

Mesamoll II for the global toy market

LANXESS plasticizers deemed innocuous

Approval from the European Commission expected in fall 2010

Leverkusen – The phthalate-free plasticizer Mesamoll II manufactured by specialty chemicals group LANXESS has taken its final step toward gaining European approval for use in food contact applications. The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) published its scientific opinion on the additive at the end of 2009. These findings concluded that alkyl(C10-C21)sulfonic acid phenyl ester, the chemical component of the plasticizer Mesamoll II, does not pose a risk to humans when used to manufacture toys or in dry and water-based food packaging applications. A positive evaluation from the EFSA is generally the final step before European approval for these areas of application is granted. LANXESS expects to receive official approval from the European Commission in the fall of 2010.

When this is granted, Mesamoll II would be one of the few plasticizers deemed suitable for use in food packaging in both the United States and the EU. However, the benefits aren't limited to just this specific market – the approval will also have a positive effect on the use of Mesamoll II in toys. Mesamoll II has already received food contact approval from the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) as of 2007.

"In 2009, we decided to focus actively on the toys market again with Mesamoll II," says Jorge Nogueira, head of the Functional Chemicals business unit at LANXESS. "The products for the toy industry exported each year by China alone contain 35,000 metric tons of plasticizer worth more than EUR 60 million – and that represents just a small portion of overall global demand. We are keen to expand our share in this market. If, as expected, we gain the necessary approval for use with foodstuffs, it would represent a crucial leap forward and

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show toy manufacturers that Mesamoll II is a safe option," adds Nogueira.

In the rubber industry and among manufacturers of polyurethane sealants and high-quality PVC products, Mesamoll II has acquired a good reputation as a versatile alternative to phthalates. The polymer additive is also in great demand due to its valuable technical properties. Its rapid gelling behavior ensures low processing temperatures and times, while its high resistance to light and saponification are particularly beneficial in applications where weathering resistance is important. It also displays low volatility, and the products manufactured from it demonstrate outstanding high-frequency welding properties. In addition, it neither contains phthalates, nor is it manufactured using them.

In recent years, the toy industry in western countries has repeatedly been the focus of widespread debate on the risks posed by certain plasticizers. On several occasions, products containing additives deemed to be potentially harmful have had to be taken off the shelves. For that reason, providers in this industry are particularly interested in safer alternatives. Usually, that means they opt for plasticizers that have been approved for use in food contact applications. However, very few of these plasticizers meet the strict requirements set by the appropriate authorities in both the United States and Europe. "We see great potential for Mesamoll II in this area," says Karsten Job, Director Marketing Polymer Additives in the Functional Chemicals business unit.. "We are supplying our customers with a safe plasticizer that – once official approval is granted and due to its global compliance – will make it much easier for manufacturers to market their products worldwide as of the fall of 2010."

According to the EFSA recommendation, alkyl(C10-C21)sulfonic acid phenyl ester – the active chemical ingredient of the plasticizer Mesamoll II – is deemed to be harmless in all products where migration does not exceed 0.05 mg/kg of foodstuff, and where there

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is no possibility of contact with fatty foods. "According to our calculations, the value for water-based and dry food contact applications is well within the stipulated range provided the product is used correctly," concludes Karsten Job of LANXESS.

The Functional Chemicals business unit is part of the Performance Chemicals segment, which achieved total sales in fiscal 2009 of EUR 1,530 million.

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LANXESS is a leading specialty chemicals company with sales of EUR 5.06 billion in 2009 and currently around 14,300 employees in 23 countries. The company is represented at 42 production sites worldwide. The core business of LANXESS is the development, manufacturing and marketing of plastics, rubber, intermediates and specialty chemicals.

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