sales increase

07 July 2006

Specialty retailer of action sports related apparel, footwear, equipment and accessories Zumiez Inc. has recorded net sales of $21.2 million for the five-week period ended July 1.

This is an increase of 38.2% compared with $15.3 million for the corresponding five-week period in 2005. The company's comparable store sales increased 12.4% for the five-week period, compared with a 10.7% increase in the same period in 2005.

The company completed its acquisition of 19 Fast Forward stores on June 24 although they are not included in the company's comparable store base.

Execute Sports welcomes new CEO

07 July 2006

Todd Hahn has joined Californian action sports apparel, footwear and equipment company Execute Sports, Inc. as chief executive officer. Mr Hahn joins Execute Sports from action sports agency the Familie and has 16 years experience in the action sports industry.

JoS. A. Bank Clothiers enjoys 19.3% sales increase

07 July 2006

Casual wear, sportswear, footwear and apparel company JoS. A. Bank Clothiers, Inc. has posted its financial results for the month ended July 1. Sales increased by 19.3% to $47.7 million compared with $40 million in the comparable period the previous year. Comparable store sales increased 8.5% compared with fiscal June 2005, while combined catalogue and Internet sales increased 20.1%.

Total sales for the five month period ended July 1 increased 17.8% to $198 million compared with $168.1

million in the corresponding period in 2005. Comparable stores sales increased 6% in the five months ended July 1 while combined catalogue and Internet sales increased 19.5%.

Textile sector holding back industry growth

07 July 2006

Finance Minister Shri Chidambaram hosted an interactive session to discuss increasing industrial growth in India. Representatives from ASSCHAM, CII, FICCI and PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry participated and offered various suggestions.

According to revised estimates of the Central Statistical Organisation, real GDP growth in India accelerated from 7.5% in 2004-05 to 8.4% in 2005-06, with the services sector continuing to be the major driver of economic activity. An industrial growth rate of 8.7% was propelled by 9% growth in manufacturing activity. The manufacturing sector accounted for over 90% of the overall industrial sector growth
.
Industrial growth in the first four years of the Tenth Plan (2002-2006) averaged 7.3%. Key sectors driving this growth in the Tenth Plan included chemicals, machinery and equipments, transport and auto parts and apparel. Among sectors that performed poorly were textiles, leather and metal products.

Bob Kennedy joins Puma team

07 July 2006

American distance runner Bob Kennedy has joined the Puma running team as performance running advisor. In this role he will contribute to running category growth in all aspects including product, sales and marketing. Mr Kennedy, who retired from professional running this year, will work closely with the product and sales team, providing feedback on footwear, apparel and accessory styles.

Adidas boosts Pakistani football exports

07 July 2006

The adidas Group has imported a substantial numbers of football from Pakistan for FIFA 2006. The company outsourced football artistic features and logos for the World Cup match ball from three Pakistani manufactures, Capital Sports, Forward Sports and Sublime Sports of Sialkot city, a major centre for sporting goods.

However, adidas has released a public warning that all unauthorised manufacture or use of the company's logo and trademarks will be prosecuted.
During May, Pakistan exported footballs worth $30.71 million compared with $30.507 in April and $15.86 million in May 2005, showing a growth of 0.69% and 93.61% respectively.

The total export of Pakistan sporting goods stood at $42.45 million compared with $41.55 in April and $29.56 million in May 2005.

Pakistan exported footballs worth $213 million in the July - May 2005-06 versus $155.84 million in the corresponding period last year, a growth of 37%.

Celanese expands agreement with HSH Group

07 July 2006

The Emulsions & PVOH business of chemical company Celanese has expanded its agreement with Poland-based HSH Group so that Mowilith and Vinamul emulsions can be distributed into Central and Eastern Europe, including the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Ukraine.

Manager of European Distributors & Agents Bodo Ott said, "HSH conveys the value and performance of our Vinamul and Mowilith polymer emulsions to customers in a number of important applications, including paints, adhesives, nonwovens and more."

The Emulsions & PVOH business of Celanese aims to improve performance, create value and drive innovation in a range of industrial and consumer end-use applications including adhesives, coatings, engineered fabrics, glass fibres, paper and textiles.

Invista to build nylon 6,6 yarns plant in Shanghai

07 July 2006

Integrated fibres and polymers company Invista is to build a new manufacturing facility to produce high tenacity nylon 6,6 yarns in the Shanghai area, China. The new plant, with an annual capacity of 11 kilotons, is expected to commence construction later this year.

The facility will manufacture nylon 6,6 yarns for use in differentiated industrial textile applications, although its major focus is the automotive airbag industry.

The announcement follows expansions at the company's Kingston, Canada, facility of 5.5 kilotons in April this year and at its Gloucester, UK, site of 3.2 kilotons in January 2005.

Commercial production of the plant is scheduled for the first quarter of 2008.