

# 1990s will bring more challenges

Major factors that will offer challenges to the detergent industry in the coming decade will be economics, social changes, environmental issues and scientific and technological developments, John A. Hockey of Lever Brothers Co. told attendees at the Surfactants and Detergents Section luncheon held in Cincinnati in May in conjunction with the 1989 AOCS annual meeting.

"I take great pleasure in working in the soap and detergent industry; it's one of the more socially responsible industries in the world," Hockey told the 180 persons attending the luncheon. Hockey, who is vice president of development for Lever Research, was keynote speaker at the section event.

Political and economic stability, he pointed out, help develop a massive consumer economy by creating disposable income. "Despite economic problems in the U.S., I still believe a consumer economy will persist over the next decade," he said, noting similar parallels in Europe, Japan and the Pacific Rim countries. Changes in Russia and China by the end of the decade may begin to create consumer economies there as well, he predicted.

The industry can expect further competition from foreign competitors for shares in the U.S. market. "We're already seeing foreign companies setting up bases within the U.S.," Hockey said, adding, "We must understand our consumers and our markets better to defend our markets. We must compete aggressively and with real commitment."

Currently, there is a plethora of different products to meet the needs of different segments of society. "This segmented trend is going to continue," he said, predicting that "a trend back to nuclear families is just not going to occur." As a result, the Surfactant and Detergent Section of AOCS "may see a larger representation from chemical engineers and from those in proc-

ess development" to help develop such products.

Due to growing environmental concerns, Hockey predicted, the industry must find "more eco-friendly products." Challenges include producing raw materials "that can be used in a variety of products for a variety of applications and that are biodegradable and eco-friendly." Packaging will be one area. "Also, major marketers in this country will start marketing eco-friendly as an aspect of their products," Hockey said, noting this already has occurred in Europe and is beginning to occur in the U.S.

Citing the immense steps in science and technology in the industry since World War II, Hockey said these advances allow the industry to offer a diversity of products. "The challenge is to give the consumers what they want for the best value."

"We now have enzymes that are safe to handle and can be used for a wide range of washing conditions. None of these were available to our predecessors," Hockey said, "The challenge to the industry "is to use these in new forms that are



John A. Hockey of Lever Brothers Co. addresses attendees at the Surfactants and Detergents Section luncheon.

socially responsible and environmentally friendly."

Predicting that environmental constraints will tighten, he said the 1990s "are going to be the decade where those companies that are technologically the most advanced are going to survive. In the 1990s, tech-

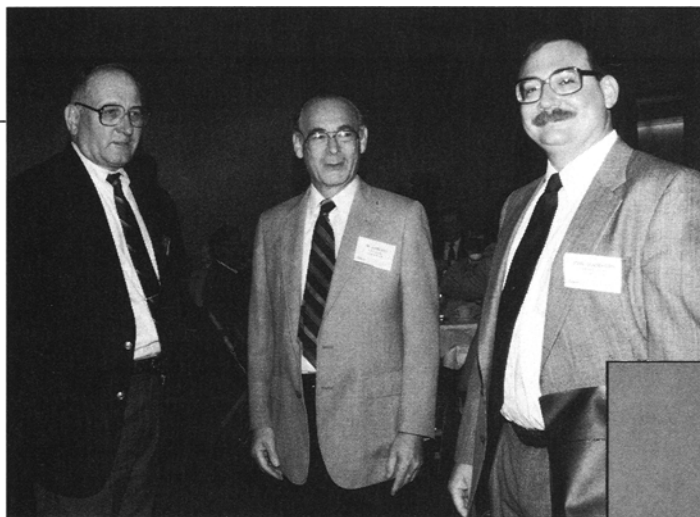


Arno Cahn, section chairperson, encourages luncheon participants to be active in the Surfactants and Detergents Section.

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**SURFACTANTS & DETERGENTS NEWS**


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In the photo above (from left to right), Ted Brenner of the Soap and Detergent Association, consultant Irv Schmolka and John Scamehorn of the University of Oklahoma talk before the section luncheon. In the photo at right, John A. Hockey (left) shares a story with David Scharer, technical program chairman for the section.



nical excellence will be the key to success."

Arno Cahn, section chairperson, told those at the luncheon that approximately 360 attended the soap technology short course which preceded the 1989 AOCS annual meeting. He noted that the luncheon was the first held by the section and that the section is still in its formative stage.

Ted Matson of Vista Chemical Co. urged participants to attend the AOCS/CSMA surfactants and detergents industry conference planned for Oct. 29-Nov. 1, 1989, at the Hotel Hershey, Hershey, Pennsylvania. Matson and Paul Sosis are in charge of the industry conference.

Matson noted that section organizers had planned to present four technical sessions at the annual meeting instead of six, "but we ended up with five." David Scharer of Shell Chemical Co., who served as technical program chairman for the section, commended J.A. McDonnell of 3M Co., J.H.

Collins of Procter & Gamble Co., I.R. Schmolka of Irving R. Schmolka Co., M.J. Rosen of Brooklyn College-CUNY and J.L. Lynn of Lever Brothers Co. for serving as session chairpersons for the five surfactant and detergent technical sessions.

Topics at the surfactant and detergent sessions were: Performance Evaluation and Formulation Technology; Recent Advances in Detergent Technologies; Cosmetics and Toiletries; Surface Chemistry of Surfactants; and New Directions in Surfactants and Higher Alcohols. Speakers from the surfactant and detergent sessions were urged by section officers to submit their papers for publication either in the peer-reviewed section of *JAOCS* or as technical news features in the News section of *JAOCS*.

"The technical program was 'world class,'" Arno Cahn said after the meeting. Scharer, citing attendance of 400 or more participants at surfactant and detergent presentations, noted, "This year's

meeting continued to show the building interest in this area."

## P&G to recycle plastic jugs

Procter & Gamble Co. (P&G) has announced a technological breakthrough that allows the recycling of used plastic milk jugs to make laundry detergent bottles.

P&G uses over 100 million pounds of high-density polyethylene (HDPE) a year in containers for its laundry detergents and fabric softeners. Test shipments of newly designed bottles which use 20% to 30% HDPE recycled from milk jugs were sent to supermarkets in early May.

Last year, P&G began using a bottle made from recycled polyethylene terephthalate (PET), the clear plastic used in soda bottles, for packaging Spic & Span. However, re-

*(Continued)*

claiming HDPE did not prove as easy as using the PET, company officials noted; unlike transparent PET plastic, HDPE bottles come in a variety of colors. As a result, P&G chose to use only translucent one-gallon milk jugs and juice bottles.

The resultant bottle design uses "virgin" plastic in an outer layer to ensure pure color and a thin layer on the inside to protect the package's contents. The remaining 55% is made up of a mixture of recycled jugs and HDPE trimmings from the original blow-molding process. The three-layer design was developed with two of P&G's bottle suppliers, Owens-Illinois Inc. of Toledo, Ohio, and Plastipak Packaging Inc. of Plymouth, Michigan.

## Volunteers sought

Participants are needed for a new ASTM task group on detergency formed by D13.53 on Practices, a subcommittee of ASTM standards-writing Committee D-13 on Textiles.

The detergency task group will identify nonreactive, nondepository agents for use in textile conservation. All interested persons are welcome to participate. The next meeting of the task group will be held during the Sept. 25, 1989, standards development meeting of Committee D-13 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

For more information, contact Beth Moran, ASTM, 1916 Race St., Philadelphia, PA 19103.

Also, ASTM's Committee D-12 on Soaps and Other Detergents will meet Sept. 12-14, 1989, at ASTM headquarters in Philadelphia. For further information, contact Beth Moran at the address listed above.

## Vista stock plan

Vista Chemical Company has announced plans to buy back one-third of its 14.85 million shares outstanding and creation of an employee stock ownership plan. Esti-



## SDA Award

M. J. Rosen (left) of the Surfactant Research Institute, Brooklyn College, City University of New York, receives The Soap and Detergent Association Award (SDA) from Ted Brenner of SDA at the 1989 AOCS annual meeting. The award was presented for the best technical paper appearing during 1988 in the Surfactants and Detergents section of *JAOCS*. Rosen and coauthor Z. H. Zhu (not present) were recognized for their paper, "Synergism in Binary Mixtures of Surfactants. 7. Synergism in Foaming and its Relation to Other Types of Synergism," published in the April 1988 issue of *JAOCS*.

mated cost to repurchase 4.95 million shares was \$350 million.

About 19% of Vista stock presently is held by members of the board of directors, management and employees. Estimated total financing requirements for the complete transaction will be about \$600 million, including funds for refinancing existing debt.

## European profits

The profitability of fatty acids and glycerine for European producers has improved during the past three to four years, according to Terry Spybey, president of the European Federation of Fatty Acid-Producing Companies (APAG).

Spybey credited increased profitability to improvements in glycerine prices and increases in total volume of both fatty acids and glycerine. However, he said the indus-

try still is too dependent on profits from glycerine; he added that the reason fatty acid profits are not as high as desired could be due to greater competition from the Far East.

## News briefs



Kevin L. Stellner has joined International Bio-Synthetics (IBIS) Inc. as senior research associate for its Applications Laboratory in Charlotte, North

Carolina. His primary responsibility is to provide technical support for the company's U.S. and Canada sales and marketing of enzyme products for the detergent industry. He previously was a principal research engineer at Lever Brothers Co. in Edgewater, New Jersey.

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**SURFACTANTS & DETERGENTS NEWS**


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**Sushil K. Bhalla** has been named technical director of the **J.M. Huber Corp.'s Chemical Division** in Havre de Grace, Maryland. He has over 20 years of experience in the management of R&D activities. He succeeded **Lloyd E. Williams**, who is retiring after 29 years with Huber Chemicals.

**Eval Co. of America (EVALCA)** has appointed **Kyoichiro Ikari** to the newly created position of director of research and technical service. Part of his responsibilities will

be to coordinate EVALCA's research efforts with those of **Kuraray Co. Ltd.** and **Quantum Chemical Corp.** to develop new ethylene vinyl alcohol resin products and applications. EVALCA is a joint venture of **Quantum** and **Kuraray**.

**New Japan Chemical Co.** of Japan, **Henkel KGaA** of West Germany and **Lucky Corp.** of South Korea have agreed to build a fatty alcohol facility in Malaysia. Production at the 30,000-metric-ton capacity

plant is scheduled for March 1991. **Henkel** will hold 55% of the shares in **Henkel Rika**; **New Japan Chemical** will hold 25%, and **Lucky** will hold the remaining shares.

**The PQ Corp.** has appointed **Allan Burns** as an associate director of its Research and Development Center. **Jed Seybold** has been named market development project manager in the company's specialty chemicals division.

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**FROM WASHINGTON**


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## ASA: Give Russia favored status

The American Soybean Association (ASA) has asked the Bush Administration to grant most-favored-nation status to the Soviet Union. Most-favored-nation status would allow the Soviets nondiscriminatory access to the U.S. market.

According to ASA, as long as the U.S. denies most-favored-nation status to Russia and restrictive import tariffs remain in place, the Soviets will be hindered from exporting to the U.S. Soviet ability and willingness to purchase U.S. goods, including soybeans, also are lessened without most-favored-nation status, ASA said.

In a letter to President George Bush, ASA President James Lee Adams proposed that the Jackson-Vanik amendment to the Trade Act of 1974 be waived for 18 months. The Jackson-Vanik amendment prohibits nonmarket economy nations such as the Soviet Union from receiving nondiscriminatory access to the U.S. market as long as those countries restrict the emigration of Jews and other groups.

Adams said that without the waiver, South American competitors would gain a competitive edge in the potentially large Soviet market.

## Reports available on grain quality

The U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO) has available two publications from the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) describing the increasing competition in world grain markets and the importance quality plays in global trade.

"Grain Quality in International Trade: A Comparison of Major U.S. Competitors" costs \$7.50. Its GPO stock number is 052-003-01140-9. "Enhancing the Quality of U.S. Grain in International Trade" is \$13 and the stock number is 052-003-001139-5. Contact: Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

## Congress considers soybean checkoff

Legislation to create a nationwide soybean promotion and research checkoff program was introduced in the U.S. House and Senate in May. Senators David Pryor of Arkansas and Christopher Bond of Missouri and Representatives Dan Glickman of Kansas and Ron Marlenee of Montana sponsored the Soybean Promotion, Research and Consumer Education Act of 1989.

The purpose of the bill, Pryor said, is "to establish a farmer-controlled, nationwide soybean promotion and research program which will expand export markets, protect domestic markets, develop new and improved uses for soybeans and soybean products, and raise consumer awareness of the benefits of these products."

U.S. soybean farmers favor the program because it is fair to all soybean farmers and would be run by the farmers, according to Don Heil, chairperson of the ASA Checkoff Development Committee. If adopted, the program would require that 50% of the funds stay in the states and would prohibit the use of checkoff funds to influence legislation.

A poll of a cross-section of U.S. soybean farmers conducted by ASA indicated that 38% strongly favored, 32% somewhat favored, 12% opposed and 14% strongly opposed a nationwide soybean checkoff; the remaining 4% had no opinion.

## NutraSweet cites European opinion

The NutraSweet Co. has told the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that regulatory officials in the United Kingdom (U.K.) and