

incorporated into polymers, stiffness, fire resistance and gas barrier properties can be enhanced at lower weight compared against using conventional fillers and reinforcement fibres. Major markets for nanocomposites include: automotive parts, electronic components, domestic appliances and office furniture.

High Performance Plastics, Mar 2003, 4 & European Rubber Journal, Apr 2003, 185 (4), 13 & Rubber and Plastics News, 21 Apr 2003, 32 (19), 5

LEGISLATION

EU reduces threshold for canthaxanthin in animal feeds

On 27 January 2003, the European Commission adopted a Directive with a view to reducing concentrations of canthaxanthin in animal feed. Canthaxanthin has no nutritional value and is only used to colour food, adding a reddish colour to salmon, egg yolks and poultry products. Scientific assessment has established a link between high canthaxanthin intake and eyesight problems. The current authorised level is 80 mg per kilo. This will be reduced to 25 mg per kilo for salmon and broiler hens and to 8 mg per kilo for laying hens. European fish and poultry farmers may decide to replace canthaxanthin by alternative products, such as astaxanthin and citranaxanthin.

Europe Environment, 7 Feb 2003, (627), IV.4 (Available from: Europe Information Service SA, Avenue Ad Lacombe 66, B-1030 Brussels, Belgium. Website: <http://www.eis.be>)

EU bans navy blue azo colorant

The European Commission has adopted a new Directive prohibiting the use of the azo colorant known as "navy blue." A risk assessment showed that substantial quantities of chromium compounds are released during the dyeing process, when "navy blue" is used. The ban comes into effect in EU member countries by 30 June 2004 at the latest.

Europe Environment, 10 Jan 2003, (625), I.18 (Available from: Europe Information Service SA, Avenue Ad Lacombe 66, B-1030 Bruxelles, Belgium. Website: <http://www.eis.be>)

TECHNOLOGY

BASF's wood colorant meets new German laws on copper content

BASF has introduced the first pigment preparation designed to fully meet the latest criteria specified in the German environmental legislation covering the recycling and disposal of used timber. In particular, the law now states that the copper content must be less than 20 mg per kilo (dry mass) for safe recycling or disposal. This limit cannot be attained with conventional wood colorants.

BASF's new product, *DispersGreen 87-2207*, has a low copper content and has been specifically designed for marking solid wood, particle-board and high-density fibre-board, as used in pallets, panels, partitions and similar products. *DispersGreen 87-2207* is very colour-intensive, easy to dose, heat-resistant and can be injected at high press temperatures.

Press release from: BASF Group. Website: <http://www.basf.de> (17 Feb 2003)

Cabot's new black masterbatch

Cabot has launched *Plasbak PE 4765* – a new black masterbatch with excellent dispersion properties. The product has a 45% carbon black loading and is compatible with most polyolefin resins, and provides a smooth surface finish. It is intended for packaging, adhesive surface protection, lamination and photographic film applications.

Revista de Plasticos Modernos, Mar 2003, 85 (561), 274 (in Spanish)

Ciba's electronic colour-matching

Ciba Specialty Chemicals has launched the *Colibri QuickMatch* system. This is an electronic colour-matching system, designed for highly accurate and consistent, tailor-made colorant recipe formulations. The system can be used for translucent, transparent or opaque colours. Ciba provides extensive software support and colorants expertise for *Colibri* customers.

Press release from: Ciba Specialty Chemicals, Basel, Switzerland. Website: <http://www.cibasc.com> (4 Feb 2003)

Dayglo's new colours for offset litho

Dayglo Color Corp has expanded its line of *Jazz* colours with new products carrying the code JZO. They have been designed for use in UV- and EB-offset and lithographic inks, providing clean, bright, fluorescent colour with the body and rheology requirements specified in litho applications.

Ink Maker, Apr 2003, 81 (3), 28

Shandong Lunbo's photoluminescent pigment based on rare earth

Shandong Lunbo Luminous Products Co Ltd is promoting a new photoluminescent pigment as a substitute for traditional luminescent pigments based on zinc sulfide. Shandong Lunbo's pigment is based on an activated rare earth material, which appears white in daylight conditions and emits a yellow-green or blue-green light in the darkness. The pigment offers the advantages of a short activation period, a long afterglow, and high brightness. It can be dispersed in plastics, paints, inks and glasses to produce luminous products.

China Chemical Reporter, 16 Jan 2003, 14 (2), 12

Viba's masterbatches for synthetic raffia based on polyolefins

Viba (of Italy) has launched a new range of masterbatches for the synthetic raffia market. Its *Vibatan PE White 12485* has been designed for use in making polyolefin raffia. Viba's new masterbatch contains 70% rutile TiO₂, offers good lightfastness and is non-abrasive. *Vibatan HDPE UV Master 02481* is designed for use in high-density polyethylene (HDPE) products. *Vibatan PP UV Master 02343* was developed to offer high ultraviolet stabilisation in food-contact synthetic raffia products. *Vibatan PE Repellent 02323* incorporates non-toxic ingredients, but is very effective at deterring rodents from attacking synthetic raffia bags. The masterbatch releases a bitter taste when nibbled but it does not affect the technical performance or cause any odour to the end product.

Plastics Additives and Compounding, Mar-Apr 2003, 5 (2), 16