

PLC hosts International Symposium

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In mid-October, TAPPI's Polymers, Laminations and Coatings (PLC) Division played host to more than 40 international delegates at its 1993 European Film, Extrusion Coating, and Coextrusion Symposium held at the Inter-Continental Hotel in Geneva, Switzerland. Attendees represented 10 European countries as well as the United States and Canada. Sixty-two percent of the attendees were converters; the rest were from supplier companies.

With five sessions and 15 papers, the symposium covered a wide spectrum of topics including extrusion coating, co-extrusion, cast film, and blown film processes. Equipment, materials, and processing were studied in depth during the three-day meeting. Organized by Thomas Bezigian, industry consultant, the conference featured speakers from the United States and Europe.

Hassan Helmy, president; Rick Keller, extrusion manager; and Steve Post, sales engineer; all of Egan Machinery, provided a large portion of the material presented. From broad background information to the minute details of extruder design, these three offered thought-provoking and stimulating talks throughout the symposium. John Montalbano, product manager of extrusion systems at Black Clawson Co., presented a session on troubleshooting the extrusion coating and cast film processes and a session on edge-bead reduction technology.

The spice of life

While representatives of the machinery companies supplied the meat of the conference, the spice was provided by a series of speakers on a wide range of topics of interest. Bezigian, whose talk was entitled "Chemical, physical, and mechanical properties of common polymers," was the lead speaker on day two. Seppo Kluusela, product development and technical service engineer of Neste Chemicals, discussed polypropylene extrusion. Yves Trouilhet, research associate at DuPont, spoke on processing of ionomers, acid copolymers, and polyesters in extrusion coating.

Jeff Siegel, vice president at Mica Corp., delivered a talk about chemical primers for paper, film, and aluminum foil. David

Markgraf, vice president of Enercon Industries, spoke about the use of corona treatment for improved adhesion, and Richard Murphy of Eurotherm Gauging Systems covered measurement and control of coextruded webs.

Day two also included a tour of the DuPont, Geneva, research center. After an in-depth look at DuPont's facilities, attendees were treated to a typically Swiss luncheon in the company's scenic reception area.

One of the more lively sessions took place on the third day when participants were encouraged to bring up actual production problems and situations for discussion by a panel of experts. By this time, most of the European formality had melted away and the group engaged in a fast-paced roundtable exchange of problem-solving tips.

Truly a global organization

The ability to meet with industry colleagues in an informal, noncompetitive, nonthreatening environment was a great benefit of the conference. The free exchange of ideas and advice came as a pleasant surprise to some of the Europeans who were not familiar with the TAPPI ideology.

In an effort to parlay this new-found enthusiasm into some long-term benefit, Alfred Yazgi has been spearheading the development of a European extrusion coating committee. With a commitment from TAPPI headquarters staff, and support from the PLC Division's Extrusion Coating Committee, this could be the beginning of a new arm of the TAPPI organization.

Midyear meeting in Atlanta

The next event of the PLC Division will be its midyear meeting in Atlanta, GA, on March 10-12, 1994. In addition to committee meetings and a technical session, there will be a leadership workshop on March 12. For more information about the mid-year meeting or the leadership workshop, contact Mark Leinmiller, TAPPI technical division administrator, telephone: (404) 446-1400, ext. 264, fax: (404) 446-6947.