

Moretto optimistic of Asian sales

Auxiliary equipment producer *Moretto* is all geared for further expansion in Asia. "We will set up sales and service offices in Indonesia and in the middle and south of China," revealed Renato Moretto, the eponymous proprietor of the company, recently. He also added that India is a growing market. "We have a lot of requests for material drying and handling equipment." Furthermore, it has a "good tie-up" with *Yudo-Star* (Korean/Japanese joint venture company for hot runners and robots) to distribute its gravimetric and dosing systems. Last year, *Yudo-Moretto* set up a showroom in China to display the automated feeding systems.

And while most companies are doubtful of the response to their equipment next year, *Moretto* expects a 5% increase in sales from Asia. "At the moment, 38% of our turnover comes from outside Europe. Sales in the domestic market (in Italy) have fallen by about 3% and are quite stable for the rest of Europe," he added. As part of its expansion exercise, in June this year, it set up a sales and service office in the UK where it had been, for the past 18 years, distributing its products through a local company.

The Massanzago-headquartered company presented its X dryer at the Fakuma show in Germany recently. Having made its debut at the Plastmilan in 2006, the X dryer has been making its rounds at various exhibitions. It is an automatic dehumidifying dryer that needs to know only two parameters: the type of material and the hourly throughput. The software controls other variables like residence time, temperature and air flow capacity, thus achieving energy savings of up to 72%, compared to conventional equipment. It uses the zeolith technology that does not require compressed air or cooling water. It is available in six different sizes with air flow capacity from 25 to 350 m³/hour. A newer capacity of 2,500 m³/hour is also available. All of these achieve a dew point of -75°C.

When the X dryer is integrated with the Flowmatik Multi, an automated distribution system for process air in multi-hopper systems, the company claims further energy savings are possible. With the capability of catering up to 32 hoppers, Flowmatik is able to work out the exact amount of process air needed for the hoppers based on the specific type of material being processed.



Renato Moretto, President of Moretto, stands next to the X dryer shown at the Fakuma exhibition in Germany recently

A new product displayed at the exhibition was the MPK PET crystalliser



As a follow up to the X PET Pro hopper shown at the K show last year, a new highlight at Fakuma was the MPK crystalliser for PET regrind. Available in 12 different sizes with volumes from 50 dm³ to 6,000 dm³, the crystalliser is designed such that immediate start-up of the mixing is possible. Furthermore, the wing profile blades that do the mixing are removable and a dust separator removes the plastic powder, thus avoiding yellowing of material. Cleaning is simpler since the cone can be opened. A *Siemens* PLC system is used for the process control that has the possibility of creating treatment profiles for specific materials with trends and temperatures.

Degradable soft TPE

TPE material producer *API (Applicazioni Plastiche Industriali)* is not too worried about competition from Asia. This is because the 52-year old company is focused on R&D and products that do not contain lead, halogen and phthalate plasticisers. Its product range includes TPUs, TPVs, SEBS and TPOs, some of which are patented.

A recent addition to its portfolio is the Apinat biodegradable compound, claimed to be the first soft TPE material that is environmentally friendly. "It has generated much interest in the footwear industry and we are currently running trials with several customers," said Export Manager Piergiorgio Biscuola. However, with the EUR6.50/kg price tag, it is targeted at branded footwear manufacturing. "Since it has excellent adhesion properties, it is also possible to produce rigid/soft items (like toothbrushes) using overmoulding," said Biscuola, adding that if a rigid bioplastic is used together with Apinat the item will be completely biodegradable.

Situated in Mussolente, *API's* facility produces 20,000 tonnes/year of material and is able to supply 1-50 tonne small batch lots. It markets its products in Asia through distributors like *Schulman*. ♦