

Plastics News

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Topas and MSM make progress on Barex replacements



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Topas Advanced Polymers

Topas Advanced Polymers says its cyclic olefin copolymer can fill the needs of medical industry suppliers who need a Barex replacement.

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Ineos Group in October 2014 announced it would end production of Barex polyacrylonitrile (PAN) resin at its only global plant in Lima, Ohio. Several producers have rushed to fill the void left by Barex, which was known as a high-performance material in pharmaceutical and food packaging films.

“We're pleased to announce that our industry-leading [cyclic olefin copolymer] is filling the needs of many health-care suppliers who seek a replacement for Barex materials,” Topas Advanced Polymers President Timothy Kneale said in a Nov. 18 news release. Topas is based in Frankfurt, Germany, and operates a North American sales office in Florence, Ky.

“PAN and COC come from the opposite ends of the polymer spectrum but they offer similar properties when it comes to barrier/permeation performance and strong chemical resistance,” Kneale added.

Topas officials added that their firm has been working closely with top packaging suppliers and “has specified COC in a wide range of pharmaceutical packages such as medicinal pouches and patches.” The pharmaceutical packaging industry is already familiar with COC through its use in semi-rigid and container applications, Kneale said.

Huhtamaki EX1016

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U.S. Patent No. 11,260,624

According to company officials, Topas COC is a key component in a broad range of global Barex replacement products from leading health care packaging companies such as Bemis Healthcare Packaging of Oshkosh, Wis.; Rollprint Packaging Products of Addison, Ill.; and the Tekni-Films division of Tekni-Plex Inc. of Wayne, Pa.

Topas operates a plant with almost 70 million pounds of annual capacity in Oberhausen, Germany. The firm was established in 2006 and is a joint venture between Japanese firms Daicel Chemical Industries Ltd. and Polyplastics Co. Ltd.



Not to be outdone in the race to replace Barex, newly formed MSM Poly LLC said on Nov. 16 that the firm expects to be producing and shipping sample amounts of acrylonitrile methyl acrylate copolymer (AMAC) latex to processors by the end of January.

MSM Poly “continues to rapidly move to satisfy demand for this polymer,” officials with the Wilmington, Del.-based firm said in a news release.

Shortly after Ineos announced its plans to end Barex, several Barex customers in the pharmaceutical packaging market contacted Montesino Associates LLC — a Wilmington-based consulting firm — about finding a replacement material.

Montesino Managing Director Peter Schmitt then contacted plastics industry veteran Patrick Mickle about finding a Barex replacement. Mickle founded medical custom extruder Kelcourt Plastics Inc. in 1982 and ran the San Clemente, Calif.-based firm until selling it to a private equity firm in 2010.

Mickle agreed that there was a continuing need for Barex — a decision that then led to the forming of MSM Poly. The AMAC material is being toll-produced for MSM Poly by Tiarco Chemical at a plant in Greenville, S.C.

In August, Ineos officials told Plastics News that the firm still was making Barex in Lima to fill customer orders, but that its plans to exit the business were unchanged.

In addition to the efforts of Topas and MSM Poly, packaging firms have been developing Barex replacement films.

Inline Play

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