

Plans under way for detergent conference

Organizers of the Second World Conference on Detergents: Looking Toward the 90s, scheduled for Oct. 5-10, 1986, in Montreux, Switzerland, plan to announce the tentative technical program in May.

Conference chairman T. P. Matson of Vista Chemical Co. and cochairman A. de Jong of Unilever N.V. met with the organizing committee during the recent annual meeting of The Soap and Detergent Association (U.S.) to complete selection of speakers and timing of the technical program.

The conference is designed to offer a detailed update of the technical, economics, legislative and commercial trends in the detergent industry and to look to the future of the industry.

Session topics include world trends, raw materials, laundry equipment/textiles, laundry detergents, nonlaundry products, builder systems, special functions, processing/packaging, and research and the consumer.

Discussion sessions will be held immediately following each plenary

session, permitting registrants to ask speakers for additional information or to comment on what has been said. There also will be ample opportunity for informal conversations among registrants at a series of social events and coffee breaks.

An accompanying exposition will provide the opportunity to view the latest equipment, supplies and services available from industry suppliers.

The first World Conference on Soaps and Detergents was held in Montreux in 1977. Since that meeting there have been numerous developments in the detergent industry, including increased international business agreements. Formulation economics have changed in the U.S. and Europe as energy conservation has taken hold. Dr. de Jong told an SDA audience several years ago that whereas more than 50% of home laundry loads used water near a boiling temperature in 1974, less than 10 years later less than 20% of home laundering was at that high a temperature. Whereas

Americans tend to wash apparel items after each use, the habit in Europe has been to wash apparel when it gets dirty—but Europeans are moving toward the American pattern because of more convenient appliances, cleaning products and textiles as well as rising standards of hygiene. More concentrated powders and liquid laundry detergents are sold in the U.S. than before; there is increased use of enzyme additives; home laundry products containing bleach are expected to be introduced soon in the United States, but are common in Europe; generic marketing was relatively new in 1977, but now is a mature marketing technique; environmental regulations have changed and increased—including control of introduction of new chemical substances.

Simultaneous translations in English, French and German will be provided for the plenary sessions. A conference proceedings will be published.

Persons who wish to receive registration materials when they are available should notify: Meetings Manager, AOCS, 508 S. Sixth St., Champaign, IL 61820 USA. Firms interested in participating in the exposition should contact J. Patrick Graham at the same address.

Surfactants in oilfields

Research at the University of Texas at Austin has resulted in improved surfactants for use in enhanced oil recovery.

"Our program was to restructure surfactants to be more effective for oil recovery," R. S. Schechter, professor of chemical engineering and petroleum engineering, said. Schechter and William Wade, a chemistry professor at the University of Texas, headed the five-year petroleum research project funded by the U.S. Department of Energy and 20 private companies.

Conventional oilfield techniques include flooding the underground reservoir with water to force more oil to production wells. The addition of surfactants helps disperse the oil as tiny globules, making them easier to push through the pores of

the underground rock. The Texas researchers focused on ways of rearranging the surfactant molecule to make it more efficient in freeing oil left clinging to the reservoir rocks. Some of the structures studied by the team now are commercially available, Schechter said.

Findings of the research are summarized in a report, "Tertiary Oil Recovery Processes, Research at the University of Texas," available as Report DE 85000139 from the National Technical Information Service, Department of Commerce, 5285 Port Royal Rd., Springfield, VA 22161 (telephone 703-487-4600) for \$16.95 plus \$3 handling charge. Copies also can be obtained by writing to Professor R. S. Schechter, Department of Chemical En-

gineering, University of Texas, Austin, TX 78712.

According to Schechter, work on surfactants for enhanced oil recovery continues at the University of Texas, through a new funding contract.

Limited growth for lubricants

Special applications such as industrial presses and supercharged turbo-engine cars will shore up sales of synthetic lubricants in Europe, although growth will be limited because of price, according to a report, "Synthetic Lubricant Market in the EEC," published by Frost & Sullivan of New York.

The marketing study also predicted that environmental concerns may brighten prospects for bio-

degradable synthetics, adding, "We already are seeking the replacement of mineral oil lubricants in motor-boat engines, ski-lift equipment and dredgers."

The study cautions that the 6% increase seen in 1985 will taper off to 5% growth in 1986 and 4% in 1989. West Germany is predicted to lead other countries both in use and rate of increase in synthetic lubricant use. Frost & Sullivan said West Germany will represent about 29% of the market in value, followed by France and Italy, each of which will account for more than one-fifth of EEC consumption through 1989. The report said polyglycols are the most prevalent of the synthetic lubricants. Also discussed are usage of polyalphaolefins, dibasic acid esters, polyisobutylene, phosphate esters and alkylbenzenes.

For more information on the report, contact Frost & Sullivan Inc., 106 Fulton St., New York, NY 10038.

Joint venture

Oleofina S.A. of Brussels, Belgium, and Palmco Holdings of Berhad Penang, Malaysia, have formed a joint venture company, Oleochem Sdn. Bhd., to develop the market for Oleofina's fatty nitrogen chemicals, fatty esters, food emulsifiers and metallic stearates in Southeast and East Asia. According to the two companies, the world market for these oleochemical derivatives is estimated at 800,000 metric tons, most of which is consumed by the

developed markets of the United States, Europe and Japan.

The products represent a range of specialty chemicals used in cosmetics, detergents, anticaking of fertilizers, roadmaking, water treatment, plastics, corrosion inhibition, food and feed.

Oleofina, an affiliate of the Petrofina Group, is a leader in the European oleochemical market. Palmco, via its subsidiary Acidchem, is an Asian producer of basic oleochemicals, fatty acids and glycerine.

Soaps in space

How well toiletries travel was of interest to space shuttle astronauts during Columbia's January flight. Astronauts exposed 10 Procter & Gamble products to laser beams and cosmic radiation to see what happens to the structure of common items like Ivory soap and Head & Shoulders shampoo in space.

One of the developers of the medical experiments, Dr. Leon Goldman of the University of Cincinnati, said he was uncertain of the impact of weightlessness and radiation, but did not expect major changes in the products. The dermatologist said he is particularly interested in the results from tests on topical medications and fungicides. P&G and other companies which supplied experimental materials to the astronauts still must do follow-up work to determine how well products used on earth will hold up in space.

Oops!

The December 1985 *JAACS* erred in saying comet watcher Edmund Halley and Sir Isaac Newton met in 1864. Both died more than a century before 1864. The two met in November 1684 at Trinity College, Cambridge. It was then that Halley convinced the somewhat reluctant Newton to write *Principia*, a scientific classic. Donald Kinsman of Emery Chemicals was the first to call *JAACS*' attention to the transposition, noting that if the meeting took place in 1864, the two scientists met in either heaven or hell to discuss a revised edition.

News briefs

Nobel Industries Sweden has purchased the Swedish chemical company Eka AB from Iggesund Bruk. The business transaction was valued at 75 million U.S. dollars. The purchase is seen by Nobel Industries Sweden as strengthening its position in the area of chemicals for the pulp and paper industry as well as in the detergent industry. Eka has been Europe's leading supplier of metasilicate. Eka has been renamed Eka Nobel AB.

Stepan Co. has promoted Steven T. Ginn and Robert M. Bohnsak to the position of surfactant sales representative. Ginn will be responsible for the Midwest region while Bohnsak is assigned to the Greater New York City area.

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