

New microfibres for wetlaid processes

Eastman unveiled its new microfibre platform in Miami, which is the result of four and a half years of development. The Cyphrex microfibres have demonstrated nearly drop-in compatibility with existing wetlaid processes and are targeted at the air, water and fuel filtration markets, as well as speciality papers and battery separators applications.

They are less than 5 microns in diameter (0.25 denier) and are engineered to provide a high surface-to-mass ratio with a narrow diameter distribution. Fibre cross-sections are available in shape options such as round, flat and wedge, while the fibre material can consist of different polymer types, such as PET, PP and nylon.

The microfibres exhibit good dispersibility and are said to blend well with synthetic, glass and cellulose fibres.

“The technology behind Eastman Cyphrex microfibres and the functionality it enables is unique and revolutionary, unlike anything else on the market,” said Mark J Costa, executive vice president at Eastman Chemical Company. “These microfibres unlock possibilities that provide innovation in the nonwovens marketplace by allowing cost-effective access to a previously unavailable size range of highly uniform synthetic fibres. Consequently, we believe these new possibilities will result in breakthrough product performance, quality and value for speciality nonwovens.”

The company invested significantly in its application development capabilities, both in terms of personnel and technology. Eastman now has a synthetic fibre pilot spinning line and a nonwoven and speciality paper research lab at its Kingsport, Tennessee, headquarters to work with customers on the development of new media and rollgoods using the Cyphrex microfibres.

A fellow exhibitor at the show, Ahlstrom, was showcasing the first commercial application using the technology, which is a fuel filtration media called Captimax. The media is designed for use in fuel filters in passenger, commercial heavy-duty vehicles and off-road machinery, and is currently being evaluated for use in hydraulic applications.

Its benefits are said to include optimum dust-holding capacity, good small particle retention and the potential for longer media life.

“Using Eastman Cyphrex microfibres in Ahlstrom’s new diesel fuel filtration media changes the filtration landscape,” said Gary Blevins, Ahlstrom’s VP for marketing and commercial for transportation filtration.

“This media can offer both high efficiency and high capacity. We’ve given our customers the ability to make filters to the specifications they need, allowing them to develop products outside the standard constraints from the media.”

The company explains that a filter can have the same dirt capacity and a reduced filter package or a package the same size with increased capacity.

“We are confident that the two companies will work together in future,” added Eastman’s Mr Costa.



The Eastman team at IDEA

Suominen launches wipes campaign

Suominen introduced two new products called Hercules and Exodus for industrial and household wiping at the show. Both combine cellulose and synthetic fibres for strength and absorbency benefits, and are available in four basis weights.

The company also launched the We Love

Wipes campaign, which aims to raise the awareness of wipes with consumers and the value chain and to motivate communication among wipes users.

The campaign centres around the Welovewipes.com website, supported by social marketing activities and face-to-face events with professionals in the wipes supply chain.

“As an industry, we want better informed consumers,” said Alistair Brown, marketing and communications director. “We want

transparency across the whole supply chain and are interesting in partnering with a number of stakeholders in the industry, such as packaging suppliers, lotions and retailers.

“As a leader in wipes, we owe it to the consumer and supply chain to provide information on the best product to use for the purpose. We want to open the dialogue and provide content to maintain interest,” he said.

“Suominen has found it relatively easy to integrate Ahlstrom’s Home and Personal