

Business
a week in business

MENT: Workers shun retirement
A third of people are postponing retiring because they cannot afford to stop working amid the economic uncertainty. According to a survey of British Industry (CBI) study, 31% of workers have asked to continue in their jobs. The figure is up from 22% last year. 8 September

Y: Building society forecasts 25% decline
The chief executive of Britain's biggest building society says house prices could fall by as much as 25% from their peak. Graham Beale, boss of the Building Society said he did not expect a recovery until 2010. 9 September

AL: Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac rescue
The US mortgage giants, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, have been seized by the US government, in what is the biggest financial bailout in history. They have financial liabilities of \$5,400bn and were seized by the government in a bid to avert a disaster. 9 September

High street sales fall again in August
High street sales fell for the fifth month this year, according to the British Retail Consortium's Retail Sales Monitor. Like for like sales fell 0.1%, the fifth time there has been a year on year decline in the last six months. The BRC said August's sales were dampened by enthusiasm for shopping. 9 September

Y: Credit crunch 'will last into 2010'
The chief executive of Britain's biggest mortgage lender, HBOS, has warned the credit crunch will last until 2010. HBOS chief Andy Hornby said it would take at least 18 months before US house prices started to rise again. 9 September

ing Polymers for Technical Solutions Tel: 01952 213 456



Ticona

Sugar beet PLA plant to be set up in Germany

David Vink and David Eldridge
020 8235 9610

A PLA plant is to be built in Germany as part of a partnership between German Bioplastics and Pyramid Technologies of Switzerland.

The plant, to be located at Guben, on the German-Polish border in eastern Brandenburg, would have initial capacity to produce 60,000 tpa of PLA. And it will use Uhde Inventa-Fischer process technology.

Plant engineering for the first production unit has started, and this unit is expected to start up in the second half of 2009. This unit will use non-GMO sugar beet as feedstock, in contrast to the more common corn starch used in other PLA plants.



Beet it: Sugar beet will be used as feedstock

mid Technologies.

Sugar beet feedstock has one less process step to PLA production than corn feedstock, according to Berndt Merzenich, md of Pyramid Plastics a subsidiary of Pyra-

Speaking at the PLA World Congress in Munich, Merzenich also said that sugar beet has a better yield per hectare than starch. He said sugar beet requires 0.17 hectares in the production of one tonne of PLA, while corn needs 0.33 hectares for

the production of one tonne of PLA.

The second stage of the plant would use second generation technology using cellulose instead of sugar beet as feedstock. There would be little or no competition with growing of food crops in this stage.

Merzenich told PRW that it will take five to seven years to develop the second generation technology to the stage where it would be as economic to make PLA as in the first generation. He confirmed that the company had secured a deal for lactic acid.

Pyramid Bioplastics is co-operating with the Fraunhofer Institute of Applied Polymer Research on biopolymer research and development.

PLA polymerisation process for Synbra site

Purac and Sulzer Chemtech have developed a polymerisation process for the bioplastic resin PLA, which will be used for the first time on foamed products.

Synbra will use the process at a foamed products plant it plans to build in the Netherlands. Its new plant will have the capacity to produce 5,000 tpa of Biofoam using the process and is targeted to be

operational by the end of 2009.

A statement issued by CSM, the parent company of Purac, said: "Synbra intends to assume a leading position in Europe as supplier of biologically degradable polymers from renewable sources and plans to expand the PLA capacity to 50,000 tpa."

The statement said Purac and Sulzer's new polymerisation technology

"will significantly reduce the process and product development time thereby enabling faster and more reliable market entry for PLA producers."

Purac and Sulzer's proprietary technology has resulted from a joint cooperation agreement for the development and sharing of the process. Purac produces lactic acid, the feedstock from which PLA is polymerised, while

Sulzer is a major technology group in polymers and other petrochemical products.

The two partners are establishing a demonstration plant for the process at Sulzer's facility in Winterthur, Switzerland, by the end of 2008. The plant will be made available exclusively to partners of Purac to help with product and process development.

acle helps extrusion firm Boomer

Irish plastics specialist, Boomer, has implemented 1,000 software solutions aimed at improving production and increasing customer capture. The aim is to prevent its growth going into reverse. The Lisburn company has implemented Pinnacle software to implement customer Relationship Management (CRM) pack-



Siobhan Marley, Pinnacle business development manager, and Andrew Wallace

Finance director, Andrew Wallace, works across the organisation.

On the waterfront

Daniela Nicola (inset) has been announced as the winner of an EPS design competition hosted by the British Plastic Federation's EPS Packaging Group. She will display her winning concept at the design exhibition, 100% Futures 2008, being held in London next week. Nicola, a mature student at London South Bank University, created the Aquapod, which is used to house plants and lights in ponds and other waterscapes. The judges said the concept combined innovation with practicality and demonstrated a good understanding of the

