Alkylate demand

Worldwide demand for detergent alkylate will grow from 1.8 million metric tons (MT) in 1986 to 2.6 million MT by the year 2000, according to a study by Colin A. Houston & Associates. Almost all detergent alkylate is converted to surfactants via sulfonation. Over 85% of these surfactants are used in household cleaning products, primarily laundry detergents.

Rapid growth in the use of synthetic detergents in large developing countries such as India and China is fueling strong growth in the demand for linear alkylbenzene (LAB), the world's leading surfactant intermediate, the study reported. By contrast, only moderate growth for LAB is anticipated in the mature North American and West European markets.

The report noted that branch alkylbenzene (BAB) consumption will continue to decline due to its poor biodegradability. BAB was replaced by LAB in household detergents over 25 years ago in the U.S. and West Europe, but other regions have only recently begun to switch to LAB. Latin America is the only region where BAB consumption is anticipated to increase during the next decade.

"The most important development for current LAB producers is the rapid increase in new LAB plants in Third World and East Bloc countries," according to Marilyn Bradshaw, project leader for the study. "These countries traditionally have been important export markets, especially for West Europe."

The study predicts that by the year 2000, the regions other than North America and West Europe will consume 800,000 tons more LAB than they did in 1986, with most of it produced locally.

In North America, Vista and Monsanto are the only LAB producers. Plant expansions announced by both companies will raise total capacity by nearly 70,000 tons by 1989.

The report noted that the unexpected success of heavy-duty laundry liquids in major West European markets in 1987 and 1988 has spurred the development of more soluble types of LAB. In the United Kingdom, liquids are reported to have over 20% of the heavy-duty detergent market, and could easily reach the same levels in France and West Germany by 1995. Market gains by heavy-duty liquids are expected to be slower in other West European countries.

In the U.S., liquids are estimated to account for 30% of the heavy-duty detergent market in 1988 and are expected to gain shares.

In less-developed countries, synthetic detergent powders are replacing the use of soap. Average growth rates expected for detergents over the next decade vary from 3–4% in some Latin American and African countries, to 8–10% in China and India.

New facilities

UOP Inc. has been selected as licensor for a new complex to manufacture biodegradable linear alkylbenzene (LAB) detergent intermediates in Skikda, Algeria. The new facility is being placed onstream by Enterprise Nationale de la Petrochemie (ENIP) and will have the capacity to produce 50,000 tons of LAB per year.

Meanwhile, Lurgi GmbH of West Germany has received a contract to build a sodium sulfate crystallization plant for Minera de Santa Marta near Burgos, Spain. The contract includes a turnkey plant, with start-up scheduled for mid-1989.

The raw material to be used at the plant will be glauberite obtained from local deposits. The resulting sodium sulfate will be used in the pulp, paper, detergent and glass industries. The plant will be designed to produce 100,000 tons of sodium sulfate per year.

Corrosion talks

The Corrosion Committee of the Federation of Societies for Coatings Technology (FSCT) will sponsor a symposium on "New Approaches to Corrosion Evaluation" at the 1989 FSCT annual meeting, to be held in conjunction with the Paint Industries' Show Nov. 8–10, 1989, at the Rivergate Exhibition & Convention Center, New Orleans, Louisiana.

Subjects to be covered in the symposium will relate primarily to statistical design, accelerated methods of conducting or evaluating corrosion studies and statistical analysis of results. Original papers are invited from coatings manufacturers, raw material suppliers, end users, test equipment suppliers, government agencies, university researchers and consultants.

For more information, contact Jay Austin, Corrosion Committee Chairman, Federation of Societies for Coatings Technology, 1315 Walnut St., Suite 832, Philadelphia, PA 19107.

FSCT officers

John C. Ballard, vice president of research for Kurfees Coatings Inc., has been nominated for the position of president-elect of the Federation of Societies for Coatings Technology. Nominated for treasurer is Kurt F. Weitz, manager of technical support for Indusmin, Division of Falconbridge Ltd.

Current president-elect, James E. Geiger, founder and president of Sun Coatings Inc., will assume the presidency of FSCT at the close of its 1988 annual meeting on Oct. 21, 1988, in Chicago, Illinois. Geiger also is president of Chemex Chemicals & Coatings Co. Inc. and president and chairman of the board of Penn Paints Inc.

Other nominations include two society representative members—Thomas E. Hill of Pratt & Lambert Inc. and Richard M. Hille of General Paint & Chemical Co.; past-president member of the board of directors, John J. Oates, who is retired from Troy Chemical Corp.; and two members-at-large on the board of directors—George R. Pilcher of Hanna Chemical Coatings Corp. and Patricia Shaw of Davlin Paint Co.