

# Industry developments top SDA agenda

The use of alpha sulfo methyl laurates as an alternative to ethylene in surfactants and the safety of linear alkylbenzene sulfonate (LAS) in the environment led the topics discussed in technical sessions at The Soap and Detergent Association's 62nd annual meeting and industry convention held in Boca Raton, Florida, in late January.

Norman R. Smith, vice president of product development for Stepan Co., noted that although alpha sulfo methyl laurates (ASML) are not a new class of surfactants, they can be considered a new alternative to ethylene for the detergent industry. Citing the tightness of ethylene supply, he said ASML is derived from oleochemicals and is independent of ethylene-based raw materials.

Stepan uses an air/SO<sub>3</sub> process to produce ASML as a consistent product for the surfactant industry, Smith said, adding that ASML is extremely mild, is biodegradable and has a good safety profile. The product performs as a surface tension reduction agent much like ether sulfate or LAS.

In experiments at various water hardnesses, Stepan found the ASML product performs well except in low water hardness. To eliminate this problem, he said, the company tried a number of blends, including a blend of ASML/LAS with an alcohol ethoxylate. "The ratio of 1:1:1, ASML/LAS/alcohol ethoxylate, looks to be the best ratio among those tested over a multitude of soils and swatches," Smith said.

Smith noted that Stepan also experimented with substituting ASML for ether sulfate in conventional heavy-duty liquid, both at 140 and 400 parts per million (ppm) hardness. "Under these conditions, with preliminary testing, products appear to be comparable, although more work needs to be done." The company also has done tests with such products as light-duty liquids and liquid dish products.

Overall findings, Smith said,

show ASML is cost effective and can act as a detergent hydrotrope product. Applications include household and personal care use, such as laundry detergents, spray cleaners, car washing products and hand soaps, as well as industrial and institutional uses.

Also in technical sessions, Adolf de Jong of Unilever N.V. presented findings on the environmental impact of LAS, as discussed previously at an international symposium on LAS organized by the Association Internationale de la Savonnerie (AIS). The major conclusion from that meeting was that LAS is innocuous in the environment in spite of the large volume used.

Since its introduction 25 years ago, LAS has been the subject of a highly critical ecological assessment. However, symposium speakers had noted that modern analytical techniques make it possible to detect LAS reliably in water, sewage, sludge, soils and sediments. In addition, over 90% of LAS is removed in conventional sewage treatment and, even in sewage treatment effluent, LAS concentrations are lower than levels toxic to water- and soil-dwelling organisms.

Other speakers in technical sessions included W. Gary Flamm, who discussed eye irritancy testing and the move toward better science in addressing animal welfare concerns, and Carolyn E. Forte, who spoke on lifestyle trends today and their impact on home care. Flamm recently retired as director of the Office of Toxicological Sciences, U.S. Public Health Service. Forte is director/editor of *Good Housekeeping Magazine's* Home Care Department and associate director of the Good Housekeeping Institute.

Also, Hercules A. Segalas, managing director of Paine Webber Inc., discussed mega-mergers and mega-deals and their implications for manufacturers, suppliers and the trade, and Robert Lane Carrick, a partner in the law firm of



Zbigniew Brzezinski



Adolf L. de Jong



W. Gary Flamm



Carolyn E. Forte



Norman R. Smith

Heller, Ehrman, White & McAuliffe, discussed California's Proposition 65.

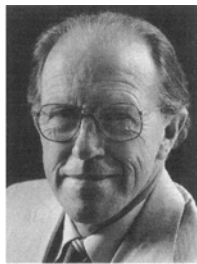
Other features of the meeting included a breakfast talk by Zbigniew Brzezinski, who discussed the new U.S.-Soviet relationships. Brzezinski is a Columbia professor and former National Security Adviser to President Jimmy Carter.

More than 1,000 persons attended the SDA annual convention, held Jan. 25-29, 1989, at the Boca Raton Hotel and Club.

## SDA officers

Stephen P. Donovan Jr., group vice president of The Procter & Gam-

## SURFACTANTS & DETERGENTS NEWS



**Stephen P. Donovan Jr.**     **David F. Webb**

ble Co., was elected chairman of The Soap and Detergent Association (SDA) for a one-year term during the association's annual convention held in Boca Raton, Florida, in late January.

David F. Webb, president of Lever Brothers Co.'s Household Products Division, was elected vice chairman. Theodore E. Brenner of the SDA staff was reelected president and secretary; Robert F. Bartlett of The Hewitt Soap Co. was reelected treasurer, and June A. Stahl of Stahl Soap Corp. was reelected assistant treasurer. Newly elected to the board was Gregory T. Grochowski of Amway Corp.

Directors reelected for 1989 were Donald D. Farinella of Capital City Products Co. Inc., Sheldon N. Lewis of The Clorox Corp., A. Courtenay Shepard of Colgate-Palmolive Co., Andrew S. Patti of The Dial Corp., Russell R. Keast of DuBois Chemicals Inc., Louis B. Reynolds of Ethyl Corp., A. Carter Fergusson of Alex. C. Fergusson Co., William F. Beck of FMC Corp., Arthur F. Fitzgerald of Monsanto Co., Elva D. Walker of National Purity Soap & Chemical Co., J. Roger Hirl of Occidental Chemical Corp., John W. Johnstone Jr. of Olin Corp., Donald E. Haupt of Shell Chemical Co., Edwin R. Vath of Stepan Co., Ashley W. Lutz of Union Carbide Corp., John D. Burns of Vista Chemical Co., and William E. Setzler of Witco Corp., in addition to SDA officers Donovan and Webb.

### Witco buys plant

Witco Corp. has acquired the Santa Fe Springs, California, sulfonation

facilities of Desoto Inc. The purchase includes buildings, equipment and inventory on a three-acre site. The plant is less than one mile from the surfactant manufacturing facility Witco purchased from Quantum Chemical Corp. in 1988.

The sulfonation plant produces anionic surfactants for use in personal care items, soaps and detergents, oil fuel and agricultural products.

In other business, Witco has acquired the Agri-Blend Inc. Co. based in Dallas, Texas. Agri-Blend manufactures agricultural surfactants. Meanwhile, Richard K. Hopkins has been named vice president of sales for the Humko Chemical Division of Witco.

### News briefs

**Paul Hiznay**, vice president of marketing and sales for **Mona Industries Inc.**, has been elected chairman of the board of the **Chemical Specialties Manufacturers Association**.

**General Electric Co.**'s silicone products division is introducing its personal care product line in Europe. The firm's products are used in deodorants, cosmetics and skin and hair conditioners. Cyclomethicones, dimethicones and amodimethicone are the chief materials targeted for Europe.

**Frank Dempsey** has been named surfactant sales representative for the Eastern region at **Stepan Co.** Also, **Gregory Servatius** has been promoted to business manager for distributors at Stepan, and **Charles A. Brown** has been named commercial director for the company's Mexican operations.

**Louis B. Reynolds Jr.** has been elected vice president of industrial chemicals for **Ethyl Corp.**

**PQ Corp.** has appointed **Jerry D. Dover** general manager of **Zeolyst Enterprises**, a joint venture with **Shell Polymers and Catalysts Enterprises Inc.** that produces cata-

lyst zeolites and zeolite-based catalysts for petroleum refining and chemical processing. Also, **William M. Chamberlain** has been appointed technical sales representative for the Midwest for the microspheres group of **PQ's Specialty Chemicals Division**.

**Akzo NV** of The Netherlands has reached an agreement to acquire the 50% share in **Procolor SA** held by **Uralita SA** of Madrid. **Procolor**, based in Barcelona, Spain, has been jointly owned by Akzo and Uralita since 1986. **Procolor** is Spain's leading coatings manufacturer.

**Iain C. Wylie** has been named president of **Croda Japan KK**.

**Marietta Corp.** in January announced it had reached an agreement in principle to purchase the outstanding stock of **American Soap Co. Inc.**, a privately owned operation specializing in the manufacture of soap products for the guest amenities industry.

The city of **Venice, Italy**, has banned the sale and use of detergents with high phosphorus content. The city ordinance now bans detergents with a phosphorus content over 1%.

**BASF Group** capital expenditures are expected to total \$2.1 billion during 1989, approximately 14% more than in 1988. Altogether, half of the expenditures are intended for expansions, 23% are for replacements, 5% are for efficiency measures, 10% are for environmental protection and 12% are for other infrastructure improvements.

Preprints and posters from the **15th Congress of the International Federation of Societies of Cosmetic Chemists (IFSCC)**, "Cosmetic Science '88—Achievements and Aims," are available in an eight-volume set at a price of £75. For information or orders, contact the General Secretary, **Society of Cosmetic Chemists**, Delaport House, 57 Guildford St., Luton, Beds., LU1 2NL, England, fax 0582-405217, telex 826314.