

AVC Promotes Styrene as a Replacement for PVC

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US packaging and manufacturing company, AVC Corp. is working on persuading clients and potential clients to switch to clarified styrene over polyvinyl chloride (PVC).

Although coloured styrene has been widely used for many years, a new clear styrene has only just been introduced to the marketplace.

AVC is trying to persuade clients to make the switch as they believe it will soon be mandated by retailers. Many big retailers such as Ikea are now phasing out the use of PVC and due to their influence, according to Moshe Begim, president of AVC Corp, many other retailers are bound to follow suit. Microsoft has also done away with using PVC in the manufacture of their products.

PVC is being phased out for environmental reasons, due to its high content of potentially harmful chemicals and its inability to be recycled effectively.

Styrene can be used for everything that PVC is currently used for, but many packaging companies have not yet managed to find a way to seal it.

AVC has been working with clarified styrene for about three months and has managed to find a way to seal it in the same way as Polyethylene Terephthalate Glycol (PETG) and PVC.

At present the company is unable to disclose details of this process as they are one of the few retail packaging companies that know how to do it.

As well as being much more environmentally friendly, clarified styrene yields more product than PVC and so the cost per unit for the customer is virtually the same.

Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) is another viable alternative to PVC, which is also used at AVC, but it is not used by many clients as it can be as much as 20% more expensive.



Another potentially viable alternative to PVC is polylactic acid (PLA) manufactured by NatureWorks which AVC also promotes. However, as it can become deformed at temperatures over 110 °F, it can only be transported using refrigerated trucks.

Therefore at the moment, apart from food packaging, PLA's uses are severely limited. This, according to Begim, will change within the next 6-12 months once PLA manufacturers find a solution for the problem of temperature sensitivity.

Due to the fact that PLA is entirely biodegradable, Begim says that food packaging should use PLA as: 'Anything that can be done to save the planet should be done.'

However, in terms of every other type of packaging, Begim believes that there is no cost-effective method other than clarified styrene, and by the end of 2006: 'Every large manufacturer will have to come into contact with packaging that has been made from it.'

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